



Italian Historical Society of America Newsletter

JANUARY 2021

BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 1

Tutto Italiano Benvenuto a *Tutto Italiano*

One of the largest ship builders in the world, [Fincantieri SpA](#), based in Trieste, Italy, owns 20 [shipyards](#); among them, eight in Italy and two in Wisconsin (acquired in 2009). The company notes the “first modern shipyard” was built in Castellammare di Stabia – in Naples – in 1780; and through mergers and acquisitions, Fincantieri grew, building merchant and passenger ships, and naval vessels.

In 1959, Fincantieri was founded as a “state financial holding company to oversee the main Italian shipyards,” and in 1984, it became an operating company. It continued to expand, focusing on “high-value-added products: cruise ships, ferries, and naval vessels.” Production is separated by type within its two divisions, merchant ships and naval vessels. By mid-2000, three new business categories were added: mega yachts, ship repair and conversions, and systems integration.

With its absorption of prior ship-building companies, Fincantieri’s achievements include (at the time) “the largest ship ever launched in the Mediterranean” (1912), “the first Italian super ocean liner” (1925), “the first ship with balcony cabins” (1927), “the largest training ship of all time ([Amerigo Vespucci](#), 1931), “the first air-conditioned ship” (1931), and “the record for the fastest transatlantic crossing of a passenger ship” (1933), among others.

After World War II, the use of steam engines to power ships was declining as diesel engines became more efficient. In 1966, shortly after the cruise ship [Eugenio C.](#) was built for Costa Cruises and delivered from the [Monfalcone shipyard](#) (region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia), Fincantieri took ownership of the facility. By then, steam turbines were the choice of shipbuilders and cruise ships were in demand. The [Crown Princess](#), designed by acclaimed architect [Renzo Piano](#), was the first cruise ship built by Fincantieri at the Monfalcone shipyard. Since then, it has [built passenger ships](#) for all the major cruise lines including Carnival, Cunard, Disney, Holland America, Regent, and Viking.

In June 2018, the “[biggest ship ever built in Italy](#)” – the [MSC Seaview](#) – was delivered to MSC Cruises from the Monfalcone shipyard.

Located on the northeastern coast of Liguria, the Muggiano shipyard was established in 1883, but it is noted that the area had been contemplated first by Napoleon, and then by Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, as a naval ship building base. During World War I, the shipyard increased its production of submarines for the Italian Navy and for other countries. Production continued during World War II, but the shipyard was significantly damaged. It was rebuilt and in 1984, under ownership of Fincantieri, the shipyard specialized in constructing naval vessels. In 1999, “[the keel for the first Italian submarine](#) [of four] of the U212A class, Salvatore Todaro (S526), was laid at the Muggiano shipyard; the submarine was launched in November 2003 and commissioned into service in March 2006.”

In 1942, [Fincantieri Marine Group](#) was founded “as a U.S. subsidiary of Fincantieri.” Located by the Menominee River in Marinette, Wisconsin, “the shipyard’s government portfolio includes ships for the United States Coast Guard and Navy.” In May 2020, it

was announced that [“Fincantieri Marine has been awarded \\$5.5 billion to develop the U.S. Navy’s newest class of warships.”](#)

In other news about the Navy, [Keel laid for warship honoring World War II Marine hero, Sgt. John Basilone.](#)
(Thanks, Aldo.)

[Italian Liners Historical Society](#)

[Navel Encyclopedia: Regia Marina](#)

[The Muggiano Shipyard Between Past and Future](#) (PDF)

[10 Influential Renzo Piano Buildings](#)

From the Italian American Press

The Italian American Press offers a wide selection of books – culture, history, memoirs, art, family, food, the supernatural, the natural beauty of Italy, and more – for every interest.

Articles on some Italian American websites lament the lack of books written about the Italian American experience – the lives of Italian immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – as they faced the hardships of living in America. The IAP features a variety of books written by first- and second-generation Italian Americans who were raised through a blend of Italian traditions and American customs.

New on the Italian American Press

[Cambridge Street by Steven Decker](#)

Sicilian immigrants rely on family and faith in Chicago's Roaring Twenties “where Italian immigrants were not wanted or welcomed, jobs were scarce, the streets were ruled by violent mobsters and crooked cops, and life in the over-crowded tenements was difficult.”

[Giovanni: Street Urchin of Naples by Joseph C. Polacco](#)

A family history, from Naples at the end of the nineteenth century to New York in the early twentieth century, interwoven with “racism, foreign wars, a flu pandemic, the Great Depression, Mussolini’s long arm, internment, a polio epidemic, civil rights/anti-war movements, the American justice system, and the American mob.”

Italian American Heritage Project

The groups opposing Columbus Day have an organized agenda to eliminate it from America; Italian Americans do not have an organized defense. The statements of truth and facts posted on so many Italian American websites have not reached the decision makers in towns and communities who side with those who present false accusations against Columbus. Italian Americans need a nationwide program to address these accusations in the battle against the campaign to abolish Columbus Day.

2020 was a particularly bad year for Columbus Day, as statues were destroyed, more petitions for changing or removing Columbus’s name from parks and other public places were presented, and the assessments of political leaders to remove statues of Columbus to protect them, have added to the controversy. The Italian American community is losing in its attempt to educate the American public (including those of Italian descent) about the significance of Columbus and Columbus Day. (See Brooklyn Paper article link below.) Indigenous People already have a designated day, and Native Americans have a day and a month to celebrate their culture.

Indigenous Peoples Day: August 9

Native American Month: November

Native American Heritage Day: Friday after Thanksgiving

Visit the [IAHP website](#) to read my articles, learn about the lesson plans, see the resources I've used, and support my work – preserving Italian heritage and Italian American history and culture through education. [All donations are tax-deductible.](#)

[NIAF 2020 Photo Contest Winners](#) (National Italian American Foundation)

[Civic gurus call for removal of Downtown Brooklyn Columbus statue](#) (Brooklyn Paper; December 10, 2020)

[Dr. Jill Biden to Become First Italian American First Lady in Nation's History](#) (La Voce di New York; November 10, 2020)

[Architect Renzo Piano Gives An Inside Look at the Forthcoming Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles](#) (Ad Magazine; January 20, 2019)

[Stefano Boeri Develops Concepts and Pavilions for the Italian Anti-Covid-19 Vaccination Campaign](#) (ArchDaily; December 14, 2020)

[Italy: Rome's Fiumicino wins Best Airport in Europe for third year in a row](#) (Wanted in Rome; November 17, 2020 [Source: [We the Italians](#)])

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January 2021: Volume 17, Issue 1

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