

NEW YORK! Celebrating Italy's Republic Day

I. I. (June 07, 2014)



Italian Republic Day in New York. It kicked off the day before and the celebrations went on the whole day on June 2nd. Countless events marked the Italian National Day: offices and branches of all Italian institutions were open to all. And then Expo 2015, art, music, sport, tastings and the screening of the movie about Giacomo Matteotti.

It was a day of celebration. The Italian flag wrapped New York, and not just in a symbolic sense.

On Park Avenue a giant tricolor awning covered the terrace of the diplomatic headquarters' entertainment hall.

On the street, a Fiat 500 and three shining Vespas by Piaggio – white red and green – attracted the attention of the passers-by.



"I-Italy's FIAT 500 is a tribute to the great contemporary architect Massimo Vignelli who designed it and passed away only a few days ago" said Consul General Natalia Quintavalle. "And the three Vespas – she continued – are there because one of them is the prize for the winner of the Italian treasure hunt. We'll award it to the family who answered all the riddles and managed to reach all the Italian stages by 2:30 pm. It was completed in a record time no one had anticipated.

Congratulations to the Rossi Hawkins family: William, Angelica and Maria Luisa."

For the second year in a row the Italian institutions in New York opened their doors in occasion of the Republic Day, which saw this year increased interest and participation. A number of events have been organized by the Consulate General, Institute of Culture, ICE, Enit, Italian School "Guglielmo Marconi", Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimo' and others. It's not going to be easy to convey the atmosphere just by listing them all, but we picked a few, big and small, to bring some of this 'all Italian' celebration to you.

The National Republic Day has been animated by many different events, meetings, ceremonies and exhibitions.

Starting off on June 1st with the Italian Treasure Hunt which saw the participants spread across the City guided by the answers to the riddles, the 'Festa' really got on the way on Monday June 2nd. The students of the 'Scuola d'Italia Guglielmo Marconi' performed in a mini sports competition organized by CONI USA: a hymn to sport and its values.

The celebrations progressed at the Institute of Culture, ICE, Italian School "Guglielmo Marconi", Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimo, Italian Consulate General. For the occasion the Consulate inaugurated a newly refurbished area with three consecutive entertainment halls. Important in the revitalization of the area has been the installation of the young artist Teresa Cinque, named "Velvet Park".

The velvet trees on the walls evoked a fairy tale forest atmosphere, the branches reaching out ready to witness important events. The end result, achieved by these precious removable fabric silhouettes, was absolutely beautiful.

The combination of art and sport was the theme of the unusual performance we attended at the Institute of Culture: kids coloured a grey wall by kicking balls, dirty with graphite, against it. "Kickstarting#2" was conceived by Andrea Mastrovito, from the Bushwick neighbourhood. The artist leads a program of socio-artistic education for children.

An unavoidable topic on this day, in New York as well as in all the 1232 Embassies, 48 Consulate Generals and 9 permanent Italian delegations scattered around the world – has been the presentation of Milano Expo 2015.

Introduced by Natalia Quintavalle and by the ENIT Director Eugenio Magnani, Piero Galli – in charge of the events - talked enthusiastically of the details of the project. For the Italians around the world Milano Expo has planned a number of special deals which include benefits on trips and accommodation. "We would like to welcome the Italians living abroad in a unique and unforgettable way to show them a very special aspect of Italy"

Also present, the Farnesina's Secretary General, ambassador Michele Valensise, who underlined the need for optimism and hope for our Country.

The icing on the cake was the contribution of Fred Plotkin, journalist, writer and much more: an American who is also the ultimate expert on Italy. Entertaining, intense and interesting, Fred's speech piqued the curiosity of the many present.

Also this year June 2nd coincides with the presentation of awards and commendations of the Italian Republic: Maria Fosco, Vincenzo Pascale, Joseph Scelsa and Joseph Guagliardo the recipients.

Diverse and manifold the nature of these celebrations. Of great relevance the projection of the



movie by Florestano Vancini "The Matteotti assassination" at Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimo'. The screening, organized with the support of the Primo Levi Centre, has been strongly desired by the directors Stefano Albertini Mussini and Natalia Indrimi. At the end of the movie Spencer di Scala (University of Massachusetts, Boston) and Mauro Canali (Camerino University) promoted an intense conversation. On a day like this, which should remind us of the values of democracy, it is compelling to remember such a tragic moment of our history.

At the ICE building, a few blocks away from the Consulate General, we celebrated Italian Style. The excellence of the 'Made in Italy' was on display throughout the day: from the marvellous dresses by Curiel, to the clothes worn by Toni Servillo in the Oscar winning movie 'The Great Beauty', by the Neapolitan tailor Attolini.

ICE celebrated big brands such as Pirelli, Piaggio, Ferrari, Panini, but also the craftsmanship and creativity that so distinctively characterizes Italy. Amongst these, Tobia clothes for men, a company from Spoleto that produces entirely handmade garments, and the curious pouches by Fedon, whose objects of artisanal design have made their way to MOMA.

And what about Food and Wine at ICE? Amongst the countless offerings, we would like to mention the Torcolato, extraordinary wine, presented by the brand ambassador Alberto Zamperla. With him the lively Alessandra Rotondi, fantastic presenter and sommelier. And then tastings offered by Colavita, Monini, Di Palo, Parmacotto.

"Surrounded by creativity, beauty and history" commented the host Pierpaolo Celeste, director of the ICE.

And the evening at the Consulate General concluded with music. The European and Italian anthems were sung by the extraordinary voices of the [Women of The World](#) [2], group of singers from all corners of the globe.

The musical group Trio Jazz "Marci Cappelli's Italian Surf Academy" – Marco Cappelli on guitar, Damon Banks double base, Mathias Kuntzli percussion – presented a retrospective of music in Italian cinema from the sixties and seventies...

In the adjacent rooms more tastings: the tempting Nutella Ferrero, Cesare Casella with his cut meats and the abundance of De Cecco pasta with red or green sauce. Tomato and pesto in big containers brimming with 'penne rigate'. All exceptionally good.

We go home with the sensation of having been to a party. A nice feeling that gives hope and that recognizes, also on behalf of the organizers, the desire to celebrate our Country's best achievements, without any rhetoric.

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