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IN & AROUND NAPLES - ITALY

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N° 76 - NOVEMBER 2020

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THIS MONTH
WELCOME TO NAPOLI, ITALY

DISCOVER the **MY COUNTRY**
NOVEMBER 2020 edition

THIS MONTH our monthly selection of top exhibitions has been momentarily suspended due to Covid19 precautions and current museum closures. But, we will be celebrating *Remembrance Day* - a date to remember - and heading for hope with some interesting stories arriving to *Gianni Rodari* - who would have been 100 years old this year. Take a look at the fascinating territory of the *Phlegraean Fields* and visit the mysterious lake *Avernus* - **Lago d'Averno**, perfect for a walk in the fresh air.



MY TASTE OF NAPLES P. 10-11

MY TASTE OF NAPLES is back again with some Autumn delights - and the great combination of *Vino Novello* wines together with *caldarroste* roasted chestnuts. Last but not least **MY LUCKY TRADITIONS** presents some interesting facts and curiosities about *O'Curniciell* - the lucky red horn... **So, Buon Viaggio buon appetito, buona fortuna!**



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REMEMBRANCE DAY 2020 the date and events affected by the Covid pandemic

So **Remembrance Day/Remembrance Sunday** will be slightly different this year - due to the general emergency situation. Usually this November date is powered by an army of volunteers working around-the-clock to celebrate veterans, serving troops, families and the younger generations - to unite in appreciation for the fallen who fought during the two world wars. Obviously as with many things, the 102nd Anniversary of the armistice which finally ended the First World War will be *"somewhat different this year"* according to the Veterans minister *Mercer*. The traditional *Cenotaph* service will take place this year as usual at 11 am but will be closed to the public - for the first time in its century-long history.

Mel Waters, chief executive of military charity **Help for Heroes**, said: *"Remembrance is an important time to remember the fallen, but also to remind the nation that many veterans are living with illness or injury and continue to need support. We are sorry to hear that the annual Cenotaph event isn't going ahead, but the safety of participants must be priority."*

The celebrations

The celebration known as **Remembrance Sunday** takes place on the second Sunday of November - closest to the 11th - as the guns of *WWI* fell silent on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918 - exactly when the *Armistice* was signed - marking the end of years of sufferance. From the official **Armistice Day** celebrations held at *Buckingham Palace* in 1919 this date is celebrated throughout all nations of the Commonwealth together with many nations marking the anniversary as a day of memorial. Every year in **November**, the nation marks the wars that have scarred our past and the bravery of the men and women who fought them. *Remembrance Sunday* and *Armistice Day*, which fall on **Sunday November 8th** and **Wednesday November 11th 2020** this year, offer us all a chance to remember not just those who fought, but what they fought for.

The main commemorative events

Remembrance Day is celebrated annually on **November 11th**. This year, **Armistice Day** falls on a Wednesday. It is not to be confused with **Remembrance Sunday** which always falls on the second Sunday in November.

The **Festival of Remembrance**, traditionally held at the *Royal Albert Hall* and attended by the Queen and her family, will not go ahead in its usual format due to the current Covid-19 restrictions and social distancing guidelines.

This year, the **Royal British Legion**, together with the BBC, is creating a pre-recorded programme that will be broadcast on BBC One on Saturday November 7. Staff, volunteers and members of the public will not be able to attend the filming of the event. The *National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph* usually takes place on **Remembrance Sunday**. This year, only members of the Royal family, international leaders and armed forces veterans will be allowed to attend the service. In line with the latest Covid-19 rules, the annual *Remembrance Sunday March Past the Cenotaph*, which usually sees up to 10,000 people take part, has been cancelled. Instead, the *Royal British Legion* is encouraging people to mark the day at home by watching the service on TV and observing the two-minute silence at home or on their doorsteps.

Each year, **November 11th** is also marked around the world. After the Second World War, many countries changed the name of the day from *Armistice Day* to *Remembrance Day*, while the US chose to call it *Veterans Day* and made the day a federal holiday. **Veterans Day** is a tribute to military veterans who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Not to be confused with *Memorial Day* that honours those who died in service, *Veterans Day* honours all military veterans including those still with us today. (cont. on page 5)



REMEMBRANCE DAY 2020 the two-minute silence - why we wear poppies

The annual march

(cont. from page 4) Bob Gamble, assistant director for commemorative events for the Royal British Legion, said: "The decision not to proceed with the annual march past the Cenotaph has been taken by the Government based on expert advice to protect the health and wellbeing of all those who would have been travelling to and participating in the event.

"Whilst it is deeply disappointing that the march will not be taking place this year, we can all still play a part in ensuring we mark the occasion appropriately and pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of our armed forces on Remembrance Sunday.

"We are encouraging people across the country to participate in their own personal moment of remembrance, whether that be watching the service on television or pausing for the two-minute silence."

Why we wear poppies

In the spring of 1915, shortly after losing a friend Lieutenant Alexis Helmer in the Second Battle of Ypres, Canadian doctor Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae was inspired by the sight of poppies growing in battle-scarred fields to write the now famous poem In Flanders Fields. His poem moved American teacher Moina Michael who began making and selling silk poppies to friends to raise money for the ex-service community. Before long, poppies made their way to the UK and became the symbol of the Royal British Legion when it was formed in 1921. The first ever 'Poppy Appeal' in the UK that same year raised over £106,000 for war veterans. The following year, a poppy factory was set up by Major George Howson MC, giving jobs to disabled former servicemen.

The bright red poppy is regarded as a resilient flower, which managed to flourish despite fields being destroyed by war.

The Legion helps members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families.



Two minutes of silence

The first Remembrance Day in Britain and the Commonwealth was held in 1919. King George V later issued a proclamation calling for a two-minute silence, it said: "All locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead."



Flanders Fields

*In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' Fields...*

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GIANNI RODARI Only in Naples...

SCHOOLTEACHER READS TO PUPILS ON THE STREETS - FROM DAD TO DAB

A local teacher from the **heart of Naples** has started a fantastic new craze - teaching to children directly from the streets and alleys to children (and families) on balconies. Obviously, this is not an easy time for the younger generation and the formation for the future. This idea has also lead to a number of initiatives including reading *Rodari* from the rooftops. *Only in Naples!*



Following the last dark lockdown period, children and students are back once again to distance-learning - known here as **DAD** (*Didattica a distanza*), that's sitting in front of computers, tablets and mobile phones. But not with **DAB** (*Didattica ai balconi*) - that's learning from Balconies! So, if children cannot go to school, then school can go to the children. The local teacher *Tonino Stornaiuolo* had this in mind when unable to go to school he went to his students - walking throughout the characteristic alleys of the Spanish Quarters of Naples - *Quartieri Spagnoli*. He chose to read (and explain) who else but *Rodari*. As families, parents (and grand-parents) looked on the lesson turned into a moment of collective joy and instantly became a viral *Facebook* event. *"The current situation is not easy - so, we must show the children that together, many difficulties can be overcome"* commented Mr. Stornaiuolo *"The emotions displayed by the children and the parents' gratitude was overwhelming, but it is I who thank them. The school where I teach follows an innovative approach based on teaching outside of the classroom using alternative teaching forms. As we were working on the author Gianni Rodari to celebrate his 100th birthdate anniversary on October 23rd - the ordinance regarding the Campania region arrived - announcing school closures. I just wanted to do something - not only for them, but also for me, as I did not want to accept once again not seeing the children for months."*

SPERANZA - Gianni Rodari

*Se io avessi una bottegaucchia
fatta di una sola stanza
vorrei mettermi a vendere
sai cosa? La speranza.
"Speranza a buon mercato!"
Per un soldo ne darei
ad un solo cliente
quanto basta per sei.
E alla povera gente
che non ha da campare
darei tutta la mia speranza
senza fargliela pagare*

HOPE - Gianni Rodari

*If I had a little shop
made of a single room
I would like to start selling
you know what? Hope.
"Cheap Hope!"
For just a penny
I'd give one customer
enough for six.
And to the poor people
that have nothing to survive
I would give all of my hope
without making them pay*

So, who was Gianni Rodari? SEE PAGE 7

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DEDICATES RODARI TO ITALY

The poem *"Speranza"* (Hope) written by Gianni Rodari was read at the closure of a UE meeting at Brussels last March. *"Special thoughts go to our European compatriots in Italy, where at the moment they are facing an extremely serious situation,"* commented the EU spokesperson *Erica Mamer* - referring to the coronavirus emergency. The poem *"Speranza"* was then read to end the briefing *"Keeping hope to be here once again tomorrow"* concluded Mamer.



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So, who was Gianni Rodari?

Rodari was a schoolmaster and journalist and may be considered as the greatest 20th-century author of children's literature. He was born on October 23rd in 1920 in *Omegna (Verbania)* and moved to *Gavirate (Varese)* following his father's death in 1929 - where he attended university and obtained a Master's degree to then teach in various elementary schools throughout the *Varese* area.



After enrolling in 1944 to the political communist movement "*PCI*" Partito Comunista Italiano he became a party official and began to direct the weekly publication "*L'Ordine Nuovo*". He continued to work as a journalist and leftist columnist for a great number of newspapers including *L'Unità*, *Paese Sera* and *Pioniere* - before devoting his creativity to writing for children during the 1950's.

Rodari created and composed a number of nursery rhymes, fairy tales, poems, short-stories and novels. His works arrived worldwide after receiving the prestigious *Hans Christian Andersen Prize* - the highest recognition representing children's literature - in 1970.

Gianni Rodari's books have been translated in a number of languages. Many of his works have proven popular in English - including *A Twelfth Night Story* (1970), *A Pie in the Sky* (1971) and *Tales Told by a Machine* (NY 1976). *Rodari* participated in numerous conferences and meetings in schools with pupils, teachers and parents during the Sixties and Seventies, where he collected a series of notes that actually formed the publication in 1973 of "*Grammatica della fantasia*" (Grammar of Fantasy) which became an important point-of-reference for all of those involved in education and literature for children.

Treating children with the serious attention they rightfully deserve but at the same time challenging them with an imaginative use of language and inclusion of "*adult*" social problems seems to have been a priority for *Rodari*.

Gianni Rodari passed away on April 14th 1980, in *Rome* where he had lived since 1950. He is clearly remembered and still positively participates to our children's future - after 100 years.

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MISENO

Dragonara

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Cape Misenum

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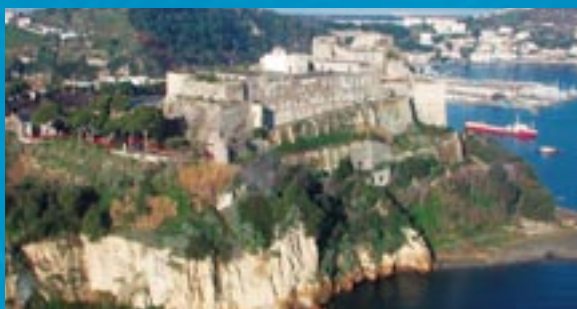
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PHLEGRAEAN FIELDS

CAMPI FLEGREI



Anfiteatro Flavio - Pozzuoli (5)



Castello di Baia/Archeological Museum (11)



view from Capo Miseno to Monte di Procida

MY VISIT CAMPI FLEGREI

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- 2 Parco Sommerso Baia (underwater park)
- 3 Terme di Baia Archeological Park
- 4 Monumental Park of Baia
- 5 Amphitheatre Anfiteatro Flavio
- 6 Macellum - Tempio di Serapide
- 7 Tempio di Nettuno
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NOVELLO WINES *Vino Novello*

SEASONAL DELIGHTS

Like every year, starting from mid-October until the end of November, the so-called Italian “new” wines appear. **Vino Novello** is a fresh, sparkling deep-red coloured wine with purple reflections, commonly confused with young wines or recent vintages, that is - wines that have not yet aged. *Novello* wines follow a production process unlike any other wine with a distinctive feature of production - fermentation by carbonic maceration.

Another great difference between *Novello* and “normal” wines is the low-alcohol content - as whole grapes are fermented and not pressed - therefore limiting the percentage of sugars converted into alcohol content (up to 11%).

Carbonic maceration is a fascinating wine-making technique originally created back in the 1930's by a French researcher called *Flanzy*. Grape fermentation is favoured by the absence of oxygen. This contemporary method was developed throughout the *Beaujolais* wine region of *Burgundy* introducing the renowned wines *vin primeur* and *vin nouveau*.

French directives regarding *Beaujolais nouveau* wines require purification using exclusively the *Garnay* grape variety, carbonic maceration methods and limited dates of sale beginning yearly from the third Thursday of each November. Italian legislations are less restrictive (regarding *Novello* wines) limiting a minimum 30% for grapes subjected to carbonic maceration with a vast selection of grape varieties and usually on the market from November 6th.

The rapid fermentation using this technique ranges from at least 10 and up to 20 days - so different from classic methods that can last for months. Whilst the *French Beaujolais* requires carbonic maceration using 100% of the grapes, the Italian *Novello* can be produced by using this technique for at least 40% - using traditional fermentation methods for the remainder.

Novello Wines in Campania

So, what is Vino Novello?

Characteristics, techniques and combinations



To preserve the fresh aromas of *Novello* wine it is advisable to store in a dark place, ideally at a constant temperature of 20°C. So, in the absence of a basement cellar - a wine cooler would be perfect - as keeping this wine in the fridge or bottle rack may compromise the quality due to sudden changes in light and temperature. *Novello* wines are best consumed within six-months of being placed on the market as this wine is also tannin-free.

Combinations: *Novello* wines are a perfect match with mushrooms, artichokes and of course roast chestnuts commonly known here as “**Caldarroste**”... (Continued on page 11)



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ROASTED CHESTNUTS *Castagne - Caldarroste*

QUALITY FRUITS - CAMPANIA REGION

The *Campania* region is not only rich in art and archaeology but offers a great range of certified agricultural products. Following last month's TASTE OF NAPLES - **Local Fruit and Vegetables** (Frutta e Ortaggi) the month of **November** and the Autumn season also includes a fantastic selection of fruit - *just waiting to be discovered!*



pictured below: The oldest and largest chestnut tree in the world **The Hundred Horse Chestnut** - Illustrated left (1776-1779 Jean-Pierre Houël) and pictured right - estimated aged 2000 to 4000 years eastern Sicily - near Mount Etna - measured 58 metre diameter in 1770



SEASONAL DELIGHTS

The provinces of *Avellino* and *Benevento* are renowned for the chestnut varieties: *Castagna di Montella* and the *Castagna di Serino*. Other typical varieties include the *Castagna del prete* (traditionally linked to the Christmas season), *Castagna di Acerno* and *Marrone di Roccadaspide*.

The **Castagna di Montella IGP** was the first agricultural product to have been assigned the **DOC** label back in 1987 from the *Italian Ministry of Agriculture* which was updated nine years later with the **IGP** protected geographical indication label. The vast areas of cultivation run throughout the territories of *Montella*, *Bagnoli Irpino*, *Cassano Irpino*, *Nusco*, *Volturara Irpina* and *Monte-Marano*.

Both the **Montella** and **del prete** varieties are commercially appreciated and exported abroad, including the canning industries of the *United States* and *Canada*.

The popular **del prete** version are prepared by with a drying process using unshelled chestnuts placed on wooden structures over a burning chestnut-wood - fire for fifteen days. The dried chestnuts are then oven-toasted then watered. Once shelled - these chestnuts acquire a characteristic caramel taste.

The chestnut **Castagna di Serino** has antique origins present in scripts written by *Benedettini* monks from the abbey situated in *Cava dei Tirreni*. The denomination *Castagna di Serino* includes two local cultivations: the "*Montemarano*" also named "*Santimango*" or "*Marrone di Avellino*" considered as one of the best Italian varieties and the "*Verdole*". Harvest starts mid-October - over half of the produce is destined to the international market whilst the remaining arrives to the canning industries and is sold as fresh. **November** is **THE** month to buy fresh castagne by the kilo and the bagged *del prete* version - available throughout the *Campania* region in most fruit stalls, markets, salumerie and supermarkets.

So, how about some piping hot *caldarroste* roasted chestnuts, with a bottle of red wine?

Caldarroste are prized throughout the *Mediterranean* and may be considered as one of the best autumn season street-foods as well as forming an array of *Sagre* - feasts, that celebrate the *castagna* in every type of dish. Choose from jams, liqueurs, flour, pasta-dishes and of course the roasted chestnuts - *caldarroste*. Traditional chestnuts are roasted over an open-fire in a large metal pan with holes, however they can also roast in the oven.

HOW - Soak the chestnuts in water for 2 to 3 hours before preparation. Preheat the oven to at least 200°C/400°F. Drain the chestnuts then with a sharp-knife cut horizontally through the outer shell, slicing from one-side to the other on the rounded side. Cover a baking tray with oven-paper (*carta da forno*) and place the chestnuts in a single layer. Oven-bake until the chestnuts swell to open and the colour results brown to nearly charred. Let cool slightly then peel the outer shell off and **Buon Appetito!**



◀TRADITIONS ◀SYMBOLS ◀SUPERSTITIONS ◀LUCK

The lucky horn - *O'curniciell* - amulet of Naples

"tuosto, stuorto e cu 'a punta"

Napoli is a magical city full of miracles, mysteries and superstitions - many of which have legends to tell from hundreds of years ago. From Saints to throwing salt over your shoulder - if you have been to *Naples* then you must have seen the *red horn* somewhere.

So, what's it all about?

THE ORIGINS

The red horn - commonly known as **o'curniciell** - **corniciello** or simply **cornio** - resembles a hot pepper and is an important symbol and renowned amulet of Naples - regarding both tradition and superstition - with antique origins dating back to the Middle Ages when primitives associated the physical power of animals with the emblematic size of their horns... and to when populations of hunters hang bloody horns of large prey at the entrance of their homes to ward off all enemies...

Well, there's just a few of many explanations!

Various phallic symbols, very close in shape to the famous "**curniciello**" have also been discovered during various archaeological excavations of *Pompeii* and *Ercolano (Herculaneum)*. Although many lucky horn charms and trinkets were made of silver and terracotta, coral was and may be considered as the material believed to withhold powers strong enough to defeat any evil influences.... Many so-called lucky-charms have been present throughout history - including horseshoes, found not only in original iron forms but also made of terracotta and silver - dating from Roman times - and how about hanging scissors?

(Continued on page 9)



"Being superstitious is ignorant but not being so is bad luck"

"Essere superstiziosi è da ignoranti, ma non esserlo porta male" - Eduardo De Filippo

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TRADITIONS SYMBOLS SUPERSTITIONS LUCK

The lucky horn - *O'curniciell* - amulet of Naples



The “**corno**” form of this artisanal talisman made fortune for many craftsmen and jewellers dating back to the ancient Greeks - who used them to represent and protect fertility and commonly as power and protection against evil.

The “**Neapolitan horn**” seems to have been an ally of the Neapolitan population for centuries now, guarding against misfortune and negativity. The local artisans of the *O'curniciell* were already present in Naples BC - from generations ago to today.

San Gregorio Armeno is commonly called *Christmas Alley* by tourists and hosts an array of craftsmen and colourful workshops that are renowned worldwide for the intricate nativity scenes and cribs known as “*presepe*”. This popular zone is alive throughout the year and not only during the Christmas season - situated in the HEART OF NAPLES - *Centro Storico* - *Decumani* and frequently highlighted over the years by *My Country magazine*.



THE CHARACTERISTICS

The basic characteristics of *O'curniciell*:

- < this “*lucky charm*” must be rigorously hand-made - to confer beneficial powers from the human touch
- < the so-called “*evil-eye*” (*malocchio*) will be kept at bay only when received as a gift
- < the twisted talisman must represent a deep-red colour and unmistakable shape - “**tuosto, stuorto e cu 'a punta**” - rigido, storto e con la punta - that's literally: hard, crooked and pointed
- < *Please note*: if the horn accidentally breaks - then don't worry - it means that it has fulfilled its role to protect you!



So, **BUONA FORTUNA! GOOD LUCK!...**

My Country magazine is distributed free-of-charge throughout Naples every month. See page 3 for the main pick-up points





Campi Flegrei literally means “*Burning Fields*”, an ancient name given to the area that today includes the towns of *Pozzuoli, Bacoli, Baia, Monte di Procida* and *Quarto*, situated just a few kilometres distance from central *Naples, Italy*.

Throughout this fascinating territory the force of nature combines the beauty of its sea and lakes, to the mysterious charm of this volcanic land. The *Phlegraean* zone is full of valuable and intricate evidence regarding past *Greek* and *Roman* traditions. The lakes of **Miseno, Averno, Fusaro, Lucrino** and **Patria** still characterize today the *Phlegraean-Domitian* coastline parting from the west of *Naples* and reaching the “*Volturno*” river’s mouth. The use of the **Phlegraean lakes** in *Roman* times as reservoirs was quite common, cultivating mussels and fish produce. The exploitation of the precious environmental resources gave life to sumptuous banquets that were held regularly in luxurious and elegant villas present throughout the territory.

visit lago d’averno

LAGO D’AVERNO - Lake Avernus took its name four-thousand years ago from a dark and deep chasm which, according to past *Greek* and *Roman* myths had access to the so-called “*Underworld*”, mysteriously connected to verses written by the famous poet *Virgilio* - “*Ingresso agli Inferi e Omero*”.

Virgilio’s poetry in the sixth book relates to this lake as an entrance to the mystical world through a deep rocky cave (*Sibilla*) protected by a black lake surrounded by looming woods over which no bird could fly as the deadly fumes rose to the sky.

The term **Avernus** actually derives from the Greek *Aornon* - “*luogo senza uccelli*” literally “*place without birds*” as legendary carbon dioxide fumes and sulphurous gases were thought to have excluded any form of animal wildlife.

Don’t miss the **Tempio di Apollo**, situated on the Western shore of the lake - a semi-circular ruin from the *Roman* era. Commonly known as a Temple dedicated to the cult of *Apollo*, Historians believe that these ruins are actually the remains of a thermal spa. The diameter of the dome reaches 38 metres making it one of the most impressive thermal complexes deriving from the imperial ages. Nature-lovers who visit this lake may be lucky enough to meet a settled community of coots, ducks, waterfowl, freshwater species and turtles which have been released into the lake, as well as snakes, frogs and freshwater shrimps. Today, *Lago d’Averno* proves to be a perfect destination not only for environmentalists but also for families with their dogs, Workshops, Agriturismo-restaurants, bike-riding, a simple walk, hiking and jogging - suitable for all ages.



SEE PAGES 8-9 FOR A VIEW
OF THE PHLEGRAEAN FIELDS - CAMPI FLEGREI

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BORBONIQUEA

Napoli



BorboniQua - a Neapolitan story

BorboniQua was created after forty years of worldwide experience regarding the clothing and footwear industries - with a background of collaborations alongside the most leading International established brands. Over the years, the main activities have involved both the promotion and placement of renowned English, American and French footwear companies towards the Italian market. It is due to this long experience and its steady growth that helped to strengthen the sheer desire to directly produce collections entirely *Made in Italy*; and more precisely - quality craftsmanship deriving from the city of *Naples* - aiming for all major International markets.

And so, **BorboniQua** was born, a brand with traditionally strong territorial roots from the city of **Naples** - the symbol of elegance

The evident Italian taste and expertise concerning tailoring and footwear craftsmanship was and is still today considered world wide as the most sought after, with centuries of creatively dressing the highest social and noble classes arriving to such an admirable standard as to become a nominated symbol and pure expression of good taste.

BorboniQua has chosen to unite and concentrate upon the development of professional experiences through an accurate selection of local quality craftsmanship situated throughout the territory of Naples.

BorboniQua is a top-quality brand emerging from a magnificent cultural and artistic history - in which the symbol of traditional elegance continues to reign still today.

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