



ITALY 2010: QUALITY & LIFESTYLE
Something Different this Year! More than Ever Before!

Italy 2010: Quality & Lifestyle broke new ground with a wide array of events throughout June, including top class musical performances and an Italian theatre production, which was a first for Hong Kong audiences.

Italy 2010: Quality & Lifestyle was made possible by our **airline sponsor Lufthansa/Swiss Air**, **hotel sponsor InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong** and the individual event sponsors. In addition, we would like to mention Stacey Rodda of RTHK Radio 4 and Phil Whelan of Radio 3 who interviewed on radio a series of Italy 2010 performers and a Chamber representative so as to allow listeners to hear about all aspects of this year's event. A Phil Whelan interview was even included in the audio of the theatre production!

As usual Italy: Quality & Lifestyle began with **the Italian Consulate General's Italian National Day Reception on 2nd June**. The reception was held again at the Central Plaza Sky Lobby with Italian restaurants and food and beverage providers serving up every kind of Italian delicacy from pizza to espresso coffee to gelato. Our Chamber's President, Mr. Fabio De Rosa and Vice President, Ms. Susan Lavender, received honorary titles from the Italian state (Cavaliere dell'ordine della Stella della Solidarietà Italiana), presented by the Italian Consul General of Italy in Hong Kong, Ms. Alessandra Schiavo, at the National Day reception. Mr. Bruno Feltracco, President of the Comitato della Dante Alighieri di Hong Kong, also received the same title.

THE ITALIAN FILM FESTIVAL 2010: "ITALIAN LADIES"

Thanks to the Italian Consulate General for obtaining the films and to our sponsor, **Caben Asia Pacific Ltd** for making the event possible, the Italian Film Festival of Hong Kong was very special this year. Its theme was: "*Italian Ladies*", as it presented a selection of classic Italian films spanning 1953 to 1998 highlighting outstanding and beautiful Italian actresses, including Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, Claudia Cardinale, Laura Betti and Asia Argento. The *Italian Ladies* film collection was able to show the diversity of genres that have been very successfully covered by Italian film makers and directors over the decades following the second world war.

We changed location this year and held the Italian Film Festival at the Hong Kong Arts Centre's Agnès.b CINEMA. This enabled Wanchai's nearby Italian restaurant, La Piazzetta, to serve up authentic Italian snacks, including La Piazzetta's special "farinata" to accompany **CasamiaWines** at the opening night reception on 8th June. The cocktail was packed with people chatting and enjoying this winning food and beverage combination before going in to see the opening night film, "Pane, Amore e Fantasia" starring Vittorio De Sica and Gina Lollobrigida. The audience were charmed by this positive and heart warming film.



In sharp contrast, but interesting in its own right, was PierPaolo Pasolini's mind wrenching film *Teorema*, starring Laura Betti and the popular British actor of the sixties, Terrance Stamp. Quite different again was "Il Fantasma dell'Opera" (The Phantom of the Opera), a horror film based on the original novel by Gaston Leroux.

La Piazzetta also offered a special price set dinner menu for holders of Italian Film Festival tickets on the night of each film so movie buffs were able to catch a quick bite before the film or relax over a leisurely full dinner afterwards at La Piazzetta.

ITALIAN MUSIC: from cello to violin to saxophone!

The world's number one cellist and contemporary cello music composer, **Giovanni Sollima**, performed his Hong Kong debut concert as part of Italy 2010 at City Hall Concert Hall on 11th June. This concert was presented jointly with City Chamber Orchestra and sponsored by **Ferrero Asia Ltd, Stones International Limited and Sopaf Asia**. Jean Thorel, the City Chamber Orchestra's Chief Conductor, gave a pre-concert talk.

Sollima's brilliance and originality literally "brought the house down" as the Time Out Hong Kong review of the concert stated. He played pieces from his spiritual ancestor, Luigi Boccherini, also a cellist and composer, and his own modern compositions, inspired by Boccherini, mixing ethnic blends from various Mediterranean sources. He has been dubbed "*the Jimi Hendrix of the Cello*" for his versatility in modern adaptations as well as classical cello recitals. As part of his encore performance he treated the audience to Jimi Hendrix's *Sugar!* It has been said that Sollima can play the cello as if it were a guitar. Indeed he can! The audience would simply not let him go.

We should add that those of us who met Giovanni Sollima at the lunch hosted by Intercontinental Grand Stamford on the eve of his concert or at the Chinese-Italian wine pairing dinner held at the Shanghai Garden Restaurant after the concert, can testify to how charming he is and interesting to talk to. Sollima is a true innovator. He told us of how he played in a concert hall shaped like a cello and had to make provision for the sound to escape so that it was not trapped by being surrounded by the same shape as the instrument itself! He told us about his experiments playing a cello made of ice on a mountain top in the Alps and a cello sculpted from stone in his own native Sicily. He explained that he enjoys exploring different materials for cellos and the various diverse sounds they each make. His cello is his constant companion. Naturally, it had to have its own seat on the plane next to him. More bizarre, however, is the fact that when he checked into his hotel he was also asked if two rooms were required!

The Violin concert "Paganini's Gut" was performed by Italian Hong Kong resident violinist, Andrea Zanchetta on 19th June at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts Concert Hall. This concert was also presented jointly with City Chamber Orchestra. It was sponsored by **OM LOG (Asia) Ltd**.



By now, those of you who did not attend the concert, may be wondering what is the meaning of Paganini's Gut. Well, it refers to the violin strings used by Mr. Zanchetta for the concert. In 2001 in Genoa, Italy an envelope containing old gut strings and bearing the handwritten note "Antiche corde del Violino di Nicolò Paganini" was discovered inside Paganini's violin case. Expert Italian gut string maker, Mimmo Peruffo, produced identical copies of this original set of strings which Paganini used on his violin. It is these strings which Andrea Zanchetta used for the concert to bring us closer to the dramatically different sound made by the type of strings which Paganini himself used.

Before the concert Andrea Zanchetta gave a talk on Paganini and the gut strings. He was relaxed, informative and very interesting to listen to. We learnt about the fascinating life of Paganini, the unlucky, sickly but brilliant violinist and composer. His ill-health stemmed from the pressure his father placed on him to practise his music. If his father was not satisfied with his son's practice, he would send Paganini to bed without food as punishment. Napoleon's sister Elisa (known as Marianna) fell in love with him but Paganini's later fame caused him to attract envy and vindictiveness from others. It was even suggested that he played so sweetly because his violin strings were made from the guts of his dead lover!

During the concert Andrea Zanchetta played the works of Tartini and Albioni in addition to Paganini. We were also treated to Domenico Zipoli's *Elevazione*, a duet played by Oboist and City Chamber Orchestra Artistic Director, Leanne Nicholls with the Orchestra's principal cellist Artem Konstantinov, accompanied by Robert Langston on organ.

The sounds of Zanchetta's gut strings were sublime and at the end of the concert the audience clearly wanted more, BUT: "*Paganini non ripete!*" (Paganini does not repeat) and so we had to be content with what we had already heard!

After the concert Mr. Zanchetta's following of devoted young students inundated him with flowers, gifts and details of their music exam results!

For something completely different, by popular demand, the Fulvio Albano Trio from the Jazz Club Torino returned to Hong Kong after their successful concerts as part of Italy 2009. With Fulvio Albano on saxophone, Gianluca Tagliazucchi on piano and Paolo Benedettini on double bass, the Trio performed two concerts at the InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong on Friday June 4th and Sunday June 6th. The Friday night concert was preceded by a cocktail reception and there was also the possibility of combining the concert with a pre-concert dinner at the hotel's *The Mistral* Italian restaurant. The Sunday matinee concert was performed at The Mistral during a special Sunday Brunch. It provided an ideal setting for families and friends to enjoy a relaxed Sunday brunch, with a choice of an amazing array of buffet selections, while listening to some truly excellent Italian jazz!



The Italian Jazz Festival was rounded off by a concert at the Venetian in Macao on the following Monday!

ITALIAN THEATRE

For the first time this year, thanks to our sponsor, **Fedrigoni Asia Ltd**, we included an Italian theatre production as part of Italy:Quality & Lifestyle: **Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author**, as adapted in English by Rupert Goold and Ben Power for their 2008 Chichester Festival production. We also thank **Unicredit, Crown Worldwide Group, Intesa Sanpaolo, Camelot** and **La Piazzetta** for their support of this event. The production was an outstanding success and contributed a giant step forward in Hong Kong's theatre scene. Our production was only the *second time world-wide* that the Goold and Power version of this play has been performed and it also boasts the accomplishment of having successfully brought to Hong Kong a piece of European 20th century, *Theatre of the Absurd*. It is clear that Hong Kong was ready for this and thoroughly appreciated since there was an almost full theatre every night and also during the two matinees.

Please see our separate article dedicated to the Pirandello play which gives some insight into how the idea came about to stage a play, how the production developed, the people involved in it and the action in the play itself.

FOOD, FOOD, FOOD!

Also back by popular demand from last year was the **"A Tavola" Italian Food Festival**. Throughout the month of June "A Tavola" featured Italian chefs creating special menus in their restaurants incorporating their own particular regional Italian cuisine as part of a fixed price complete meal. Italy has a wide variety of different regional cuisines and this promotion gave Hong Kongers a chance to sample a good selection of these dishes prepared by authentic Italian chefs from the regions where the dishes originate.

Special cards were distributed throughout Hong Kong displaying the logos of the participating restaurants, the regional cuisine they were preparing and photos of the individual chefs. The variety of regional cuisines was amazing, ranging from Veneto in the north to Sicily in the south, as you can see from the list below:

- ANGELINI: CAMPANIA Chef Vittorio Lucariello
- DIVINO: VENETO Chef Michele Senigaglia
- DOMANI: MARCHE Chef Michele Bernacchia
- GAIA: LAZIO Chef Paolo Monti
- GOCCIA: PIEMONTE Chef Fabrizio Napolitano
- GRISSINI: LIGURIA Chef Marco Torre
- ISOLA: PUGLIA Chef Gianni Caprioli
- JOIA: EMILIA ROMAGNA Chef Alessandro Angelini
- LA BAITA: FRIULI, VENEZIA GIULIA Chef Francesco Bettoli
- NICHOLINI'S: UMBRIA Chef Michele Rodelli





- OSTERIA: SARDEGNA Chef Michele Camolei
- THE MISTRAL: SICILIA Chef Claudio Dieli
- VA BENE: LOMBARDIA Chef Paolo Federici
- W52: ABRUZZO Chef Francesco Berardinelli
- ZEFFIRINO: TOSCANA Chef Tamara Mattii/Marco Torregrossa.

The **ALFA ROMEO 100th Anniversary** was celebrated jointly with the Alfa Romeo Owners Club Hong Kong on 13th June. An exhibition of various sumptuous Alfa Romeo cars was on show at the entrance to the W Hotel from 1pm to sunset after which a delicious dinner was prepared at the Kitchen Restaurant of the W Hotel.

Tell us what type of events you would like to sponsor as part of Italy 2011:Quality & Lifestyle! We want to choose the events that you want to sponsor!

