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IL CAVALIERE

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF THE ITALIAN LEGIONS OF MERIT

SPOTLIGHT ON ITALIAN EXCELLENCE AT THE FORTY-NINTH ASILM GALA

Over three hundred members of the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit, distinguished American and Italian officials and friends of the Society came together February 19, 2015, for the most important ASILM event of the year, the 49th Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony. Within the luxurious Grand Ballroom of The Pierre Hotel, the Gala celebrated the Society's members and Italian excellence with an elegant reception, gourmet dinner prepared by Le Cirque, a variety of exceptional wines donated by top Italian producers, a successful auction of 1985 vintage Italian wines, special performances by TV and music icon Jo Squillo and much more.

The evening honored some of the best and most distinguished leaders of Italian excellence: Comm. Mario Andretti, the world-champion race car driver; Cav. del Lavoro, Marchese Piero Antinori, President of Marchesi Antinori; Dr. Joseph Bertino, Chief Scientific Officer of Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey; Uff.

Giovanni Mantovani, Director General of Veronafiere; Uff. Hon. Eugene Nardelli, Counsel of Boies, Schiller & Flexner and former Associate Justice of the NY Supreme Court; Cav. Joseph Perella, Founding Partner and Chairman of Perella Weinberg Partners; Count Lucio Tasca, President of Tasca d'Almerita; and Cav. del Lavoro Gianni Zonin, Chairman of Zonin 1821.

Recognizing the great importance of this event, the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella and the New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio sent congratulatory messages for the occasion.

Many important Italian officials were present, including: Min. Natalia Quintavalle, Consul General of Italy; Dott. Roberto Frangione, Vice Consul General; Dott. Sabato (Dino) Sorrentino, Deputy Consul; Dott.ssa Isabella Periotto, Deputy Consul; Mr. Diego Maggio, President of Paladini dei Vini di Sicilia; Dott.

Eugenio Magnani, Director of ENIT; Mr. Marco Martella, U.S. Representative at the Bank of Italy; Hon. Patrizia Bisinella,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



Left (Front Row, L to R): Ms. Audrey Herd-Smith (for Cav. del Lavoro, Marchese Piero Antinori), Dr. Joseph Bertino, Cav. Joseph Perella, Uff. Hon. Eugene Nardelli; (Back Row, L to R): Cav. del Lavoro Gianni Zonin, Count Lucio Tasca, Uff. Giovanni Mantovani, Comm. Mario Andretti and Cav. di Gran Croce, Dr. Lucio Caputo, at the 49th ASILM Gala Dinner Dance and Awards Ceremony at The Pierre Hotel in New York City on February 19, 2015.



Cav. di Gran Croce, Hon. Dominic Massaro and Mrs. Frances Massaro arrive for the reception in the Garden Foyer.



Cav. Francesco De Angelis and Mrs. Belen De Angelis show their support for the Society.



(L to R): Frank Desiderio, Esq., Mrs. Donna Genova and Cav. Angelo Genova at the Gala.



(L to R): Mrs. Egidiana Maccioni, Comm. Sirio Maccioni, Mrs. Mary Ann Mattone and Cav. Joseph Mattone, Sr., Esq.



(L to R): Cav. Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, Mr. Frank Bisignano, Msgr. Jamie Gigantiello, Msgr. Ronald Marino and Msgr. Hilary Franco at the ASILM Gala reception.



(L to R): Dr. Pascal De Caprariis, Dr. Francesca Verga, and Comm. Stefano Acunto pose together at the reception.



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(L to R): Cav. di Gran Croce Lawrence Auriana, Min. Natalia Quintavalle and Comm. Mario Andretti at the reception.



Mrs. Loyse Paradiso and Cav. Berardo Paradiso in the Garden Foyer.



Uff. Joseph Sciamè poses with Ms. Maria Teresa Cometto during the event.



ASILM members and their guests socialize over sparkling wine during the reception at The Pierre Hotel.



(L to R): Cav. del Lavoro Gianni Zonin, Ms. Alessandra Rotondi, Mr. Francesco Belcaro, Mrs. Silvana Zonin and Mr. Francesco Zonin.



Mrs. Christina Grassi and Comm. Prof. Marco Grassi enter the elegant Garden Foyer.



(L to R): Board of ASILM: Comm. Salvatore Salibello, Uff. Hon. Marie Garibaldi, Mr. Frank Desiderio, Gr. Uff. RoseMarie Gallina-Santangelo and Cav. di Gran Croce, Hon. Dominic Massaro.



Friends of the ASILM, Mr. Robert and Mrs. Karen Tanzola, arrive at the hotel.



Ms. Laura Savini made the evening even more memorable as Toastmaster.



(Spotlight on Italian Excellence at the Forty-Ninth ASILM Gala - continued from page 1)

Senator of the Italian Republic; and Hon. Flavio Tosi, Mayor of Verona.

Notable members of the Italian community in the U.S. in attendance were: Comm. Stefano Acunto; Cav. di Gran Croce Lawrence Auriana; Cav. Gilda Rorro Baldassari; Uff. Thomas Bellavia; Mr. Frank Bisignano; Cav. Vivian Cardia; Cav. Dr. Ralph DeFronzo; Frank Desiderio, Esq.; Uff. Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio; Gr. Uff. RoseMarie Gallina-Santangelo; Uff. Hon. Marie Garibaldi; Uff. Prof. Marco Grassi; Mr. Lawrence Inserra; Cav. di Gran Croce, Hon. Dominic Massaro; Cav. Joseph Mattone, Sr.; Uff. Hon. Eugene Nardelli; Cav. Berardo Paradiso; Comm. George Pavia, Esq.; Comm. Salvatore Rotella; Comm. Salvatore Salibello; Uff. Joseph Sciame; Comm. Hon. Vincent Tese; Cav. Angelo Vivolo, and many others.

Distinguished friends of ASILM also joined in the celebration: Dr. Paolo Andreoli, B.ssa Sheri de Borchgrave, Cav. Francesco De Angelis, Ms. Alessandra Rotondi and Dr. Francesca Verga, as well as the foremost press representatives, including Alessandro Torcoli of Civiltà' del Bere, Elena Cardinali of L' Arena di Verona and Carlo Alberto Delaini of the Veronafiore Press Office.

In addition to granting high patronage, the new President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella, in a personal message to ASILM President Cav. di Gran Croce, Dr. Lucio Caputo, expressed his warmest greetings and wishes for the greatest success to the Society. President Mattarella was elected by the Italian Parliament on January 31, 2015 and was sworn in on February 3rd, succeeding Hon. Giorgio Napolitano.

The president's generous words of appreciation for the Society produced an enthusiastic atmosphere in the Grand Ballroom, offering an excellent kickoff to the evening. Indeed, following the announcement of this letter, ASILM members and their guests joined in a toast to President Mattarella and to President Barack Obama.

Guests then stood for the National Anthems of the United States and of Italy, both of which were performed by Panorama Music under the direction of Mr. Rino Minetti.

In his formal letter to the Society, Mayor Bill de Blasio, drawing upon his own Italian roots and his appreciation for the Society and its activities, wrote:

"It is a pleasure to welcome everyone to the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit's 49th Annual Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony.

Founded in 1965, the Society is instrumental in uplifting the Italian diaspora and deepening the ties between New York and Italy. Our two great nations may be divided by an ocean, but we are united through a shared sense of pride and an unwavering commitment to our communities. I have always celebrated my Italian roots for shaping my values and inspiring my vision of a brighter and more equitable world.

I often find myself drawing on the many lessons my grandparents taught me, chief among them: how to work hard, how to serve others and how to dream big. As one of hundreds of thousands of proud Italian New Yorkers, I am delighted to seize this occasion to applaud ASILM's tremendous efforts to reward excellence, cultivate community, foster cross-cultural exchange and honor a rich ancestry.

On behalf of the City of New York, congratulations to tonight's honorees. Please accept my best wishes for a wonderful ceremony and continued success."

The newest feature of the Gala Dinner was the charity auction of 1985 vintage wines that raised funds for the ASILM Education Fund, which is dedicated to undergraduate students studying the Italian language. Auctioneer Col. Michael Power from the Manhattan Auction House conducted the auction.

Members of ASILM and their guests were invited to take part in the Society's first benefit auction, and take home some of the most exceptional wines from Italy. Among the rare 1985 vintage bottles were Brunello di Montalcino DOCG Riserva from Biondi Santi; Amarone della Valpolicella DOC from Bolla; Giulio Ferrari, Reserva del Fondatore from Ferrari; and a Tignanello from Marchesi Antinori. Most of the wines on auction were no longer available for retail.

The auction was a huge success, raising more than \$10,000 for the Education Fund. In addition, all proceeds from the Gala were dedicated solely to further ASILM's scholarship fund, adding a more meaningful, long-term impact to this event.

Another key highlight of the evening was the awards ceremony and its impressive line-up of honorees, all of whom have made important achievements in their respective fields and have established themselves as leaders in their professions. ASILM President Lucio Caputo and the Toastmaster of the event, Ms. Laura Savini, led the ceremony and presented the two prestigious awards: the Grand Award of Merit and the Gold Medal for Excellence in Wine. The Grand Award of Merit, ASILM's highest honor, is presented in recognition of individuals whose accomplishments, dedication and leadership have influenced the lives of many. These individu-



als have demonstrated Italian excellence through their contributions to diverse fields, including art, medicine, business, politics and jurisprudence, earning them recognition nationally and internationally, and inspiring countless people.

This year, the Grand Award of Merit honored eight extraordinary leaders in their fields:

Comm. Mario Andretti is considered the best race car driver in the world. He is the only one to win the Daytona 500, the Indy 500 and the Formula One World Championship. He is the four-time Indy Car National Champion and the three-time winner of the 12 Hours of Sebring; and he is the all-time Indy Car lap leader. He is enshrined in 20 Halls of Fame. In addition, he achieved 111 major career victories and 109 pole positions. He was named Driver of the Year in three different decades (the 60s, 70s and 80s) and Driver of the Quarter Century (in the 90s), and was selected by both the media and fans as America's Driver of the Century.

Guests were greeted with a surprise at the entrance of The Pierre Hotel: the car that Mario Andretti had driven when he won the Daytona 500 in 1967. The racing car was generously provided for display by Cav. di Gran Croce Lawrence Auriana. A video documenting Mario Andretti's career played during the Gala reception.

Cav. del Lavoro, Marchese Piero Antinori started working in the family business Marchesi Antinori in 1957, and became its president in 1988. The Marchesi Antinori winery represents over 600 years of traditional and innovative wine production. As president, he has shaped the company over the past quarter-century into one whose wines—including his ingenious invention, the famous Tignanello—are prized by connoisseurs around the world. For more than 30 years, he has combined progressive and original techniques with traditional ones to dramatically improve and redefine winemaking in Italy. Ms. Audrey Herd-Smith, National Business Development Manager for Antinori, accepted the award on his behalf.

Dr. Joseph Bertino is an accomplished leader in the field of medicine. He became the associate director of The Cancer Institute of New Jersey in 2002, and was appointed Chief Scientific Officer in 2004. He was named interim director of the Stem Cell Institute of New Jersey in 2007, has been an American Cancer Society Professor since 1976, and is a University Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology at Rutgers, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He is a world-renowned medical oncologist and researcher who is internationally recognized for his role in finding curative treatments for leukemia and lymphoma.

Uff. Giovanni Mantovani is the Director General of Veronafiere and organizes annually several world-famous exhibitions in Verona, giving great support to different Italian sectors and to the Italian economy. Among his most notable exhibitions is Vinitaly, the world's preeminent wine expo. He is recognized for his many influential activities on behalf of Italian industry. Prior to becoming Director General, he was CEO of Sviluppo Fiere SpA, Vice President of AEFI (Italian Fair Institutions Association) and

President of Consorzio Genius Vini, which promotes the Italian wine industry and agribusinesses internationally.

Uff. Hon. Eugene Nardelli served for eighteen years as a Justice of the New York State Appellate Division, and prior to that served as an elected Justice of the NY State Supreme Court and as a Civil Court Judge. Presently he is Of Counsel to the law firm Boies, Schiller & Flexner. He also serves as a Director of the Interest on Lawyers Accounts Fund of New York State; a member of the Policy Section of the Attorney Disciplinary Committee; a Special Master of the Appellate Division; and a Member of the Continuing Legal Education Board of New York State.

Cav. Joseph Perella is Founding Partner and Chairman of Perella Weinberg Partners. He served as CEO from its formation in 2006 to June 2014. Prior to founding Perella Weinberg Partners, he was a member of Morgan Stanley's Management Committee, and was Chairman of Wasserstein Perella & Co. He held senior positions at First Boston and co-founded its Mergers & Acquisitions Group. His investment banking experience of more than 40 years includes strategic assignments for leading companies in virtually every industry and region of the world. He is an active philanthropist, serving as Director of the American Italian Cancer Foundation, The Atlantic Salmon Federation and the Boys & Girls Harbor, among others.

Count Lucio Tasca d'Almerita, fully committed to the enhancement of Sicilian wine production, is the president of the Conte Tasca d'Almerita Agricola, a family-run wine estate founded in 1830 whose wines are celebrated worldwide for their outstanding value and history. He comes from a line of Tasca counts who introduced many innovations in farming technology and cultivation techniques for wine. Among his many activities, he is the Chairman of the prestigious Grand Cru Committee, Founder and President of "Assovini Sicily," Founder of Istituto Grandi Marchi, President of T Holding, the sole Director of the Capofaro and Wine & Co.

Cav. del Lavoro Gianni Zonin is well-known around the world for his world-class premium wines. After becoming Chairman of Zonin 1821 at the very young age of 29, he grew the family company both in the number and size in Italy and the U.S. through the acquisition of various wine estates. Today, Zonin 1821, one of the leading private winemaking companies in Europe, heads the most important family-owned wine companies in Italy, employing a workforce of 650 and reporting sales of 152 million euros in 2013. In 1976, he established Barbourville Vineyards in the state of Virginia, becoming the first vinifera winegrowers in the Monticello area since Thomas Jefferson.

Each recipient spoke briefly upon accepting their awards, thanking the Society and its members for the recognition, and touching upon the important influence of their Italian heritage on their careers and their lives in general.



Auctioneer Col. Michael Powers conducts the Society's first auction, helping to raise more than \$10,000 for the ASILM Education Fund.



Guests kick off the dinner with a toast.



A group of distinguished guests come together to celebrate the Society, its members and Italian excellence.



Over 300 guests attended the 49th ASILM Gala, making this one of the highest-attended Galas in the Society's history.



Left: ASILM honored nine wine industry leaders with the prestigious Gold Medal for Excellence in Italian Wine. (Front Row, L to R): Mr. Trancredi Biondi Santi, Dr. Lucio Caputo, Mr. Alessandro François (Castello di Querceto), Mr. Fabio Maccari (Mezzacorona); (Back Row, L to R): Alessandro Torcoli (Civiltà' del bere), Mr. Pio Boffa (Pio Cesare), Mr. Cesare Cecchi, Ms. Chiara Lungarotti, Count Lucio Tasca and Cav. del Lavoro Gianni Zonin.



(Continued from page 6)

Previous recipients of the Grand Award of Merit include: Hon. George W. Bush, former President of the United States; H.E. Giorgio Napolitano, former President of the Italian Republic; Dr. Silvia Formenti, Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at NYU Langone Medical Center; Cav. del Lavoro Giovanni Rana, founder of the Rana Group and one of the most prominent food producers in Italy; Hon. Patricia de Stacy Harrison, President and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Comm. Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi, Surgeon-in-Chief at New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center; Cav. di Gran Croce, Hon. Arnaldo Pomodoro, the renowned Italian artist whose works stand prominently throughout the globe; Cav. di Gran Croce, Hon. Antonin Scalia, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States; and Gr. Uff. Hon. Ronald Spogli, former United States Ambassador to the Italian Republic.

For this edition of the ASILM Gala, the Gold Medal for Excellence in Wine was presented to the following notable wine producers: Jacopo Biondi Santi, Pio Boffa (of Pio Cesare), Cesare Cecchi, Alessandro François (of Castello di Querceto), Matteo Lunelli (of Ferrari), Chiara Lungarotti, Luca Rigotti (of Mezzacorona), Lucio Tasca d'Almerita and Gianni Zonin. Alessandro Torcoli, editor of *Civiltà' del bere*, and Ettore Riello, President of Veronafiere, also received the esteemed Gold Medal.

Guests enjoyed a four-course dinner prepared by 2-star Michelin Chef Raphael François, Executive Chef of Le Cirque, and Ashfer Biju, Executive Chef of The Pierre Hotel, under the supervision of restaurateur Comm. Sirio Maccioni. Le Cirque presented its signature dishes: lobster salad with black truffle vinaigrette, seasonal

agnolotti, ossobuco with saffron risotto and gremolata sauce, and, for dessert, its famous crème brûlée.

The dinner was paired with ten high-quality Italian wines, all of which were donated to the Society by the leading producers, who traveled from Italy to personally attend the Gala and meet members of ASILM. The winemakers graciously donated 18 bottles each of their wines, an estimated value of \$12,600, allowing the Society a savings of \$1,000 in the overall cost to The Pierre Hotel.

The mineral and sparkling waters were provided by San Pellegrino. Ferrero Rocher and Rondnoirs were donated by Ferrero USA.

Throughout the evening, the Grand Ballroom was abuzz with energy aided with the help of lively jazz tunes and pop hits performed by Panorama Music, and with the surprise performance by the hugely popular Jo Squillo. Guests rushed onto the dance floor as soon as Ms. Squillo stepped onto the stage and performed some of her most famous hits. Many danced until late in the evening.

In summary, the awards ceremony and the number of distinguished guests of honor, the benefit auction, the exquisite dinner and wines, and the presence of many distinguished ASILM members, VIP and friends of the Society provided a wonderful contribution to an evening that was successful, memorable and exciting. ■

GRAND AWARD OF MERIT CEREMONY



Comm. Mario Andretti, world champion race car driver, accepts the Grand Award of Merit from Dr. Lucio Caputo.



Ms. Audrey Herd-Smith, National Business Development Manager for Antinori, accepts the Grand Award of Merit on behalf of Cav. del Lavoro, Marchese Piero Antinori.



Dr. Joseph Bertino is presented with the Grand Award of Merit in recognition of his accomplishments in the field of medicine.



Uff. Giovanni Mantovani is awarded the Grand Award of Merit for his contributions to Italian industries.



Cav. Joseph Perella accepts the Grand Award of Merit, presented for his many achievements in the financial sector.



Uff. Hon. Eugene Nardelli gives a poignant speech upon receiving the Grand Award of Merit for his outstanding judicial career.



Count Lucio Tasca is recognized with the Grand Award of Merit for promoting Italian excellence in the wine industry.



Cav. del Lavoro Gianni Zonin receives the Grand Award of Merit for his many contributions to the wine sector.



The celebrated Italian TV, fashion and music star, Jo Squillo, put on a surprise performance at the Gala.



Cav. Vivian Cardia and guests dance to the lively tunes of Jo Squillo and Panorama Music.



Guests enjoy the rest of the evening dancing.



The race car driven by Mario Andretti when he won the Daytona 500 in 1967 stood outside the entrance of the hotel. This famous vehicle was generously lent by Cav. di Gran Croce Lawrence Auriana.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE PICTURES OF THE GALA DINNER DANCE AND AWARDS CEREMONY, OR WOULD LIKE TO KEEP UP WITH THE SOCIETY'S NEWEST ACTIVITIES, PLEASE VISIT THE OFFICIAL WEB-SITE OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF THE ITALIAN LEGIONS OF MERIT:

WWW.ASILM.ORG

HI-RESOLUTION IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.



A BRIEF UPDATE ON I CAVALIERI IN AMERICA

In October 2014, members of ASILM were informed that the Society was preparing a book titled *I Cavalieri in America* about the Society and its members. This elegant book will be presented to the President of the Italian Republic, who is also the head of all chivalric orders.

For this special project, one page in color will be dedicated to each personality who received his/her decoration from the Italian Republic and lives in the United States or in Canada.

In addition to outlining the mission of ASILM, the main purpose of *I Cavalieri in America* is to contribute public knowledge about all the Society's members who received their decorations from the Italian Republic for their accomplishments. Ultimately, the book will pay homage to decorated personalities by highlighting their influential roles in American society and in furthering relations between Italy and the U.S.; it will also include information on different chivalric orders, as well as messages from important personalities. The book will be in English.

Unfortunately, the preparation of the book has taken more time than expected and required more people to edit its contents.

In addition, several decorati sent their material in handwritten text that was often not very clear and necessitated close interpretation and re-typing. More time was needed to reduce the biographies that exceeded the 200-word limit and to contact several decorati to obtain better quality pictures in high-resolution.

Despite these problems, the first draft of the book will be ready for its formal presentation to major Italian officials; the presentation will take place during the Society's trip to Italy in June 2015 (please visit www.asilm.org to see how you can attend the trip and participate in this presentation).

For decorati who have not yet participated: although it is past the deadline to have information in the book's first draft that will be formally presented in Italy, it is not too late to have biographies and pictures in the final publication. The Society is accepting entries on a rolling basis.

Please mail the form (available to download from www.asilm.org), a 200-word biography, and a high-resolution picture to: 60 East 42nd Street, Suite 2214, New York, NY 10165; or e-mail: president.asilm@yahoo.com. ■

WANT TO SUBMIT YOUR NEWS?

For members who wish to submit their recent honors or activities to be included in the next issue of *Il Cavaliere*, please do not hesitate to e-mail president.asilm@yahoo.com. This information will also be placed in the "Member News" page of the website of the Society: www.asilm.org, unless otherwise specified.

VIP TRIP TO ITALY

The date of the Society's VIP trip to Italy, specially reserved for ASILM members, is fast approaching.

The trip, which will coincide with the June 2 celebration of the anniversary of the Italian Republic, is divided into two parts: Part One (May 30 - June 5, 2014) will focus on official meetings in Rome and the presentation of the book, *I Cavalieri in America*; and Part Two (June 5 - 10, 2015) will include excursions to Florence, Portofino, Turin and Milan.

Members may choose to participate in one or both parts of this special trip.

As highlighted in the itineraries, both parts of the trip will provide participants with rare opportunities. In Rome, ASILM members will attend special events, including the military parade celebrating Italy's anniversary, and have private meetings with top Italian officials.

Furthermore, in light of the country's celebration of its history and heritage, there will be a significant part dedicated to the formal presentation on the highly-anticipated book, *I Cavalieri in America*, to hundreds of local Italian authorities, members of the diplomatic and consular corps, VIPs, television personali-

ties, journalists and friends of the Society at a lavish reception.

For Part Two of the trip, members will visit cities across the northern region of Italy and end their trip with a visit to EXPO in Milan.

Thanks to sponsorships, the cost of the trip to Rome (Part I) has been contained at around \$2,500 per person (double occupancy), and will maintain the elegant and comfortable standards of the previous trips. The land package for Part I includes hotel room(s), daily breakfasts in the hotel, restaurant meals, and all private coach transportation for transfers and excursions indicated in the program.

Proceeds from this trip are solely used to further the ASILM Education Fund, a scholarship fund created by the Society for undergraduate college students who would like to pursue a degree in Italian language studies.

Reservation forms and the itineraries for Parts One and Two are available on the Events page of the Society's website: www.asilm.org. **Some spots are still available**, but members who wish to participate are encouraged to send their reservation forms as soon as possible. ■

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VIP Trip to Italy

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**To view the itineraries of
Parts I and II of the trip,
please visit the website
of the Society:**

www.asilm.org

Cavalieri who receive honors and other recognitions should send information and a portrait photograph to:

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P.O. Box 789,
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IL CAVALIERE
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