



VOL. 9 NO. 4 DECEMBER 2013

IL CAVALIERE

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

SPECIAL HOLIDAY ISSUE

WISHING ALL OUR MEMBERS A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON

AN ENCHANTING EVENING PLANNED FOR THE 48TH ANNUAL ASILM GALA DINNER DANCE & AWARDS CEREMONY

Now less than three months away, the 48th Annual Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony of the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit is guaranteed to be an evening to remember. The event has been scheduled to take place on Thursday, February 20, 2014, in the Grand Ballroom of The Pierre Hotel in New York City. The Gala will feature an elegant venue, fantastic Italian food and wine, and an awards ceremony, all of which will serve to showcase Italian excellence from all over the world and to provide an unforgettable evening for members of the Society.

It is expected that the ASILM Gala will be held under the high patronage of H.E. Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Italian Republic. This would be the second time that President Napolitano grants this honor, having done so for the first time for the December 2012 ASILM Gala.

To add more a meaningful, long-term impact to this upcoming event, the proceeds from the Gala will go to the ASILM Education Fund.

The ASILM Education Fund is a scholarship that was established by the Society for undergraduate college students who would like to pursue a degree in the Italian language. The scholarship will be granted on the basis of achievement, character, motivation and financial need, and will be subject to renewal throughout the recipient's undergraduate college career.

All payments to the Gala are tax-deductible. (The cost of tickets will remain the same as last year.)

Because of the popularity of last year's new location, the ASILM Gala will again be in the Grand Ballroom of The Pierre Hotel. The five-star hotel's prime location across from Central Park is just one of the many features that distinguish The Pierre from other fashionable hotels in New York City. The splendid interior of its Grand Ballroom is warm, inviting, stunning and unique, all at once. The Society received extensive and positive feedback about The Pierre Hotel, as well as with regard to the February date.

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The Pierre Hotel will once again be the venue for the ASILM Gala. Its elegant interior and perfect location make it one of the most sought-after event spaces in New York City.





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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.



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A FANTASTIC TRIP TO PIEDMONT AWAITS YOU

JUNE 21 - 29, 2014



A view of the magical city of Turin, the capital of Piedmont.

Anticipation is mounting for the forthcoming trip to the picturesque region of Piedmont, Italy, from Saturday, June 21, to Sunday, June 29, 2014. ASILM members from across the United States will venture to Turin, Italy, to take part in the third exciting trip organized by the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit.

Turin, the capital of Piedmont and the fourth-largest city in Italy, will be the temporary home for the ASILM delegation during its time in Piedmont. The city is the perfect setting for the group, as it is brimming with rich Italian history as the first capital of unified Italy, in 1861, and the former residence of Italy's royal family, the House of Savoy. Also of interest is Turin's status as a major center for industry, commerce and trade.

Turin's streets feature numerous sites, historic bars and cafes, contemporary art installations and memorable piazzas and buildings, many of which were designed in the baroque, rococo, neo-classical and Art Nouveau styles. A

large portion of Turin's piazzas, castles, gardens and palaces (i.e., Palazzo Madama) were erected in the 16th and 18th centuries, following the shift of the capital of the Duchy of Savoy (later Kingdom of Sardinia) from Chambery (later France) to Turin as a result of urban expansion.

During their stay in Turin, members of the delegation will reside in one of the most luxurious hotels in Turin, the Grand Hotel Sitea. This four-star hotel is conveniently situated in the center of the city, and is surrounded by many of the most important cultural sites in Turin, including the famed Egyptian Museum, a must-see site that members will visit on the trip.

Because of its central location, warm hospitality and elegant interiors, the Grand Hotel Sitea has attracted many celebrities. Notable guests have included Nobel Prize winners, actors and musicians, such as Louis Armstrong.

KIMBERLY FRY

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Give the gift of a donation to the ASILM Education Fund

The Society is pleased to announce that the ASILM Education Fund is officially open for donations from members.

This recently-established scholarship fund is dedicated to financing scholarships for undergraduate college students interested in pursuing degrees in the Italian language.

With the rising costs of college tuition, and decreased state support, scholarships are becoming increasingly essential in helping students get into the college of their choice and pursue their passion. Too many hard-working students who deserve to go to college and study their desired major end up not doing so because of their economic situations. ASILM is proud to set up this fund to help secure a successful future for these students.

While the Society is focusing on guaranteeing a college experience for a select number of students, it is simultaneously encouraging the study and use of the Italian language in the United States, which has always been an important goal of ASILM.

ASILM has made its initial contribution of \$25,000.00 to the fund.

The fund is open to tax-exempt contributions from ASILM members and friends who wish to support the initiative to promote Italian education of qualified students.

Members are thus invited to contribute to this scholarship fund and help make someone's dream of majoring in the Italian language come true. They can do this by sending a check made out to the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit.

Members who donate to the fund thus play a pivotal role in ensuring its success, and may be instrumental in persuading as many people as possible to participate.

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The ASILM delegation will reside at the Grand Hotel Sitea during its stay in Turin. The hotel has had many famous residents over the years.

The hotel was recently assigned the prestigious award of *Locale storico d'Italia* (Italian historic place).

On Saturday, June 21, members will check into the Grand Hotel Sitea. Whether catching up with other members of the delegation or exploring the city or even resting from a long day's travel, members can choose how to spend their time before attending a relaxing welcome dinner in their honor at the Grande Carte, an elegant and popular restaurant within the hotel featuring regional cuisine and wine.

Members will spend the following day on a walking tour of Turin. One of the first stops will be the Santuario Basilica La Consolata. It is believed that a blind Frenchman "saw" the image of the Mother of God, "Consolata," near the Church of Saint Andrea after having a vision. Facing the image, the blind man regained his sight. The image was once part of the original church, but was lost centuries ago. However, the power of the image, to many a sign of divine mercy and miracles, still lives on and a new image of the Consolata was placed in a church chapel where it continues to draw an ever-greater number of pilgrims.

As they continue on their Turin tour, the delegation will visit the Mole Antonelliana, one of the iconic landmarks of Italy, and a symbol of Turin itself. It is so imposing that visitors cannot view the skyline of Turin without spotting this striking structure. The Mole, as it is often called, is home to the National Museum of Cinema, and, standing at over 525 feet, lays claim to the title of the tallest museum in the world.

The more daring members can take the elevator to reach the Mole's *tempietto* (a small temple right below the structure's long, narrow spire) where they can admire the panoramic view of the city and the surrounding countryside.

Members will be able to stroll through the wide collection of

media at the National Museum of Cinema, one of the most important institutions of its kind. As they walk through the various rooms, members will discover that the museum has a unique exhibition setup; the architect designed a space that allows for fascinating visual and acoustic experiences, one unlike any other cinema museum in the world.

Departing the Mole Antonelliana and its National Cinema Museum, members will visit Piazza Castello, the main piazza in Turin considered the heart of the city center. Spread across the piazza are the Palazzo Reale and the Palazzo Madama, home to the Ancient Art Museum of Turin, the Royal Theatre, the Royal Armory, the city's main library, City Hall, the Church of Turin and the Church of San Lorenzo, among many other important buildings. Palazzo Reale originally served as the seat of Savoy power and the House of Savoy's royal residence from the mid-1500s to the 19th century.



A view of Piazza Castello, the heart of the city center, and the location of many fascinating sites.

Among the many attractive buildings in Piazza Castello is the San Lorenzo church, which is famous for its baroque architecture designed by Guarino Guarini and also for containing a copy of the Holy Shroud.

After a stimulating day of touring the city center, the delegation will be treated to classic Piedmontese cuisine at the famous La Smarrita restaurant, located on the Nobile Floor of Palazzo Salmatoris in Piazza Carlo Alberto. The restaurant's location has much historical importance, as it was the place where Count Camillo Benso di Cavour discussed the unification of Italy. Its location, cuisine and decor combine to make La Smarrita one of the most prominent restaurants in Turin, and an ideal place for an elegant dinner for the delegation.

On Monday, June 23, the delegation will be welcomed by the mayor of Turin, Hon. Piero Fassino, at his office. Hon. Fassino is a popular figure not only in Turin, but throughout Italy. Members will have the rare opportunity to meet and talk with him about



Members will spend an entire afternoon visiting the lovely La Venaria Reale and its Reggia.



A view of the Galleria Grande of La Venaria Reale.



The medieval castle is one of the biggest treasures within Valentino Park, and a must-see for the delegation while in Turin.

the Society and to discuss ways of strengthening the mission of the organization.

Following the meeting with Mayor Fassino, the delegation will spend the rest of the day relaxing and enjoying Valentino Park, one the most beautiful sites in Turin. The park is the second largest in Italy and the country's first public garden. It is situated along the west bank of the Po River, and its lush landscape contains botanical gardens, a medieval castle and a village, Villa Glicini, scenic paths and much more. Like Mole Antonelliana, Valentino Park is considered a symbol of Turin itself.

Del Cambio restaurant awaits the delegation for a memorable dinner that night. The most famous restaurant in all of Turin, it has been in operation since 1757 and holds a significant place in Italy's history, especially the country's Unification Movement. Indeed, Del Cambio was a favorite meeting spot for the "fathers of modern Italy": Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi. Cavour's favorite wall seat is still there. From his vantage point, he could keep an eye on a small window where a collaborator would appear and indicate that the debates had gone sour. Since that time, numerous politicians and actors from all over the globe have sat at that same table, including Mikhail Gorbachev, actor Jean Reno, and Carla Bruni. Once more, the delegation can absorb a place of history while also experiencing the cultural cuisine that establishes Piedmont as a unique region of Italy.

The delegation will depart on Tuesday, June 24, for its first grand excursion outside of Turin, to Alba, a medieval town in the province of Cuneo that is noted for its delectable white truffle, peaches and wine production. While strolling around the town's beautiful streets and piazzas, members will visit important sites such as the Palazzo Comunale, the Bishop's Palace, the Alba Cathedral, the San Domenico church, St. John the Baptist church and the few 15th-century towers that adorn the quaint town. Like Asti, Alba is viewed as the core of Piedmont's wine industry, and members of the delegation will have the opportunity to sample



While in medieval Alba, members can sample some its celebrated white truffles.



PIEDMONT TRIP PROGRAM

June 21 - June 29, 2014

Saturday, June 21

Arrive in Turin
Check in at Grand Hotel Sitea (Via Carlo Alberto 35)
8pm: Welcome dinner at Grande Carte restaurant in hotel

Sunday, June 22

9am: Full breakfast in hotel
10am - 5pm: Walking tour of the city (Santuario Basilica La Consolata, Mole Antonelliana, National Cinema Museum, San Lorenzo, Piazza Castello, and Palazzo Madama)
1pm: Lunch in a local restaurant
5pm: Return to hotel
8pm: Dinner at La Smarrita in Turin
10pm: Return to hotel

Monday, June 23

9am: Full breakfast in hotel
10am: Tentative meeting & medal ceremony with the Mayor of Turin
1pm: Lunch in a local restaurant
3pm: Visit Valentino Park and Borgo Medievale (15 min. walk)
6pm: Return to hotel
8pm: Dinner at Del Cambio Restaurant in Turin
10pm: Return to hotel

Tuesday, June 24

8am: Full breakfast in hotel
9am: Transfer by private coach to Alba (1 hour from hotel)
10am - 12:30pm: Visit Ferrero confectionary plant
1pm: Lunch hosted by Amb. Paolo Fulci in a local restaurant
3pm - 7pm: Visit Palazzo Comunale and its Bishop's Palace, Cathedral of San Lorenzo, San Domenico Church, and historic center in Alba
8pm: Dinner at Ristorante Piazza Duomo in Alba
10pm: Return to hotel by private coach

Wednesday, June 25

8am: Full breakfast in hotel
9am: Transfer by private coach to Santa Margherita Ligure (2 1/2 hours from hotel)
1pm: Lunch in a local restaurant
2pm: Transfer to Portofino (10 min. from SML)

7pm: Dinner at Ristorante Stella in Portofino
9pm: Return to hotel by private coach

Thursday, June 26

9am: Full breakfast in hotel
10am - 5pm: Visit by private coach to Basilica di Superga; Turin Cathedral and its Holy Shroud; and then the National Auto Museum
1pm: Lunch in a local restaurant
6pm: Early dinner at Grande Carte restaurant in hotel
9pm: "Magic Turin" guided tour
11:30pm: Return to hotel by private coach

Friday, June 27

9am: Full breakfast in hotel
10am: Transfer by private coach to Asti
11:30am - 1pm: Visit to Consorzio d'Asti
1pm: Lunch
3pm: Transfer to Fontanafredda Winery by private coach (30 min. from Asti)*
4pm: Tour of Fontanafredda Winery and the hunting house of La Bela Rosin*
7pm: Transfer to Rivoli by private coach (1 hour from Fontanafredda)
8pm: Dinner at Combal.Zero restaurant in Rivoli
10pm: Return to hotel by private coach

Saturday, June 28

9am: Full breakfast in hotel
10am: Visit the Egyptian Museum
2pm: Lunch in a local restaurant
3pm: Transfer by private coach to Royal Palace of La Venaria Reale (30 min. from hotel)
8pm: Farewell dinner at Dolce Stil Novo Restaurant in Turin
10pm: Return to hotel by private coach

Sunday, June 29

9am: Full breakfast in hotel
Check out of Grand Hotel Sitea. Depart from Turin

8 NIGHTS TOTAL

*TENTATIVE - PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGES



some of the finest at Piazza Duomo Restaurant.

In 2013, the Piazza Duomo Restaurant joined a select list of the top 50 restaurants in the world. This three-star Michelin Guide restaurant, well known for its delicious Piedmont cuisine, promises to leave each delegation member wanting more.

But the primary reason for going to Alba is to visit and tour the Ferrero SpA, one of the most important and successful companies in Italy. Former Ambassador to the United Nations, Francesco Paolo Fulci, now president of Ferrero, will greet the members of the delegation.

Ferrero's confectionary plant is not open to visitors. However, under Ambassador Fulci's personal intervention, the ASILM delegation will be allowed to participate in an exciting tour of the plant. This extremely rare opportunity will allow members to learn about Ferrero's history and to offer an inside look at the daily operations of the prestigious company. Afterwards, Ambassador Fulci will graciously host a luncheon for the members of the delegation in a local restaurant.

On Wednesday, June 25, members of the delegation will depart Turin again for an excursion to Liguria's Italian Riviera, first to visit Santa Margherita Ligure and then Portofino.

Santa Margherita Ligure is more than just a resort town, as members will soon discover. The town has several must-see sites: the castle that was built in 1550 by the Republic of Genoa as a defense against attacks from greedy pirates; the Basilica of Saint Margaret of Antiochia; the Abbazia della Cervara; and the Villa Durrazzo, which contains lovely gardens and breathtaking scenery.



The center of Piazza Statuto contains a monument dedicated to workers killed while building the Frejus rail tunnel linking France and Italy. It is topped by a crowned figure believed to be the wayward angel Lucifer. The statue is said to point toward two other religiously themed monuments in the "white" section of the city. ~Photo courtesy of Robert Hanashiro, USA Today

After a luncheon, members will visit Portofino, a village with stunning views of the Riviera. Its beaches and harbors are recognized world over as among the most beautiful. Although the town boasts its Castello Brown and the Church of St. Martin, most people come to see the exquisite harbor and experience a taste of the relaxing lifestyle in Portofino.

Members will also visit Portofino's leading restaurant, Ristorante Stella, and sample some of its seafood dishes. This family-run restaurant is more than 160 years old, and is located next to the picturesque harbor, allowing for unforgettable views of the sea.

The following day, the delegation will again set out to explore the city of Turin, visiting the Turin Cathedral, home to the Holy Shroud; Basilica di Superga; and the National Automobile Museum.

The Holy Shroud is a linen sheet that bears the image of a man who appears to have suffered a physical trauma, possibly crucifixion, thus leading many to believe it is the burial shroud of Jesus of Nazareth. Protected within the Turin Cathedral, the Holy Shroud is arguably the single most studied artifact in human history and certainly one of the most controversial, as many scientists and researchers debate its authenticity. Despite the controversy, countless visitors from around the world come to Turin for the sole purpose of seeing the Holy Shroud during its rare public unveilings.

In addition to the Holy Shroud, members will also have the opportunity to marvel at the architecture of the Turin Cathedral, the major Roman Catholic church of Turin, and its campanile.

On this tour, members will also have the chance to visit the National Automobile Museum, which recently underwent extensive renovations of its exhibition space and building. Built in 1932, it is among the oldest museums in the world and the only one of its kind in Italy, and contains almost 200 original cars dating from the mid-19th century to today, and an additional eight varied brands of vehicles from Europe and the United States. It is fitting that such a unique museum resides in the "Automobile Capital of Italy," as Turin is considered to be the birthplace of much of the Italian automotive industry, including Fiat.

Later the delegation will join together for one of the most interesting parts of the trip program, a "Magic Turin" guided tour. There are many believers who consider Turin to be a city brimming with magic—as "Good" is constantly battling against "Evil"—and that the Holy Shroud is the source of this constant struggle. Others believe that this battle is caused by Turin's location, situated on two mystical triangles: the triangle of white magic (with Lyon and Prague) and the triangle of black magic (with London and San Francisco).

A guide will navigate the group through the mysterious city streets at night, pointing out the various symbols hidden from onlookers while telling magical tales and explaining deep-rooted suspicions that help make Turin a truly fascinating and incredible city.



On Friday, June 27, members will depart the city of Turin once again, this time for the verdant, hilly landscape of Asti, where they will visit Consorzio d'Asti to meet with its top executives. In addition to this meeting, the delegation will sample some of the finest Piedmont wines, such as Asti Spumante DOCG, Barbera d'Asti, Dolcetto d'Asti, and Moscato d'Asti, during an in-depth presentation prepared by the Consorzio in honor of the delegation.

This one-of-a-kind Asti experience will not end there. After Consorzio d'Asti, the delegation will tour the town's old quarters and its many sites, and shop and sample truffles (one of Asti's major delicacies), cheeses, amaretti (almond cookies) and more wines and grappas.

Members of the delegation will then bid farewell to Asti as they depart to Fontanafredda to visit its winery, tour the estate and discover the restored hunting house of "La Bela Rosin."

The King of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele II, fell madly in love with commoner Rosa Vercellana (or La Bela Rosin in Piedmontese), and it was in the estate's hunting house where they set out on a passionate love affair. Rosa later became Countess of Mirafiori and Fontanafredda, the mother of the king's two children, and then his morganatic wife, resulting in her never actually becoming the Queen of Italy. Her mausoleum resides in Turin.

Not far from Fontanafredda lies Rivoli, where the delegation will have dinner at the renowned restaurant, Combal.Zero. Members will discover from its food, wine, atmosphere and hospitality why the restaurant is rated as one of the top 50 in the world in 2013.

No visit to Turin would be complete for the delegation without a visit to the Egyptian Museum, the only one besides the Cairo Museum dedicated solely to Egyptian art and culture. On Saturday, June 28, ASILM members will see the museum's superb collections of artifacts as old as 4,000 years, numbering some 6,500 objects (another 26,000 are in storage). With this museum visit, members will see why the well-known decipherer of hieroglyphs, Jean-Francois Champollion, famously wrote, "The Road to Memphis and Thebes passes through Turin."

For the remainder of the afternoon, members travel to La Venaria Reale and visit its Reggia (Palace) and gardens. The enormous palace of leisure is impressive in its style and size: it is an exceptional example of Baroque architecture and measures a total of 80,000 square meters of floor space; and the Reggia and the gardens cover 950,000 square meters. The gardens are a mixture of old and new, with contemporary artworks intermingling with the ancient. Grottos, ponds and gardens add to the spectacular natural scenery, while the stunning mountain peaks of the Alps rest silently in the background. It is no surprise why La Venaria Reale is the fifth most visited site in Italy.

After several hours enjoying La Venaria Reale, the delegation will take a short stroll over to Dolce Stil Novo restaurant, which is located in the Reggia. Within this majestic restaurant, members



One of the thousands of works in the collection of the Egyptian Museum in Turin.

will dine on gourmet Italian cuisine with a contemporary twist. The unique atmosphere of Dolce Stil Novo, along with its delicious food and wine, will provide a truly unforgettable experience for the ASILM and will offer the perfect send off to the members as they celebrate their last evening in Italy.

The trip to Piedmont follows the success of the trip to Rome in November 2011 and the most recent trip to Sicily in March 2013.

The benefits of these trips to Italy are intangible yet immensely significant for the Society. They offer opportunities for members to meet one another and become acquainted, a near-impossibility for some members who live far from the New York headquarters where most of the Society's events take place and where the majority of members reside. Indeed, some members find that they have no way of meeting fellow ASILM members at all because of the mileage between them.

Distance is often an obstacle for members who desire to meet



The delegation will explore the Fontanafredda winery, as well as its famous hunting house, whose former resident was La Bela Rosin.



their fellow members at the Gala, the diplomatic reception or other event held by the Society. For example, members living in Texas who do not want to spend money on a trip to New York for an ASILM event that takes place for just one evening, may find more value in investing in a trip to Italy where they will celebrate their heritage, be exposed to a beautiful country, and spend time meeting members and developing close ties.

As demonstrated in two previous trips, members developed and strengthened their friendships with one another as they experienced the many sites Italy has to offer; and they could share these special moments upon their return to the United States.

Another invaluable benefit of these trips is that they produce revenue for the Society, as all members of the delegation participating in the program pay for their own land packages, hotels included. Furthermore, the land package is set at a special, competitive price that is contained at the lowest amount possible thanks to sponsorship.

All proceeds from this trip will go to the ASILM Education Fund, a new scholarship created by the Society for undergraduate college students who would like to pursue a degree in the Italian language studies.

Ultimately, the trips are vital in serving the mission of ASILM. They strengthen the traditional bonds of friendship existing between Italy and the United States. Members of the Society who participate act as ambassadors as they venture to Italy and meet with the most prominent Italian officials, and, consequently, establish the Society's name in the minds and hearts of Italians.

The cost for participating in this trip is limited to \$2,850.00 per person (double occupancy). This amount covers the land-package of 8 nights in Turin, including accommodations, private coach, lunch at a winery, and dinners, as indicated in the program.

As space is limited, ASILM members are encouraged to RSVP now for their spot by e-mailing president.asilm@yahoo.com for the participation form. Members will receive these forms in the mail in the coming weeks. ■



Del Cambio Ristorante is one of many restaurants in which the ASILM delegation will enjoy Piedmontese cuisine and wine.



Left: Members will be able to take a lift to the top of the Mole Antonelliana, where they will be rewarded with panoramic views of the city. The Mole Antonelliana is a major Turin attraction.

(ASILM Education Fund - continued from page 3)

Donors, unless otherwise requested, will be given proper recognition.

When a substantial amount is reached, a separate committee composed of qualified members of the academic world will be set up and will contact universities in the United States to discuss conditions for the assignment of scholarships.

Universities that offer the best opportunities for applicants will be assigned the scholarships or, upon extensive review, the

committee will select the university with the best proposal.

Any member with a scholarly background who wishes to join this separate committee to contact various universities should contact ASILM at president.asilm@yahoo.com.

Members of the committees will perform tasks without any direct or indirect compensation. ■



(ASILM Gala - continued from page 1)

The exciting black-tie event is organized each year as a celebration for members, with an evening of music and dancing, socializing and exceptional food and wine. The 2014 Gala is expected to be the biggest celebration yet.

One of the striking features in store for guests is the four-course, special surprise dinner. The entire dinner—as well as the whole evening—will be heightened with a meal prepared by one of the most famous chefs in Italy, whose name will be kept secret until the day of the event.

To further showcase Italian excellence and the dining experience, members will once again be treated to some of the finest wines Italy has to offer. Last year, the guests sampled an impressive assortment of wines donated by top Italian producers (all of whom attended the event). Among them were: Planeta, Cometa IGT Sicilia, 2010; Casa di Grazia, Victorya 1607, Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG, 2011; Marchesi Antinori, Il Bruciato Bolgheri DOC, 2010; Jacopo Biondi Santi, Sassaloro IGT Rosso Toscana, 2009; Ferrari, Tenuta Castelbuono, Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG, 2006; A. & G. Folonari Tenute, La Forra, Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG, 2008; Rocca delle Macie, Ser Gioveto IGT Toscana, 2008; and Zonin, Castello del Poggio, Moscato d'Asti DOCG, N/V.

Another special feature of the Gala will be the awards ceremony, which will take place at the conclusion of dinner. The ceremony gives recognition to those Italians and Americans who have strived toward improving the lives of the public by making enormous contributions in diverse fields, including art, medicine, business, politics and jurisprudence. Because of their contributions, their names are recognized nationally and possibly abroad. These individuals are presented with the highest award of the Society, the Grand Award of Merit.

It was the tradition of the Society to give the Grand Award of Merit to select outstanding leaders in their fields during a private ceremony. The exclusivity of these ceremonies often gave very little opportunity for ASILM members to witness and participate in this presentation. Presented for the first time at last year's Gala, members are now able to witness the presentations of the Grand Award of Merit and to meet and greet the awardees before and after the ceremony.

Last year's Gala ceremony honored four extraordinary leaders in their fields with the Grand Award of Merit: Comm. Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi, Surgeon-in-Chief at New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center; Cav. di Gran Croce, Hon. Arnaldo Pomodoro, the celebrated Italian artist whose works stand prominently throughout the globe, from the Vatican Museums to the United Nations in New York; 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.

Each recipient spoke briefly during the Gala, thanking the Society and its members for his honors. The same will be the case in February.

Previous recipients of the award include President of the United States, Hon. George W. Bush; and President of the Italian Republic, H.E. Giorgio Napolitano.

During the ceremony, there will also be presentations of the prestigious Medal of Merit to a few select members. This medal, the first of its kind offered by ASILM, is an honor that is given to members who have had their present decoration—bestowed upon them because of some personal quality or the rendering of some special service—for the longest period of time. Uff. Hon. Marie L. Garibaldi, Cav. Irma Jaffe and Comm. Sirio Maccioni were the recipients of the Medal of Merit in December 2012.

In addition, the Society will present a much-deserved award to the mystery chef for his or her many activities in furthering Italian food excellence across the globe.

A fourth exceptional feature of the 2014 ASILM Gala will be the return of Panorama Music to perform their vast range of tunes that will enliven the evening. After the awards ceremony, members will have the opportunity to dance the rest of the night to jazz standards, current top 40 hits and much more.

The dress code for the event is strictly black-tie with decorations.

Formal invitations will be mailed to ASILM members in January 2014. However, if members would like to make their reservations in advance, they are welcome to contact the Society. ■





DID YOU KNOW? HOLIDAY EDITION

UMBRIA

Many tourists venture to Umbria around the holidays for its spectacular holiday festivals, parades and even the tallest Christmas tree in the world.

One such tradition of Umbria takes place in Città di Castello. In mid-afternoon on Christmas day, canoeists from the town's Canoe Club dress as Santa Claus and decorate their canoes in lights before paddling down the River Tiber to the landing stage at the Ponte Vecchio, where there is a crib suspended over the water. Once there, they give sweets and presents to the children waiting excitedly on the bridge. All the while, torches illuminate the sky, creating a very festive and joyful atmosphere.

Umbria is also home to the world's tallest Christmas tree, located on Mount Ignacio near Gubbio. At 800 meters tall and 400 meters wide, and with about 500 light bulbs and 2 kilometers of cabling decorating it, this tree of lights earns the title of the world's tallest Christmas tree in the Guinness Book of Records. Anyone looking from miles away would still be able to see this tree. ■



The world's tallest Christmas tree, located on Mt. Ignacio in Umbria.



TURIN

Turin's Christmas light shows are some of the best in the world, attracting thousands of locals and tourists from across the world every year.

These are not just any lights. They are part of Luci d'artista, an initiative established by the city council in 1997 in an effort to extend Turin's role as a collector and promoter of contemporary art. For the light show every year, one or two artists bring alive their ideas for an installation using only electric light as their medium.

The lights turn on at the beginning of November, and go out in mid-January. ■

ROME

Many piazzas in Rome come to life during the holidays. Piazza Navona transforms into a Christmas market, where sweets, toys, nativity figures and decorations are sold to crowds and where Babbo Natale (Father Christmas) occasionally visits to bring merri-ness to the children.

In Saint Peter's Square, an enormous Christmas tree is set up in the center of the piazza, making it a perfect holiday setting for when the Pope gives the midnight mass on Christmas Eve to thousands of visitors.

Rome is home to a large Jewish population, and celebrates Hanukkah with a large menorah in Piazza Barberini. One candle is lit each night during this special season. ■



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OF THE ITALIAN
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48th Annual ASILM Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony

February 20, 2014

For more pictures from previous editions of the annual ASILM Galas, please visit Photo Gallery on the website of the Society:

www.asilm.org



Trip to Piedmont, Italy

June 21 - 29, 2014

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
AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF THE ITALIAN LEGIONS OF MERIT



Il Cavaliere is an official publication of the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit, a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization legally incorporated in the State of New York.

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