



APULIA

A FILM TOURISM GUIDE

The cinema has changed the way people see Apulia. This has happened in recent years when entire sequences of a land where every single thing is generously lighted, have courted the darkness of theatres around the world. A Baroque light in *Loose Cannons* by Ferzan Ozpetek who – in the words of the judges at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York when they presented the film with an award - “makes you want to immediately book a trip to southern Italy.” White seastacks rising out of the crystal waters of the Gargano, where the stars of Bollywood dance in *Housefull* by Sajid Khan, a film seen by over 400 million Indians. Free and easy trullo houses for the duo Zalone-Caparezza in *What a Beautiful Day* by Gennaro Nunziante, all-time top grossing Italian film. Hundreds of sets which in recent years have criss-crossed Puglia, and as many filmmakers, including Olmi, Martone, Paskaljević, Cipri, Vicari, Gaglianone, di Robilant, Rubini, Placido, Wertmüller, and Winspeare. And which, in past decades, attracted – among others - Pasolini, Bene, Monicelli, Taviani, Sordi, Zeffirelli Moretti, Amelio, Salvatores, Soldini, and Avati.

An invitation to travel, to see for yourself that in Apulia the word cinema exists, with 10 itineraries that help reveal it, surprising and changeable, with an incredible wealth of history, charm, myths, stones carved by genius and by the wind, crystal clear seas and iron red skies.

A guide for writers and producers who are looking for locations for their films. But also for travellers in search of unexpected destinations and places to see, like films.



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A Film Tourism Guide

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*To Damiano Russo,
with stars in his eyes*

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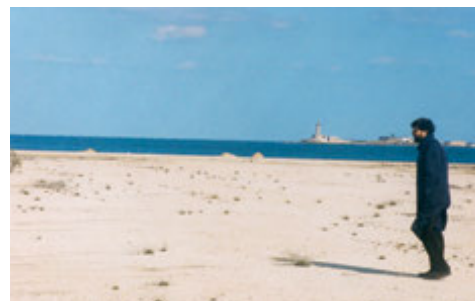
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Apulia is a bride amid the olive trees with a pistol in her hand (*Loose Cannons* by Ferzan Ozpetek), it is Toni Servillo on a lounge chair on Brindisi's industrial beach (*È Stato il Figlio/It Was the Son* by Daniele Cipri), it is Caparezza amid the trullo houses singing *Sarà perché ti amo* (*Che bella giornata/What a Beautiful Day* by Gennaro Nunziante), it is Indian stars, Akshay Kumar and Deepika Padukone, dancing *Bollywood style* over the Gargano sea stacks (*Housefull* by Sajid Khan), it is Luigi Lo Cascio in the secrets of the castle of Bovino in the Italy of 150 years ago (*Noi credevamo/We Believed* by Mario Martone). Skillful in transforming itself, for the movie camera it can become a place nearby (Naples, Palermo, Turin) or a distant land (Palestine, Greece, often Africa).

There is a Apulia which, in recent years, the cinema has redesigned.

For all who have the understandably attractive idea of going there, as always it proffers its magical wares, such as the clear light of its turreted coasts, the ferrous darkness of its industrial cities, the azure canvas of horizon over the sea, the golden waves of wheat on the Tavoliere, the impressive postmodern skylines intermingling with bizarre Trulli architecture or Federican puzzles.

Certainly, Apulia continues to exist in its clamorous and archetypical beauty, but it has also become a vivid universe in the dream created by the cinema, a factory for everyone. Worth visiting tirelessly as a tourist, circumnavigating as

a spectator at the cinema, repaginating continuously in infinite present and future storylines as a filmmaker, stories that we will be here to share, but also to generate. Sometimes it is enough just to come here with a compass and choose which cardinal direction to imprint on a story. The location alone does not make the film, but the film gives life to the location, showering it with new images and references. The cinema multiplies sequences of Apulia like a rotary press making a million copies, distributing them around the world. So, 400 million spectators see *Housefull* in India and become aware of the Gargano for the first time, and the judges at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York award a prize to *Loose Cannons* because “it immediately makes you want to book a holiday in southern Italy.” We had a dream, to bring the cinema here, calling out to it like mermaids call out to a hero on a quest, with persuasive songs, but also with facts. With the ability to attract, support, accompany and produce. The results have been exciting. More than 130 film production companies have been hosted in Apulia in a few short years of activity, just under five, an exhilarating path travelled by newcomers, experimenters and maestros with feature length films, shorts, documentaries, television series, and videos. A path that led to the moving parable *The Cardboard Village* by maestro Ermanno Olmi. And it continues. Dreams and numbers. A survey by Fondazione Rosselli on the economic impact on the territory during the first four years of the Apulia Film Commission has shown that for every euro received, production companies spent more than six in the territory. The proportion was 1:6.3. €2,848,000 euros were allocated, while the production companies spent more than €11.4 million here. The benefits do not stop there, quite the contrary. If you take into

consideration the fact that suppliers of goods and services for the production companies also have to spend to satisfy the demand, those 11.4 million euros become €34 million for the local economy.

The reality of a cultural infrastructure and, in particular, of a cinematographic infrastructure is being created.

And there is more going on than just production companies filming throughout Apulia. The Apulia Film Commission accompanied and trained screenwriters from around the world in the project “Apulia Experience,” it introduced their topics and their stories to potential producers through the “Euro-Mediterranean CoProduction Forum,” it produces young Apulian cinema with the “Memory Project,” it distributes and protects the national and international cinema of quality through its own circuit, unique in Italy, consisting of 25 “Art House” theatres, it creates occasions for meetings, it works with and supports production companies in its two “cineports” in Bari and Lecce, and works in preservation with the Regional Media Library. Every year cinema also becomes a party, or rather, a festival at the “Bifest - Bari International Film Festival” organized by Felice Laudadio.

Apulia has put down roots in the cinema: years will pass and skilful eyes and hands will plant more seeds of history for a new film and for a thousand more, cultivated by the magical inspiration of this region. And it will continue to be crossed as if in a wide-angle panning shot, in all its beauty.

Antonella Gaeta

March 2012

Preface to the first edition

“You shouldn’t have done this to Apulia.” Venice, International Film Festival 2007, we had just baptised the Apulia Film Commission Foundation (AFC), created a few months earlier thanks to a regional law passed in 2004. It was a beautiful summer day. The Lido was clean and the humidity of the lagoon was, for once, lower than that of Bangkok. We were at a presentation party with many directors, from Monicelli to Placido, actors, producers, film fans, journalists from the small nomadic tribe that hops from festival to festival. One of them, to pay a compliment, chose a paradoxical tone, “You shouldn’t have... Now everyone will go down there to shoot films. It’s practically the end of a paradise.” In actual fact, for at least the past 15 years Apulia has been one of the most frequently used locations in Italian cinema, which has finally succeeded in rejuvenating itself by moving away from Cinecittà.

For almost all of the 1900s, the century of the cinema, very few films had been made in Apulia. Filmmakers preferred nearby Basilicata: more archaic and archetypal, stones and Christs one step beyond Eboli. Then, in 1991, the Apulian beaches were overrun by a tidal wave of Albanians, 20,000 arrived all together on board the ship Vlora in the harbour of Bari. They were exiles in search of a promised land: a dream or a nightmare. Gianni Amelio dedicated *Lamerica* to them. The Channel of Otranto was transformed into a north-west crossing of people, merchandise, stories, vi-

sions of a wide “ex-world” (Matvejevič), Balkan and generally Oriental. That traumatic border character, literally western, instigated creative narrative or reflection along the line of the Adriatic horizon. And not only on the screen, if we consider the luck of “meridian thought,” the popularity of tarantism, the unexpected Apulian literary rebirth. The Spanish writer Jorge Semprun gave the name *The Lights of Brindisi* to a European project for audiovisual narrations on illegal immigrants arriving by sea. The American intellectual Susan Sontag, who stayed in Bari during the last years of her life, understood a tragic and symbolic *quid*, “The exodus has passed through here.” And the exodus – prompted Sontag, warning how racism is always lying in wait – is *tout court* the history of the 20th century.

On the other hand, a Film Commission, by virtue of its statute, multiplies the images of a territory and, in our case, “risks” revealing to a larger public landscapes and stories of Apulia that are, in many ways, intact, or preserved by the decay that not uncommonly accompanies success. In the AFC’s first year of activity, about 80 cinema-television production companies of various genres and formats, and not only Italian, chose this region for their sets. About 40 of these received financing as per the rules of the Foundation’s “Film Fund.” The list includes young talents, asked to tackle the Apulian identity and history in the short films of our “Memory Project.” Money spent in “lost grants,” you could say. A lexical trap and modality that we reject, because the opposite is true: the cinema and audiovisual media can create substantial opportunities for economic development that government agencies are wise to encourage. This is a belief supported by academic research and facts: between September 2007 and September 2008,

the AFC distributed 730,000 euro to production houses which, in turn, invested over 7 million euro in the region. And what about the promotional return in newspapers or on television, for example when Monica Bellucci and Sophie Marceau were working together in a film in the Salento area. Certainly, beyond the yields of past seasons, short-lived fashions and stars of fleeting fame, the AFC wants to pave the way for an industrial Apulian system, a system equal to the task of meeting the needs of the heady transformation underway in the cinema as a result of the development in digital technologies. As a start, soon the Bari and Lecce “Cineports” will be available to casts and film crews. These are flexible and hospitable structures, created for the use of cinema professionals, but also for spectators, without whom nothing is ever possible.

The guide you hold in your hands was designed for both the tourist who loves the cinema and the filmmaker in search of locations. However, after having read the itineraries and the related essays by famous members of the cinema world, the reader will probably not be satisfied at all. Quite the opposite, he will want to come to or return to Apulia to travel around it or to contemplate a few of its enchanting aspects, despite the fact that the savoury dialects, some bitter ironies of the language, are pure disenchantment. And perhaps to catch himself thinking, “the cinema, that’s fine, certainly, why not? But, in the meantime, I’ll take a dip in the sea.” It’s the “Apulian effect,” the consequence, the charm, perhaps the mystery of a light that cannot be captured by any lens, that escapes by “holding back” like some great actors who deny themselves by indulging themselves and viceversa.

Oscar Iarussi

November 2008

Itinerary 1 The Gargano and the Tremiti Islands

Where the secrets
of the sea lie



MANFREDONIA – MONTE SANT'ANGELO
SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO
SAN MARCO IN LAMIS – MATTINATA
VIESTE – PESCHICI – SAN MENAIO – CARPINO
RODI GARGANICO – ISOLE TREMITI

On the previous page: Surprise views wind their way along the coast and meet the blue sea on long beaches of pebbles or fine sand. Explore uncontaminated bays and enchanted marine grottoes.

Opposite: The houses seem to climb up the hillside around the fortress at Monte Sant'Angelo, facing onto the Gulf of Manfredonia. The town's sanctuary is dedicated to the warrior archangel Saint Michael and has been a destination for pilgrims for over 1500 years.



Like an enormous turtle sleeping on the shores of the Adriatic, the Gargano soon comes into view as you leave behind the area of the Tavoliere to reach the sea and the scent of pine trees and olive groves, just beyond a bare and hilly landscape. As you travel towards the silent and solitary mountain, history dozes upon the secrets of the land. Then, suddenly, the curtain rises on the origins of the art and architecture of the past, memory enchants you like a mermaid and your eye falls upon the Church of San Leonardo di Lama Volara. Here, where the Teutonic knights welcomed travelling pilgrims, a luminous crown, formed by the sun and the eleven petals of the rose window during the summer solstice, alludes to the astral calendar of the megalithic complex at Stonehenge. Not far away, on the plain between Manfredonia and the Ofanto River, by taking the road that leads to Zapponeta you reach the Gargano National Park, a natural oasis. This is what is left of the lake and marsh basins that once made the Capitanata area one of the largest and most well-known aquatic environments in Europe, with bulrushes that disperse their seeds in the winter wind, and giant swamp reeds that watch over Salso Lake, which teems with fish.

The way to the promontory also provides another dreamlike voyage back in time. Solemn, golden and unpredictable, the Church of San-

ta Maria Maggiore stands next to an early Christian basilica dedicated to the Virgin in the town of ► **Siponto**. Pupi Avati was seduced by its decorated medieval stone and filmed a few scenes from his blockbuster ★ *The Knights of the Quest* (2001) here.

A few kilometres further on, sheltered from the northern winds, a natural quay forms the port of ► **Manfredonia**, founded by Manfred of Swabia to offer a new dwelling place to the inhabitants of Siponto, who were submerged by swamps and destructive earthquakes. There, majestic and elegant, the Swabian-Angevin castle overlooks rows of sailing and fishing boats, with its spectacular walls, cylindrical towers and the large Annunziata rampart. For centuries it defended soldiers and citizens, but was defeated in the attack by the Turks in 1620. Today, its halls are home to the National Archaeological Museum of the Gargano, which houses 1500 Daunian steles. Just outside the city, immediately after passing the presumptuous modernity of the factories of the ex-Enichem Company, a detour leads to the Gargano's harshest and craggiest area, a land of ascetics, saints and hermits. The small town of Macchia marks the beginning of the ascent that, hairpin bend by hairpin bend, climbs up to ► **Monte Sant'Angelo**, the European metropolis of the cult of angels, perched atop the mountain and chock full of both decorative and his-



Travelling through the valley that leads to the Gargano promontory is like travelling back in time. The medieval Church of Santa Maria Maggiore is set in a motionless natural environment, in what was once the ancient town centre of Siponto.



Like *The Knights of the Quest* (2001), Pupi Avati's film crew worked on various locations in Apulia, both in the north and the south. Some of the settings for this medieval war film include the Gargano, the cloisters in Conversano and the Brindisi coastline.

torical angels. Princes and kings resided in its castle, while numerous saints, popes and crusaders knelt before Saint Michael, the warrior archangel who appeared time after time in the grotto. Piovene wrote that what the Gargano once was and what it is now can be seen here. Once you have arrived at the top, where the climate is always cool and you breathe the curious effervescence of piety, your enraptured eyes will fall upon the thick, dark green of the inland plateau with the solemnity of a Greek poem, or upon the brilliant blue of the sea, peeping out between the roads and melting into the sky, or perhaps upon the panorama of the vast Gulf of Manfredonia that stretches out towards the Tavoliere as far as the coastline of Bari and Castel del Monte. Ferdinando Maria Poggioli was struck by this marvellous view and, in *★Morte Civile/Civil Death* (1942), a film version of the play by Paolo Giacometti, he used elements of this landscape in a way that no one ever had before in the history of cinema. The impervious and untamed soul of this land was later fully understood by Lucio Fulci who directed Irene Papas, Florinda Bolkan and Barbara Bouchet in the urbane psycho-sociological thriller *★Don't Torture Donald Duck* (1972) using Piazza de Galganis with the Junno neighbourhood as a backdrop, between the white tiles and chimneys and rocky precipices.

Once on the road that leads back down towards the plain, a path invites you to follow the last leg of the Via Sacra Langobardorum, where Hannibal is said to have settled with his army after the Battle of Canne and where, on the crest of one of the many rocky spurs, rise the majestic walls of the abbey of Pulsano .

The road that leads to ►**San Giovanni Rotondo** passes through a valley that is reminiscent in every way, both in its climate and its characteristics, of Provence: vast, deserted scree with sparse tufts of bushes that interrupt the desolation. The city looks luminous, situated in a dell, with the Cappuccini convent and the magnificent, white House for the Relief of Suffering. The new church, designed in wood, steel, glass, stone and copper by Renzo Piano, has the world's largest stone arch and vast spaces to receive the faithful. This is the backdrop for a film with an original and caustic documentary style, *★Fan Pio/Pio Fan* produced in 2011 by Giovanni Troilo and Graziano Conversano. The pair, with particular, ironic skill, interweave the lives of five people whose stories – voluntarily or not – are marked by the presence of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, one of the most worshipped saints in the world, who lived in San Giovanni for 52 years, until his death in 1968. At the train station of ►**San Marco in Lamis**, the concept of a space



The sanctuary of Saint Padre Pio of Pietralcina, one of the most worshipped saints in the world, is the destination of the group of pilgrims who are the main characters of the film *Fan Pio/Pio Fan*, by the Apulian directors Giovanni Troilo and Graziano Conversano. We are in San Giovanni Rotondo.



The sea stacks of Baia delle Zagare won over Bollywood which landed here in 2009 to shoot *Housefull*, second highest grossing film in the history of Indian cinema. The stars who dance amid the rock sculptures of the Gargano are Akshay Kumar and Deepika Padukone.

becoming an island persuaded Sergio Rubini to celebrate his first film as a director on a set between those four walls. ★ *The Station* (1990) rediscovered the metaphysical dimension of French cinema. Based on a play, the film received the FIPRESCI Prize at the Venice Film Festival. The name of Francesco de Robertis also resonates in this area. He was born here and, in the 1940s was one of the precursors of Italian neorealism. However, the town is, above all, the centre of the devotional panorama and, at the end of a large valley along the Via Sacra, lies the striking vision of the convent of Santa Maria di Stignano. Its door is crowded with mystical symbols and inscriptions made by the pilgrims who stopped there to gather their strength for the climb up the archangel's mountain. Not far off lies the convent of San Matteo, another stopping place for the faithful, overlooking an oasis of green.

Its large square opens onto the Farajama, one of the trails that winds its way through the ► **Gargano National Park**. A wild aesthetic energy pulls you into its forests, in search of sublime solitude. The extensive foliage of beeches, turkey oaks, pines, firs and ashes reaches into the blue of the sky, gathering rays of light that enchant and seduce the soul of anyone who enters the ► **Umbra Forest**, one

of the most beautiful forests in Europe, a treasure chest of wild flora and fauna. Through these places, and continuing on to the beaches of Peschici and Manacore, Raoul Bova – in Avati's film – journeys and battles together with the other knights in search of the Holy Grail. The Gargano's coastal road shines with charm and panoramic surprises, equal in beauty to the coasts of Amalfi or Athens-Cape Sounion. A continuous succession of curves moving through the sun, rocks and pine groves, winds alongside the immense still, blue sea which laps up onto pebbles and forested cliffs as far as Portogreco, then onto the long sand beaches of Vieste and, finally, touches the lakes of Lesina and Varano. Through groves of olives, almonds and prickly pears, it is a short drive from Manfredonia to ► **Mattinata**, which lies in a valley where Alfonso Gatto magnificently described "mountains densely packed with walls circling up to the sky." The walls are ancient evidence of the age-old tradition of stock rearing. A jagged landscape of jutting rocks, little bays and grottoes with magically enchanting light leads to Zagare Bay, Vignanotica Bay and Pugnochiuso Bay. The splendid natural landscape of Pugnochiuso appears in ★ *White Horses of Summer* (1975), a film about childhood featuring Ciccio Ingrassia and directed by Raimondo Del Balzo.



Instead, the sea stacks of ►**Baia delle Zagare** and the shockingly white sheer cliff over the beach of ►**Vignanotica**, can be seen in the background of the flyers and posters of ★**Housefull** (2010), second highest grossing film in the history of Indian cinema, released in 750 cinemas and seen by 400 million spectators. Directed by Sajid Khan and featuring numerous Bollywood stars, including Akshay Kumar and Deepika Padukone, the film recounts the exhilarating adventures of a young groom, who arrives in the “most beautiful and romantic place in the world,” which seems to have already seduced half a million Indians who dream of visiting it. The main cities of the British ex-colony are plastered with advertising billboards showing the natural marvels of the Gargano which frame the smiles of the film’s main characters and invite everyone to spend their vacation on the set of the film with the slogan: “Beautiful [sic] Puglia – spend your holidays on the movie set.”

Not far away, the background of the Gattarella cliff, which towers over the blue of the sea and the sky, was the setting for the rather Fellini-like scene of the playful flight in ★**AAA Achille** (2001), Gio-


A fantastic display of rocks and sea is found on the Tremiti Islands, where, according to legend, Diomedes was buried. San Nicola, San Domino, Caprara and Pianosa are the cornerstones of a solemn beauty, silent and full of secret stories.

vanni Albanese’s debut film. The white crag of Pizzomunno, located at Vieste between two windy beaches, evokes ancient legends and faces the Federican castle that overlooks the narrow alleys of steps, arches, small plazas and white houses in the medieval town where the pirate Dragut ordered the decapitation, on the cold paving stones, of hundreds of townspeople. Here Davide Ferrario directed a few scenes of ★**The Children of Hannibal** (1998), including some on the sea, where the Sant’Eufemia lighthouse recounts safe landings, and the San Francesco trabucco (typical fishing pier) is the first of many along the coast beyond the large Manaccora grotto. The reef below the Cristoforo Colombo seafront, the Marina Piccola and the former Capuchin convent, now the visitors’ centre for the Gargano National Park, along with the ►**Umbra Forest**, have more recently hosted the shooting of the television mini-series ★**Il generale dei**



Stories of the sea navigate on high in the Church of Madonna di Loreto in Peschici. Models of boats hang from the ceiling like votive offerings. Peschici is a seaside town on the Gargano that can be seen in the film *Il figlio dell'uomo/The Son of Man* directed by Virgilio Sabel in 1954.



 *AAAAchille*, the first film by the Foggian filmmaker/actor Giovanni Albanese, tells the story of a child stutterer who undergoes a unique form of therapy. Filmed in 2001, the scene of the flight of the angel is set at Pizzomunno on the Gargano.

briganti/The Brigands' General (2012) directed by Paolo Poeti for RaiUno, in two episodes. The miniseries recounts Carmine Crocco (Daniele Liotti), historical leader of the Lucanian brigands, whose power reached as far as Irpinia and Capitanata. He became commander of an army of 2,000 men who made a decisive contribution to the Unification of Italy, siding with Garibaldi.

► **Peschici** is a snow-white interlacing of houses, terraces, little ladders and balconies with an Arabian feel to them. It appears unexpectedly like a nativity scene, painted and impregnable, clinging to a cliff. Many of the town's inhabitants, together with Fiorella Mari, acted in *★Il figlio dell'uomo/The Son of Man* (1954) directed by Virgilio Sabel, and produced by San Paolo Films. The film shows the small town in its uncontaminated splendour with the tower of Monte Pucci and the abbey of Kàlena. Other stories set here are *★Nemmeno in un sogno/Not Even in a Dream* (2002), directed by Gianluca Greco, and an episode, interpreted by Lino Banfi, in Carlo Vanzina's comedy *★Un'estate al mare/A Summer at the Sea* (2008). ► **San Menaio** is a strip of houses facing the sea. *★La vita, un lungo viaggio in treno/Life is a Long Journey by Train* (2009) by Thierry Gentet begins with the image of its beach, as far as the "trabucco" of

Montepucci and describes the eternal charm of ancient fishermen's tales. Produced by French television, this docu-fiction tells the life story of Ferruccio Castronuovo, assistant director to Federico Fellini and Sergio Leone, a witness to the golden era of Italian cinema. At the point where the road begins to ascend, the luxurious Marzini pine wood soon submerges the tracks of the "Garganica," which, with its Far West scenery, has snaked along the coast through narrow tunnels of bare, red rock for almost half a century. Along the route of the old mule tracks, deviating inland, we reach Vico, a town of ancient stone, where small paved streets climb up between the secrets of towers, arches, balconies, grottoes and oil-presses which are decorated with orange blossoms and oranges on the patron saint's feast day. Above, on a hill thick with olive trees, you will find the home of the famous Folk Festival ► **Carpino**. The town's traditional peasant stories and melodies are narrated and celebrated by Thierry Gentet in *★I cantori di Carpino/The Story-singers of Carpino* (2008), through the voices, music and words of two of them: Antonio Maccarone and Antonio Piccininno. From here, in *★Cra-j-Domani/Craj-Tomorrow* (2005) by Davide Marengo, Teresa De Sio begins a musical journey on the trail of the authentic folkloristic



Discover the Gargano's coastline, equal in breathtaking charm to the coasts of Amalfi or Capo Sounion in Greece. Vieste, perched on the San Francesco peninsula, is one of the largest towns.



The fishermen of bygone days relied on “trabucchi,” a fishing system characterised by long wooden piers built out into the sea and wide nets used to entrap the fish. The Gargano National Park safeguards the “trabucchi” along the coast.

roots of the Gargano, first meeting choristers and then Matteo Salvatore of Foggia. Even Marcello Mastroianni and Gina Lollobrigida spent time among the plazas of this town and nearby Peschici while filming *★The Law* (1959), a film based on the novel of the same name by Roger Vailland that director Jules Dassin discovered hot off the press in a Paris bookshop.

Not far from the Lesina and Varano lakes, which are separated from the sea by dunes and forests, lies ►**Rodi Garganico**. It is said that on the town's beach the scent of the orange groves is so sweet that it brings tears to the eyes during the flowering season.

From the hill in town, you can see as far as the ►**Tremite Islands**, ancient border land, and today a marine reserve as well as a municipality of the Gargano National Park. Between the islands of San Nicola, San Domino, Caprara and Pianosa, yetties belonging to coastal villas and shipwrecks delineate the archaeological map of the sea. A legend narrates that Diomedes was buried here, while his companions were transformed into birds. Their song, together with the solemn and rough beauty of the fantastic kingdom of Ulysses' companion, is the setting for the story of burning passion told in a novel by Balzac and faithfully transposed on film by Jacques

Rivette, a pioneer of Nouvelle Vague, in *★The Duchess of Langeais* (2007). Seen in the film, an Italian-French co-production, are not only the cloister and the colonnade of the courtyard, but also the mosaic pavement of the Benedictine abbey of Santa Maria, built on the ruins of the Roman villa where Giulia may have lived when her father Augusto relegated her there because of her dissolute lifestyle. Instead, a story of solitude and love made of shy glances and awkward approaches matures under the roof of a parsonage in *★Islands* (2011) by Stefano Chiantini, who chose as his stars the Bohemian actor Ivan Franek and Asia Argento. But the islands were also the set of *★The Boy From Ebalus* (1987) by Giuseppe Schito, one of the few Italian films on terrorism. Thanks to their similarity to the Greek islands, some sources make reference to shots filmed for outdoor scenes in *★The Guns of Navarone* (1961), a film nominated for seven Oscars, produced by Columbia Pictures and starring Gregory Peck and Anthony Quinn. Soon to be released is *★Dhulm-Anni di tormento/Dhulm-Years of Torment* (2009), a film produced by the Libyan government to tell the life story of the leader Muammar Gaddafi, who claimed ownership of the archipelago through a series of violent attacks.

SAILOR'S WARNING

PULSATILLA

I'll tell you right off what you'll find on the Gargano. You'll find olive trees, lots of them. If you conceive a daughter on the Gargano, you can pay homage to the place by calling her Olivia, a nice name. Or, if you really want to burden her, you can call her Ripalta, like the Patron Saint of Cerignola who has given her name to many girls bent under the weight of the latitude. You'll find lemon ices made with real lemons, good ones. You'll find people just getting by, fishing or trading, who often won't even greet you with a "good morning" or "good evening" because they were raised among the ravines of a mountainous massif where nothing moves but diffidence and an irritating north wind. You'll swim in turquoise waters that you'll find stunning. And the tufa. Long walls of black tufa, beautiful. And shining houses of white stone. You'll rent a wrecked, but functional moped. You'll park the old contraption at the harbour and you'll go to a restaurant that offers fish at a good price with a view of the sunset. You'll find burnt beaches and forests, that hint at crime and negligence, but that have their own rough charm. You will surely also find unburnt beaches and forests with

the scent of twisted pine trees and karst rock whipped by the wind, eroded and strong. You'll only find excellent mozzarella if someone reveals the best place to buy it, otherwise you won't. You'll find the most beautiful beaches at the end of the most inaccessible paths. You'll hear a hostile language, with few vowels and a gritty sound, "pigghqkss pkkmgfht'nbr'ccdkäus," like something made from a blend of debris and the lava from the ancient volcano. Affordable apartments, hand-painted clay whistles, dried figs, vegetables preserved in oil, useless t-shirts, crowded plazas, improbable discos. Excellent oil, excellent bread, excellent lemon liquor that land on your table with nonchalance and normally in this order. Red wine, with 17% alcohol, to crown a lovely day or to melt the loneliness of an unbearable night. Tomatoes so ripe that they fall to pieces by themselves on your "frise" (rusks) accompanied by the song of the crickets. Non-EU workers tired of cultivating tomatoes. A few great intellectuals, normally in despair. Scented oregano, the best. The backdrops of Andrea Pazienza. A lot of hard work, for you and for us. But, there are those who say it's worth it.



THE STORY-SINGERS OF CARPINO

MAURIZIO SCIARRA

“Carpino, Italy, province of Foggia...” So begins a song by Eugenio Bennato about this small town on the Gargano, known for its oil, but even more so for the tarantella. It was with him, in 2000, that I discovered Carpino, but, above all, the fantastic trio The Choristers, Sacco Andrea, Maccarone Antonio and Piccinino Antonio, all with their surnames strictly before their names. Between 91 and 85 years old, they sang serenades and tarantellas that spoke of love, passion, the cycles of the land linked with the cycles of life. With them I filmed *Chi ruba donne/He Who Steals Women*, which tells of their personal richness, which becomes the richness of their land: the unconscious poetry of those who sing so as not to feel their fatigue. It was an unforgettable experience, the first time that I narrated a piece of Apulia. I had always been afraid of falling into the trap of folklore, the hagiography of territories and emotions. There, it was all so real and natural that there was no danger! “He who steals women is not called a thief, but a young man in love...”,

“Woman at the window, toss me a carnation from the vase,” “You are just a girl of 14, but, little one, you have bewitched my heart...” These are the verses that become enthralling and unrestrained rhythm, far from the “trends” that arrived later, with the “cultured” discovery of the pizzica and the nights of the tarantella... Carpino maintains its traditions and conveys them to the world in a festival that each year brings together story-singers from around the world, in its enchanting August nights. Years have gone by and, of the trio, only Piccinino remains. Maccarone has joined all the women of his life, the women that his wife and the whole town found out about publicly during the first screening of the film in the town square. Andrea Sacco is also gone, he was the first to go. I remember going to the cemetery with him to visit his wife and filming one of the most moving scenes of the film: his serenade to his dead sweetheart, sung while standing on what was to be his tomb. There Andrea said, “I will not die, because those who sing never die.”

Itinerary 2
Foggia and the Tavoliere

The west wind blows
over the golden grain



SAN NICANDRO – APRICENA
RIGNANO – SAN SEVERO – LUCERA
FOGGIA – TROIA – BOVINO – DELICETO
SANT'AGATAÀ– ROCCHETTA SANT'ANTONIO
CANDELA – ASCOLI SATRIANO – CERIGNOLA

On the previous page: Wind and drought, during the post-unification era, favoured the cultivation of wheat which soon transformed Foggia into the “breadbasket of Southern Italy.” In this area, at Borgo Segezia, Daniele Luchetti set the film *My Brother is an Only Child*.

Opposite: Land of marble and quarries, Apricena is also the birthplace and setting for the extreme poverty of the childhood of the great story-teller Matteo Salvatore. The scenarios of stones and labour, like the Pizzicoli quarry, have become the setting for a renowned jazz festival in the summer.



Returning from the Tremiti Islands, on the crest of a hill between Lesina and Varano, you will find ►**San Nicandro**. A student of cinema in Tel Aviv came all the way here from Israel in search of the origins of her name, in a physical, psychological and historical journey, narrated by Vincenzo Condorelli in ★*Zefat, San Nicandro. Il viaggio di Eti/Eti's Journey* (2010). This is how she learned, through previously unseen archive materials, the history – unique in the world – of the small peasant community that spontaneously converted to Judaism, following in the footsteps of Donato Manduzio, in the 1930s. This pretty medieval village was the centrepiece of a film that obtained a well-deserved Lion of San Marco at the Venice Film Festival. For a year, Elio Piccon filmed the images of ★*L'antimiraçolo/The Anti-miracle* (1965) with a cinema camera on his shoulder and then edited Riccardo Cucciolla's voice-over.

Not far away, after visiting the frescoes of Santa Maria di Monte d'Elio and the spectacular Pozzatina sink-hole, 100 metres deep and one of the largest natural amphitheatres in Italy, you reach ►**Rignano**, “Apulia's balcony,” where ★*Padre Pio da Pietrelcina/Padre Pio of Pietrelcina* (1997) was filmed, produced by Rai TV and directed by Alberto Rondalli. The countryside, as far as Foggia, was the set for the surprising short film ★*A Chjàna* (2011), winner of the Con-

trocampo Italiano Prize at the 68th Venice Film Festival. Based on true events and the fight against racism and slavery, it is directed by the Italo-American Jonas Carpignano. Before shooting, the director spent a lot of time with the community of illegal immigrants in Rosarno and the ghettos of Foggia, where he met many of the characters in the film.

The baronial mansion of nearby ►**Apricena** is built on the ruins of the hunting castle of Federico II, who hosted feasts of boar meat and mined the marble for his Castel del Monte here. The choreographic scenario of the town's quarries now hosts a famous, lively August jazz festival.

But the architectural triumph of Apricena's dazzling marble is found in ►**San Severo** in the sumptuous buildings commissioned by abbots and abbesses to create a new Baroque face for the medieval town. A resilient city, birthplace of the creative genius Andrea Pazienza, it was the capital of the Capitanata area and seat of tribunals and the bishop's palace. It was rebuilt in the 1700s after a terrible earthquake. A carved stone portal leads to the grand staircase of honour decorated with stuccoes in the monastery of the Franciscan fathers, now the civic museum. Not far away, is the elegant neo-classic façade of the Verdi Theatre which Umberto Giordano called



Rocky hills in the heart of the Subapennine Dauno are crowned with small, labyrinthical medieval towns like Rocchetta Sant'Antonio, the setting for Maria Teresa di Lascia's bestseller *Passaggio in ombra/Passage in the Shade*.



The Tavoliere, the immense plain that opens up before your eyes as you arrive from the north, after the harshness of Campania's hairpin turns, is one of the most beautiful abstract landscapes in Italy. The ideal geography for an "on the road" film, between undulating expanses of green and wide open skies.

"one of the most modern and beautiful in Italy." San Severo is also the land of wine and vineyards that spread out as far as the eye can see. Today, labyrinthine hypogea transformed into underground cathedrals host historical taverns, such as the maison D'Arapi, also a theatre for jazz concerts. The memory of ancient Dionysian rites, metaphor of the fine line between life and death, lives on in the procession of the "fujenti", who, with mixed feelings of joy and trepidation, chase the rhythmic explosion of fireworks on the festival days held in honour of the Madonna del Soccorso.

Beyond the oscillation of bell towers, cupolas and clay roofs, in the golden sea of the wheat fields, you can see fortified farmhouses, architectural gems that the entrepreneurial middle classes built to protect their fields of grapes, olives and wheat. Here, the marginalised situations and illicit trafficking typical of southern Italy were narrated by the Neapolitan Stefano Incerti in *★Before Sunset* (1999). The aristocratic residences of ►**Lucera**, where ancient families related to the Neapolitan kingdom moved to escape Spanish and Aragonese vassalage, have still not been filmed. Comfortable mansions and luminous façades, with large rooms, frescoed ceilings,

courtyards and loggias, tell tales of barons, marquises and aristocratic landowners. Visiting the exquisite Garibaldi Theatre, a tiny copy of the Petruzzelli Theatre in Bari, or walking along the narrow and winding streets that lead into small squares and unforeseen corners of light, you can experience the tranquillity typical of provincial medieval cities, where the subtle magnetism of history, as Gregorovius said, is of a seduction unequalled worldwide. Twenty-thousand Sicilian Saracens lived in the Arabian fortress on a hill so that "the enemy be discovered from afar." The perfect square of the boundary walls of Federico II's imperial palace still stand. Here Pasquale Festa Campanile directed *★Soldier of Fortune* (1976), with Bud Spencer, evoking the famous Challenge of Barletta in a comic-grotesque style.

Massimo Troisi chose the unpretentious square of the magnificent Angevin cathedral for the setting of *★Le vie del Signore sono finite/The Ways of the Lord are Finite* (1987), the story of Camillo Pianese, an anti-fascist barber, paralysed by love.

►**Foggia** is located in the heart of the Tavoliere, in an immense plain



In Bovino, alleys, narrow streets painted white, and the silence of the land take you over half a century back in time.

Piazza Cavour, wide-angle shot on a modern city, is one of the faces of Foggia, a provincial capital that has rarely been used in the cinema. *I Love You Eugenio* and *AAAACHILLE* are a couple of the films set in the city of the composer Umberto Giordano.

which spreads out like an undulating and multicoloured sea under the infinite sky.

In the city, the elegant mansion of the current provincial Administration was the seat of the Dogana della Mena delle Pecore, where shepherds paid taxes for the transhumant herds of sheep that ploughed through the grassy paths of the sheep tracks coming into the area from the mountains of Molise and Abruzzo. The plain that surrounds the city was basically unproductive until the Unification of Italy. At that time the cultivation of wheat – the only crop that could survive in wind and drought – surpassed sheep farming. Underground storage areas were built in the city to house the treasure of what became the “breadbasket of Southern Italy.” An example is the deep pit in Piazza Piano delle Croci, just a few meters away from the steps to the Church of San Giovanni Battista. Not far away, in Piazza Sant’Eligio, is the spectacular Calvario Church with a baroque arch and five chapels with cupolas that lead to the crypt where assemblies of Normans and Carbonaris met. Rooms and faces from history and tradition were immortalised in the streets

of this neighbourhood by the director Luciano Emmer, with music by Eugenio Bennato, in *★Foggia, non dirle mai addio/Never Say Goodbye to Foggia* (1996). Instead, using aerial panoramas, streets and parts of the town centre, the outskirts and the industrial zone, as well as the areas around the city, Mimmo Mongelli recounts in *★Franco. Un uomo in piedi e la signora vestita di nebbia/A Standing Man and the Woman Dressed in Fog* (2011) the case of the murder of Marcone, director of the Registry Office, which remains one of the most unsettling Italian mysteries. Next to the Bohemian actor Ivan Franek, numerous stories are told in this docu-fiction, not only those of his children Paolo and Daniela, but also of other people involved in the investigation for various reasons.

The ancient and melancholy heart of the city, with the legendary Piazza del Lago, the Norman cathedral and the mansions on Via Arpi, is where singer and showman Renzo Arbore first cultivated his passion for jazz. This area was the setting for the autobiographical story of the Foggian sculptor Giovanni Albanese, who debuted as a director, with great pathos and irony, in *★AAAACHILLE* (2001), star-



Niccolò Ammaniti set his novel *I'm Not Scared* in Apulia. When Gabriele Salvatores shot the film of the same name in 2003, he chose the yellow fields of wheat located on the border of the Ofanto Valley and Basilicata as his location.



ring Sergio Rubini and the young Loris Papienza, who had already worked with Sergio Castellitto in *★Padre Pio* (2000), directed by Carlo Carlei for Mediaset.

Nearby are the music conservatory and the neoclassical City Theatre, both dedicated to Umberto Giordano, composer of some of the most successful Italian operas. He was born in Via Pescheria. Next to the civic museum, the arch with foliage and eagles that was part of the Hohenstaufen palace, decorated with marble basins and columns and courtyards where grand galas were celebrated, honours the memory of Emperor Federico II's predilection for Foggia, where he passed his winters hunting.

But the historical centre, even the interiors of the historical bookshop Dante, welcomed the television cameras led by Lucio Dell'Accio who, in *★Scene di una strage/Scenes From a Massacre* (2010), reconstructs the tangled events of the massacre in Brescia on 28 May 1974. The documentary is supported by a wealth of archive material and accompanied by the music of Ludovico Einaudi, Brian Eno and Claudio Lolli, as well as the voice of Franca Rame who recites *Il romanzo delle stragi/The Novel of Massacres* by Pier Paolo Pasolini. In the search for evidence, the director makes a road movie which, in part, stars Puglia the home of one of the victims: the Foggian teacher and union organizer Luigi Pinto.

Upon entering the modern part of town, the "beastly sun," which dazzled even Ungaretti, is softened by palm trees and fountains that create a historical scenery. Each point of the large starfish-shaped fountain in Piazza Cavour seems to be a starting point for the surrounding wide, tree-lined streets. The fountain is a reminder that the source of the city's water is the Sele River. In this square, you can also find the cupola of the offices of the Aqueduct, where the scene in the round hotel room was filmed in *★I Love You Eugenio* (2001), starring Giuliana De Sio. The white portico of the city park, with a garden by Luigi Oberty, was the setting for another long scene from the film, which won Giancarlo Giannini a David di Donatello for Best Actor. But a passion and talent for the cinema can be found in any of the wide variety of roles that the seventh art offers. After winning awards at the annual Littoriali youth festivals, Domenico Paolella, a young Foggian fascist intellectual, won the Grand Prize of the Cannes Film Festival with his documentary *★La tragedia*



In 2007, Daniele Luchetti directed the film *My Brother is an Only Child*, based on the novel *Il fasciocomunista* by Antonio Pennacchi. He set the childhood of the two main characters, played by Elio Germano and Riccardo Scamarcio in Borgo Segezia, in the greater Foggia area.

An army quartered and waiting for battle or a Shakespearean drama that unfolds inside its walls. The castle of Lucera, with its pentagonal crown of defence turrets, encloses the rest of the building built for Federico II.

dell'Etna/The Tragedy at Etna (1951). Gabriella Cristiani brought home to Foggia the only Oscar award in Apulian history for the editing of Bernardo Bertolucci's blockbuster ★*The Last Emperor* (1987). The actress Lia Di Leo was also from this area. Before moving permanently to the United States, she debuted at Cinecittà as Nerone's slave in ★*Quo Vadis* (1951) by Mervyn LeRoy.

Before leaving the city, the streets on the edge of town lead to the Pino Zaccheria city stadium, which played a star role, together with the coach from Prague, Zdenek Zeman, in the best years in the history of football in Foggia, recounted with delicacy and passion by Giuseppe Sansonna in the docu-film ★*Zemanlandia* (2009).

Upon leaving Foggia, you arrive in ►**Borgo Segezia**. The town's name evokes the Greek goddess appealed to for good harvests. Of the rural villages founded on the edge of the city during the Fascist era in order to transform the Tavoliere's labourers into State farmers, this is certainly one of the most attractive and well-preserved. Daniele Luchetti chose it as the setting for the childhood of the main characters in ★*My Brother is an Only Child* (2007), starring Riccardo Scamarcio and a sensational Elio Germano. The film, based on the novel *Il Fasciocomunista* by Antonio Pennacchi, with an award-

winning screenplay by Stefano Rulli and Sandro Petraglia, is one of the most successful works in recent Italian cinema.

Heading south you will be enchanted by the eleven reliefs in fretwork and the small columns in the rose window of the splendid Romanesque cathedral in ►**Troia**. The church is imbued with Pisan influences and is entered through a door with bronze wings carved with dragons, dogs, lions and the lives of saints and bishops. The "Procession of the Kiss," held on Easter Sunday, ends in the church's forecourt, before emotional observers, with an encounter between the Virgin and the Resurrected Christ. Not far away is the gem of San Basilio and the De'Pazzi house, where Miale da Troia, one of the thirteen Italians who participated in the Challenge of Barletta, lodged. Among horizons of windmills, fields of poppies and sunflowers in spring and snow in winter, the Subapennine Dauno is ushered in on the route that leads to ►**Faeto**. This city on a hill was founded in the Angevin era by a colony from Provence that has maintained its own language. It dominates the Celone Valley amid vast forests and ancient watermills. In ►**Orsara**, where the most interesting Jazz Festival of the region has been held for the past 20 years, the visitor is welcomed by bonfires and skull-shaped pumpkins in November,



Bovino and Deliceto, two small towns in the story, attracted Mario Martone as locations for his film on the Risorgimento, *Noi credevamo/We Believed*, which competed in the Venice Film Festival. Here, in particular, the part of the story regarding the prison was filmed, starring, among others, Luigi Lo Cascio.

or by the knights of Calatrava in procession in August. In this magical and lively atmosphere of lights and colors, the Foggian director Carlo Fenizi decided to set his fairytale comedy *★Effetto Paradosso/Paradox Effect* (2011), which tells with surprising perspicacity and hilarious irony, of the springtime of the life of the main character, interpreted by the splendid Julieta Marocco, alongside Cloris Brosca. The film, all Apulian, boasts the extraordinary participation and soundtrack of Terranima, as well as a predominantly Foggian cast (including non-professional actors) and technicians.

Arriving in ►Bovino e ►Deliceto, one soon feels the need to take a walk around the massive castles. Although some structures in reinforced concrete remain mysterious, the scenery and interiors of these marvels of history convinced Mario Martone to choose this additional location for his feature-length film on the Risorgimento, produced in collaboration with Rai TV, *★Noi credevamo/We Believed* (2010). Based on the book of the same name by Anna Banti and co-written by the Taranto writer Giancarlo De Cataldo, the film is interpreted by an exceptional cast, including Luigi Lo Cascio and Valerio Binasco.

►Sant'Agata, is built on the peak of a rocky summit that offers an immense panorama of the entire plain, as far as the gulf. Rudolph Jula came here for the filming of *★Cattolica* (2003), a Swiss-German co-production. Toni Santagata, a pioneer of folk music who became an actor with Pupi Avati, was born here.

A stone's throw from the medieval town ►Rocchetta Sant'Antonio, setting for the bestseller and Strega award-winner *Passaggio in ombra/Passage in the Shade* by Maria Teresa Di Lascia, you will find ►Candela, quietly sitting on a mountain top, looking down on the valleys of the Carapelle and Ofanto Rivers. It was the charm of these fields, painted in epic shots of the main characters amid the wild, golden wheat blown about by the west wind, that convinced Gabriele Salvatores to choose this as the site for his film *★I'm Not Scared* (2003), based on the novel of the same name by Niccolò Ammaniti. It is set in the rural, almost mythical, south and was put forward by Italy at the Oscars as Best Foreign Film. Nearby, atop the three hills where Pirro triumphed over the Romans, is ►Ascoli Satriano, birthplace of Michele Placido, director and screenwriter, as well as actor in the Rai TV programme *★Padre Pio-Tra cielo e terra/Padre Pio-Between Heaven and Earth* (2000), directed by Giulio Base. Around the town, archaeologists have unearthed a Neolithic village, Faragola's Roman villa and the ruins of the ancient city of Herdonia, including its walls, towers, basilica, thermal baths and amphitheatre.

Heading back down to the plain, you will reach ►Cerignola. In 1958, the luminous and majestic cathedral and the Corso cinema, just opened, were the setting for many scenes in *★Legs of Gold*, a comedy set to music by Lelio Luttazzi, with Totò, in which local actor Rosario Borelli played the role of a footballer on a team that Baron Luigi Fontana wanted to sell together with his rare wines. The town, besides being the location of the house in which Pietro Mascagni composed the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*, lays claim to other illustrious citizens: from Nicola Zingarelli, author of the first Italian language dictionary, to Giuseppe Di Vittorio, symbol of the proletariat and the peasant revolts in the Tavoliere area and throughout Apulia. The director Fernando di Leo is a native of nearby ►San Ferdinando di Puglia. He was the screenwriter for Sergio Leone's first spaghetti-westerns and the founder of Daunia Film, finally rediscovered thanks to Quentin Tarantino.

... AND THEN THERE ARE THE “FOGGIANI”

RENZO ARBORE

ZOOM

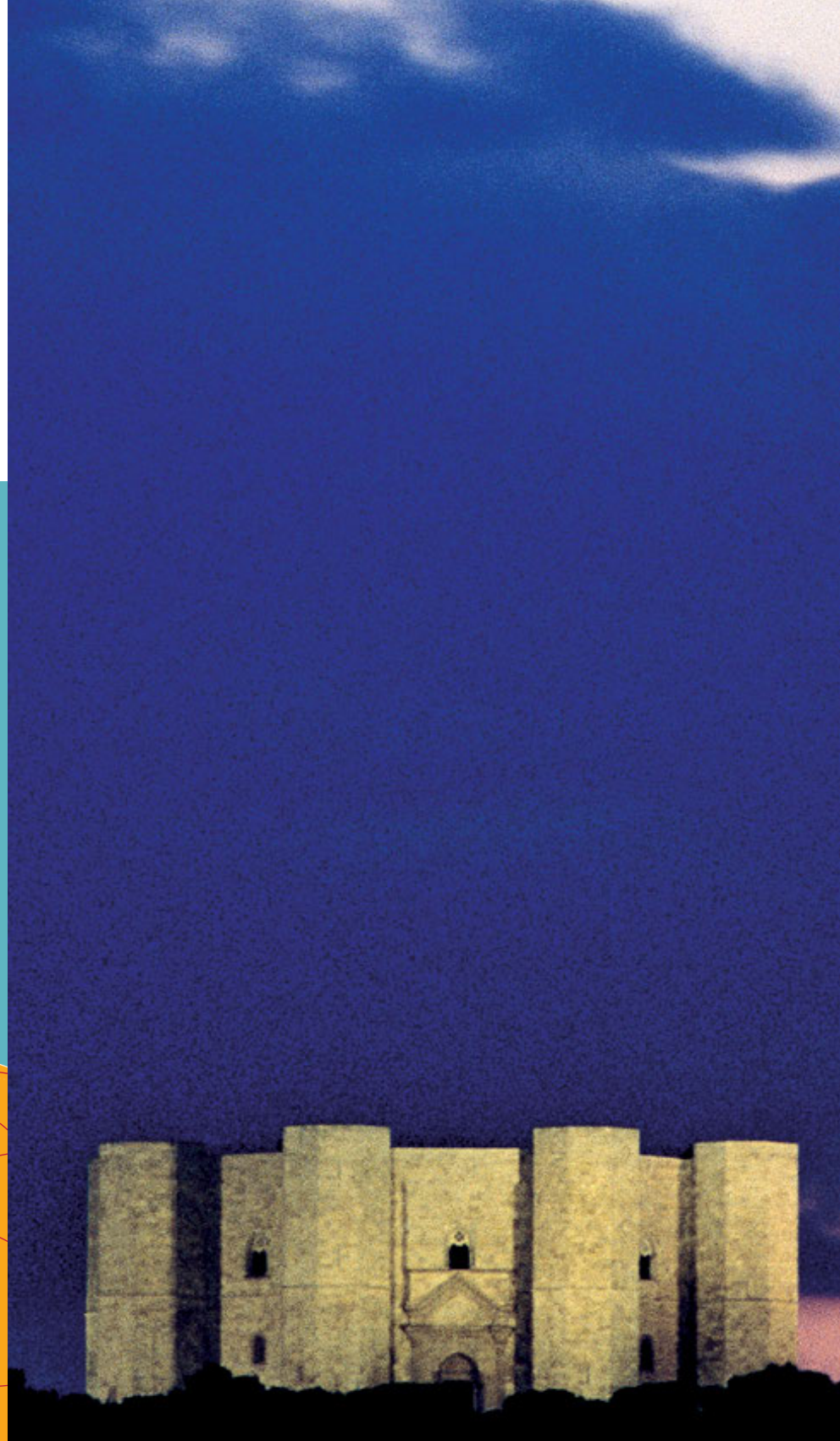


When I was a child, there was a saying that was very offensive to us Foggians, “Fuggi da Foggia non per Foggia ma per i foggiani/Run away from Foggia, not because of Foggia, but because of the Foggians.” It was an easy proverb because, naturally, the assonance between “fuggi” and “Foggia” was very strong, but, if you wanted to, you could also say Fiuggi. It has always been thought, therefore, that Foggians are inhospitable, but the exact opposite is true. They, including the undersigned, have a rather self-deprecating manner regarding their fellow townsmen (we always feel a form of smug scepticism for each other’s abilities), while we have unlimited admiration for “non-natives,” who are always welcomed with open arms. My friends who debuted at the Taverna del Gufo know something about this phenomenon. Carlo Verdone, Roberto Benigni, Massimo Troisi, Enrico Montesano. Later, after travelling around the world, I realised that Foggia was a modern city, particularly beautiful in the old town, with its Federican ruins, where you can still breathe the atmosphere of the simple, country life that starts in Piazza della Cattedrale and continues on as far as the Giordano Conservatory. A very Mediterranean city, easy to live in, full of trees, clean, orderly. The surprises continue in its rich

and picturesque province. We have an extraordinary promontory, one of the most beautiful in Italy, where you can smell the scent of the “savoury” sea. We have the Tremiti Islands which have not suffered from unfortunate development, but have remained unspoiled. Then, there is the Umbra Forest which overlooks many towns that I will not name so as not to make you jealous. There are also two lakes, Lesina and Varano, sought out by gourmets for their eels. We have large cities like San Severo, Cerignola and Manfredonia that are as beautiful and hospitable as the smallest towns. There is San Giovanni Rotondo which has become an important pilgrimage destination thanks to the spirituality of Padre Pio. Also Incoronata has a black Madonna to whom we are all devoted. There are the salt mines at Margherita di Savoia, home to pink flamingos that are an amazing sight when they take flight. But the image that always comes to my mind when I think of Foggia and its surroundings, is that of its golden wheat interspersed with red poppies. A decidedly unique sight that I have never found anywhere else in the world. And, to conclude, as a man of music, let me remind you that Foggia is the birthplace of Umberto Giordano, one of Italy’s greatest composers.

Itinerary 3
Barletta, Andria, Trani

The lights and shadows
of a paradoxical retaliation



BARLETTA – TRANI – ANDRIA
CASTEL DEL MONTE – MOLFETTA
BISCEGLIE – GIOVINAZZO – CANOSA
MARGHERITA DI SAVOIA

On the previous page: Many agree that Castel del Monte, a mysterious gem built for Federico II, the “puer Apuliae,” is the most beautiful castle in the world. Jean-Jacques Annaud was inspired to film *The Name of the Rose* here.

Opposite: The imposing Norman-Swabian castle that dominates Barletta naturally calls adventure to mind. The cinema was not immune to this call, from Zeffirelli, who filmed a few scenes of *Othello* here, to Mingozi, with *Flavia: Heretic Priestess*.



“One fine day in April of the year 1504, the bells of San Domenico in Barletta chimed the last notes of the Ave Maria. In the square on the seashore...”

Our itinerary can only begin with this outdoor evening scene from a script written 150 years ago, but still today able to open imaginary horizons that identify a territory, a city, and the province that we are about to visit.

It is the opening scene of *Ettore Fieramosca* by Massimo d’Azeglio. The Challenge of Barletta as a story that becomes a legend, an epic poem that becomes a folk epic. Pure cinema. When you arrive in ► **Barletta**, the road sign at the traffic circle that leads to the sea, to Trani and to Andria (the other two principal cities of the area) says “City of the Challenge,” beneath a monument to Ettore Fieramosca. He brandishes a battle-axe against La Motte who lies defeated at his feet. This is perhaps not the friendliest welcome for a French tourist, but for everyone else it is the entrance ticket to the myth. The curtains rise. The famous film about the Challenge of Barletta is very old and still very good, it has made generations quiver. ★ *Ettore Fieramosca* by Alessandro Blasetti, 1938, featured all the film stars of the age: Clara Calamai, Elisa Cegani, Osvaldo Valenti, Andrea Checchi and, in the title role, Gino Cervi. After him, there was Bud

Spencer. Forty years after Blasetti, Pasquale Festa Campanile filmed ★ *Soldier of Fortune* in 1976. Philippe Leroy was the hateful Frenchman La Motte, Bud Spencer was Fieramosca. This version was more picaresque than a heroic tale, more bragging and punching than blood and honour. It was also more historically accurate. The Challenge must have been bloodless, 13 against 13 (did you know that this is the reason that only in Italy, unlike the rest of the world, is 13 a lucky number?). There was one death because the traitor was killed, no one had explained to Graiano d’Asti that Asti wasn’t in France, according to the geography of that century, but was in the future Italy. And for a Bud Spencer-style added extra, just remember that the 13 Italians included Fanfulla da Lodi and another cinematographic must: Brancalone. *Soldier of Fortune* was filmed in a fantastic landscape in Lucera, at the castle where the Saracen guards of Federico II lodged. For the film, the castle was transformed into the walls of Barletta attacked by the French. If you would like to trace the real sites of the Challenge, you will find it all in Barletta. Starting at the Church of San Domenico with its high façade along the city’s main street, then passing through the narrow streets of the historical centre, you will find the wine shop where Fieramosca threw down the glove in a challenge to La Motte because he had insulted the Italians. The wine



shop is in a rusticated 15th century building. Although the furnishings have been reconstructed as if for a film, it is still interesting to visit. The square cited by d'Azeglio is also there, with the monumental marine harbour, but since the level of the sea is lower today, the square is now 300 meters from the entry to the port. In the small street that leads to the cathedral, built during the Crusades by King Richard Lionheart, where the oath to save the honour of Italy was made, the lateral streets are named after the 13 who were from all the regions of Italy, from Sicily to Lombardy. To conclude the Challenge tour, continue on for 200 meters past the wine shop, keeping it to your left, and, on the right, you will find the unusual, for this area of Apulia, and stunning Baroque Palazzo della Marra. It has a loggia with cupids and pterodactyl angels facing the sea. Do not miss the De Nittis collection inside the building, more than 100 paintings by the master of impressionism, who was born here and made a name for himself in Paris. Even great art can be linked to the Challenge, Massimo d'Azeglio himself was an excellent painter, and in that fateful year, 1503, Leonardo painted the Mona Lisa.

The imposing Norman-Swabian castle already dominated the city in that year, but cinematic connections lead us to other adventures, again between history and literature. In 1986, Franco Zeffirelli set ★*Othello*, his film-opera with Katia Ricciarelli and Plácido Domingo here. Barletta as Cyprus. In the film, Othello announced from the bastion of the castle of Barletta that, "Muslim pride was buried in the sea." However, the same castle, in immense underground dungeons, in a secret little port, and on boundless terraces overlooking the sea, was the setting in 1974 for one of the strangest, craziest and most unfairly forgotten films ever set in Apulia: ★*Flavia: Heretic*

A dizzying view of Trani with its cathedral, the pearl of the Romanesque style in Europe. This city provided a whole genre of the Italian-style sexy comedy. Starting in 1975 with one of the first of these films: *Under-graduate Girls*, starring Gloria Guida.

Priestess by Gianfranco Mingozzi, starring the superstar and iconographic Florinda Bolkan. Actually, the story took place in the Salento area, in and around Otranto, during the Turkish invasions, but the castle of Barletta plays an important role. Flavia, forced to be a nun and, therefore, a rebel, falls in love with a Muslim conqueror who lands in Apulia and her conversion to Islam passes paradoxically (by today's standards) as a feminist assertion of the rights of women, humiliated by the Church and male chauvinists. In the end, she is flayed alive by priests and Christian leaders. The torture scenes and the final battle are set in the castle of Barletta, in its two gun towers (worth visiting for their echo and the vertigo brought on by their height and depth). Its ramps allow for entry to its bastions on horseback. A visit to the castle of Barletta requires at least the two hours of the film. In this same fortress, particularly in the moat that today is the site of gardens and concerts, many of the sequences of Pupi Avati's film ★*The Knights of the Quest* (2001), with Raoul Bova and Murray F. Abraham, were filmed. The period is that of the Crusades, which brings us to another symbol of Barletta: the statue of Hercules in front of the Church of Santo Sepolcro. The bronze figure of the Byzantine emperor Heracles (or perhaps Theodosius), more than five meters high, shone bright with a coat of gold in Constantinople's hippodrome. During the sacking of the 4th Crusade, not against Muslims, but against Orthodox Byzantines in 1204, the Venetians



The Puglian comedian Uccio De Santis made his film debut directed by Vito Cea in *Non me lo dire/Don't Tell Me*.



Pinuccio Lovero. *Sogno di una morte di mezza estate/Pinuccio Lovero. A Midsummer Death's Dream* is the docudrama that the young director Pippo Mezzapesa, who has already won a David di Donatello for his short film *Zinanà*, created around the figure of a philosophical undertaker.

stole the statue, but their ship was wrecked off the Apulian coast and the statue washed up on the shores of Barletta. Today it is the guardian of the city. If you liked ★*Kingdom of Heaven* by Ridley Scott, the glorious defeat of Balian, the fall of Jerusalem and the return to Europe, enter the Santo Sepolcro Church. It celebrates that flight from the Holy Land, and the pain of its loss. It was built by the survivors of San Giovanni d'Acri, the last Christian stronghold, who landed at Barletta. It houses a fragment of the true cross, a warning of defeat. Do you remember the best lines from the film? "You go to certain death." "All death is certain."

A complete change of scene and genre for the film debut of the Apulian television comedian Uccio De Santis. Vito Cea directed him in ★*Non me lo dire/Don't Tell Me* (2012). He plays a comedian who falls into the abyss of depression, and appears with Nando Paone, Aylin Prandi and Mia Benedetta. Itinerant locations with stops in Barletta, Sant'Agata di Puglia, Margherita di Savoia, Bari, Fasano, Cisternino and Monopoli.

Just 12 kilometres down the road to the south and you reach ►**Trani**, rich in art and history. However, your visit must begin in front of a building with Fascist architecture, which faces onto the sea. Above, there is a date, 1934, and the original inscription, "Middle School"

the "De Santis" secondary school. This is the birthplace of the Italian-style sexy comedy. It was 1975 when Michele Massimo Tarantini filmed the granddaddy film of the genre (scholastic subspecies, not to be confused with the military, hospital or "decamerotic" variants). An unforgettable Gloria Guida stars in ★*Under-graduate Girls*. In class, among professors and students, Gianfranco D'Angelo, Alvaro Vitali and Ilona Staller. Soon thereafter, still in Trani, Mariano Laurenti filmed ★*Coeds*, with Femi Benussi, and ★*La compagna di banco/ The Desk-mate*, with Lilli Carati. But Gloria Guida was the star of sex on the desks, the fatal thigh under the professor's desk, watching a girl take a shower through the keyhole, the eulogy to masturbation, soft pornography for the whole family. In 1979, the sequel ★*How to Seduce Your Teacher*, was filmed in the same secondary school in Trani with Lino Banfi, his uncle the headmaster Pasquale Lo Ricchiuto, Alvaro Vitali the janitor. Edwige Fenech, Carmen Villani, Nadia Cassini, the other scholastic divas were teachers, not students. Gloria Guida had no rivals. Also in Trani, although not in a classroom, Pamela Prati debuted completely nude in 1981 in Michele Massimo Tarantini's film ★*La moglie in bianco, l'amante al pepe/ The Wife in White, The Hot Lover*, an absolutely ingenious title. Now, leave the secondary school, and young erotic impulses, behind



you and you will find yourself in front of the sea. Walking along the seafront to the right, passing by reefs, restaurants and cycling paths, after about half a kilometre you will reach the small Colonna peninsula, with the monastery of the same name which is well worth a visit. To the other side of the secondary school, a few dozen metres away, the city park lies above the sea, offering a delightful walk amid “the rustle of the fronds” and “the roar of the waves.” Paths, groves of trees and displays for the delight of children’s games and lovers. Hidden under the wall, a delightful Art Nouveau beach club which seems like the set of a silent film. The park ends at the small fort overlooking the circular harbour, guarded on the other side by the cathedral, at the same time sail and lighthouse. It is named Saint Nicholas, not to be confused with Saint Nicholas of Bari. Saint Nicolino was a pilgrim the other way around: he arrived here from the east to see the Pope, he died of starvation at age 19 and the airiest cathedral in Apulia was dedicated to him. It is a triumph of the Romanesque style, highly photogenic, even used in advertising, but be careful when framing your photo. The sun illuminates the façade in the afternoon and the startlingly tall bell tower may get cut off. The cathedral also appears in ★*Flavia: Heretic Priestess* and in another feminist film, this time set in the present, ★*Desire* (1983), directed by Anna Maria Tatò, Marcello Mastroianni’s last partner, photographed by Giuseppe Rotunno, screenplay by Vincenzo Cerami. And also in ★*Turné/On Tour* (1990) by Gabriele Salvatores with Diego Abatantuono, Fabrizio Bentivoglio and Laura Morante who is

Giovinazzo, a seaside village located on the way to Bari, amazes with its Arabian-style cathedral which dominates the small port guarded by round towers. Rubini filmed a few scenes from *All the Love There Is* here.

contested by the two. Do not miss the bronze door of Barisano, now kept inside the cathedral to protect it from sea-salt, which depicts, among the evangelical and biblical figures, a thin boy, Saint Nicolino. Also visit the crypt with its forest of columns. But while Trani, with reflections on the harbour and the whiteness of its stone, seems to be a concentrate of the rhetoric on Apulia’s light that so fascinates directors, it also suggests a paradoxical revenge. Think of all the thrills of the vampire films you have seen. Well, Trani could be the Mediterranean homeland of Dracula. The reason is simple: the light is blinding, it dazes, it can cause visions more terrible than those of the night. Fear of the sun driving straight down among these houses and terraces is more real and significant than fear of the dark. Escape from the sun, enter the semi-darkness of the diocesan museum, right next to the cathedral. Among paintings and Madonnas, reliquaries and crucifixes, saints and icons, all admirable things, on the second floor you will find the bust, a round high-relief in marble, of Monsignor Davanzati. Born in Bari, he was Archbishop of Trani, where he died in 1755. He wrote, before John W. Polidori and Bram Stoker, a Dissertation on Vampires, not a novel, but the most exhaustive analysis of the vampire phenomenon ever, still unequalled today. He, an illuminist bishop, did not believe, but his dissertation describes all the beliefs, and the scanty evidence, of



flight and bloodsucking, the walking dead and cadavers pierced by stakes. Just the titles of a few chapters make the mouth water: On the Power Delegated to the Demon; Which Physical Causes Could Produce Vampire Appearances. You will see Trani in a different light. Take a walk through its labyrinth of narrow streets and lose yourself in your defensive fantasies. Christopher Lee is around the corner. Even a stroll through the park can have its surprises, dark corners thick with vegetation, a round little castle with a spiral staircase... The book reprinted by Besa is the most original souvenir of Trani for yourself and as a gift. Just recently, in the cemetery next to the Colonna monastery, strange skeletons have been found with a piece of pointed wood between the ribs. A rite against the plague, the experts said. Hmmm! Who knows what dear Davanzati would think to know that Trani has become the land of the BAT... In the end, the bat won. To stay with the Gothic theme while, in the Romanesque town, go the church of the Templars with its apse on the harbour and the entry with a portico on the much darker street behind. It guards secrets and a buried treasure, but to find them you have to demolish the church, and when the church of the Templars falls down, Trani will disappear. "We are dwarves on the shoulders of giants," this much quoted phrase was coined by a rabbi in Trani in the 13th century when, as the ghetto and the two synagogues open to the public attest, there was a flourishing Jewish community protected

A gigantic screen of air and white mountains of salt make the salt flats of Margherita di Savoia a unique scenery. The evaporation off the salty basins creates a pink and white optical illusion, an evocative mirage.

by Federico II. The emperor had his castle, symbol of secular power, built across from the cathedral. This is where Elena di Epiro married Manfredi, favourite son of Federico, and here she was imprisoned after the fall of the Swabians. Elena d'Epiro is *★La regina che venne dal mare/The Queen Who Came From the Sea*, title of the recent docu-fiction by Carmine Fornari which, rich in beautiful images, uses Kubrick's technique in *★Barry Lyndon* of reconstructing an entire epoch through individual events. The sad story of Elena is the inspiration for widening, as Fornari does, the Federican range of influence as far as Andria and Lucera. Here, in what remains of the Arab town where the Emperor's Muslim guard lived, it seems you still hear echoes of the Orient in the boundless perimeter of the town walls, a kilometre long, completely empty inside. The French Angiovinis, after having defeated Manfredi, made a clean sweep of the infidels, who were faithful to the Swabians. In the Cathedral of Andria, Federico's two wives are buried: Isabel of England and Yolanda of Jerusalem, Queen of Cyprus. They died at age 16, according to the papists they were poisoned by their husband who wanted to enjoy in peace the favours of the Apulian Bianca Lancia, mother of

Manfredi. The castle, well-restored, with interwoven courtyards and ramparts that descend straight into the waves, should be your last stop in Trani, in view of another castle, not on the sea, but in the sky. To close the triangle of the triple capitals of the BAT (Barletta-Andria-Trani) province, you must pass by the magical octagon. ► **Andria's** most famous monument is located about 20 kilometres from the city. Travelling towards the Murgia, you see before you a nipple on a hill-breast. As you draw nearer, the shapes take form as in a kaleidoscope. ► **Castel del Monte** is simply the most beautiful castle in the world. Fantastic architecture and architectural fantasy. It was a natural choice for the film based on the novel that was a monument to the force of mystery and the passion of reason: *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco. That's right, Eco was inspired by this very castle in his description and reconstruction, in the manner of a theatre of memory, of the abbey's library, fulcrum of all secrets and all answers. He was thinking of Castel del Monte and Piranesi's drawings. In 1986, when Jean-Jacques Annaud made the film with Sean Connery in the role of William of Baskerville, Castel del Monte, slightly disguised, was the labyrinth of books doomed to burn, the symbol of all the citations, the dovetails, the rhetorical figures of the event. Seeing it as a labyrinthical library, Eco and his director hit the nail on the head. When you enter, remember that the castle is, first and foremost, a labyrinth. This is the only interpretation clear to anyone. First, looking at it from the outside, you can imagine many other possibilities: a solar bomb, an esoteric machine, the Emperor's stone crown, an astral meridian, a time machine, a lodge for hunting and sexual pleasures, the building that houses the Holy Grail. Eight octagonal towers, each located at the eight corners of a perfect octagonal layout. The octagon is the geometric figure half-way between the square, representing the earth, and the circle, the sky. The number eight is the symbol of infinity, eight is the eighth day after the seven days of creation, and so goes beyond creation. And yet, in its apparent symmetry, if carefully observed from the outside, there are unsettling divergences, for example in the position of windows and loopholes. Inside, the layout should be simple, eight diamond-shaped rooms on the ground floor, the same above, with an octagonal courtyard in the centre. But try to walk through it: the doors, lighting, spiral staircases, passages from one room to



In 1999, the director Michele Lanubile made his only, successful, full-length film. It is called *Io non ho la testa/I'm Not With It* and is the story of a journey made by two monks in the Apulia of Federico II, in the 13th century. Filmed at Castel del Monte.

another are all out of order, designed specifically to confuse (does one enter or exit?), to render your progress non-linear, with walls suddenly closed off so that you have to go back in the direction you came from. After a short time in a place that is, admittedly, small, you lose your sense of orientation and the spaces seem to expand. Castel del Monte is a labyrinth, not only of the mind. More than a magic box, a magician's box. Or, logically: a magic lantern. The year is 1240, the cinema is an architectural sequence that seems to have invented the secret of movement. Castel del Monte is the backdrop, or better still, it inundates the screen in an Italian-style police story from 1976. ★ *Cross Shot* by the master of the genre Stelvio Massi, with John Saxon, Renzo Palmer, Lino Capolicchio, Lee J. Cobb (no less!) and the Apulian actress Rosanna Fratello. In 1999 the Apulian director Michele Lanubile filmed ★ *Io non ho la testa/I'm Not With It*, with monks, philosophers, Jews, Saracens and Byzantines, entirely in Federico's court.

After the wonder of Castel del Monte, it's not easy to return to Andria. Yet its large historical centre offers churches, cloisters, stairways and noble mansions that deserve a half-day adventure (you will find a labyrinth here, too). A couple of scenes from ★ *The*



The historical center of Bisceglie, a seaside village, is made of ancient stone. Together with Molfetta and Giovinazzo it is an example of the rich and suggestive harbours that guard this part of the Adriatic Coast. The world of the cinema seems not to have discovered these towns yet.



Since the Roman age, Barletta, with its landing stage, has played a strategic role as a crossroads of people and exchanges. An oxbow of sea, today shaped by factories that are also very close to the historical centre, creates a strong contrast.

Basilisks (1963) by Lina Wertmüller were filmed in Andria's narrow streets, white with lime and sheets on the line, as well as in Spinazola and Minervino Murge. Southern loafers in the motionless time of aspirations perpetually postponed.

Let's turn back towards the sea, heading south, towards Bari. Bisceglie and Molfetta show off their dense marine villages. ► **Molfetta** has a spectacular cathedral on the sea with two bell-towers. ► **Bisceglie** has two Norman towers and the dark church of a strange saint, Saint Adoeno, who was also a Norman. The world of the cinema seems not to have discovered these scenes of the south influenced by northern mists. In contrast, ► **Giovinazzo**, continuing on towards Bari, is stunning with a Arabian-style cathedral that overlooks a small harbour enclosed by round towers and tortuous alleys. Sergio Rubini filmed a few sequences of *★All the Love There Is* (2000) in Giovinazzo. The area between Giovinazzo and Bitonto was the setting for the docudrama *★Pinuccio Lovero. Sogno di una morte di mezza estate/Pinuccio Lovero. A Midsummer Death's Dream* (2008) by the young filmmaker Pippo Mezzapesa, which tells the tale of an aspiring gravedigger.

Heading inland from Barletta, halfway to Canosa, you will find the road to Canne, or better ► **Canne della Battaglia**. The archaeological

park lies atop a knoll with the stratified ruins of various eras, a bit like Troia. A Roman city, then Byzantine and Medieval. Classic columns and early Christian basilicas. The Ofanto River flows by below. This is the site of the most famous battle in ancient history. In 216 B.C. Hannibal used the pincer attack, still studied today in military academies around the world, to annihilate the Roman legions. The best film on the subject is *★Hannibal* by Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia, made in 1959. Victor Mature, with a patch over one eye, is the Carthaginian leader; Gabriele Ferzetti played Quinto Fabio Massimo, the delayer. Actually, the battle was filmed on the Serbian-Romanian border, with 12,000 extras. Later, television showed us admirable computer reconstructions of the battle, but the scene in the film is incomparable, when Hannibal-Mature explains the pincer attack to his generals using his sword to represent the Ofanto River and goblets of wine as infantrymen and cavalry.

► **Canosa** has museums and tombs to help us remember the glorious past of one of the most important Apulian towns, from the pre-Roman age to the Imperial age with frescoed graves and collections of vases with an iconographic array of myths, heroes and gods. For all practical purposes, the cinema of the age was projected on a round screen: the amphora. A sort of blockbuster that brought



visual tales into the home. Do not miss the basilica of San Leucio, an early Christian church built on the Temple of Minerva, of which you can still see colonnades, mosaics and large marble heads. The Antiquarium is just next door. Canosa also offers another itinerary, that of the Norman-Crusader, starting at the tomb of Boemondo, a small temple-sepulchre with clear references to the Holy Land. This was Norman Duke Boemondo d'Altavilla, conqueror and lord of Antioch in the first Crusade. In the adjacent cathedral of San Sabino (protector saint of poisoned people), there is a bishop's throne and tabernacle from the year 1000, as well as the so-called door of Boemondo, with bronze knockers probably sculpted in Constantinople, but certainly of Oriental manufacture. A trip up to the Norman castle offers a view of the Tavoliere as far as Vulture. Returning by the Roman bridge over the Ofanto River, which has resisted floods for 2,000 years more efficiently than the new motorways, brings you back to echoes of Hannibal and the Emperors. All that remains is a stop in ►[Margherita di Savoia](#) to admire its

Pink flamingoes are one of the attractions in the wetlands around the salt flats of Margherita di Savoia. Many passionate birdwatchers come here to see them take flight.

gigantic air screen. But you have to be lucky, very lucky. The key factors are great heat and a clear sky. If both are present, the large mirrors of the salt flats, with the white mountains of salt, seem to reflect the land upward and evanescent images appear in the sky, created by the evaporation of the basins of salt water. A mirage is called the "Fata Morgana," or Morgan le Fay, in Italian. While the water level falls, before the salt emerges, the basins become pink with microorganisms, as well as the pink flamingos that are the main attraction of the protected wetland (guided walks can be booked). The cinema could make good use of these areas, so far untouched by the motion picture camera. No films have been made in Margherita di Savoia and its salt flats, but, who knows, perhaps this is due to a spell cast by a jealous Morgan le Fay.



THE OCTAGONAL ENIGMA

FRANCO CARDINI

Professional scholars detest “esoteric” and “mysterious” literature, written for *amateurs* by “experts” who, too often, are only designated as such by themselves. Castel del Monte is – along with the pyramids, the Holy Grail, the Templars (and, not by chance, often mixed together with the three fateful subjects) – one of the preferred topics of these “experts” and these *amateurs*.

Nonetheless, it is no surprise that the splendid, mysterious gem of the Murgia holds such an intense mystique for many seekers and would-be experts. There’s no denying it: despite the many serious studies, not as numerous as the infinite number of “mysterious” works, but, nonetheless, many in number, we are still far from being able to affirm that that enigmatic octagonal monument has revealed all of its secrets.

Starting with its actual purpose and the reason why it was founded and built.

Therefore, all questions remain unanswered: its original function, the uses it was planned for and the actual use made of it by the king who had it built, the meaning of the chosen shape and of the iconic plan used, its value in the context of the whole of Federican architecture, its geographical position and its relationship with the celestial and astronomical order. The latter is an inescapable topic when speaking of architecture, especially architecture that is in some way “public” and even “holy” (in the anthropological sense of the term), not only in the Middle Ages.

It is legitimate – beyond the temptation to fall into the area of the occult – to investigate the legend of Castel del Monte along with examining the true history, that written and that still to be written, because research, by definition and by its nature, never ends. The legend comes from the castle’s history and is a legitimate, even inescapable, story subject.

SCENT OF “ROUSA” (ROSE)

LINA WERTMÜLLER

ZOOM



I have made many films in Apulia. It is a region that I like very much. It is beautiful by the sea, but also in the inland areas. I have always been struck by its profound personality. As soon as you pass the borders between Apulia and Calabria or between Apulia and Basilicata, you can immediately feel the change in the landscape. The colours of the towns, the houses and the people change.

It's strange. Certainly the fact that there are white houses is due to the influence of Magna Grecia. In Apulia, the tradition is to paint them every year. There are also white houses in Sicily, but it is not a family rule that the walls must be repainted every March or April. Apulians feel a profound need for cleanliness and candour.

And then there's the language. Just as an example, I have always been intrigued by the destiny of the “o.” While in Sicily “rose” is pronounced “rròsa,” in Apulia it becomes “rousa.” I am also struck by the Greek atmosphere in the seaside villages. Candid white homes for people of the sea on the blue-green of the Adriatic Sea. I hope they will not be massacred by the modern building industry that is ruining

our small cities, but that they will be respected and honoured for their unique and ancient beauty. Would that they remain as they are, and not change in any way. They have the scent of the Orient, they are a message from our past. I even wrote a story on the defence of the “sea villages.” It is always an enchanting encounter when you come here to make a film. Apulia is blessed with everything, with light, landscape, the olive trees that create green reverberations in the land, extraordinary food, and profound and happy people. Just think of the people of Bari and their history. Think of those famous Apulian pirates who were paid by the Venetian Republic to steal the body of Saint Nicholas. They survived a violent thunderstorm, attributed the miracle to the saint they had on board and decided to keep him in Bari and make him their patron saint. Saint Nicholas is the most famous saint in the world, even more so than Saint Francis. In winter he changes into the smiling and happy Santa Claus. Isn't that a good sign? We are so lucky to have been born in Italy! Every morning we should kiss the ground. And Apulia is one of the most beautiful pearls in this crown.

THE GREAT DREAM

STEVE DELLA CASA



Lino Banfi (as everyone knows) is really named Pasquale Zagaria and has worked in every kind of performing art, from picture story magazines to TV series, and is always great. He mastered the art of the curtain raiser, debuted at the cinema in small parts, became a star with the Italian-style comedy and then the best-loved actor of both dramatic and entertaining TV series. Since he knows how to be a true comedy king, he knows he can never slow down. Therefore, every so often we see him return to the comic roles that made him famous, even now that the viewing public knows him better as Grandpa Libero or as an understanding father able to acknowledge the point of view of two “different” daughters. Probably his best performances were as leading actor in four films. In *Il Commissario Lo Gatto/Inspector Lo Gatto* Dino Risi’s touch can be felt; *Vieni avanti cretino/Step Up Idiot* in which he is directed by Luciano Salce (who played the part of the true comedy king, using character actors he knew well for small, unforgettable roles); *Fracchia la belva umana/Fracchia, the Human Beast* (notable for Neri Parenti’s rhythm and, above all, for the way Banfi outclasses Paolo Villaggio, which

is anything but easy to do); and *L’allenatore nel pallone/The Drowsy Coach*, directed with the expertise of Sergio Martino. In all of these films, Banfi adds his own touch to the gags in the screenplay. Like Totò (but, above all, like Age and Scarpelli), Banfi invented his own non-existent language, an Apulian dialect with an exaggerated emphasis on the vowel “e.” This has been his forte since his days as curtain raiser, when he sang *Filomeña muy hermosa è scappata da Canosa/Beautiful Filomeña Ran Away From Canosa*. He has another characteristic, he never forgets his friends and this has granted him entry into theatrical history. A history that Banfi knows well and which he talks about willingly. A history of plates of pasta cooked clandestinely in rented rooms without kitchens, of real solidarity, of ingenious, nasty little tricks, of some dreams that come true and many others that are dashed. Banfi’s dream came true when he became famous, sought after, recognised, appreciated. He has always been a great person, even when no one paid any attention to that obscure character actor who appeared every once in a while in the role of a B-movie Apulian...

Itinerary 4
The Murgia

Into the abyss
in cinemascope



CERIGNOLA – RUVO – TERLIZZI
GRUMO – ALTAMURA – GRAVINA
SPINAZZOLA – MINERVINO MURGE

On the previous page: A dizzy and seemingly endless climb leads up to Minervino Murge, a small town that charmed Lina Wertmüller. She set her masterpiece, *The Basilisks*, here in 1963.

Opposite: Called the “lioness of Apulia,” Altamura joined the Neapolitan Republic in 1799. The historical centre conserves its places, memories and monuments in the streets around the cathedral built for Federico II.



In the making of the recent television film on Giuseppe Di Vittorio, the great Apulian trade unionist, interpreted by Pierfrancesco Favino, there arose a strange controversy between Cerignola, birthplace of Di Vittorio, and Gravina, chosen by the production company for the setting of Di Vittorio's childhood and first struggles. Di Vittorio was a self-taught labourer who became the General Secretary of the CGIL and a leader in the international trade-unionism movement. ► **Cerignola** protested and, as a result, a few scenes were filmed at the actual sites where Di Vittorio lived. Not on the Murgia, but on the Tavoliere. Besides the realisation that the historical centre of Gravina is the perfect place to set a rural town of the early 1900s, this was the beginning of a kind of cinematographic cliché in which Apulian peasant culture was thought to be best captured with the landscape of the Murgia. Actually, the Murgia is a land of rocky hills, 400-500 metres high, that is never cultivated, but best suited for raising livestock. There are, however, farmhouses and highly photogenic panoramas. Several memorable films have chosen this area of Apulia as a land of strong and severe agricultural connotation. It is not the wheat fields of the Tavoliere, nor the vineyards of the large Apulian plain, but the Murgia which represents the archaic and untamed beauty of the countryside. An archetypical

film is ★ *Three Brothers* by Francesco Rosi, 1981, with Philippe Noiret, Michele Placido, Vittorio Mezzogiorno, and photography by Pasqualino De Santis. With the death of their mother, three sons return to the farmhouse of their father, a farmer. One son is a judge, another is a counsellor in a prison, and the third is a factory worker. They argue. Our itinerary takes us to the primordial landscape between Gravina and Altamura, a city rich in art, cathedrals and sumptuous buildings. Let's begin on the outskirts of the Murgian hills, in the towns of the hinterland whose roads lead up to the Murgia. ► **Ruvo** was the setting for a few scenes, the only ones outside of Bari, of ★ *La Riffa/The Raffle* by Francesco Laudadio, 1991, filmed with Monica Bellucci in her film debut. Do you remember? A beautiful young widow discovers her husband's debts and decides to raffle herself off. Ruvo's historical centre, with the cathedral that broods over it like a hen, is an excellent place for intelligent walks, particularly by night. A name linked to the Challenge of Barletta can be found in the building in the square. The French were quartered here under the command of La Palisse, who couldn't believe that a quarter of an hour before dying he would still be alive. Therefore, the charm of this city has a La Palisse feel to it. The Jatta Museum is worth seeing, with its amazing collection of Magna Grecia vases with red on black, or black on ochre framing that



recount the entire mythological (and psychoanalytical) apparatus of Western civilisation. We cannot say we are not Greek.

Nearby ► **Terlizzi**, untouched by tourism and film sets, would be an excellent location. Discover the secrets of the sanctuary of the Madonna di Sovereto. A village skirted by the heavy traffic of Highway 98, but which offers an arcane atmosphere just a few metres away from the asphalt. A 13th century tower, which surmounts a small church with a Baroque altar in gold, has a secret passage that leads into the apse, decorated with frescoes from the year 1000, Christ Pantocrator and headless saints. For the real surprise, you have to look beneath your feet, the paving stones cover tombs on which warrior monks are carved in great detail and symbolism... Knights Templar. Everything else – the red frescoes in the sacristy with crosses, chessboards, suns and stars with eight points – follows logically. Sovereto is like the trailer of a film yet to be made.

On Highway 98, at the same point as Ruvo, in ► **Corato** (worth a side trip to admire the pink Renaissance rusticated building built for Lucrezia Borgia), you will find the crossroads that lead to the

Gravina, Altamura and Poggiorsini, the last Apulian town before the Lucanian mountains, are the settings for the films of the filmmaker Nico Cirasola, the Apulian “Ed Wood.” Surreal and archaic settings used in *Odore di Pioggia/The Scent of Rain*, *Da Do Da/From Here to There*, and *Albania Blues*.

► **Murgia**. Perhaps the most interesting route is the road that starts in Corato and crosses the Serraficaia Murgia. Oak forests, hilly roads, mysterious crossroads that seem to disappear into nowhere among the hills, and long straight stretches almost like those deep in the heart of the USA, with electric light poles beating the rhythm of the passing frames. A short adventurous journey. And then the *iazzi*, stone shelters for flocks and shepherds, bring us back to the Murgia.

► **Altamura** appears high in the distance, surrounded by fortified farmhouses and noble residences. A film that resonated in these landscapes was ★ *Allonsanfán* by the Taviani brothers, in 1974, with Marcello Mastroianni in the star role, a sort of pre-Risorgimento Pisacane corroded by doubts and betrayals. The Tavianis returned here in 1990 with ★ *Night Sun*, also set in the Borbonic era, with



The Murgian landscape, between Gravina and Altamura, was crowded with brigands and farmers for *The Bride's Journey*, a film shot here by Sergio Rubini, set in a 17th century imagined together with Raffaele Nigro.



Pane e libertà/Bread and Freedom tells the story of Giuseppe Di Vittorio, the great Apulian trade unionist, played by Pierfrancesco Favino. This television film, shot in 2007 in Gravina and Altamura, was set in Foggia and Cerignola, Di Vittorio's hometown.

old-style sanctity and passion. The two actresses performing with Julian Sands were Charlotte Gainsbourg and Nastassja Kinski. Altamura joined the Neapolitan Republic in 1799 and earned the role of "lionesse of Apulia" for resisting (and surrendering in the end) to the armed reactionaries of Cardinal Ruffo. In the city there are many memories, sites and monuments around the cathedral, both imposing and mild, built for Federico II.

★ *The Bride's Journey*, with Sergio Rubini as both director and actor, 1997, takes place in the Murgia landscape, with brigands and farmers, this time in the 1600s, starring Giovanna Mezzogiorno, screenplay by Raffaele Nigro.

The films of Nico Cirasola, the most famous Apulian filmmaker, scour the hillsides, town walls and town streets of the Murgia. In Gravina, Altamura and Poggiorsini, the last Apulian town before reaching the Lucanian mountains, Cirasola filmed ★ *Odore di Pioggia/The Scent of Rain*, 1989; ★ *Da Do Da/From Here to There*, 1994; ★ *Albània Blues*, 2000, and ★ *Focaccia Blues*, 2009.

► **Gravina** takes its name from its gravina, the ravine it is built in and around. To appreciate its beauty, you must cross over to the other side of the ravine, ideally walking across the Roman footbridge. From this vantage point, the city spreads out across the abyss in



An unusual experiment for the film *Appartamento ad Atene/ Apartment in Athens*, the first film by Ruggero Dipaola with Laura Morante and Gerosimos Skiadaresis. Gravina in Puglia is transformed into the Greek capital, in particular the La Plaka neighborhood with the Parthenon in the background.



cinemascope. The church with Norman origins is worth seeing, but the most charming church is that of the Madonna delle Grazie, just across from the train station, on the other side of the tracks. An enormous eagle in relief spreads its wings across the entire façade with the rose window as its breast.

In Gravina you could ask, “Excuse me, where is the Acropolis?” it might be there. To see it, you just need a cinematographic eye. For its timeless characteristics, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Gravina was recently a clamorous example of what can be defined as estrangement of the set. The cinema, as well as the theatre, to quote Proietti, where all is pretend and nothing is false. In the same way that in the early period after World War II a film on Jerusalem was filmed in the old town of Bari, in 2011 Gravina was transformed into the Greek capital for the production of *★ Appartamento ad Atene/ Apartment in Athens* by Ruggero Dipaola, with Laura Morante and Gerosimos Skiadaresis. The famous neighbourhood La Plaka, populace and taverns at the foot of the Parthenon, was reconstructed on the edge of the ravine. Why Gravina? Because it has an aura of the past and the film is set not today, but in the Athens of 1943 during the German occupation. The screenplay is also curious, it is based on the novel of the same name by the American writer Glenway Wescott, but is reminiscent of the famous French novel *Il silenzio del mare/ The Silence of the Sea*: a Nazi official is hosted by a family of the occupied town. But, in the novel the French culture was contagious, in the film it is the German brutality. This is the film debut for Dipaola, a director with Apulian origins, who won the Marc'Aurelio Award for Emerging New Talents at the Rome Film Festival.

Gravina, in 2009, was also the set for an Italian-German comedy with Lino Banfi, *★ Maria, He Doesn't Like It!* Banfi, alias Antonio Marcipane, lives in Germany, his daughter Sara is marrying the Teutonic Jan, but her father insists that the wedding be celebrated in Apulia, not in Andria or Canosa, the actor's actual roots, but in the more photogenic, and in this film colourful, Gravina.

In the silent landscape, at times lunar, empty and, in any case, resounding with mysterious presences, between Gravina and Altamura, a curious documentary *★ Le Murge, il fronte della guerra fredda/ The Murgia, Frontline of the Cold War* was filmed by the



Travelling up to the Murgia you pass through oak forests, hilly roads and mysterious crossroads that seem to disappear into nowhere among the hills. The Appulo-Lucano railway travels across the same terrain from Bari all the way to Matera, in Basilicata.

Turinese director Fabrizio Galatea. It tells a true story from 1959 which should have remained a secret, about when Fanfani authorized the Americans to install 10 missile positions with nuclear warheads here, each one 100 times more powerful than the one dropped on Hiroshima, pointed east towards Russia. They were one of the deterrents used by Kennedy against Krushchev during the Cuban crisis in 1963. Then they were dismantled. The missiles were underground and had launching channels hidden between stones, bushes and thickets, but the best part is that back then – travelling over the few roads in the area – everyone swore they knew where the missiles were. The ancient intelligence of this land, that knows



Like a mother hen, the cathedral broods over the historical centre of Ruvo di Puglia. With its Romanesque style, reworked various times starting in the 12th century when it was built, it is one of the most famous and “nordic” churches in the region.

how to exorcise fears and not get upset about the new, had reduced them to the rank of mushrooms.

From Altamura you can descend towards Bari, passing through ► **Grumo**, birthplace of Sergio Rubini, who set his first, and highly original, film ★ *The Station*, here, although the tiny train station in the middle of nowhere with the young stationmaster, an Apulian straw dog, played by Rubini himself, is located on the Gargano line at San Marco in Lamis. In Grumo you can also visit the Mother Church, built by the Swabians and Angevines, and a few attractive 17th and 18th century buildings. Rubini’s house is in the small square of San Francesco. The town’s name “Grumo” means “clot” or agglomerate



Focaccia Blues, filmed in 2007 and 2008 by Nico Cirasola is the reinterpretation of a true story that took place in Altamura and became famous worldwide. A bakery wiped out competition from McDonald's with its traditional focaccia.



A primordial and primitive landscape. Altamura's neolithic "pulo" offers an amazing look through the millenia. The Taviani brothers set their 1974 film *Allonsanfan* here amid farmhouses and the rugged and untamed vegetation.

of houses. The city's coat of arms includes two Saracen half-moons. Giovanni Pascoli called Grumo "muddy" when he passed through in a carriage during a journey to Matera.

Speaking of trains and journeys in other times, departing from Gravina, a solitary railway line passes through Poggiorsini and takes you to ►**Spinazzola**. Continuing in "strains," meaning strange trains, you can take the Barletta-Spinazzola line and descend to the sea. Stop in Minervino. A dazzling black and white film, ★*The Basilisks* (1963), was set in Spinazzola and Minervino by Lina Wertmüller, born not far from here, in Basilicata, at Palazzo San Gervasio. Photography by Gianni Di Venanzo, music by Ennio Morricone. Stefano Satta Flores, was the Oblomov delle Puglie (the film's first title), or the basilisk, meaning a lizard in the sun, always waiting for nothing, contemplating nothing. "I'll give you my answer in three days." An elegy to apathy as an antidote to the desperation of southern Italy. Wertmüller returned to Spinazzola in 1996 for ★*The Nymph* with Isa Danieli, Raoul Bova, Stefania Sandrelli and the debut (and one and only appearance) of Lucia Cara. Farmyard eroticism.

Both Spinazzola and Minervino are built on hilltops with fantastic panoramas. Minervino also has an aristocratic skyline around a stately building and a panoramic view of the plain and the Vulture Mountain. It is called "Il Faro," which means "the beacon."



MURGIA DREAM!

NICO CIRASOLA

Daytime location shot

Pantanella – an abandoned village – between Gravina and Poggiorsini, in the heart of the Murgia.

This place is sacred for prophets. Amid valleys and gullies a 16-year-old boy lies on a sack that smells of oil mixed with wheat, with his nose to the sky, he counts the clouds of various shapes that float by.

The boy turns his face to the right and then 180° to the left.

Subjective camera of the boy

A multicoloured arch traces the rainbow, from right to left. The rain has recently wet the clods of earth raised by a plough and the rocky area; the blue of the sky rests on the hot colour of a clay soil mixed with tufaceous stone. The camera brings into focus a closeup of the soil, with the sky in the background... it looks as if we are on the moon!

For 360° there are no electric light or telephone poles, nor a single tree, only slight valleys and rises as far as the eye can see. On the hillsides the stones form walls for housing sheep, horses and cows, but we can only hear the distant echo of all this, farther on lies the farmyard, the heart of countryside activity. In the background, the sun sets on a multi-coloured horizon. After the rain, the scent rises up to the sky and takes you to the world of dreams.

Garagnone, Cardinale, Montecaccia, Colaceli, Pellicciari,

Pantano and Pantanella, Melodia, Dolcecanto, Cafieri, Capo Posta, Torre Disperata, Gallinella. They delimit the landscapes of the immense space of the Murgia. Murgetta and many other names indicate the place where the boy passes his time “catching flies” and wasting time in idle contemplation!

Every year, in June, when school finishes, the boy offers to help his uncle in the fields. In reality, it is a magical moment of encounter between him and the infinite space of the Murgia, a thousand imaginative stories of love, fear and playful erotic visions pass through his mind.

If you depart from Bari, heading north on Highway 98, turn right at Corato and then left towards Gravina, Altamura, Poggiorsini. After a few kilometres, straight stretches of road, hairpin turns and valleys lead towards the horizon and towards the Calabro-Lucana railway which covers the length of the whole area, at the foot of the hill between Gravina and Spinazzola, but the magic places can be reached from Noci, Santeramo in Colle and Minervino Murge.

Each season has different shades of colour: at times pastel, at other times strong, definite colours.

In November, the season for cardoncello mushrooms, people with a trained eye can identify the areas of darker green where the cardoncello is probably hidden behind a rock or mixed in with the flora of the Murgia.

These landscapes tantalise the imagination of directors and producers.

The gods on Mount Olympus desire that the magical places on the Murgia never be violated or destroyed!



SOUTHWARD BOUND

SERGIO RUBINI

My Apulia is not the eastern one, but the one far from the sea, harsher and rural, made of farmers and shepherds, everything turned inward and jealous of itself. Almost secret, full of churches hidden in the most unthinkable places. I was born on the edge of the Murgia, in a large rural village, Grumo Appula, and grew up among vineyards and olive groves, the scent of almonds and freshly pressed oil. Then at 18, I went to Rome, but I attended secondary school in Altamura and I remember my daily trip back and forth, immersed in an unforgettable landscape.

Of course, my vision of things was partial, my perceptions are filtered through nostalgia, because I carry a mental space inside me that tends to be ideal. And yet, even now, when I visit my parents in Grumo, 13,000 inhabitants and not a single hotel room, I like to take the car and drive slowly up

and down the rocky hills, in first and second gear, from one abandoned farmhouse to another. All around, as far as Basilicata, you find mostly unfarmed areas in which nature is the boss. Where you can still taste the flavours of yesteryear, eat untreated fruit.

My roots are there, that's why I set a few of my films there. From *The Station* to *All the Love There Is*, from *Soul Mate* to *Our Land*, to *The Cézanne Affair*, mixing places and dialects, travelling around the Salento area, perhaps, and making the actors speak the Barese dialect. I do not believe that cinema has to necessarily reconstruct reality. Too much philology can also be dangerous, it brings on strange desires for secessionism and division. I prefer a generic South that everyone can identify with. You can stick whatever you want into it, even Balkan songs, no one will notice. It's the world's South.

Itinerary 5
Terra di Bari

The proximity of the sea
is strongly felt



BARI – CONVERSANO
POLIGNANO A MARE – MONOPOLI
TORRE CANNE – SELVA DI FASANO
CASTELLANA GROTTE

On the previous page: A coastal city with centuries of history, Monopoli's Capitolo beach is the centre of the summer nightlife. Instead, in the Conghia quarter it is possible to visit the large botanical garden, Lama degli Ulivi.

Opposite: Bari Vecchia, Bari's historical centre, is Byzantine, Norman and Venetian. A labyrinth of narrow streets, ancient dwellings, small towers and cathedrals, interspersed with frequent votive niches, was transformed into Jerusalem in the film *The Earth Cries Out* by Duilio Coletti in 1949.



A deep breath of salty air – the proximity of the sea is strongly felt in ► **Bari** – and you can begin your tour of the old city by following the flutter of long, black Orthodox cassocks. Soon their distant language, Russian, will mix with the dialect that gently dances with invective, shouted up to the tips of the medieval towers, exploding from the ancient dwellings, the homes that take possession of the street because things have been this way for centuries. Every possible good-natured duel will crown the Viking from Bari Vecchia, the prince of those people's courts of the numerous courtyards made holy by the Madonnas in niches. The Russian priests will continue on, following the arabesque curves of the narrow streets – transformed into Jerusalem and Haifa in 1949 for ★ *The Earth Cries Out* by Duilio Coletti – and their passage will renew the crossing of streets and peoples who have moulded Bari's nerve centre, particularly around the year 1000. Various peoples have surrendered part of their soul and culture to this historical centre, one of the most amazing in Italy, but not for its architecture or beauty. No. For density of eras, carved stones that reach up to the sky, blood spilled for religious causes, commerce and organised crime. Bari prospered first with Byzantium and Venice, then through the theft of the relics of the world's most famous miracle worker, Saint Nicholas of Myra, the saint of both Catholics

and Orthodox Christians, the Father Christmas of the Nordic peoples and the Americans. The most sublime and silent saint, the Oriental (and who can say how he happens to be Barese), can be heard in the basilica dedicated to him, a Romanesque masterpiece, an imposing white needle of sunrises and sunsets. Now, despite numerous attempts, this thousand-year history has not yet given rise to true cinema. Every year in May it is the site of the holy celebration of the saint's solemn feast day, both by land and by sea. The cathedral of San Sabino is similar to the basilica in beauty and sumptuousness. It is situated in a plaza full of people, dark guardians perched on mopeds and grim housewives weighed down with children. Only recently, in 1999 and in 2003, did the old town reveal itself partially in two films by Alessandro Piva, ★ *LaCapaGira/My Head is Spinning* and ★ *My Brother-In-Law*. Stories that expose the often troubled core of these dark tangles of narrow streets and mankind, mixing them with the extreme suburbs of poor neighbourhoods like San Paolo or Libertà, and immersing them in the livid and remorseless light of the harbour, a wide easily modulated esplanade. The metaphysical spaces of the Fiera del Levante were used by the directors Roberto De Feo and Vito Palumbo as a starting point for the descent into Mickey's (the excellent Damiano Russo) pulp netherworld. The short film ★ *Ice Scream*



The metaphysical spaces of the Fiera del Levante are used by Roberto De Feo and Vito Palumbo for the short film *Ice Scream*. The Bari actor Damiano Russo plays the main character, Micky.



The Second Wedding Night is a true hymn to Apulia. Pupi Avati filmed it almost entirely in Monopoli, Fasano, Ostuni and Torre Canne. It was released in 2005 and stars Antonio Albanese, Katia Ricciarelli and Neri Marcorè.

(2010), pushed to the fore by the awards won at international festivals, including the Academy Awards, is sailing towards an American remake, in a feature-length version. The outskirts of town are seen in 2000 in Gianni Zanasi's film *★Beside Myself*, a semi-documentary reconstruction of the presentation, complete with shoot-out, of his previous film *★In the Thick of It* with Paolo Sassanelli in the San Paolo neighbourhood. Here, but also in the Stanic and Enzitetto neighbourhoods, the director Federica Di Giacomo, from La Spezia, filmed her documentary *★Housing* (2009). The main characters, hanging onto the walls of their homes like victims of a shipwreck on a piece of wood, defend their public housing apartments from continual attacks by others who would like to occupy them. It is a kind of wild Far West, but also a dramatic no man's land which won the Locarno and Turin film festivals. We find the same topic, public housing and the inexorable actions that keep a roof over one's head, but also building speculation and a ruthless suburbia in the Madonnella neighbourhood, in the film by three directors *★Da che parte stai/Whose Side Are You On?* (2011) by Mario Bucci, Pierluigi Ferrandini and Francesco Lopez. An experimental feature-length film in which each director tells the same story with his own aesthetic and point of view in a sort of Rashomon set in the outskirts of town, facing the eternal dilemma: what side is the law on? Oz Film, a young Apulian collec-

tive also specialized in casting, produced *★The Cardboard Village* by Ermanno Olmi and *★Habemus Papam* by Nanni Moretti. And finally, the Madonnella neighbourhood and a house to be ruefully sold in the short film by Andrea Costantino, *★Sposerò Nichi Vendola/I'll Marry Nichi Vendola* (2010), which pictures the disorientation of an entire nation.

Leaving these city fringes (a rich selection of marginalised non-places), clear-cut, and separate from the old town is the nearby 19th century Murat-era neighbourhood, the centre of mercantile and profiteering Bari. Films set here include *★Sotto gli occhi di tutti/In front of Everybody's Very Eyes* (2003) by Nello Correale and *★La Riffa/The Raffle* by Francesco Laudadio (1991), the actress Monica Bellucci's first film, which highlighted the area between Piazza del Ferrarese and the Yacht Club. The Bari that prospers by night was also reproduced by Daniele Vicari in *★The Past is a Foreign Land* (2008), based on the novel of the same title by Gianrico Carofiglio. Clandestine gambling, late-night dares and desperate paths for the pair Elio Germano and Michele Riondino. More nocturnal scenes for the episode *★La doppia vita di Natalia Blum/The Double Life of Natalia Blum*, also by Carofiglio, directed by Anna Negri, in the RaiDue series *★Crimini/Crimes* (2010). The main character is Emilio Solfrizzi.

Amour fou, past and present, hyperrealism and dreams are the nar-



In Bari, in September 2007, Daniele Vicari shot the film *The Past is a Foreign Land*, based on the bestseller of the same name by Gianrico Carofiglio. In the theatres a year later, it stars Elio Germano and Michele Riondino, from Taranto.



In 1999 a small independent film captured national attention thanks to the force of its use of language. *LaCapaGira/My Head is Spinning*, set completely in Bari, was directed by Alessandro Piva who won a David di Donatello for Best New Director.



rative medium of Paolo Franchi *★La spettatrice/The Spectator* who penetrates the dark universe of a couple. The director deploys a city map that goes from Piazza Luigi di Savoia to Via Putignani and the Murat seafront area for his third film *★E la chiamano Estate/And They Call it Summer* (2012) with Jean-Marc Barr, Isabella Ferrari, Filippo Nigro and Luca Argentero.

Bari also paved the way for lightweight films like *★Maschio femmina fiore frutto/Male Female Flower Fruit* by Ruggero Miti with Anna Oxa, who used her role to experiment with ambiguity, and *★Quello strano desiderio/That Strange Desire* by Enzo Milioni, in 1979. Another example is *★Fratelli Coltelli/ Brother Knives* by Maurizio Ponzi, in 1997, with the over the top comedians Emilio Solfrizzi and Antonio Stornaiolo, and an appearance by Simona Ventura.

Seen through the eyes of the cinema, Bari hardly ever tells a pretty tale, so let's take a short walk and seek comfort in the Petruzzelli Theatre, burned by an arsonist in 1991. In wartime Bari, which was bombed in '43, it hosted the first anti-fascist convention while Radio Bari transmitted the first programme in liberated Italy. Days of conflict, allies and curtain raisers, material used by the great Alberto Sordi, who directed *★Stardust* (1973), an epic about a theatre company that is on the verge of achieving its dream of fame and prestige in Bari. A bow to him and the showgirl Dea Dani, the sublime Monica Vitti, in front of the Petruzzelli Theatre is the ideal way to enter the theatre with Franco Zeffirelli. The Tuscan director chose it as the setting for the Brazilian Aida in *★Young Toscanini* (1988). One year earlier, Herbert Ross, the "musical" director of *★Funny Lady* and *★Footloose*, came here to film *★Giselle* danced by Mikhail Barishnikov and Alessandra Ferri. After the fire, Nico Cirasola, our "Ed Wood," brought the theatre back to life in *★Bell'epokèr* (2004), an eccentric and nostalgic look at a century of the Petruzzelli which, reconstructed, could be reconciled with the city and the cinema. A harbour for Crusaders and, after a millennium, landing site for clusters of immigrants. The ship Vlora became the terrible icon of this phenomenon when it arrived in Bari in August of 1991 with 20,000 Albanians on board. From that time on, Bari has had a better sense of being a border city. The cinema reproduced this change, as well as the tragic magnitude of the Albanians' arrival, in *★Lamerica* (1994) by Gianni Amelio and the photography was displayed at the New York MOMA as a symbol of the 20th century. Finally, Carmine Fornari exam-



A boat procession and historical parade to commemorate the transfer of Saint Nicholas to Bari.



In the winter of 2010 the Bari sports hall was transformed into an immense studio for maestro Ermanno Olmi. *The Cardboard Village*, with Michael Lonsdale and Rutger Hauer, was presented, not for competition, at the 2011 Venice Film Festival.



For *Il sole dentro/The Sun Within* by Paolo Bianchini, the tongue of beach at San Giorgio in Bari becomes Guinea. We are in Africa and learn the true story of Yaguine and Fodé, two adolescents who froze to death in the baggage compartment of an airplane flying to Brussels in 1999.



ined the Albania-Italy journey in *★Hotel Dajti*, in 2000. That migration route that brought 20,000 Albanians to Apulia on 8 August 1991 on board the Vlora has become a documentary for Daniele Vicari, on the 20th anniversary of the landing, with *★La nave dolce/The Sweet Boat* (2012). The title alludes to the original cargo of the ship, heroically commanded by Commander Halim Milaqi, who was able to save thousands of lives by bringing the boat into Bari harbour: it transported sugar, and the Albanians heading toward the El Dorado they saw in Italy fed their thirst with the sugar. The story of Violeta, a passenger on the Vlora, also enriches the documentary *★Il colore del vento/The Colour of the Wind* (2011) by Bruno Bigoni, which navigates the Mediterranean intercepting stories of the sea and of identity.

Migrants again, admirable, in the apologue that maestro Ermanno Olmi offers the city with *★The Cardboard Village* (2011). Filmed entirely in a single interior, the Bari sports hall, which thanks to scenographic skill is transformed into an imposing deconsecrated church and closed regardless of the vocation of the place and the priest (a



Torre a Mare, a seafaring suburb of Bari built around the small harbour that was a vacation hideaway for Baresi in the 1900s, as shown by the Art Nouveau villas. Nino Rota lived and composed his soundtracks here.

sorrowful Michael Lonsdale) who has always carried out his priestly office there. Inevitably the church regains its true role for the last time when it becomes home to a group of illegal immigrants who build a cardboard village, until the betrayal of the sexton Rutger Hauer. Instead, Raffaele Virzillo chose the San Nicola stadium for part of the filming of his comedy *★100 metri dal Paradiso/100 Meters From Paradise* (2012), in which lay and Catholic fans follow the performance of a team of Vatican athletes. With the Spaniard Jordi Mollà and with Giulia Bevilacqua. Now, we can take our leave of Bari imagining we are in a fast camera car, ideally by night, that captures the beautiful seafront with its rigorous Fascist era buildings and barracks, the city wall, the Margherita Theatre, the 19th century mansions with their backs turned to the sea, as the sociologist Franco Cassano shrewdly points out. The quays, the globe-like Albergo delle Nazioni, the Pane e Pomodoro (Bread and Tomato) beach, the park where the Punta Perotti “eco-monster” was demolished and then you have left the metropolitan city and its perfectly curved landscape behind you. But first, fragments of Guinea, reconstructed on the tongue of sand in the San Giorgio Bay area where Paolo Bianchini found his Africa for the film *★Il sole dentro/The Sun Within* (2012). It is the true story of Yaguine and Fodé, two adolescents who froze to

death, on 27 July 1999, when they illegally stowed away in the baggage compartment of an airplane heading to Brussels. A letter was found in their pockets addressed “to their Excellencies the members and leaders of Europe” asking for the right to study and a decent life in their homeland.

Back in the sun, stop off at ► **Torre a Mare**, a fishing village with Art Nouveau vacation villas set around a tiny harbour and a 16th century watchtower. Here, in his beloved hideaway, Maestro Nino Rota, who was the director of the Bari Conservatory until his death, composed the soundtracks that are the perfect musical mirror of Federico Fellini’s fabulous imagery, from *★The Young and the Passionate* to *★La dolce vita/The Sweet Life*. From the sea, follow the panoramic coastal highway “Adriatica”, that leads down to the Salento area, and take the exit that will guide you up to ► **Conversano**. However, before leaving the coast visit Cozze, a small village of stone huts mathematically arranged. With the red of the soil and the blue of the sea they form a landscape oil painting.

Conversano, an ancient Peucetian centre, sits on the peak of a Murgian hill. To get there you travel along a panoramic road of small dry-stone walls and fields of oats. You enter the town at the Garibaldi city park, its paths full of the traces of the 19th century. Its genius loci calls out to you from the tall towers of the Norman castle. The fact that the castle is partitioned internally is living testimony to the changes that have taken place with the passage of time. In Largo della Corte you take a big step back in time to a medieval landscape that speaks loudly of the Orient, with its polychrome architecture, winged lions and carved doodles. Conversano is the city of cloisters. The most famous is that of San Benedetto, where the nuns had powers that irritated the bishops. The sense of this multicultural medieval atmosphere did not escape Pupi Avati, who filmed a few scenes from his expedition to the Holy Land, *★The Knights of the Quest* (2001), in the untouched cloister of the convent of Santa Maria dell’Isola, located in the countryside. In the winter, along the secondary road to Putignano, that same generous countryside is dotted with lakes formed in karst dolines that gather meteoric water. Nearby you will find the ruins of the ancient settlement Castiglione, watched over from the top of a hill by a square tower. Stepping back in time to 1965, Mario Monicelli filmed a few external shots for his farcical *★Casanova ’70*,



The final scene of *Cado dalle Nubi/I'm Flabbergasted*, first cinematic adventure for the comedian Checco Zalone (Luca Medici), directed by the Bari director-writer Gennaro Nunziante. Polignano offers a dizzying sea view.

The wind and the sea have sculpted Polignano a Mare, a unique city built on sheer cliffs over the sea amid karstic grottoes, rock perches and the incredible Cala Paura. Mario Monicelli turned the town into a bigoted Sicily in *Girl With a Pistol*.



a small-budget film that probably gave him the idea for the location of a much more important work that we will soon discuss.

The road leads down again towards the sea along a road that passes through prosperous Conversano suburbs. Old villas belonging to noble families, centuries-old olive groves protected by law as a landscape heritage. ► **San Vito**, a small suburb of Polignano is a revelation: an extremely lyrical fishing village watched over by the walls of a Benedictine abbey which dates back to the year 1000. It is located on a natural inlet that, looking from the abbey, is revealed along a Renaissance loggia. The complex hosts laboratories and houses for artists, particularly lively in the summer, worth visiting, if possible. A courtyard of stone ravines and a system of terraced staircases lead up to the roof, past paintings of the sea, while a special light casts a shadow on sculptures, artists' meeting places and long tables.

In ► **Polignano a Mare** the prodigy is repeated every time. The historical centre of Greek Polignano will always amaze for the intensity of the wind and the sea which have turned this small city into a system of sculptures. Take a walk and contemplate these natural beauties visible at the end of the narrow streets or from one of the breathtaking terraces. Karstic grottoes (especially the spectacular Palazzese Grotto), cliffs that brave swimmers dive off of each year and the Cala Paura inlet crown Polignano the queen of seaside towns. The city of Domenico Modugno, who soared on the Italian song, and Pino Pascali, a genius of disruptive art, whose works are kept in a museum dedicated to him.

The cinema used Polignano, but gave it a different identity, in ★ *Girl With a Pistol*. In 1968, Monicelli transformed it into a backward Sicily that seduces and leads the beautiful Assunta Patanè, played by a sublime Monica Vitti, to pursue a private vendetta. The historical centre, with its tiny alleys and houses painted white with lime, and the cliffs beaten by the angry sea are identical to a Sicilian landscape. Another beauty, local and Mediterranean, passed through these alleyways: Bianca Guaccero, main character of ★ *Si può fare l'amore vestiti?/ Can You Make Love While Dressed?* (2012), film direction debut by Dario Acocella. Still in Polignano, with a sea view, for the final scene of ★ *Cado dalle nubi/I'm Flabbergasted* (2009), first cinematographic adventure for Checco Zalone, the stage name for Luca Medici, a comic and improvisational talent, entrusted to the care of the director-writer-



accomplice Gennaro Nunziante. The south is the point of departure and return for Checco, an aspiring singer and defender of Apulian soil from the offences of the Lega Nord political party: he confuses Alberto da Giussano with a Power Ranger and says the film tourism phrase par excellence: “It’s inconceivable not to see Apulia!” A comedy with a hint of Polignano also for the Tuscan Massimo Ceccherini, who directs himself here in *★La mia mamma suona il rock/Mom Plays Rock* (2012).

Instead, it was the 1990s, the time of the new Italian cinema, when Gabriele Salvatores led his two errant actors, Diego Abatantuono and Fabrizio Bentivoglio, along the sculptural curves of these roads in the 1990 road movie *★On Tour*.

The coast leads us on to ►**Monopoli** and, with discretion, begins to reveal the series of farmhouses which continue on to ►**Fasano**. They slowly create a map of a past strictly regulated by the land and organised in autonomous consortiums. Masterpieces of rural architecture, fortified, Oriental in feeling, painted red and white with lime, often hidden oases of peace or, at times, open as restaurants or banquet halls, such as the farmhouses of Spina, Santanna or Il Melograno, a favourite destination of Ermanno Olmi in the 1960s. Monopoli has stories to tell. Its historical centre smacks of the sea and is entered by an extremely scenic ancient harbour, amid fishermen’s houses with tiny windows, Moorish balconies, echoes of Byzantine and Venetian dominion and, in the high ramparts of the castle, Turkish intimidation. Monopoli accommodated the sounds and purposes of a southern music academy in *★Tutta la musica del cuore/All of the Heart’s Music* (2012), a RaiUno series interpreted by Lucrezia Lante della Rovere. And it was a stopover in Vanzina’s *★Buona giornata/Have a Nice Day* (2012), with Abatantuono, Salemme, Banfi, and De Sica.

A seafaring village that welcomes visitors as it did 1000 years ago, at a small landing place with a high wall of houses and small workshops. Nestled onto the sea, Monopoli preserves an arcane memory of journeys and dominations.

Still in the heart of town the shady curves of the historical centre lead to the 19th century Palazzo Palmieri. A few kilometres outside the city you will find the fortified, medieval abbey of Santo Stefano on the sea. While the series of beaches in its Capitolo district has become a hot spot for summer nightlife, just a short distance away from the holiday hullabaloo, in the Conghia quarter, you will find the Lama degli Ulivi botanical garden. Thirty thousand square metres and two thousand plant species create environments ranging in type from desert to Mediterranean, Asian to North American, interspersed with cave churches and an early Christian underground oil mill. Not far off, ►**Egnazia** is a reminder of past splendour. It is an ancient city, dating back to the Bronze Age, with an excellent harbour that the Romans quickly seized and included along the road of the Via Traiana. Since its fate was tied to that of the rulers of the world, the ancient Gnathia declined when Rome did. Now, with its vast ruins, its amphitheatre, tombs and sacella, it is the poor shell of a glorious past, a stone gateway to Africa or the Middle East, or a site for end of the world scenes.

The aura of a long horseback ride in period costume could also be reproduced perfectly on the long seashore of fine sand dunes at ►**Torre Canne**, one of the numerous suburbs of Fasano. A small, but very popular seaside spa town, guarded by a white lighthouse, it is one of the towns in the area that appeared in Pupi Avati’s film *★The Second Wedding Night* (2005). Actually, most of the countryside around Fasano was featured in this film, the yellow sheaves and long, hot plains served as an anchor for the gentle



Proceeding from Conversano along the secondary road to Putignano, you will find the Marchione Castle, a perfectly symmetrical structure on three levels, built for the Acquaviva D'Aragona counts in the 1700s as a hunting lodge.

Egnazia dates back to the Bronze Age and was a Roman harbour. Its fate was linked to that of the rulers of the world. The ruins of the amphitheatre, the sacella and the Via Traiana make for a silent scenery, imbued with the charm of a decayed power.



A dreamlike oil painting, Cozze, the village of trullo houses, is located on the "Adriatica", Highway 16 that leads to the Salento area. Red earth, dazzling green, it a mathematical system of small trullo houses that stand out against the blue sea.

The grottoes of Castellana, an endless spectacle, were only fully discovered in 1938. A few decades later, in 1962, the director Riccardo Freda set his film *Maciste in Hell* here.



folly of Giordano (Antonio Albanese), the love-struck mine clearer. In the film, set at the Signorello farmhouse, reference is made to the actor Enzo Fiermonte who was in Bari at that time, in 1946, making his only film as a director ★*Latleta di cristallo/The Crystal Athlete*. Just a few kilometres away, ► **Savelletri**, another seaside hamlet of Fasano, which becomes a forced retreat for the old singing star Piero Cicala (Emilio Solfrizzi), now an uncomplaining cook at the “Al polpo re” restaurant in Eugenio Cappuccio’s film ★*Se sei così ti dico sì/If That’s the Way You Are, I’ll Say Yes to You* (2011). An unexpected television appearance and an energetic Belen Rodriguez shake him up and then send him mutely back to this serene land tasting of the sea.

Other unique farmhouses in the area include: Maccarone, San Domenico (with golf courses on the sea), Torre Coccaro and Borgo San Marco. Perhaps more famous than the city of Fasano itself, founded around the year 1000 after the destruction of Egnazia, is the ► **Selva di Fasano**, locus amoenus nestling in the midday calm among hairpin bends and dense woods. Every spring since 1946, this has been the site of the Fasano-Selva, one of the all-time great uphill sports car races. Once the roar of the motors has ceased, the silence of the forest remains, a small realm of tranquillity. Here there are many luxurious villas and a minaret built in 1918 for Damaso Bianchi, a nobleman from Fasano with a passion for art and the Orient. Close to the Selva area, Fasano also offers a stroll through the savannah at the Zoo Safari which houses animals in partial freedom among local, centuries-old olive trees artistically placed throughout the park.

At ► **Castellana Grotte** you can penetrate the belly of the earth, luxuriant, asleep in a solemn silence. Discovered in 1938, the grottoes are three kilometres long and reach a depth of 71 meters. They are the result of erosion caused by an underground river which carved spectacular stalagmites and stalactites. Passing through the large grotto, the crystal lake or the cavern of the altar, you will reach the White Grotto, a cathedral of pure limestone, one of the world’s most beautiful. The cinema worked in this natural gallery of art fairly coherently in 1962, using it for the underworld in the peplum, or sword and sandal, film ★*Maciste in Hell* by Riccardo Freda. But, after Ciro Ippolito’s dreadful aliens (★*Alien Terror*, 1980), it’s time the seventh art takes inspiration from this ancestral, karstic monument.



THE BARI CINEPORT: THE FIERA DEL LEVANTE

The Bari Cineport is the logistical heart of the Apulia Film Commission Foundation’s activities which aim to enhance the competitiveness of the reception and support services for the audio-visual production companies that film in Apulia. Opened on 16 January 2010, it was created thanks to the “Contemporary Senses” agreement of the Apulia Regional government, a 1200 sq m business center, located in the Fiera del Levante not far from the monumental entrance.

It contains audio-visual production offices, casting, makeup, hair and costume rooms, as well as a storage area and a set workshop. The Bari cineport has a full HD theatre with Dolby Surround Sound with 96 seats, plus two for people with special needs, and a simultaneous translation booth. The theatre has a conference desk with three microphones, a radio microphone, a video projector, a 16:9 8x3 meter screen, a DVD/Blu Ray player and technical assistance. Designed as a base of operations for the production companies hosted, in the course of a few years the Cineport has become an artistic and cultural space open to the city, becoming in turn a location for art exhibits and collections, cultural events, conventions and casting sessions for cinema and television. Press conferences are held here at the beginning or end of filming or to present the films that have received funding. The Cineport, with its halls equipped with WiFi and projection capacities, is perfect for hosting both training courses and high level professional specialization courses, such as the international course “Closing the Gap”, and refresher workshops for professionals in the audio-visual sector.



ESPECIALLY BY NIGHT

GIANRICO CAROFIGLIO

The nighttime view of Bari from the south is my favourite. The sea is dark, but not threatening, you see the line of the seafront and then the harbour, full of lights and promise, the taller buildings – the tower of the provincial government building, the bell tower of the Cathedral of San Sabino, the Motta skyscraper, built where the first house of the Murat quarter once existed – give the city silhouette a rhythm, there are cast iron lamp-posts and jets of water splashing up out of the sea. All of this, when entering from that direction, imparts a sense of a small metropolis, cordial and welcoming. It is beautiful.

The harbour is a world apart. If you happen to see it by night, it is hard to understand how it can be so immense, how it is possible that such a large place can be contained in the city, when – it seems – it should be the other way around. That the city should be contained, all of it, in that vast unknown territory, with gashes that look like the setting for a disturbing dream,

where it seems that different rules than those of the external world apply.

The entire area around the Arena della Vittoria has a spectral beauty by night. There are enormous abandoned industrial areas, ruined warehouses inhabited by ghosts, deserted streets, smokestacks that suddenly stand out in the dark. Walking along those streets, you can imagine running into a Philip Dick character or, alternatively, getting sucked into some time-space vortex.

The monumental entry to the Fiera and its solid, pale ochre-coloured walls, articulated in a series of blind windows, offer an unusual spectacle in an urban context outside the Sahara desert area. They give the impression of a giant Libyan fortress removed from the desert and mysteriously catapulted to our part of the world, facing the mild Adriatic Sea. Or perhaps the set of a Hollywood blockbuster, abandoned for decades, inexplicably well-preserved and waiting for a film that will never be made.

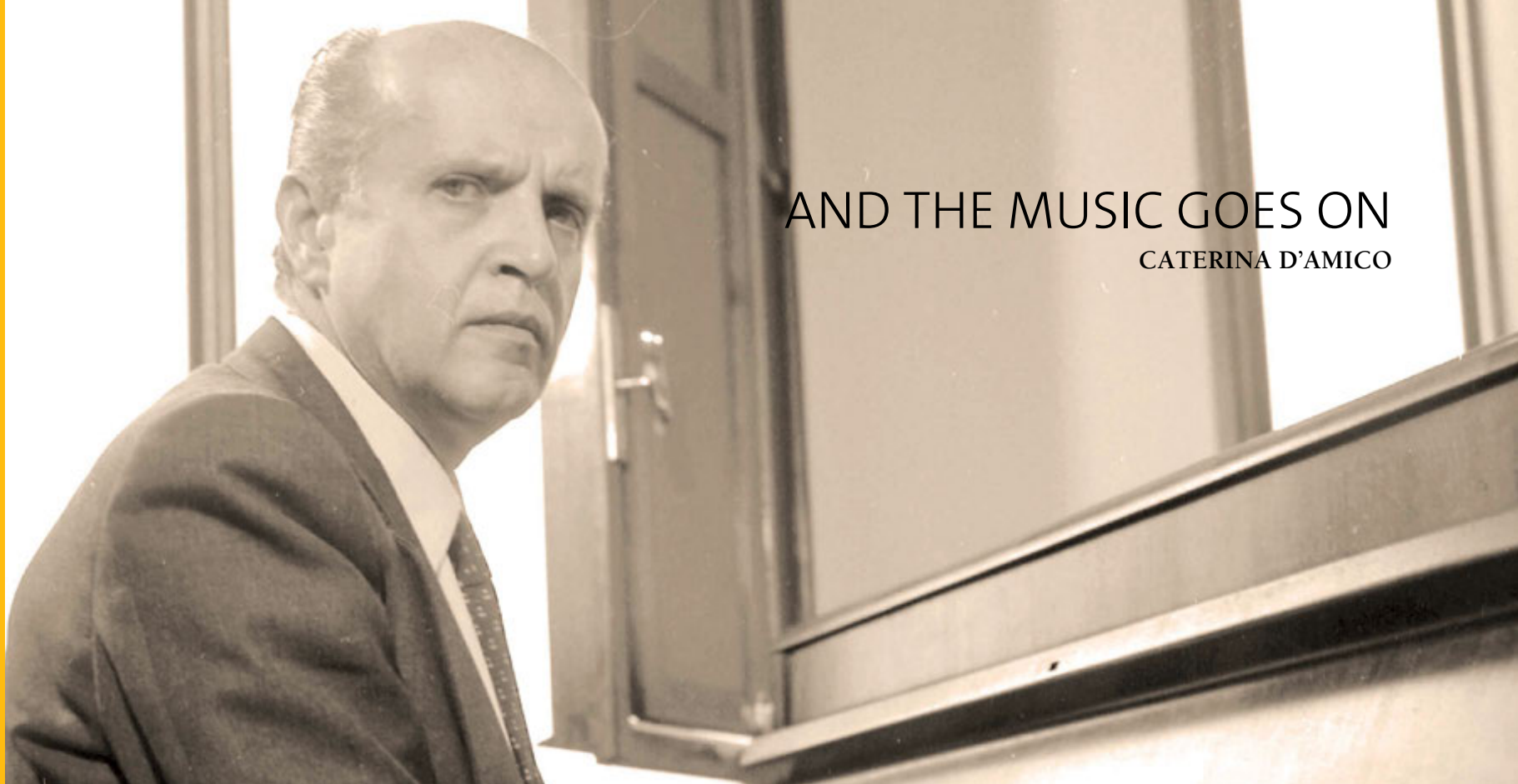


8 AUGUST 1991: ON THE WATERFRONT

RAFFAELE NIGRO

A news agency reported that in the afternoon an Albanian ship swarming with people, many of them young, had docked on the offshore pier. I was in my office on the sea and I ran to the harbour. I had recently been to Albania. I had made countless friends and I felt that these were “my” people, even though I had no Albanian blood. On the quay, between the sea and the walls, a crowd of refugees kept at bay by the police, few girls, many adolescents, even some children. The policemen tried to stop me, but I was pulled forward by the desire to talk and understand. I penetrated the wall of people, in that pungent and persistent smell of sweat, soil and mustiness. Their mouths were chapped and their faces dirty with coal, heads crowded above other heads, hands on hands, breath on breath. Each one of them wanted to talk to me, they gave me pieces of paper with four or five names and telephone numbers written on them. They wanted me to call their families, to say that they were safe, alive, in a free and friendly land. There were still bunches of young men hanging onto the ship’s hawsers, others dived off the ship into the sea to refresh themselves after the burning

heat of the crossing. I was looking at a corner of hell and no one suspected that that apotheosis of freedom was to be the beginning of a war of incomprehension and solidarity. I, too, asked for news. Why had they fled in such a large group, what was happening on the other shore, what news of the regime? With frightened and feverish agitation. Perhaps the wall of water was somehow cracking, perhaps the curtain of silence and distance was coming down. The air smacked of coal and uncertainty, an exhausting mugginess that, at the time, had the colours of their homemade wool sweaters and their faces baked in the sun, of their cracked lips and the confusion of the fear of joy. Then the first buses arrived and loaded up a reckless number of people. Going who knows where. Other buses arrived and the first mobile phones began to ring. At that point anxiety became worry fear rebellion. The mayor Dalfino and don Tonino Bello arrived on the quay, uncertain of what to do, frightened. They, too, were surrounded by the swell of a crowd of desperate souls, all those people who had arrived from the sea and the world of silence.



AND THE MUSIC GOES ON

CATERINA D'AMICO

Nino Rota was born into a family of musicians. His fame as an *enfant prodige* soon attracted the attention of many artists. Gabriele D'Annunzio invited him to play at the Vittoriale; Arturo Toscanini worked to have a scholarship in the United States assigned to him; Igor Stravinsky was his friend for all of his life.

An extremely versatile composer, his work ranges from chamber music to symphonic compositions, from theatre to television, he owes his worldwide fame to music for the cinema.

Nino Rota was a truly special creature. He lived in a large, beautiful house in the heart of Rome, just around the corner from the Pantheon; but he was there very infrequently, not only because his success took him around the world, but also because in 1937 he had won a position as a teacher at the Musical Secondary School of Taranto, and two years later he transferred to the "N. Piccinni" Musical Secondary School

of Bari, where he became the director in 1950, a role he carried out with scrupulousness and passion until he retired. In truth, I think that he spent most of his time on the trains. He was always late, not because he was a rude or superficial man: simply because his feeling of time did not coincide with that of social conventions. He spoke Italian in a simple and yet sophisticated manner, completely without dialectal inflections. It was impossible to tell where he came from, perhaps because he belonged to no one place. He seemed to live a parallel, and blissful, existence in a world made of music, which he left only occasionally to communicate with human beings. And certainly, some benevolent divinity watched over him, because his distraction never caused harm. At a certain point during his earthly sojourn he must have discovered some particularly attractive celestial sphere: as his great friend Federico Fellini wrote, he did not die, he just passed on.



THE THEORY OF FLIGHT

GINO CASTALDO

If you should ever have the good luck to meet Mrs. Franca Gandolfi, ask her to tell you the story of the exact moment in which her husband, Domenico Modugno (with the help of a stormy Roman evening and the windows blown wide open by the wind) came up with the final answer to the puzzle that he and Migliacci had been working on for some time. *Volare, oh, oh, volare, oh oh oh!* That evening the Apulian singer sang before the window, and it was one of the most moving moments in the history of the Italian song. It was the infinitive, in its imperative meaning, that was missing in the song. The rest of the song was ready and waiting, with those surreal images of colours and navigations (erotic?) through the clouds. In other words, if it was a creative miracle, it was also due to the fact that artistic impulse and historical circumstance had never found a coincidence so perfect, an affinity so fitting and reciprocal. At the end of the '50s, Italy resembled a person who was restrained, compressed, something was bubbling up under the old exterior, something was coming to a head even if no one yet knew

what to call it. For once it was a song that revealed what the Italians already felt under their skin. Moreover, the invitation was much more than a mere reflection. There was the intention to surge forward, to risk, to discover what lay just beyond the grey horizon that, until then, had vexed post-war reconstruction. Moreover, we can see a semantic subtlety with far-reaching consequences. Let's consider the verb, that "volare/fly" that erupted into television screens in early 1958. After all, "fly" has been one of the most commonly used verbs in the history of man. It is amazing to note how often it was used millennia before man could actually fly. In 1958, the verb "fly" was widely rooted in the knowledge that flight was a reality, possible, even accessible, within everyone's reach. And yet, with a single, melodious stroke of genius Modugno succeeded in an almost impossible task. He added a semantic supplement to that overused and abused verb, a verb that in its universal rhetoric, in its arrogant majesty, seemed not to need anything else. And instead, one of the fundamental verbs of human expression has been slightly different for the past 50 some years. It has acquired the meaning of the song, for many people it means crossing the blue, a flight in the dense sea of our desire. How many songs can boast of that?



FANTASTIC ANTONIO

ALESSANDRO BARICCO

But it also happened that, interrupting more or less work-related occupations, some men waited for an old man to pass by, a friend, who with a nod of the head told them the time, and so they all swarmed lazily away from the Old Town, with the vague notion that they would return. At a cracking pace, but in fact idly, they headed down the little streets that salvaged the shade in the waning sun of the afternoon, and, ogling the women whose paths they crossed, and making a few tight-lipped comments, they arrived at the ramparts and the large field below the ramparts where, finally, they found what they were looking for, an improvised football

game played by kids of various ages, with goalposts made of rubbish bins or whatever, where however – in the heart of the game – crackled the irresistible anomaly of a child who played with imagination and strength, caressing the ball and inventing magical hip movements that the other kids were barely able to decipher and that the spectators underlined by throwing their heads back, or smiling like old connoisseurs – a wild, genius of a child who, inexplicably, was there, for them, and not in some football Olympus open only to an elite few. So they experienced the miracle. And they called it, “Come on out, Antonio’s playing.”

Itinerary 6
Massafra and the ravines

A land of canyons,
legends and medicinal herbs



MASSAFRA – CRISPIANO
MOTTOLA – CASTELLANETA – NOCI
PUTIGNANO – GIOIA DEL COLLE – LATERZA
GINOSA – MARINA DI GINOSA

On the previous page: Divided by a ravine and united by two bridges, Massafra's castle dominates this area's stony precipices.

Mel Gibson chose this spot to film a few sequences for *The Passion*.

Opposite: A superb selection of Byzantine rupestrian churches characterises the area around Mottola, from the Church of San Nicola to that of Santa Margherita and Sant'Angelo in Casalrotto. This area has been inhabited since the Iron Age.



The land of canyons, but not only. Capable of evoking not only the Far West, but also a timeless journey through dreamlike, untamed, brutal scenery or soft, green slopes. ► **Massafra** and, in general, the ravines are a land of legends, miracles, medicinal herbs, and folk liturgies that border on paganism, witches and ancient beliefs, influences with origins lost in the mists of time. The ravines, rifts of varying sizes and depths used by the locals to escape invaders, have been used by the cinema, but have not yet fully expressed their potential. Pier Paolo Pasolini chose Massafra, with Matera and Gioia del Colle (the castle), for his ★ *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*. It was 1964 and the writer-director spoke of his discovery in a story, using the term “canyon.” It is possible to find the Palestine of 2,000 years ago in Apulia or Basilicata. After Pasolini, Mel Gibson filmed ★ *The Passion* (2004) here: the territory of the ravines, located in the heart of Apulia, but which begins in Basilicata (and includes Grottaglie, Laterza, Montemesola, Crispiano, Massafra, Mottola, Castellaneta, Palagianello, Ginosa, Villa Castelli), truly seems to be frozen in time.

From a hilltop, Massafra dominates an important part of this scenery, historically the site of settlements dating back to the Neolithic era. The chapels and monasteries of the Basilian monks date back to

the late Middle Ages, but there are also churches dug into the rocks. Of note are the Church of Madonna della Greca, the crypt of San Simeone in Famosa, the settlement with the underground Church of Sant'Angelo in Torella, and the lower Church of Madonna della Scala. The city, divided by the ravine and united by bridges, is characterised by various important architectural structures. The 22-metre tall watchtower, built at the beginning of the 18th century; the castle that houses the Civic Historical-Archaeological Museum of the Cultures of Wine and Oil; the ancient noble residences, such as Palazzo De Notaristefani. There are many churches, including the Mother Church, built in the 16th century over an ancient crypt and reconstructed in part in the 18th century; and the sanctuary of the Madonna della Scala (The Madonna of the Stairs), located in the ravine of the same name, which is reached by descending a stairway with 125 steps. According to a local tradition, the steps cannot be counted because the number changes when you go up and when you go down. There are quite a few legends in this area. The church dedicated to saints Cosma and Damiano dates back to 1720 and was built where there was once a grotto “of health” in which there was a spring of water that was said to work miracles. The sanctuary dedicated to the Madonna di Tutte le Grazie was built between 1648



Opening scene and backstage of *The Paese delle spose infelici/The Town of Unhappy Brides*, first film by the director Pippo Mezzapesa, from Bitonto. The days of a group of adolescents are spent in Massafra, under the looming skyline of the Ilva factory. From the book of the same name by Mario Desiati.



and 1655 after the appearance of the Virgin, who “asked” a young shepherdess for it to be built.

The ► **Stornara Natural Reserve** (1501 hectares) is also important in the territory, with a coastal forest of Aleppo pines, a natural haven full of dramatic light and atmosphere.

The tradition of the presence of *masciari* (sorcerers) is felt in the air and is evident, above all, in the place names (“Gypsy’s Ravine,” “Pharmacy of Greguro, the Sorcerer”).

As often happens in the south, religion plays a strong role in opposing these influences. There are numerous processions: Sant’Antonio di Padova on 13 June; Madonna del Carmine on 16 July; San Gaetano di Thiene on 7 August; Santa Lucia on 13 December and, before Easter, the procession of the Mysteries, which is reminiscent of the more famous rites held in Taranto. On the last Sunday of Carnival and on Shrove Tuesday there are processions with floats and costumed groups.

An ideal setting, with this charm and fascination, for ★ *Il paese delle spose infelici/The Town of Unhappy Brides* by Pippo Mezzapesa (2011), which brings the novel of the same name by Mario Desiati to the screen using Massafra (but also Taranto) as a highly effective backdrop for the dynamics that characterize the story: the friendship between Zazà and Veleno, different in social class and destiny; their hopes and their dreams as young men from the provinces. An injured and rocky landscape also characterizes the love of the two adolescents for the “stray Madonna” Annalisa, a woman who enters their lives by falling off the roof of a church that overlooks the abyss of the Massafra ravines.

On 20 July, not far from Massafra, in ► **Crispiano**, there is a “summer” carnival dedicated to liver. There are processions with floats and costumes while food made from lamb, beef, pork and horse livers is served.

At Christmas there is a living creche with more than 300 costumed performers and artificial snow. Both in winter and summer, these events recreate the atmosphere of a south that is still emotionally tied to the past.

Farther to the north lies the hill of ► **Mottola**. You can feel the influence of the past. This area has been inhabited since the Iron Age, although the most important and characteristic monuments date back to more recent times. The cathedral (13th century Mother Church,



enlarged in 1507) and the superb Byzantine rupestrian churches, from the Middle Ages, including San Nicola, Santa Margherita and Sant'Angelo a Casalrotto. Also worthy of note in Mottola are the religious activities linked to Holy Week. Holy Thursday is celebrated with a procession for the Adoration of the Repositories led by so-called “paranze,” or barefoot, hooded friars. Holy Friday and Saturday are also celebrated with processions. An important artistic-cultural event is the International Guitar Festival, held in July. In mid-August, there is a Meat Festival, part of the Ravines Festival which attracts hundreds of visitors and tourists to its shows and equestrian games.

► **Castellaneta** is located in the heart of the Ravines Regional Park, a highly evocative area that has, over the centuries, been a hideaway for entire populations and single fugitives (like the Lucanian brigand Antonio Locaso, called “il Crapariello”). The historical centre has a medieval layout with very narrow alleys and streets, but the most important architectural treasures date back to the Baroque period. There are also numerous churches from the 15th and 16th centuries. Naturally, the city would not be complete without a monument in majolica dedicated to Rudolph Valentino at the end of the promenade. There is also a museum dedicated to Valentino, who was famous worldwide, the first true silent film star, born in Castellana on 6 May 1895 who died in New York on 23 August 1926 when he was only 31.

Right here, Nico Cirasola prepared the film dedicated to the myth of the great actor, a character to rediscover, as the director of **★Focaccia Blues** says. The star invented what today we call glamour and

The area around Castellana is the best example of the geomorphological changeability typical of Apulia. The high land that the city is perched on is similar to a Far West precipice and immediately calls the American canyons to mind.

was the first to incarnate the figure of the romantic, but resolute, man, a prototype that many imitators would take on during the history of the cinema.

The territory of Castellana extends from the Taranto Murgia all the way to the Ionian Sea and includes a wide variety of landscapes, including the area furrowed by ravines and dry waterways, called “lame.” The main ravines in the area are the Gravina di Castellana, or Large Ravine, that encircles the historical centre and is one of the largest and most spectacular in Apulia. Then there is Gravina del Porto, which borders on Gioia del Colle. There are also dolmens and the ruins of a Peucetian settlement in the area. Various rupestrian settlements are found in the ravines: Santa Maria del Pesco and Santa Maria di Costantinopoli contain valuable frescoes.

Splendid historical farmhouses dot the countryside of Castellana, some are fortified and have vineyards and fruit orchards. The hamlet of Castellana Marina, an important tourist centre, is located on the coast. It is notable for its beautiful villas (even Sofia Loren had one) and beautiful “period cross sections” (1960s and 1970s architecture) completely surrounded by the Bosco Pineto forest, which extends for nine kilometres along the coast. Over the years, large hotels and important holiday villages have been built here, particularly in the



area of Riva dei Tessali (which has a famous golf course) and Termitosa. In part, tourism here is tied to local traditions. For example, the Holy Week rites, the exhibits of nativity scenes and the living creche during the Christmas season, the festival of San Francesco da Paola and the Far'nèdd festival on 3 August, the largest food festival in Italy, held in the historical centre and offering a choice of a wide variety of typical dishes (rusks with extra-virgin olive oil, focaccia, orecchiette, various cooked meats, mozzarella and far'nèdd, a typical flour made of barley and chickpeas).

Castellaneta hosts an event in the European Challenge Golf Tour. The landscape of ►Noci is decidedly gentler. Sergio Rubini well demonstrated this while directing his film ★*The Bride's Journey*, starring Giovanna Mezzogiorno and Rubini himself, in the nearby countryside (other scenes were filmed in Conversano). Set at the beginning of the 1600s, the film tells the story of a young aristocrat and her stableman who fall in love during a journey. Noci, which owes its name to the numerous walnut trees that existed in the area in the distant past, is located between Bari and Taranto on a Murgian hill 400 meters above sea level. Its forests are still one of its most characteristic natural elements. Among the works of art to be found in Noci are the abbey church of Barsento (591), a few kilometres outside of town, the church of the Capuchins, the collegiate church (Mother Church) and the Benedictine monastery, Madonna della Scala. The *gnostre* are a characteristic of the historical heart of the city. These are courtyard-like spaces found in the narrow streets of the centre. They are closed on three sides and open onto the main street. The townspeople used to sit here (and many still do) to chat on summer evenings. The same atmosphere can be found at the farmhouses, like the one in Mimmo Mongelli's



Located not far from Noci, the Barsento abbey church, which dates back to the 1500s, is part of the system of solid, white farmhouses that fill the gentle, green landscape of the area.

Opposite: The heart of Noci is a tranquil, enchanted historical centre, as of yet untouched by rampant tourism. The “gnostre” are typical courtyards found in the white lanes, which offer discrete meeting places for the residents.



In 2003, the theatre director Mimmo Mongelli made his cinema debut. *La casa delle donne/The House of Women*, based on the novel of the same name by Maria Marcone, is an all-female saga shot in Noci, Conversano and Bisceglie.





First directing experience for the Bari actor Paolo Sassanelli who filmed the short film *Uerra/War*. In the period following the Second World War, Dino Abbrescia is a very particular father, eternally “at war” with his neighbour, played by Totò Onnis.



Site of one of the oldest (it dates back to 1394) and most important carnivals in Italy, Putignano is still waiting for its own film. In both versions, the classic winter and the new summer carnivals, floats and costumed groups invade the city.

film **★*La casa delle donne/The House of Women*** (2003), which tells a rural, all-female story 60 years long, set in the countryside of Noci, Conversano, Molfetta and Bisceglie. Also in Noci, folklore and faith animate the different months of the year. The Procession of the Mysteries is held on Good Friday; the Festival of the Madonna on 30 April; the patron saint’s festival, Maria della Croce, is held on 3 May; and the Murgia Festival during the second week of June. There is no lack of more recently instituted, but already well-established, events like the Night of Serenades, held 23 and 24 June; the patronal festival of San Rocco held on the first Sunday of September; the Mushroom Festival in October; and, in December, the “Pettole (a typical local Christmas dessert) in the Gnostre and Chocolate Festival.” Noci, as well as Altamura and Santeramo in Colle, was the backdrop for **★*Da Do Da/From Here to There***, a film by Nico Cirasola, starring Totò Onnis and Gilla Novak (1994), which tells, entertainingly, of the descent of the gods from Mount Olympus into a city of southern Italy. Moreover, when Paolo Sassanelli switched from acting to directing, he set his film **★*Uerra/War*** (2009) between ► **Casamassima** and Noci. The film stars Totò Onnis and Dino Abbrescia and is a short film set in 1947: a “story of love” between a father and his children

in the poor south during the first years after World War II. His period reconstruction, amid the alleys of a poor Italy, is very well done. From Marcel Carné to Camus (**★*Black Orpheus***), from Federico Fellini to Visconti, up to Alberto Lattuada by way of infinite minor films, the Carnival has been a backdrop often used by the cinema. Love stories, thrillers and action films with classic chase scenes, have all been set amid parades of floats, especially in Rio de Janeiro or Venice. Instead, ► **Putignano** is still waiting for its own film, despite the fact that it is one of the oldest and most important carnivals in Italy and Europe (since 2006 they have added a summertime version). The traditional character that represents the event is called Farinella. His name comes from a local dish with the same name. The origins of the Putignano Carnival date back to 1394 when local farmers, with their faces covered with flour, ran to watch the passing of the relics of Saint Stefano Martire and tried to outdo each other with jokes and satirical verses. This was also the beginning of the “Propaggini,” in which rhyming verses that tease city politicians or others in a position of power are recited in the local dialect. This event, held on 26 December, is still the heart of the Putignano Carnival tradition. The Rusk Festival is held in July, the Farinella Festival



in September and the Mushroom Festival in October. The Madonna della Grazie processions are held on the last and the next-to-last Sundays of May. Putignano celebrates the Madonna del Carmine on 16 and 17 July. On 2, 3 and 4 August the city's patron saint, Saint Stefano, is celebrated with illuminations and fireworks. The procession for the Madonna del Pozzo is held on the last Sunday in August. Illuminations and fireworks are in store again on the third Sunday in September for the Madonna Addolorata. Also in September, there are processions for the Santi Medici Cosma and Damiano, on the 27th, and San Michele Arcangelo, on the 29th. The traditional bonfire is lit for Santa Lucia on 13 December.

In 1999, Fabio Segatori filmed **★Terra bruciata/Scorched Earth** in ►**Gioia del Colle** with Giancarlo Giannini, Raoul Bova, Michele Placido and Bianca Guaccero. This was an entertaining experiment which mixed an Italian-style western with an action film to tell the story of the vendetta of an immigrant who has returned to his hometown. Gioia del Colle has been underused by the cinema. It has locations that are not yet famous and gastronomic specialties

Visually spectacular, Laterza is one of the oldest centres in Apulia, a living testimony to the continual battle to dominate a stony territory hostile to man. There is a large ravine near the city.

such as locally produced Primitivo wine and delicious mozzarella. The town is laid out around a Byzantine castle that was used by Pier Paolo Pasolini for his 1964 film **★The Gospel According to St. Matthew**, but the city's origins are much older. Excavations have uncovered a Peucetian village dating back to the 7th century B.C.

Gioia was a principality of Taranto and a fief of the De Mari princes of Acquaviva delle Fonti. Other links to the world of the cinema include Sylvester Stallone's family tree (his father was the son of emigrants from Gioia) and the city was the birthplace of Ricciotto Canudo, an intellectual and a pioneer in cinematographic criticism.

►**Laterza** is located in a strategic position, on the edge of the ravine of the same name. The territory around Laterza is part of the Apennine branch of the Bari Murgia. Laterza has extremely ancient origins, a necropolis dating back to 2000 B.C. was found at Candile. The inhabited area was most probably founded around the year 1000.



During the Middle Ages invasions by barbarians and Saracens forced the inhabitants of Ginosa to take refuge in the ravines. This bare city dug into the rocks is home to masterpieces, like the rupestrian Church of Santa Sophia.



Massafra, in the heart of a land of wild ravines, carves out a corner of landscape that looks like Mexico in its architecture, crevasses and light. Pasolini transformed it into Palestine for a few scenes from *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*.

History, tradition, folklore and faith are the basis for the various religious festivals. The patronal festival, for Maria Santissima Mater Domini, is celebrated on 20 and 21 May. The feast for the Madonna delle Grazie, held in the countryside, falls on Easter Tuesday. On 21 May there is a fair of typical products. On 16 July the Madonna del Carmelo is celebrated. The Festival of Bread and Roast Meat is held on the first Sunday of August. The Santi Medici are celebrated on 27 September. The Red Pepper Festival is held in the first half of August. The timeless day of Gianluca Sportelli's short film *★Nonsostare/! Don't Know How to Be* (2009) takes place in the centre of Laterza. A clear sky marked by an airplane's wake, a father (Paolo Sassanelli) and a daughter (Delia La Gala), their relationship expressed in looks, gestures, and jealousy, in the apparent immobility of an almost deserted town.

From the ravine to the sea, ►**Ginosa**, and its suburb Marina di Ginosa, cover a variegated territory, from plains to hilly landscapes. Already inhabited in the Paleolithic age, the Messapians lived here during the Bronze age. During the Roman age, Ginosa was important for

its vicinity to the Via Appia. The local population here, as elsewhere, was forced to escape into the ravines to protect themselves from attacks by barbarians and Saracens during the early Middle Ages. Here, too, the Byzantine monks left artistic masterpieces like the rupestrian Church of Santa Sofia.

►**Marina di Ginosa** is a lively summer holiday spot. It is one of the top beach areas on the Ionian Sea, with numerous beach establishments, campgrounds and holiday villages that attract over 100,000 tourists each year. For 10 years the sea here has been awarded a Blue Flag for clean waters by the environmental protection association, Legambiente. Religious tourism attracts visitors to the natural scenography of the ravine, where Pier Paolo Pasolini filmed a few scenes for *★The Gospel According to St. Matthew*.

Ginosa's patronal festival, the Passio Christi and the Terre de U'Munachicche festival attract many tourists from both the local area and the whole region.

The town's medieval architecture, such as the Norman castle dating back to 1080, is very attractive.



THE RETURN OF RUDY

NICOLA LAGIOIA

Castellaneta lies 240 metres above sea level, surrounded by the vertical drops of the ravine and a beautiful landscape of Mediterranean scrub, vineyards and large pine forests which would continue endlessly to the south if it were not for arson that burns them down every 10 to 15 years, benefiting the holiday villages. Only the flat expanse of the Ionian Sea disrupts the view of this landscape. It was once the land of Magna Grecia, Saracen raids and Baroque reassembly. But, what we are interested in here, is that more than a century ago – paradoxically – this sleepy little town between the Murgia and the Ionic arc was the birthplace of the Modern Myth. Rudolph Valentino was born here. Before Marilyn and James Dean, before Humphrey Bogart and Greta Garbo, before Elvis and the crowds crying while watching the Beatles and the Stones, it was he (Rudy the dark, handsome man, the “sheik” with magnetic eyes, the god of all bullfighters in *Blood and Sand*) who became the first worldwide film star. And, to tell the truth, the first bisexual icon. A synthesis of D’Annunzianism in frames and an apotheosis of kitsch able to reach depths of exoticism and sensuality previously unheard of. In the ’20s the United States was at his feet: there was no woman who

wouldn’t have given everything to have him, no man who didn’t envy him. The so-called entertainment society was created with the famous tango steps of Rudy Valentino in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. But, the legend – before he became one – was simply the second son of a veterinarian from Castellaneta. After elementary school in Taranto and boarding school in Perugia (where he was remembered as being “homely”), he first left Italy, moving to Paris, and then left Europe to seek his fortune across the Atlantic. From that moment on, no one would ever again hear of Rodolfo Alfonso Pietro Filiberto Raffaello Guglielmi: there was only Rudolph Valentino, the world famous star.

Very little of him remains in Castellaneta: a small museum and a ceramic commemorative statue that has the nickname “the water bag,” because in shape and size it looks more like a tribute to Oliver Hardy than to the Great Seducer. However, in recent years his birthplace has begun to remember him: round tables, symposiums, a few film festivals. Who knows, perhaps the prodigal son – while remaining an indelible part of the history of Hollywood – will decide to return home sooner or later.

Itinerary 7
Brindisi and the Itria Valley

Light refracted between
the land and the sea



ALBEROBELLO – LOCOROTONDO
CISTERNINO – OSTUNI
SAN VITO DEI NORMANNI – BRINDISI
MESAGNE – ORIA – FRANCAVILLA FONTANA
CEGLIE MESSAPICA

On the previous page: A landscape of fairy tales, bizarre, archaic and, at the same time, futuristic. Alberobello is a world-famous city, a Unesco World Heritage site. It was recently discovered by Bollywood in *Bachna Ae Haseeno*.

Opposite: One of the most beautiful landscapes in Italy, Ostuni has been an *unicum* for centuries. The city was originally whitewashed in defence against the plague and is still snow-white and softly settling on a hill, with houses nestling one on top of the other.



And then you wake up in the Itria Valley. You have chosen a dreamlike experience that focuses you on your own breathing. A unique experience that slows down your perception of your environment, rendering all that you see more intense under a vast blue sky with soft clouds and a sea of light and olive trees, dark green or silver depending on which way the wind is blowing. An ocean of tranquility with roads lined with soft arteries of low dry-stone walls, sheep tracks, snow-white farmhouses, low woodlands. A timeless landscape, archaic in its unchanging nature and enduring beauty. It is difficult to describe without using terms like “extraordinary.” In the midst of this pure natural landscape, ► **Alberobello** is unique for its trullo houses, round stone dwellings with conical roofs. It is said that they were put together and taken apart like atavistic Lego blocks to avoid paying taxes to the Kingdom of Naples. The immanent nature of this village, long a free fief, explains the transcendence of a city centre that seems to be decorated in a bizarrely imaginative way. Apulian trullo houses, which date back to the 16th century, but which are archaic enough to take us back in time to the Mycenaean tholoi and around the world to Cappadocia, Spain, Japan and Marocco. Rione Monti (Hill District), Aia Piccola (Small Threshing Floor), Trullo Sovrano (Sovereign Trullo), trulli Siamesi (Siamese trullos), Casa D’Amore (House of Love). They

all incite bold flights of fancy when the cinema uses them as sets. The most recent film shot here was by Bollywood, the flourishing and flamboyant Indian film industry. The film was called ★*Bachna Ae Haseeno* (2008), a Hindi blockbuster, starring Ranbir Kapoor. This collaboration opens the way to previously unimagined intercultural exchanges. The unique possibilities offered by the town are also shown in ★*Audience of One*, a documentary on the attempt by the debuting American director Michael Jacobs to make a science fiction film here in 2005. For the occasion, the trullo houses were to have been transformed into a megalopolis of 30 million inhabitants in the year 3000 A.D., a post-environmental disaster. Exotic, futuristic, but also terribly historical, the heart of the peasant culture fortified its soul here. It featured in the first trullo sequence of Nello Mauri’s ill-fated ★*Idillio infranto/Shattered Idyll*, filmed in Apulia in 1931. The trullos were also the setting for the post-World War II film ★*Women Without Names* (1949) by the Hungarian director Géza von Radványi, brother of Sa’ndor Ma’rai, filmed in Alberobello’s concentration camp, called the Casa rossa/Red House. Then here comes Checco Zalone ready to mock them irreparably (and irresistibly), directed for the second time by Gennaro Nunziante. The most beloved scene in the top Italian box-office record holder of all time, ★*What a Beautiful Day*



Narrow houses shoot up with steep roofs along scenic Via Nardelli. This is the most characteristic image of Locorotondo, the *locus rotundus* with a perfectly circular centre.

Below: Piazzetta Vittorio Emanuele, with its clock tower, is the symbol of Cisternino and of the Itria Valley, a mix between rural culture and the Orient. The colourful Bhole Baba ashram is located in the most spiritual area of the valley.



The Molfettan rapper Caparezza sings *Sarà perché ti amo* amid the trullo houses of Alberobello for the film *What a Beautiful Day*.



(2011), is when the Molfettan rapper Caparezza sings *Sarà perché ti amo* between lavishly laid tables set amid the beloved trullo houses. Here, too, the *bon sauvage* Zalone returns to the south with the flora and fauna of stereotypes at his complete disposition.

Outside the town, a smattering of increasingly white trullos can be found throughout the valley – called *Trullishire* by the English – along panoramic roads bathed in intense light. They lead you to the nearby towns, small villages of monumental beauty such as ► **Locorotondo**, shining from its hilltop and the nearby Ostuni. The late Latin toponym, Locus Rotundus, expresses the circular sense of the typical narrow houses with steep, curiously Dutch roofs, called *cummerse*, which are numerous along the panoramic street Via Nardelli. This is the heart of trullo country and this town tells the tale of a nucleus of peasants who, in the year 1000, came here to build their little houses, one piled on the other as if for mutual assistance, creating an immaculate maze dominated by the neoclassic San Giorgio Mother Church. The centre, untouched by time, produces wine, as demonstrated by the extensive wine cooperative, and it reaches back into the past thanks to its 138 districts, from Lamie di Olimpia to Laureto, where life is lived as it was a century ago. Here time is immobile, and the ambiance is beloved by the writers, artists and directors who come here.



The Indian director Siddharth Anand brought the scent of Bollywood to the Itria Valley in 2008, with the stars Ranbir Kapoor and Minissha Lamba. The movie *Bachna Ae Haseeno* was filmed in Alberobello, Zagare Bay and Santa Cesarea Terme.



The First Assignment is the film debut of director Giorgia Cecere who directs Isabella Ragonese, a brave teacher in the 1950s. For the small village setting, she chose the Castelluccio farmhouse, located between Cisternino and Fasano, in the Itria Valley

Your senses expand as you near ► **Cisternino**, the most spiritual area of the Itria Valley. An arcane force drew the Basilian monks here in the Middle Ages, and the interreligious community of the colourful and welcoming Bhole Baba ashram at the end of the 1970s. India and trullos yet again, and Oriental spices as well in Cisternino's historical centre, where the houses are wedged together, connected by steps, arches and small courtyards full of flowers and open-air cookers. At the centre of it all lies Piazzetta Vittorio Emanuele, a wide-angle drawing room dominated by the Watch Tower and, in the winter, by a special light. All around, small villages are wedged into the landscape like ancient pearls. One of these, dominated by the ► **Masseria Castelluccio** in the area between Cisternino and Fasano, captured the perfect sentiment and atmosphere that the screenwriter Giorgia Cecere sought for her first film ★ *The First Assignment* (2011). Isabella Ragonese is a schoolmarm in the 1950s who bravely faces a community of men and women, hardened like the stones in which they live, in order to teach their children to read and write. In exchange, she learns to walk the country paths, perceive the seasons and gain a new sense of life and love. In the same countryside and during the same years, Bianca Guaccero is a

modern and independent woman, directed by Ricky Tognazzi in the RaiTV series ★ *Mia madre/My Mother* (2010).

Via dei Colli is a road with a Mediterranean rhythm. Along a dizzy pre-Murgian slope, with the sea in the distance, it leads you through enchanting little trullo towns like Acquarossa until you reach ► **Ostuni**. If you stop in one of the many roadside turnoffs along this road, the white city seems as beautiful as a sunrise. It is perhaps the most beautiful view in Italy, a white spaceship, a rustic meringue nativity scene, painted white to defend itself from the plague. Longobard, Byzantine, home to Basilian monks. Rich in karstic pits and prehistoric settlements, its vast territory is painted with breathtaking landscapes, fortified farmhouses, sleepy districts like Pascarosa and, reaching as far as the sea, to limpid bays like Torre Pozzella and Costa Merlata. In the town centre, climb up through tiny alleys and let yourself be blinded by the houses, grafted one onto the other in layers, pressed together all the way up to the cathedral, the town's Oriental apex with a façade half Venetian, half Balkan. This white labyrinth lends itself to any type of cinematographic transformation. In 1962, Luigi Zampa shot ★ *Roaring Years* here with Nino Manfredi. The city played the role of an ambiguous town, emblematic of a fascist and opportunistic South. The exhilarating 1998 road movie



★*The Children of Hannibal* stops off in Ostuni, as does the ramshackle army of ★*Italia 2061*, by the Vanzina brothers, in 2007. And, finally, it is the departure point for the journey in ★*Il grande botto/Big Bang* by Leone Pompucci, filmed in 2000. Head down to the sea and, continuing along the coast, you will find ►**Torre Guaceto**, lost in time. The tower, a defensive outpost that lends its name to this portion of placid paradise, dates back to 1500. It was a late Aragonese garrison, part of a “network” of defence against the Turks who had mounted a bloody attack on Otranto. From tower to tower, messengers passed the cry of alarm along the coastline. Since then no one has built anything in the area, which is now a marine and wildlife reserve. It is an oasis of timeless nature, ideal for representing any epoch, from the Middle Ages to an uncontaminated contemporary setting. The reserve covers 1000 hectares of land, 2000 hectares of sea, seven kilometres of coast and changeable landscapes with sheep-tracks and sandy dunes that slide into the sea, quilted with white lilies and dotted by junipers. The Mediterranean scrub is interrupted by small coves that are treasure chests of pure water. Once a year, Torre Guaceto hosts Naturalia, a festival of words and music

A marine and wildlife reserve, Torre Guaceto gets its name from the watchtower that since the 1500s has been the only garrison in an uncontaminated paradise, made of dunes, Mediterranean scrub and small coves of crystalline water.

by the light of the full moon. Massimo Natale filmed ★*Martino's Summer* (2010) entirely at Torre Guaceto. Divided between the massacres of Ustica and Bologna, during the summer of 1980 when, once again, we lost our innocence, the young Martino (Luigi Ciardo) learns the challenges of surfing from Captain Clark (Treat Williams) amid the sea's waves and his boundless imagination.

Around the nature preserve, ►**Serranova** offers a passageway to the sea along a road lined with olive trees, each half a millennium old, a silent arboreal expanse.

Heading towards ►**San Vito dei Normanni** through the yellow-blue countryside of wheat sheaves and sea, you pass through what remains of a vast Byzantine rupestrian settlement. The crypt of San Biagio, in the Jannuzzo district, completely covered with frescoes representing the cycle of Christ, is a bit of stone set among



prickly pears, in a cradle of green meadow scattered with flowers in spring and bare in the summer, a rock cathedral from an Eastern African moor, Greece or Albania. The Jannuzzo farmhouse and the ruins of the Badessa farmhouse tell the tale of past human industry. San Vito dei Normanni also speaks volumes of days gone by. Piazza Leonardo Leo, in the town centre, offers a piece of post-Fascist Italy intact in tiny bars with their original signs, old-timers' social clubs, discrete Baroque, city hall, watchtower and old men who keep up a buzz of conversation during the early hours of the afternoon. The plaza is closed

on one side by the Dentice di Frasso castle, of Norman origins, that housed Vittorio Emanuele III and Pietro Badoglio in 1943. All around the town li stratoddi, old roads of rural homes and cellars, branch off. For this evocative capacity for self-preservation, Sergio Rubini chose San Vito (as well as his beloved Mesagne, but also Oria, Brindisi, Torre Santa Susanna and Bari) for *★The Cézanne Affair* (2009). A return to the chosen land, the generous autobiographical source, and once again we meet the railwayman with legitimate artistic ambitions that are unrecognized in his milieu. We see through the eyes of the young Gabriele (Guido Giacquinto/Fabrizio Gifuni in the adult role) and the adults are played by Rubini himself, Valeria Golino, Riccardo Scamarcio, Anna Falchi and a carefully selected team of character actors. A sense of an interruption in time and location is created by the enormous ex-Nato base, near Brindisi, a reminder of a belligerent America which caught the attention of Louis Malle. Next stop, ►**Brindisi**. The city evokes the mythical memory of your first trip to Greece. That's no coincidence. The crossroads of arrivals



A silent esplanade, wounded by man. Brindisi wears the wounds of unbridled industrialisation. The magnificent beaches often have a background of fuming smokestacks and conveyor belts, in a symbolic contrast.

Opposite: From a distance, the crenellated towers of the famous Federican castle welcome you to Oria, the city of the neighbourhood tournaments. A medieval fortress that will not disappoint you when you climb the steep streets that lead to its giddy façade.

and departures is a natural part of Brindisi, last stop on the Via Appia, harbour of the first crusades and kingdom of the Templars, who underwent the trial that undermined their Order in the mysterious 13th century Church of Santa Maria del Casale. Cinematographically undiscovered, profoundly evocative, the city was a stop on the India Mail, a postal train that connected London and Bombay. Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Arthur Rimbaud passed through here. Rimbaud stopped over because of a case of sunstroke and was enchanted by this bay of ancient sea. He remained here months before departing for Africa where he was to die. The maudit poet understood that Brindisi is a city that preserves, in an immediately perceivable way, its deep, ancestral relationship with the sea. There is a waterfront, which the city centre curves around, along a slice of the Adriatic that is mild and navigable by motorboats. Its lay-out has been the same for 2000 years. The seafront can be reached on foot by passing through the two columns that mark the threshold of the Via Appia. Virgil passed through them and died here. Cicero often passed under these arches,



One of the symbolic images of the sorrowful *April* (1998) by Nanni Moretti was filmed on Brindisi's coast. Desolate and bewildered, Moretti awaits the arrival of another decrepit ship overloaded with immigrants and questions for the Italian left.



È stato il figlio/It Was the Son is Daniele Cipri's first film without Franco Maresco. The working-class neighbourhoods of Brindisi are transformed into the suburbs of Palermo to give atmosphere to the tragic-grotesque events of the Ciraulo family, with Toni Servillo as the head of the household

perhaps thinking of his epistolary friend, the playwright Marco Pacuvio. Stanley Kubrick evoked this place in his film on *★Spartacus*, who was betrayed here by the Illyrians. Facing onto the inner harbour is a fishing village, but also military garrisons, factories and the Swabian castle, headquarters of the Italian Navy. The director Goran Paskaljević lands a couple of Albanian newlyweds at the Border Police's harbor station where they are interrogated and detained, not very politely. Distressing and true, *★Honeymoons* (2009) is the journey of two couples imagined by the Serbian author of *★Polveriera/The Tinderbox*, which discusses borders, mistakes, prejudices and the meaning of the future in a Europe that still has too many barriers standing. The pictorial dock of the harbour becomes a location for Federico Rizzo (he also filmed in *▶Torchiarolo* and *▶San Pietro Vernotico*), director of the semipulp thriller *★Deep Within* (2012), the story of a return home and to the past. From the banks of this harbour, Davide Barletti finds a crossing to the other side of the Adriatic, Albania, for his journey down the Balkan Appian Way in his nomadic documentary *★Radio Egnatia* (2009).

The historical area ends with the silent aura of the Sea Fort, the Aragonese castle which turns red at sunset. If you arrive from the

sea, you can glimpse the magical suspension of the fortress built on the island of Sant'Andrea at the end of the 1400s, a Christian garrison designed to offer protection from Muslim raids. The industrial harbour is the ideal non-place that Nanni Moretti chose for the saddest part of his film *★April* (1998), where he waits for another decrepit ship overloaded with Albanians, bewildered in a tragic time of migration and death. A ship abandoned at that time still lies in those same waters, an immobile, rusty monument to the sea. All around lies a silent esplanade, wounded by man, his machines and his monumental talent for disaster, emblematic of a *finis terrae* region, a border land and a new passageway after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The skyline of the old coastline is extraordinary, with the towering smokestacks of the Petrolchimico factory and the luxuriant nature of the ex-Government Salt Flats in a clearly symbolic contrast. Among the intermittent and statuesque cliffs remain the traces of old rifle ranges and coastal armoured turrets, and, above, military fighter jets flash through the skies and commercial airliners take flight. Brindisi's rough and ready outlying neighbourhoods (Paradiso, Commenda and Bozzano) take on grotesque and surreal tones for Daniele Cipri, in his first film without Franco Maresco. *★È stato il*



In 2006, Sergio Rubini filmed *Our Land*, a Karamazovian clash between four brothers, starring Fabrizio Bentivoglio, Paolo Briguglia, Massimo Venturiello and Emilio Solfrizzi, in Mesagne and Nardò during the burning hot summer.

figlio/It Was the Son (2012) based on the novel of the same name by Roberto Alajmo. It is the story of the Ciraulo family who lose their daughter, killed during a shoot-out. The father begins to spend the money earmarked for victims of mafia crimes before he actually receives it. In the midst of the desperate creativity of the beehive of neighbourhoods, appears the blank face of the marvellous Toni Servillo (by his side, the Chilean Alfredo Castro, the great actor used by the Chilean director Pablo Larraín in *★Tony Manero* and *★Post mortem*) to tell this surreal mystery of misery. The outskirts of Brindisi become Palermo's Kalsa area, because, says Cipri, "working-class suburbs are universal places." A perfectly successful operation. Brindisi remains Brindisi, instead, in the harrowing documentary by Valentina Pedicini *★My Marlboro City* (2010) which brings back the days of smuggling. The skill of the young director from Brindisi helps memories and coastlines to unfold as we leave the city.

Next, we continue to the south, through the burgeoning song of the cicadas, Eucalyptus trees, Jerusalem pines, ancient riverbeds,

lands where many civilisations have developed. Heading towards ►**Mesagne** you enter what was once the hot territory of the SCU, the Sacra Corona Unita. In this area, between Brindisi and Tuturano, the fourth mafia used abandoned farmhouses, cottages and grottoes as hideouts. The city of 100 underground oil mills can be quickly identified by the moat of the Norman-Swabian castle and a historical centre with a heart that beats to the rhythm of ancient Messapia. Mesagne with its strong spirit was chosen by Sergio Rubini in the burning hot summer of 2006 as the main setting for his Karamazovian film *★Our Land*. He found a perfect southern Far West in the old town, between the Baroque Mother Church with three orders, Piazza Orsini and the Brusca farmhouse. The embattled towers of the famous Federican castle announce ►**Oria** from afar, set upon a hilltop, crowning a Medieval fortress of ancient Cretan origin that was celebrated every August by the Federican court and with tournaments between neighbourhoods. The castle, which has a triangular layout with an intact parade ground for 5,000 soldiers, barracks, repositories, cisterns, secret passageways and a forest, at times seems to disappear into the smoke. Oria's countryside is the site of a small "family" zoo. In 2002, Walter Toschi set his film *★Outsider* here, amidst the underworld and a vast selection of stereotypes.

Just a few kilometres of olive groves away and you can enter ►**Franca-villa Fontana** through one of its three gates: Croce, Carmine and Cappuccini. Its countless mansions built between the 17th and 18th centuries, located along Via Roma, tell the tale of a generous past. Among these is the Baroque Imperial Palace constructed for the Orsini del Balzo. At Easter the city puts on one of the most scenographic Holy Friday Mysteries processions in the area, with confraternities and hooded devotees, loaded with towering crosses, images used in the culminating scene of *★Our Land* by Rubini. The countryside around Francavilla is home to the municipality of Urupia, one of the few ecological villages in southern Italy. Returning to the north, along the road you come across ►**Ceglie Messapica**, ancient centre built up in rings around the beautiful Piazza Plebiscito. Complete with a clock tower and small houses around the plaza, it is a motionless scene out of an early 20th century painting. Nearby Corso Garibaldi is a street of cafés with outdoor tables and home-made cakes. Windy alleys climb up to the Palazzo Ducale, with its geckos that sit on the windowsills in the heat of summer enjoying the last rays of sun.



IN THE COURTYARDS OF TIME

PIETRO MARINO

The farmhouses of Apulia dot the landscape like mirages. Often a tower stands out above a large house decorated with flights of steps, battlements, and terracing, beyond a high fence that encloses other buildings set around a farmyard. Stalls, warehouses, inner gardens, all watched over by a small church with a steeple. Small agricultural communities, or “green courtyards,” organised around a main building (the farmworkers lived on the ground floor, while the owner-gentleman lived above) creating an area of functional spaces. A history recorded on palimpsests from the Middle Ages to the 1500s, and which saw its period of greatest glory between the 1600s and the 1800s, punctuating the social history of the region with its agricultural transformations. From the Tavoliere to the Murgia, from the Itria Valley to the Salento, this model is repeated, with variations in form and function, creating the charm of an unpretentious and welcoming rural architecture.

From the government “sheep” farms, in the Daunia and Murgia areas, to the rural Arcadia south of Bari, to the noble home-farmhouses in the Salento, among olive trees and vineyards, Macedonian oaks and carob trees, between countryside and sea, today’s idyllic picture shows the signs of a life of work, but also of adventure, the danger of attacks from marauders and brigands by land, and from the “Turks” by sea. The majestic “fortified farmhouses” were the solution for defence: crenellated towers and embrasures, wall walks and stone bridges. Sometimes grottoes, karstic Apulia is full of them. In the restored interiors, partially transformed, you can view the relics and trophies of farming culture, millstones and wells, rakes and saddles, lamps and jugs, lace and chests of drawers. Stories of courteous grace, of composed Mediterranean voluptuousness, blend with the traces and the fruits of the labour of the fields and with the wounds of time, in coves whitened with lime, in the warm breath of living stone.



WHERE LOCATION IS LIFE

AL BANO CARRISI

The cinema? A great passion, both in front of and behind the film camera. Nine musicals, in the '60s and '70s, made me fall in love with this genre, which I then also cultivated as a director. I independently filmed dramatisations which often accompanied my albums or told of particular moments in my life. If I should ever pick up a motion picture camera again, I would like to celebrate the colours of our region. I have done this in the past, but it seems to me there is a greater need for

it today. This corner of Apulia must become the California of Europe, before someone snatches even this away from us. Our region is a natural set with the right mix of sensations and atmosphere that can render any film unique. The important thing is to know how to “read” our region. It can truly offer so much. Some people have already noticed all this, but the best is yet to come. The scent of our sun-kissed towns, the history that only the centuries-old olive trees can tell and the crystalline blue of a still uncontaminated sea are all here: ready to set the scene for an important story, a memorable event or, more simply, a memory to be immortalised. They call them locations, here they are the stuff of everyday life.

Itinerary 8
The Gulf of Taranto

Red sunsets
with a factory view



TARANTO MARTINA FRANCA – GROTTAGLIE MANDURIA – AVETRANA

On the previous page: Both a physical place and a metaphor for postindustrial society, Taranto is a city with a deep and simple spirit. The glorious past of Magna Grecia, the harbour, and the historical centre each propose ever-changing vistas.

Opposite: Castel Sant'Angelo rises up out of the sea with its quadrangular prominence. Seat of the Italian Navy, it speaks of Taranto's relationship with the military tradition that made an ideal setting for films like *The White Ship* or *I fantasmi del mare/Ghosts of the Sea* by Francesco De Robertis.



When you speak of cinema, ► **Taranto** combines a kind of primacy and conclusion. It is the area in which one of the first legends of worldwide cinema was born. Rudolph Valentino was born in Castellaneta on 6 May 1895 and died in New York on 23 August 1926. And, as a location, it shone as the star of ★ *The Miracle* by Edoardo Winspeare. Taranto emerges in the film by the director from the Salento area as an authentic leading actor, both a physical place and a metaphor of postindustrial society. A city and a territory tied to the rites and liturgies of the past, but projected towards the deaf and dumb future of the global market and hyper-production, launched on an unbridled race towards self-destruction. Nonetheless, the red of the sunsets tinged by the smoke of the Ilva factory reveals only certain aspects of this extraordinary city. Many other distinctive characteristics, countless scenes and situations await the occasion to confirm Taranto as an excellent site for the cinema. The religious liturgies, with their “perdoni” and “troccolanti” (roles played by the participants in the Easter processions), the narrow alleys of the historical centre, the glorious past of a Magna Grecia city, the harbour and the rigour that the military arsenal ascribe to the city are other aspects of its complex charm. Don't forget the beaches, the beauty of the swimming establishments, the discotheques, the

city's propensity for commerce, entertainment and beauty which could make Taranto the ideal site for a Vanzina-style holiday film. Taranto's magic comes from its history, from its intense cultural exchanges over the centuries and from the presence of strange characters such as Pierre-Ambroise-Francois Choderlos de Laclos, French general and writer who died in Taranto on 5 September 1803. He was the author of *Dangerous Liaisons*, a literary classic that inspired various films, including ★ *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988) by Stephen Frears starring John Malkovich, Glenn Close and Uma Thurman. The tomb of General de Laclos no longer exists, but traces of his stay are still evident: the de Laclos Fort on the Island of San Paolo, for example, the largest of the Cheradi Islands in the Ionian Gulf, is still today a highly suggestive example of the military architecture of the past. Taranto's military tradition is the basis for its cinematic history. Seat of an Italian Navy Arsenal inaugurated in 1889, Taranto is the perfect set for war films. ★ *The White Ship* was filmed in the harbour in 1941 by the director Francesco De Robertis, an Apulian from San Marco in Lamis (the film was supervised by Roberto Rossellini). In 1948 De Robertis filmed ★ *I fantasmi del mare/Ghosts of the Sea*, once again in the harbour and in the Arsenal. In the war film genre, there is also ★ *Il prezzo della gloria/The Price of Glory* (1955)



A block of houses on the sea that are very reminiscent of a disorderly and magical Naples. It was no coincidence that Lina Wertmüller chose Taranto and its surroundings to reconstruct the Neapolitan hinterland for *Ciao, Professore!* and, more recently, *Mannaggia alla miseria! / Darn it All!*



Two women and two cities, Treviso and Taranto, in the film *The Acrobat* that Silvio Soldini shot in Apulia in 1997. The film stars Licia Maglietta, Valeria Golino and Fabrizio Bentivoglio. The main location is the city with two seas.

by Antonio Musu who directed Gabriele Ferzetti, Eleonora Rossi Drago and a young Mike Buongiorno in the same setting. Renamed “the city of two seas” because it faces onto the Small Sea (a sort of bay) and the Large Sea (the Ionian), Taranto developed around three centres: the old town, the new town, with its characteristic swing bridge, and the “Village.” The most typical aspects of these areas have been captured by films like ★*The Acrobat*, shot by Silvio Soldini in 1997 (starring Valeria Golino, Licia Maglietta and Fabrizio Bentivoglio), which tells the story of a friendship between two very different women (one from northern Italy and the other from the south), or a more “local” film like ★*Pesci o puttane / Fish or Whores* by Cesare Fragnelli, filmed in 2001, which tells the story of the city of narrow alleys, organized crime, the fish market and young Albanian girls driven to prostitution. The Taranto of the “common” people also serves as the background to stories of the underworld in ★*Two Families*, starring Franco Nero, filmed in 2007 by Romano Scavolini, and in the RAI TV mini-series ★*Sarò il tuo giudice / Il Be Your Judge* directed by Gianluigi Calderone, starring Franco Castel-

lano and Agnese Nano. Here Taranto, with its large harbour, is the ideal junction for transporting drugs to the north. Less dramatic colours and comic tones bring out a lighter side to the common man of Taranto in the film ★*The Children of Hannibal* by Davide Ferrario, in which Apulia is the last stop in an escape to the south. The film stars Diego Abatantuono, Silvio Orlando and Valentina Cervi. Also worthy of note are the locations in Taranto in the film ★*Towards the South* that Pasquale Pozzessere, born in Lizzano, shot in 1992 with Antonella Ponziani and Stefano Dionisi, and in the Tamburi neighbourhood which was the setting for ★*Ciao, Professore!* by Lina Wertmüller with Paolo Villaggio. In the tradition of the glorious genre of the Italian style comedy, able to show the light side of life of every story, but also the bitter side, Taranto becomes the perfect stereotype of a southern city, an ideal frame for the “characters” that Wertmüller loves, working-class people characterized by their exuberance and the excesses of their nature: ignorant, naive, bunglers, violent, but also generous, passionate, brave, depending on the time and occasion. In a single word: “alive.”



Taranto becomes the outskirts of Turin in the 1970s in *Rust* by Daniele Gaglianone, presented at the 2011 Venice Film Festival. This is home to a group of children, the sons of southern immigrants, who will soon have to face a merciless “boogeyman,” interpreted by Filippo Timi.

So, in 2010 both Martina Franca and Brindisi became Naples for Wertmüller in *★Mannaggia alla miseria!/Darn it All!* The actors include Gabriella Pession, Sergio Assisi, Piera Degli Esposti and Tommaso Ramenghi. Inspired by the idea of bringing Nobel prize winner Muhammad Yunus’ project of “banks for the poor” to Italy, the story centres on the misadventures of three young adults who, while dreaming of helping the people of the south with “micro-credit,” live their lives and their private emotions, including love, friendship and rivalry. The fragility of the characters and their utopias are destined to clash with the scepticism and slyness of a disenchanting reality.

However, Puglia does not offer only “southern” landscapes and atmospheres, modest interiors or the petty bourgeois overlooking alleys or sea views, just as it does not limit itself to presenting sumptuous natural or architectural scenery. On the contrary, it also lends itself – with excellent results from the visual point of view – to showing the much less pleasant face of a territory disfigured by unregulated development and the grey suburbs of bedroom communities.

The Ilva smokestacks in Taranto rule over this scenario, materially and symbolically, that evokes a south scarred by the same disease as the cities of the north, where economic laws have upset and cancelled the ancient rules of communal living. The ghettos of the “new” housing projects, the beehives that seem to have been planned as containers of pain and violence represent an Italy that is all the same, “non-places” in a widespread malaise.

That’s how, in *★Rust* (2011) by Daniele Gaglianone, the outskirts of Taranto become the outskirts of Turin in the 1970s. At the centre of the film is a group of children, the children of southern immigrants, who have already been condemned to the role of victim by the sombre scenario. The kids’ playing field is a scrap yard, a space where out-of-commission structures loom between the carcasses of old cars, and where everything is decayed and rusted.

The sinister appearances soon generate cruelty and fear. The monstrosity of the environment, as in a horror film, breeds the monstrosity of the people and the drama becomes a tragedy: two young girls are raped and killed. The offender, the evil man, the monster, who will be defeated, reigns supreme in the “dimension of rust.” A merciless and implacable metaphor for the world in which we live. But, while Taranto knows how to take on the role of Turin in the 1970s, it is even better at interpreting itself today. The proof is in *★Mar Piccolo/Small Sea* (2009), the harsh film directed by Alessandro di Robilant which caused heated controversy in the Ionian capital. Not everyone liked it. In fact, the Paolo VI neighborhood was described, without sugar-coating, as a problematic and difficult place, theatre of marginalization and violence. The film, which gave the young actor Michele Riondino the possibility to perfect his tough guy look, speaks of the life of a young man who, in the metropolitan Far West, quickly learns the only rule valid in a land without rules: to avoid being destroyed, you must destroy others. Atmospheric pollution and moral pollution paint a picture that seems to leave no way out. Everything, in the shadows of the colossal steelworks factory, yet another metaphor for a looming evil, is degradation, fear, and desperation.

And once again the smokestacks – outlined in a sky streaked with red smoke – are the backdrop to *★Il paese delle spose infelici/The Town of Unhappy Brides*, the film that Pippo Mezzapesa based



Alessandro Di Robilant chose Taranto for his film *Mar Piccolo/Small Sea*, shot in 2008. Six weeks spent in the Paolo VI and Tamburi neighbourhoods. The film stars the newcomer Giulio Beranek and Michele Riondino.

Palazzo Pantaleo and Palazzo d'Ayala Valva characterise the central area of Taranto, the most elegant area of the city, an ideal spot for a leisurely stroll. In the long history of the Ionian capital, these buildings express the city's rich past.



on Mario Desiati's best seller of the same name. This south is also sad, this south is also desperate, but able to preserve, and therefore uncover, pockets of natural vitality. The countryside (which was actually filmed near Massafra) counterbalances the industrial smokestacks. There is the sea, there are the wheat fields, there is the friendship between Zazà and Veleno; the social outcast, son of a poor family, and the boy who comes from a well-to-do family. Two worlds which meet, understand each other, and taint each other, in the same way as the environments they represent.

The Ilva factory also figures in the docu-film *★La svolta. Donne contro l'Ilva/The Turning Point. Women Against Ilva* (2010) by Valentina D'Amico where, thanks to a series of dramatic interviews, Europe's largest steelworks is not only evoked, but stands accused: in this film, the widows, wives, and mothers speak. The film tells of an entire city that has paid a very high price in terms of pollution, disease and death for "progress" and the economy. The dangerous conditions to which the workers are exposed are described by employees and former employees, and by the symbolic story of Antonino, who died in the factory. Marco Santarelli, in his documentary *★Scuola Media/Middle School* (2010), presented at the Turin Film Festival, also addresses the issue with the sons of workers at the "great steelworks factory" who study at the "Pirandello" Middle School, once again in the Paolo VI neighbourhood.

The presence of Ilva and its influence on Taranto are exorcised by the director Giacomo Abruzzese in *★Fireworks* (2011), an imaginative short film in which, under the cover of New Year's Eve fireworks, an international group of environmentalists is able to blow up the large steelworks factory.



So far we have spoken of modernity. But, Taranto is also a very ancient city. It was founded in 706 B.C. as a colony of Sparta and then became an important centre of Magna Grecia.

The last two columns of the ruins of the Temple of Poseidon (or Doric Temple), the oldest temple in Magna Grecia, still stand over eight metres tall in Piazza Castello. In the National Archaeological Museum, another gem founded in 1887, you can view finds like the sarcophagus of the famous Athlete of Taranto. Also in this museum, you will find one of the largest collections of handiwork from the Magna Grecia era, including the famous Gold of Taranto. The necropolises, located at seven sites, are fundamental for studies of the Greco-Roman period. Of course, there are also examples of architecture of more recent historical and cultural importance in Taranto, like the Crypt of the Redeemer or the homes of noblemen, including Palazzo Pantaleo and Palazzo d'Ayala Valva. There are churches of various styles and eras: from the Romanesque style to the Baroque façade of the Cathedral of San Cataldo, from the Gothic style of San Domenico Maggiore to the Renaissance and Neoclassical lines of other places of worship. The ancient “de Beaumont Bonelli Bellacicco” hypogeum, in the Old Town, is also characteristic with an opening at sea level.

In the land of ravines, the terrain is made up of depressions, terraces, and deep plateaus that hide treasures. Such is the case of the hypogeum at San Marzano di San Giuseppe, dedicated to the Madonna delle Grazie.

Palazzo de Beaumont Bonelli was later constructed on top of the hypogeum.

Taranto stands in front of the sea like a woman in front of a mirror. It is a city rendered beautiful by its light and before the cameras of the cinema; poetry had already taken note. Just read the poet Raffaele Carrieri to find out.

A plus in this city, from a cinematographic point of view, can be found in its patrimony of traditions, in particular those related to religion. Winspeare captured them in *★The Miracle*. The culminating scenes of the film take place during the rites of Holy Week. The Our Lady of Sorrows and the Mysteries processions date back to the period of Spanish domination, they begin at dusk and continue through the night. The confraternity members, dressed in the traditional costume of the “perdoni,” with their faces covered by a hood, proceed at a very slow pace to the sound of funeral marches. The processions involve the entire city and attract the faithful and tourists from all over the world. History and folklore mix with more recent customs



The Cheradi Islands suggest stories of men, wars and garrisons. The de La-clos Fort is located on the Island of San Paolo. It is named after the general and famous author of the 18th century novel *Dangerous Liaisons*.



Oltre il mare/Beyond the Sea is the first film by the director Cesare Fragnelli, from Martina Franca, who chose a generational story set in the summertime. The locations for the group of young friends on vacation are Martina Franca and Otranto.

in Taranto. The Taranto Palio, for example, is a masked competition, carried out in boats, that since 1986 has taken place during the festival for the patron saint, Cataldo, from 8 to 10 May. The celebration culminates in the traditional procession by sea and fireworks.

Important events are held in nearby towns. In Pulsano and in San Giorgio Ionico the bonfire of San Giuseppe is lit on 19 March. The Festival of San Giuseppe is held in Fragagnano, on 13 and 14 March. This very ancient tradition includes the preparation of the *matte*, tables set up in the streets and loaded with typical products of the local cuisine. The Festival of “The Street of Knowledge and Flavours,” a highly acclaimed wine and food festival, is held in Maruggio, on 20 and 21 August.

On the coast, just a few kilometres from the capital, Bosco Pineto is the name of the long coastal strip of Aleppo pines that face the Ionian Sea for about 10 kilometres. Besides Castellaneta Marina, the area includes the territories of Termitosa and ► **Riva dei Tessali**, famous for its important holiday villages. Beautiful beaches, dunes and dense Mediterranean scrub are the main characteristics of this part of Apulia.

In the gold book of cinematographic sets, ► **Martina Franca**, located inland on the rise towards the north, is probably worthy of more than its citation as a location in the film ★ *The School Teacher in College*, filmed in 1978 by Mariano Laurenti with Edwige Fenech and Lino Banfi. This film dates back to a particular period of Italian cinema, when soft-erotic comedies were a sure hit in the cinema. Many of these films were shot in Apulia, above all in Trani and Conversano. Martina Franca becomes the backdrop (as well as Otranto where large part of the film takes place) for ★ *Oltre il mare/Beyond the Sea* by Cesare Fragnelli (2011). This is Apulia’s first film about a group of young people on vacation dealing with the pleasures and disappointments of friendship and love, betrayal, drugs and all the other things typical of the “genre,” including the presence of the old uncle-professor (Cosimo Cinieri) and the full range of youthful types: the handsome guy, the clumsy guy, the chosen one. Among the actors, Alessandro Intini and Nicola Nocella.

Martina Franca could be a truly special set for a film. The city’s historical centre is unique, with tall houses, narrow streets, and charming and unmistakable *trullo* homes (found not only in Martina, but



As its name reveals, Grottaglie originated in the Palaeolithic era with a nucleus of people who dug their homes into the rock. Its ceramics, exported around the world, are shaped in the workshops of the steep streets of the historical centre.

Opposite: Fortress of the Templars and the Knights of Malta. Maruggio is a medieval centre that originally dates back to the 4th century B.C. A couple of kilometres from the town centre, history steps aside for the summertime holidaymakers at Campomarino.



also in other cities of the Itria Valley like Alberobello, Locorotondo, Noci). The Baroque churches make the landscape more heterogeneous. Of all the events held in Martina Franca, the one that stands out, for international visibility, is the Festival of the Itria Valley (held in July and August), an opera festival that was promoted by Paolo Grassi, the memorable superintendent of the Milan Scala, and is now the pride of Apulian culture. Martina caters to tourism, farm holidays, bed & breakfasts, hotels of every kind. For tourists, the perfectly restored farmhouses are gems of hospitality.

Returning south towards Taranto, we find ► **Grottaglie**, which takes its name from the grottoes. The origins of the city can be found in the rupestrian settlements which followed one after the other in the area up to the Palaeolithic period. Birthplace of the great Latin scholar Quinto Ennio, Grottaglie has a great quantity of historical remains that can be traced back to the Middle Ages, when the local

peoples hid in the deep ravines to protect themselves from invaders, in particular Goths and Saracens (970 A.D.). The choice of living in the grottoes was recurrent over the centuries and was also adopted by brigands, in the 1800s, as in the case of the brigand priest *Ciro Annichiarico* (called *Papa Ggiro*). A short film was made about him by the *Associazione Terra delle Gravine* (Land of the Ravines Association) and directed by *Antonio Vincenzo Greco*. The quarries of *Fantiano* are dug out of the tufa in the centre of Grottaglie. Today they house an open-air theatre where the *Musica Mundi International Festival* is held. Rich in history and natural beauty, famous around the world for its ceramics, one of Grottaglie's architectural beauties is the *Episcopio Castle* (late 14th century) that now houses the *Museum of Ceramics*. In 2008, a few scenes were filmed right inside the *Episcopio Castle* for the *RaiUno* television series dedicated to Pope *Giovan Battista Montini*, ★ *Paolo VI/Pope Paul VI*, starring *Fabrizio*



A self-contained historical centre, enchanting and suspended in time, encloses Martina Franca's centuries of history. Here the white buildings are tall and intermixed with Baroque churches. The Itria Valley Festival is held at Palazzo Ducale.

Gifuni. In particular, the castle was used as the setting for the scene in which the pontiff visited, in 1964, the prisoners at Regina Coeli. Also important are the churches and noble mansions like Palazzo Urselli, from the 15th century, and Palazzo Maggiulli-Cometa and Palazzo Blasi, from the Baroque era. The Grape Festival is held in Grottaglie from 22 to 24 August.

► **Manduria**, called the heart of the Salento area, city of the Messapians and Primitivo wine, is the geographical centre of the three provincial capitals: Taranto, Lecce and Brindisi. It sits on Taranto's Murgia and has a coastal strip 18 kilometres long. Enzo Pisconti shot

a curious "family" film in the city – ★ *Qui a Manduria tutto bene! Everything's Okay Here in Manduria!* – in which the main character, Enzo himself, lives divided between his dreams and an ordinary, provincial reality. A natural set that mixes the ancient with the modern, Manduria is a cinematographically versatile location. The Chidro River also flows through the area. According to legend, the river was formed by the tears shed by Saint Peter after he repudiated Christ. Founded by the Messapians, Manduria maintains numerous signs of the past, including the megalithic walls, the remains of a moat and a necropolis. The most important monuments include the collegiate church (Mother Church), the medieval Jewish ghetto and the mansion of the Marquis, built in 1719. Visit the archaeological park and all of the historical centre. The activities of a publishing house, Lacaita, drew important personages to the city, like the Nobel prize winner Salvatore Quasimodo, who studied the poet Leonida of Taranto (born in 320 B.C.). Manduria's economy has a large agricultural base and the town is famous for high quality Primitivo wine and olive oil. The Primitivo is exported around the world and in August, at the Wine Festival, it is possible to taste it in all of its variations. Another important event is the Fiera Pessima, one of the most important trade-fairs in southern Italy, held in March. Its origins date back to the period between the 14th and 15th centuries.

On the border of the province of Lecce, ► **Avetrana** is located near the ancient and important road system that, during the Roman era, connected Taranto, Manduria, Nardò, Leuca and Otranto: the "Via Sallentina." There are remains from the past of various kinds and from various epochs, such as the Torrione, the ruins of a castle that was probably of Norman origin (1050-1070), the Mother Church, rebuilt between 1743 and 1756, and the Imperial Palace. There are also karstic grottoes and a few archaeological sites in the area. Various periods of history are represented in the San Martino grottoes, to the south of the town towards Torre Colimena, and in the hamlets of Santa Maria and Modunato. Avetrana hosts folk events that are very popular with tourists. On 17 January, during the Bonfire of Sant'Antonio Abate, domestic animals are blessed. On 19 March, long tables are set up in the main plaza for the Tria of San Giuseppe. Regular customers are offered the festival's typical dish, tria (home-made taglia-telle) served with fish.



MIRACLE IN TARANTO

EDOARDO WINSPEARE

For me, Taranto is the most cinematographic city in Apulia and for this reason I set a film there. But, I would quickly film ten more there because of the quality of the emotions created by this decaying and, at the same time, marvellous Ionian centre. When I am in Taranto, even only in my thoughts, I feel flooded with a sorrowful sweetness that is the precursor to infinite stories of harrowing humanity. And also, it is a city that you can see, in the sense of it being generous to anyone who wants to capture its spirit with a motion picture camera. Its position between the two seas, the bridges, the islands, the fact that you can see it from a great distance and, at that distance, already realise that something unique is waiting for you down there, make it a perfect place for the cinemascope format. Its horizontal nature, which makes it gentler on the eye, is broken dramatically by the vertical lines of the Ilva smokestacks and the large 15 floor buildings in the modern neighbourhoods. Not only the lines, but also the vast spaces of the sea and those narrow spaces of the alleys in the old town, and then the wide seafront, the darkness of the ancient dwellings and the blinding light that reflects off the ever-present water, the walls with paint flaking off from the dampness and the saltiness in the air, and walls repainted in Pompeii red, ochre or a more banal white, the enchantment of the pleasant position chosen by the ancient Greeks and

the fascinating, and equally frightening, Golem of the largest iron and steel factory in Europe, the rich and the poor, people who only speak dialect and the proper ladies who do not understand it, Neorealist faces and the bored expressions of reality TV show participants: all of this evokes strong contrast and nourishes the imagination of a director in love.

Yet another thing that I feel intensely in this place is its spiritual nature. In my opinion, if Jesus Christ were to return to earth, he could do it on the shores of the Small Sea because the suffering caused by modern slavery is accompanied by an almost messianic expectation of a sign from the sky. Anyone who has seen the *perduni* procession during Holy Week knows what I mean. The pain of the passion and death of the Saviour is represented with solemn elegance, as if it were frozen in the temporal dimension of the slow steps, feet almost suspended mid-air before touching ground, of the hooded confraternity members of the Addolorata and the Carmine. Hope is visible in the faces of the residents of Taranto, on that day the most dignified and noble of Mediterranean peoples. With the eyes of ancient Greeks, they ask the starry sky to explain the meaning of existence. One Holy Friday about 10 years ago, the philosophers and mystics that the residents of Taranto had become in my eyes, touched my heart and I was transfixed by this moving city. Five years later, I filmed *The Miracle*.

ILVA OR ATLANTIS

MARIO DESIATI



If you want to understand what the Iron and Steel Industry is, you must go to the Orimini hill, a promontory 700 metres high that divides Taranto's Ionian plain from the valley of trullas. At the tip of Orimini, in the middle of the Macedonian oaks, it is not hard to find a small "specchia," or mound of stones that in the past was a watchtower for shepherds and, even earlier, for the Greeks, and even farther back into the depths of time, for the Messapians. It's not hard to understand, it's up there that it all becomes clear, how we are often fooled by appearances, or in the case of the Iron and Steel Industry, by a contradiction; appearances corrupt.

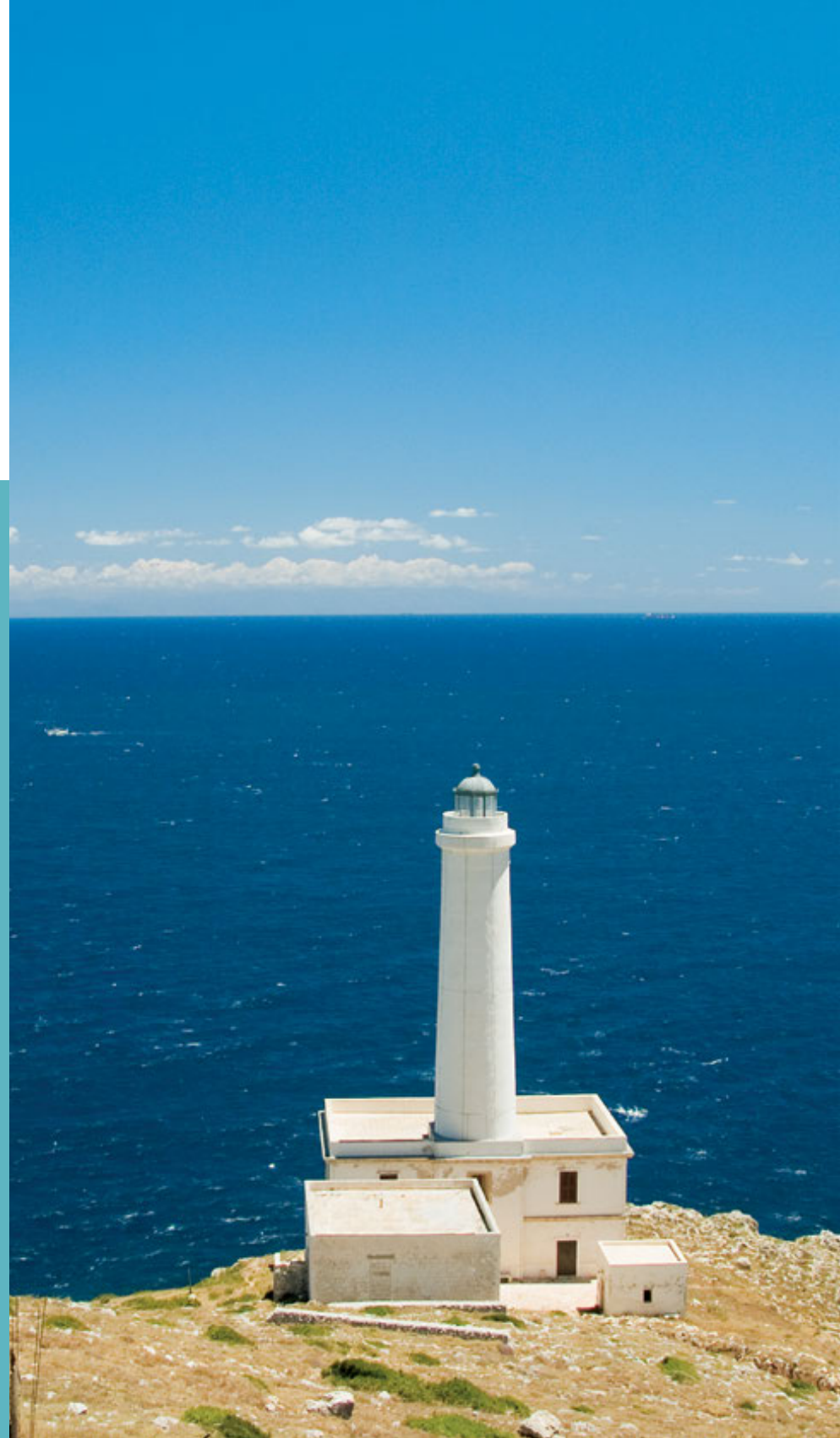
When the weather is good the sky is streaked by at least a dozen colours, from red to violet, from beige to cherry, from pink to reddish purple. That plain full of dark entrails, of gigantic smokestacks belching out black smoke and shrapnel is inexorably beautiful, those trails of flaming slime rise up to the sky and colour it with rust. Taranto behind the clouds of the Ilva factory has always looked to me like Atlantis submerged by

smoke, a virgin and intact city preserved under a reliquary of calcium and quartz, where the smell of the anthracite and naval dockyards takes the place of the smell of the sea.

You always learn from a contradiction, and if you want to understand what the Iron and Steel Industry is, it's not enough to just see it, you have to smell it. I have taken the blue bus that drives down to Ilva from Orimini many times. I have taken it in the evening, when it is full of steelworkers on their way to the night shift. The bus crosses the junctions around the factory, it slowly crosses the network of ring roads that curve along the tongues of fire and the burning smokestacks. The air outside is always hotter than the temperature of the place you have come from, a damp air that leaves the smell of iron and steel on your skin, an odour that you can only smell when the doors of the bus are opened, and only once in your life. That odour is so strong that it "burns" your nose, so that you become accustomed to it and can no longer smell it, that odour teaches you first hand what this town, this city, our life here, is all about.

Itinerary 9
Lecce and the Adriatic Coast

The light of the Salento,
slow and burning



LECCE – CASALABATE – MELENDUGNO
OTRANTO – SANTA CESAREA TERME
PORTO BADISCO – CASTRO – TRICASE
DEPRESSA – SANTA MARIA DI LEUCA

On the previous page: Otranto, visionary “pearl of the Orient.”

On clear days you can see the line of the Albanian mountains from its shores. From the lighthouse at Punta della Palascia, the most eastern point in Italy, you can watch the first sunrise of the new year.

Opposite: The Cesine wildlife reserve is one of the 80 areas protected by the WWF in Italy. Located near Vernole, it is a 600 hectare paradise of coastal ponds, small islands, canals, Aleppo pines, sandy dunes and dry stone walls.



The light of the cinema in the Salento area is slow and burning: a friend in the early morning when it stands out among the dolmen and menhir, mosaics and crypts, castles and Baroque churches that are strewn about this corner of Apulia, blinding at midday, when it penetrates the silent expanses of the olive groves, mysterious in the afternoon when it reflects off the ivory coloured buildings carved in the noble stone this land lies upon. The places of the cinema are “places” in these districts that are open to dialogue with Eastern Europe, affectionate and respectful prodigal sons of Mamma Africa, courteous, hospitable, nevertheless cautious, even a bit snobbish, towards the rest of the world.

This is ► **Lecce**, “the Florence of Apulia,” Messapian and Roman, ancient Lupiae, homeland of Quinto Ennio, Baroque gem, located only a few kilometres from both the Ionian and the Adriatic seas. Monica Bellucci walking slowly along the Roman stones of Via Vittorio Emanuele II is one of the superb images of ★ *Don’t Look Back* by the French director Marina de Van, a student of Francois Ozon, set between Piazza Sant’Oronzo and Piazza Duomo. The first is not a simple square, but a philosophy of life that flows from the Roman amphitheatre to the last column of Via Appia (its twin is in Brindisi) with a wooden statue covered in copper of the saint, from the 16th century Palazzo del Sedile

(commissioned by the Venetian merchants and previously used as the City Hall) to Palazzo Carafa (the current City Hall), from the votive shrines to the angular columns of the buildings, from Bar Alvino to the phantom presence of the tenor Tito Schipa, with his most famous pieces playing out of loud-speakers at the stroke of midday.

The second, seat of the diocese, is a closed square, scenographically lit. An agorà with many friezes, watched over at its entryway by monumental gateways, its interior is beautiful thanks to the tall steeple designed by Giuseppe Zimbalo, the ancient seminary with a Baroque well decorated with acanthus vines, clusters of grapes and angels.

In this aura, Sergio Rubini and Antonio Albanese brought to life one of the episodes in ★ *Manual of Love 2* by Giovanni Veronesi (2007), with a breathtaking scene filmed around the Fountain of Harmony, located near the walls of the Renaissance castle of Carlo V, designed by the military architect Gian Giacomo dell’Acaya.

Standing out amidst all of this is the “Bodinian” garland of stone at the Santa Croce basilica which intertwines with the floral decorations on Palazzo dei Celestini. Eternal companions of the fortified walls of the old town are Porta Rudiae, Porta San Biagio, Porta Napoli, as worthy of admiration as Torre del Parco and Torre di Belloluogo, linked to the legend of Queen Maria d’Enghien. In the 1800s, a series



of Art Nouveau villas were built along Gallipoli and Lo Re avenues. They are in the Moorish style, eclectic, similar in their forms to the villas that can be admired in Leuca and the “Cenate” district of Nardò. In the confusion of the historical centre, amid aristocratic homes, lies the centre of the local nightlife, the pulsating pubs of the young, who spend trendy nights, stuffing themselves with delicacies, drinking glasses of wine and having inevitable night-time chats in the small square with the statue of Fanfulla. Don't miss the small shops selling papier-mache figures, handmade objects in ceramics or Lecce stone, delicious savoury snacks, pasticciotti (typical local pastries), quince jam, pastries made with almond paste and a small cup of hot coffee or coffee on ice (typical of Lecce). A teeming universe of peoples who surround the Roman Theatre, Via Palmieri, Via Ferrante d'Aragona, the Provincial Sigismondo Castromediano Museum, with the austere halls that Raoul Bova passed through in the mini-series *★Prima della fine/Before the End* by Michele Soavi, on the massacre at Nassiriya (2006).

A special mention goes to the deconsecrated Church of San Francesco della Scarpa, with its one-eyed papier-mache statue of San Giuseppe Patriarca, the churches of Santa Teresa, the Rosario, the Paisello Theatre (Lecce's gem), the Greek Theatre, stage of the opera season, the luxurious city park and the ex-Sant'Anna Conservatory. The “son of the baron” of Depressa, Edoardo Winspeare, chose to shoot a few scenes of *★Galantuomini/Gentlemen* (2008) in Lecce, in Piazza Mazzini, the city's business centre, and Palazzo Codacci Pisanelli, previous site of the university. The much discussed

Wide-angle shot for one of the most breathtakingly beautiful squares in Italy, the Baroque Piazza Duomo in Lecce. Various films have been set in the “Florence of Apulia” from *Manual of Love 2* to *Liberate i pesci/Set the Fish Free*, to the television series *Il giudice Mastrangelo/Judge Mastrangelo*.

★Melissa P. by Luca Guadagnino (2005) took a few streets from the San Lazzaro neighbourhood, among the most elegant in Lecce, for his city of the south. The alienating charm of the narrow streets also captured Cristina Comencini in *★Liberate i pesci/Set the Fish Free*, a bitter comedy with Michele Placido (1999).

Just a stone's throw from the obelisk of Ferdinando I (1882) we find Romanesque severity mixed with Baroque in the Church of Santi Nicolò e Cataldo, located in the monumental cemetery where the remains of Tito Schipa lie next to a sculpture of a small nightingale, symbol of his glorious voice. The quiet of this eternal place was interrupted by a few scenes of *★Il giudice Mastrangelo/Judge Mastrangelo*, in the second series of the Mediaset programme, with Diego Abatantuono and Alessia Marcuzzi. Next to the cemetery is the Olivetani complex with spiral columns in the cloister designed by Gabriele Riccardi (1559), a Renaissance well and a second, white cloister.

Claudio Baglioni, singer-architect, performed at Lecce's Railway Museum for an hour in 2004. It was a wonderful occasion to get to know this incredible place where, instead of paintings and installations, there are exhibits of steam locomotives from 1911, tank cars, locotractors, boxcars, truck cars, relics, old signs and iconographic material. The museum is managed on a non-profit basis by the Ionic-Salento Railway Friends Association (AISAF), with the collaboration of the Ital-



The French director Marina de Van, student of Ozon, shot the film *Don't Look Back* in Lecce at the end of 2007. The two actresses with double identities, philosopher and psychoanalyst, are Monica Bellucci and Sophie Marceau.



Lecce and other cities in the Salento area, including Tricase, Gagliano, Novaglie, Ugento and Otranto appear in Edoardo Winspeare's fourth film, *Galantuomini/Gentlemen* (2008), a story of love and the underworld starring Fabrizio Gifuni, Donatella Finocchiaro and Beppe Fiorello.



ian Association for the Industrial-Archaeological Patrimony (AIPAI). Its entrance is across from the Marco Vito quarry to the south-west of the railway, in a very run-down area, not far from the 16th century Nymphaeum of the Fairies, carved out of a monolithic boulder.

The presence of the Railway Museum is interwoven with that of the South-East Railway, the only secondary rail line that connects the towns not served by the State Railway to the large cities. Since 1931 the rail cars have travelled up and down from Lecce to Capo di Leuca: 474 kilometres on a single rail line. Sad and lonely? Perhaps, but there were those who, in times gone by, noticed the charm and comfort of boarding a train at the station of Gagliano and getting off in Paris without even thinking of going by car.

A romantic image, undoubtedly, a southern vendetta against fast food tourism. Gianluca Arcopinto and Amedeo Pagani's Pablo Film noticed this. In 2003, with the collective FluidVideoCrew (Davide Barletti, Lorenzo Conte, Edoardo Cicchetti, Mattia Mariani) they shot **★Italian Sud Est/Italian South East**, an experimental docu-film full of exhilarating characters in original shots. The rail cars were also more than ready to host the sets of **★Don't Tell** and **★Don't Look Back**. Stars of the seventh art take the place of the "lunatics" of this land, brought together by the click-clack of the wheels of the little train snubbed by most. The train that passes through places "where you can lean on prehistoric walls (as long as they last), pass by dolmen and menhir, eat ancient foods, drink Merum wine and speak a mixture of Latin and Greek," according to Silvana Silvestri.

"No one knows this land more than I do, no one can smell its scent the way I do..." Expressions of love from the Italian-Turkish director Ferzan Ozpetek, dedicated to the Baroque capital and the Salento area on the day that Lecce proclaimed him "honorary citizen" in a ceremony in the council room of Palazzo Carafa. It was 22 May 2010, two months after the release in cinemas of the award-winning **★Loose Cannons**. The film was presented at the Berlin Film Festival (nominated for the Golden Globe, Silver Ribbon, David di Donatello, Bif&st), it excited the New York public at Robert De Niro's Tribeca Film Festival ("it makes you want to immediately book a trip to southern Italy," was the motivation for the Special Jury Mention) and received compliments from Madonna and John Travolta during a Los Angeles retrospective dedicated to the director. Produced by Domenico



The Moorish Villa Sticchi is an eccentric mirror of the dialogue across the sea with the Orient and its elevated aestheticism. Facing the sea, it captures its reflections. This architectural monument is the symbol of Santa Cesarea Terme.

Opposite: The Turks arrived from the sea in 1480 and massacred 800 men in Otranto. Their poor remains are preserved in the Cathedral of the Martyrs. A story that became the masterpiece of Maria Corti, the novel *Lora di tutti*.



Procacci's *Fandango*, in collaboration with RaiCinema, the film has a top notch cast: Riccardo Scamarcio, Nicole Grimaudo, Alessandro Preziosi, Ennio Fantastichini, Lunetta Savino, Ilaria Occhini, Elena Sofia Ricci, Carolina Crescentini and Daniele Pecci. It is a light and lively comedy, co-written by Ozpetek and Ivan Cotroneo, about the conflicts that flare up in the Cantone family, wealthy pasta entrepreneurs, when the two sons reveal their homosexuality. The sumptuous residences of the town's historical centre are on parade with their fairy-tale gardens, from the Famularo and Tamborino-Cezzi villas to the Materdomini villa in the nearby countryside of Arnesano. No less sparkling are the lanes and visual backdrops that surround the sets, from the square with the Greek church to the Renaissance Palazzo Adorno, to Via Vittorio Emanuele and Via Paladini, to the small Falconieri Square. In 1974, the same small agora, which supports the caryatids of Palazzo Marrese, welcomed Francesco Rosi and his *★Cadaveri eccellenti/Illustrious Corpses*, a legendary and controversial film based on Leonardo Sciascia's novel *Il contesto*, with Lino Ventura, Tino Carraro, Max von Sydow, Fernando Rey, Tina Aumont, and Maria Carta. The film's interiors were shot in Palazzo Tafuri, on Via Vittorio Emanuele II.

Also important for *★Loose Cannons* was the former Vito Fazzi Hospital, an old structure from the first 30 years of the 1900s. Surrounded by a large park it preserves its elegance and dignity, as well as the imposing 19th century Palmieri boarding school, the natural stage, with its ivory coloured colonnade, for the argument between the

gay brothers Tommaso and Antonio (Scamarcio-Preziosi). The phantasmagorical table loaded down with traditional Lecce sweets like "pasticciotti" (quince jam sweets), "bocche di dama," and cream horns will go down in history, along with the Cantone women who wear pins, necklaces, bracelets and earrings made ad hoc by Lecce designer Gianni De Benedittis. One last comment goes to the enjoyable *50mila* written by Giuliano Palma & The Bluebeaters, and sung by Nina Zilli, which in the film is delightfully interpreted by Scamarcio in front of the mirror. A curiosity for anyone wanting to follow the trail of the film through Lecce: on Via Cairoli, for some time now, you can see the Baroque "nook" of the French actor Gerard Depardieu, who is also fatally attracted to the beauty of the Salentine capital. A completely different topic for the 70 minutes of *★Grazia e furore/Grace and Fury* (2011) from the Salento to Thailand in the docu-film directed by Heidi Rizzo, of Specchiola. With this film, Rizzo debuted as a director after paying her dues as an operator in the productions of Edoardo Winspeare. She is also co-producer with Gustavo Caputo (Saietta Film), in collaboration with RaiCinema and the City of Lecce. The spotlight is on Thai Boxing, on the basis of an idea elaborated by Alessandro Valenti (co-writer of *★Galantuomini/Gentlemen*) with two brothers from Lecce, the champions Fabio and Gianluca Siciliani, who, without apparent filters, play themselves. They are supported by the Thai master Sangtiennoi Sor Rungroj. The docu-film, shot in their gym and amid the dry stone walls in the countryside of *►Merine* (a hamlet of *►Cavallino*), has its exotic



The sumptuous residences of the historical centre are on parade in Lecce, for Ferzan Ozpetek, its honorary citizen. He set *Loose Cannons* here, the award-winning film that thrilled both the public and the jury at the Tribeca Film Festival. With Riccardo Scamarcio, Nicole Grimaudo, and Ennio Fantastichini.

counterpart in the Thai scenes. The soundtrack is worthy of note: shawms, bells and Thai percussions blend with tambourines, cord instruments and the saxophone.

More quality filming can be found in town for the television series **★*Il commissario Zagaria/Commissioner Zagaria*** (2011) by Antonello Grimaldi, with Lino Banfi, his daughter Rosanna and Antonio Stornaiolo, at Villa Reale (a private residence with a jewel of a garden with geometrical hedges of cypresses, views of olive groves and exotic corners with banana and palm trees created by the Florentine architect Pietro Porcinai) and on Via Marco Basseo, where many still remember the pretend “shootout” in the equally pretend market. Last, but not least, the august Baroque streets are courted by the stars of international fashion. In the torrid August of 2011, straight in from London, the photographic set for the most famous model in the world, the Scotsman David Gandy, descended on the town. A meter and 88 cm of sculpted muscles and the testimonial for the Dolce&Gabbana advertisement, Gandy (who had already been here in 2009 for a video shot at Nardò) worked for a renowned British designer label at about 10 locations, including the area near the neoclassical church Santa Maria della Porta, where he pierced the heart of his fans in a black suit, jet-black hair, blue eyes and murderous gaze.

Taking a look at traditions, don't miss the festival of the patron saints

Oronzo (first bishop of Lecce), Giusto and Fortunato, held 24-26 August, in the glowing lights of the illuminations, sounds of the band and hundreds of stands. Also worthy of note is the Festival of Santa Lucia (13-24 December), held in the courtyard of the ex-Teatini convent, with high quality artisan nativity scenes and figures. Lecce is also the location of the European Cinema Festival held in the month of April.

Wave after wave, the Adriatic Sea sculpts ►**Casalabate**, Lecce's first seaside. Windy and with a low stretch of sand, here you find Torre Specchiolla, a two-storey watchtower, built in the 16th century for defence from attacks by Saracens. Extremely well-preserved, it is the first in a series of forty towers that dot the coast as far as the Ionian border with the province of Taranto. A sea-resort that has been excluded from the holiday industry, its buildings have been neglected and not kept up, but, perhaps for these very reasons, it is ripe for that cinematographic “pretence” that creates and transforms everything. Casalabate was one of the sets for **★*Life Sentence*** by Davide Barletti and Lorenzo Conte (2007), based on Vista d'Interni, an autobiographical book written by the ex-boss of the Sacra Corona Unita, Antonio Perrone from Trepuzzi.

This is the beginning of a journey along 250 kilometres of the “te lu sule, lu mare e lu jentu” coast. We pass through Torre Rinalda, Torre Chianca, Frigole and we stop in San Cataldo, the “beach of the people of Lecce,” full of beach establishments and homes immersed in the green that was once the “forest” of ancient Lupiae. Site of Porto Adriano's Roman remains, in the winter ►**San Cataldo** and its lighthouse are similar to those Felliniesque landscapes full of the quiet and void that tell stories. This scenario was used by the Lecce director Massimiliano «Maci» Verdesca for his first film **★*W Zappatore/Long Live Zappatore*** (2011), the story of the Salentine Marcello Zappatore, a metalhead with stigmata, and a “dark” guitarist in real life, too. Sandra Milo, needless to say a true Fellinian icon, plays the role of an overwhelming hippy granny. The film was also a success in the USA, at the Brooklyn Film Festival; it won awards for best film and best leading actress for Milo.

Not far from San Cataldo lie the Rauccio farmhouse (15th century) and the Cesine wetlands. In the nearby hinterlands, an island of light bathes Santa Maria di Cerrate (12th century), a small Romanesque basilica with three naves, probably of Basilian ancestry.

The scene changes, there are fewer sandy beach establishments



Otranto's coast is ruled by the Alimini Lakes, two expanses of waters of karstic origin, edged by marsh weeds and springs of fresh water. A terse scenery, long and distant, Mediterranean and reminiscent of immaculate Caribbean beaches.

Between Otranto and Porto Badisco, at Aeneas' legendary landing site, there are unique sights like the red bauxite quarry, a surreal palette below the flight path of falcons. An ideal set for a science fiction film.

and the rocky and jagged coasts begin. We arrive at the ► **beaches of Melendugno**: Torre Specchia Ruggeri, San Foca, ► **Roca** and the Grotto of Poetry, sublimated by the image of that "pale flight of seagulls" drawn by the poetic eye of Rina Durante (1928-2004), oxymoron of a territory wounded by a disharmonious pentagram of houses. However, the charm of Roca Vecchia and Torre dell'Orso, the two "sisters," a pair of tall cliffs that broke off from the rocks of the shore centuries ago, remains. Torre Sant'Andrea is wrapped in the embrace of the headlands and gazed upon by the crags. The hamlet of Borgagne is pure poetry, an example of fortified architecture.

★ **Rockman** (2010) tells the story of this area where the first strains of Salentine reggae were heard and which in a few short decades has become the "Jamaica of Italy." The docu-film was written by Tommaso Manfredi, Davide Barletti and Mattia Epifani who also directs. Based on the book *Dai Caraibi al Salento. Nascita evoluzione e identità del reggae in Puglia (From the Caribbean to the Salento. The Birth, Evolution and Identity of Reggae in Puglia)*, the film proposes an itinerary that takes us to the places and songs of Puglian reggae bands from the 1980s to the present. ★ **Rockman** focuses on the character Militant P, born in the Salento and now a resident of Bari, the founder of the Sud Sound System, which he left in 1992, but that still today recognize him as an incomparable maestro.

The Idruntine coast includes the ► **Alimini Lakes**, two stretches of

water with karstic origins, fringed by marsh weeds and fresh water springs, connected to the sea. Coves, inlets, tropical beaches and a luxuriant vegetation lead to ► **Otranto**. "Pearl of the Orient," visionary with its wealth of influences, starting from the mosaic carpet of the Tree of Life by Pantaleone in the cathedral of the Martyrs, which mixes stories from the bible with knights and zodiac signs, and which inspired the novel *Otranto* by Roberto Cotroneo. The chapel with the skulls of the martyrs slain in 1480 by the Saracen hordes of Achmet Pascià is the background and metaphor of *Ora di tutti* by Maria Corti. The Aragonese castle, celebrated in the Gothic novel by Horace Walpole (1794), overlooks the Canal. On clear days the mountains of Albania are visible on the horizon. The "spirit" of Carmelo Bene wafts through the city of light and silence. His "vacation villa" on Via Padre Scupoli, a 16th century mansion which belonged to the church official Achille Starace, was assigned by the maestro as the seat of the Immemorabile Foundation. The "eternally alive" Bene challenged the limits of the cinema in the City of the Martyrs when he produced the masterpiece ★ **Our Lady of the Turks** (1968). A daring leap across years and genres takes us to the television "lights, camera, action" of the second series of ★ **Elisa di Rivombrosa/Elisa of Rivombrosa** (2004) that chose Porta Terra as the background for its 18th century Naples. Touches of glamour in the Idruntine village where the native of Lecce, Ennio Capasa, designer for Costume National and beloved by the Hollywood



Depressa, a hamlet of Tricase, is dominated by the castle of the Winspeares, the family of Edoardo Winspeare, director of *The Miracle*, and *Pizzicata*, the first international revival of the “pizzicata movement.”



The two main characters, Vincenzo Salemme and Giuseppe Battiston, in a scene from *Make a Fake* by Giovanni Albanese. The streets are those of Palmariggi, the village that serves as the backdrop for a comedy about a group of bungling forgers

jet set, often takes refuge. A natural theatre can be found in the hills of Minerva, the San Nicola di Casole monastery (11th century), the crypts dug into the rock of the Valley of Memories, the medieval dovecote at Torre Pinta and, along the coastal crest, Torre del Serpe, crumbling and mysterious. Strong aromas of Mediterranean scrub and thyme around the tufaceous stones of the Orte farmhouse, near the Punta della Palascia lighthouse, symbol of the “sunrise of the third millennium.” Atmospheres out of “The Arabian Nights” provided scenes and colours to the film ★*A woman* (2010) by Giada Colagrande, from Pescara, as well as the excellent little film ★*Passing Time*, a family drama set in a small farmhouse, winner of the David di Donatello for “best short film” (2010) by the Roman director Laura Bispuri. The harbour, castle and historic centre were the stars of the third series of the Rai television detective series ★*Nebbie e delitti/Fog and Crimes* (2009) by Gianpaolo Tesconi, with Luca Barbareschi and a former Miss Italia, Anna Valle. In the hinterland you will find ►**Palmariggi**, a sweet village where the director and sculptor Giovanni Albanese directed the playful ★*Make a Fake* (2011), with Vincenzo Salemme, Giuseppe Battiston, Paolo Sassanelli, Donatella Finocchiaro and Hassani Shapi. An Italian style comedy with bungling forgers, reminiscent of ★*The Band of Honest Men* starring Totò and Peppino (1956), in which our

“heroes,” fired from their jobs at a pasta factory, decide to reproduce works of art by famous artists. Born in Bari, raised in Foggia, currently of Rome, Albanese has chosen this happy little town as his Salentine “home” and has become an honorary citizen. This is Italy’s Far East, featured in one of the scenes in ★*Soul Mate* by Sergio Rubini, a dreamlike film that flows from the small towns in the hinterland to the Moorish Villa Sticchi, “gem” of the sulphurous ►**Santa Cesarea Terme**, to then dive into the emerald green waters of Ponte Ciolo, in the Novaglie marina. Places of rarefied beauty: ►**Porto Badisco**, where Aeneas landed while escaping from Troy, the red lake of the bauxite mine watched over by falcons, perfect for a science fiction film, the prehistoric paintings of Grotta dei Cervi, forbidden to man. ►**Porto Miggiano**’s overhanging rock and the fluorescence of the Romanelli, Zinzulusa and Rotundella grottoes lift the curtain on ►**Castro**, “a castle of a town” with its 16th century fortifications, followed by Marittima (a hamlet of Diso), where the television presenter Serena Dandini bought a house. A few years earlier Lord Alistair McAlpine, treasurer of Margaret Thatcher’s party, also bought property here. The lord is the owner of the convent of Santa Maria of Constantinople, a holiday home for VIPs in the world of art lovers. Likewise, a mansion in the centre of ►**Diso** is the vacation spot preferred by director and screenwriter Giuseppe

Bertolucci, brother of the Oscar winning director, Bernardo, while the tiny ►Castiglione, a village of ►Andrano, caught the attention of the famous Turinese pianist and composer Ludovico Einaudi, concertmaster for the Night of the Taranta, who bought a home there.

We arrive in ►Tricase, a city in love with the cinema. Three theatres, one dedicated to art films, not by chance called “Paradiso.” In September there is also a small festival at which Helen Mirren and her husband Taylor Hackford fell in love. The couple, the year the actress won the Volpi Cup for ★*The Queen* (2006), chose the Salento area rather than the hills of Hollywood and soon after bought the Matine di Tiggiano farmhouse.

On the Pasanisi rise, near Tricase Porto, you will find Villa Caputo. Art nouveau halls and a terrace with a view of the sea remind one of Judge Mastrangelo who quarrelled there with his devoted follower Uelino-Catania.

The “Lu Uin-Spir” castle, as Winspeare calls it in a modified version of the Salento dialect, lies in the hamlet of ►Depressa. Edoardo Winspeare, director who was fascinated, before it became fashionable, with the energy of the “taranta” and with an explicit relationship with the *Terra del rimorso/Land of Remorse* by Ernesto De Martino (the nerve centres are Nardò and Galatina). His fame exploded in the 90s with ★*Pizzicata* and ★*Life Blood*, low-budget cult films that crossed the length and breadth of the Salento area, through farmhouses, squares decorated for festivals and percussive sounds, introducing characters like the drum player Pino Zimba, Anna Dimitri, Officina Zoè and Lamberto Probo. Monte Orco is the natural “set” for one of the most spectacular living nativity scenes in Italy: a “Bethlehem” complete with man-made snow, starring dozens of extras with costumes from Cinecittà. We cannot leave Tricase without mentioning the Vallonea, the “oak of 100 knights,” seven centuries old, majestic, topped with thick green foliage.

►Santa Maria di Leuca is Italy’s southernmost point, located on a bay enclosed by Punta Ristola and Punta Mèliso, considered the point where the Adriatic and Ionian seas meet. A tall lighthouse is located near the Sancta Maria de Finibus Terrae sanctuary, dominating the falls of the Acqueduct. Its beam of light protects mariners and also shines on the hill where an assortment of eclectic villas have been built (Meridiana, Episcopo, Arditi di Castelvetere, among the most famous).



THE LECCE CINEPORT: MANIFATTURE KNOS

The Lecce Cineport covers 500 sq m, has a parking area for cinemobiles and a space for art exhibits and installations. Located within Manifatture Knos, a total of 4000 sq m, and from the middle of the 1960s to the end of the last century a training school for metal workers and electrical technicians, it was later abandoned and converted into a center for cultural production.

It was first called CNOS (National Centre for Salesian Works) and became Knos on 17 November 2007. The first letter was changed to indicate a new beginning. The factory on Via Vecchia Frigole belongs to the provincial government, but is managed by the Sud-Est Cultural Association and offers a creative home to many Salentine companies and cultural associations. The Lecce Cineport, opened in May 2010, is a space created to support the cinema and the many production houses that choose the Salento. Since then, dozens of troupes have been hosted and initiatives for the promotion of cinematographic culture have been organized.

Courses are held in the Cineport for local operators and workers in the audiovisual sector, with the objective of strengthening their practical knowledge about the movie camera and the use of technical material on film sets. The courses are taught by professionals in the field who share their professional knowledge, in both theory and practice. The Lecce site also hosts art exhibits, events and press conferences for the presentation of films financed, and projects handled, by the Apulia Film Commission.

OTRANTO

ROBERTO COTRONEO



One day it will probably be necessary to write a history of literature divided exactly in half. The first half will discuss books that were not made into films, when it seemed obvious to everyone that they should have been. The second half will discuss films that could have been great novels. Two examples, just to be clear. The first category obviously includes *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The second: *Once Upon a Time in America*.

In writer's minds nowadays, places are films and films are places. Otranto is certainly much more than a so-called location. It is a narrative and cinematographic journey made of places, stones, itineraries and horizons. It is a film shot – collective and always different – without a film camera and without film. To use a cinematographic term, I would say that it is a long take, as long as the lives of the people you meet in a place like this.

I must say that it is really strange that a city made to be filmed and narrated, in the end has only been narrated. Except for Carmelo Bene's film *Our Lady of the Turks*, no one has shot a

film in which Otranto has, in some way, taken control of the story and led the directors, actors, technicians and stage hands. Maybe the motive lies here: the premonition and the sensation that Otranto will not set you free, that it decides, it takes you to the Torre del Serpe, to the small Church of San Pietro, around the Alfonsine walls, it makes you watch the horizon of the sea from the diamond point of the castle, and it takes the horizon away from you in the twisted alleys of the historical centre. As if it were an infinite steadycam, someone chooses places and situations, and therefore stories, for you. Someone decides the colours of the fields behind Baia dell'Orte, and the nuances of white of the buildings in the centre, like the colour of the stone of the bastions. This "someone" is the city itself: able to tell its own story. And, in the end, no one has the courage to film in a city that, above all, is a screenplay already written. Written in a language that almost no one knows, and that makes me say that Otranto is a mental space where the story attracts the world like an irresistible magnet.



TITO SCHIPA, HEAVENLY VOICE

TITO SCHIPA JR.

“Cinema is memory,” said Manoel de Oliveira, the great Portuguese director.

The set of my memories of the Salento area occupy a set spot in the studios I have in my head. Childhood images – since I was a child when the first images made an impression on me – that with the passing of time, later focused on another child, born two centuries ago. A human gem set in the gold and pinkish light and the cobalt blue skies of Lecce.

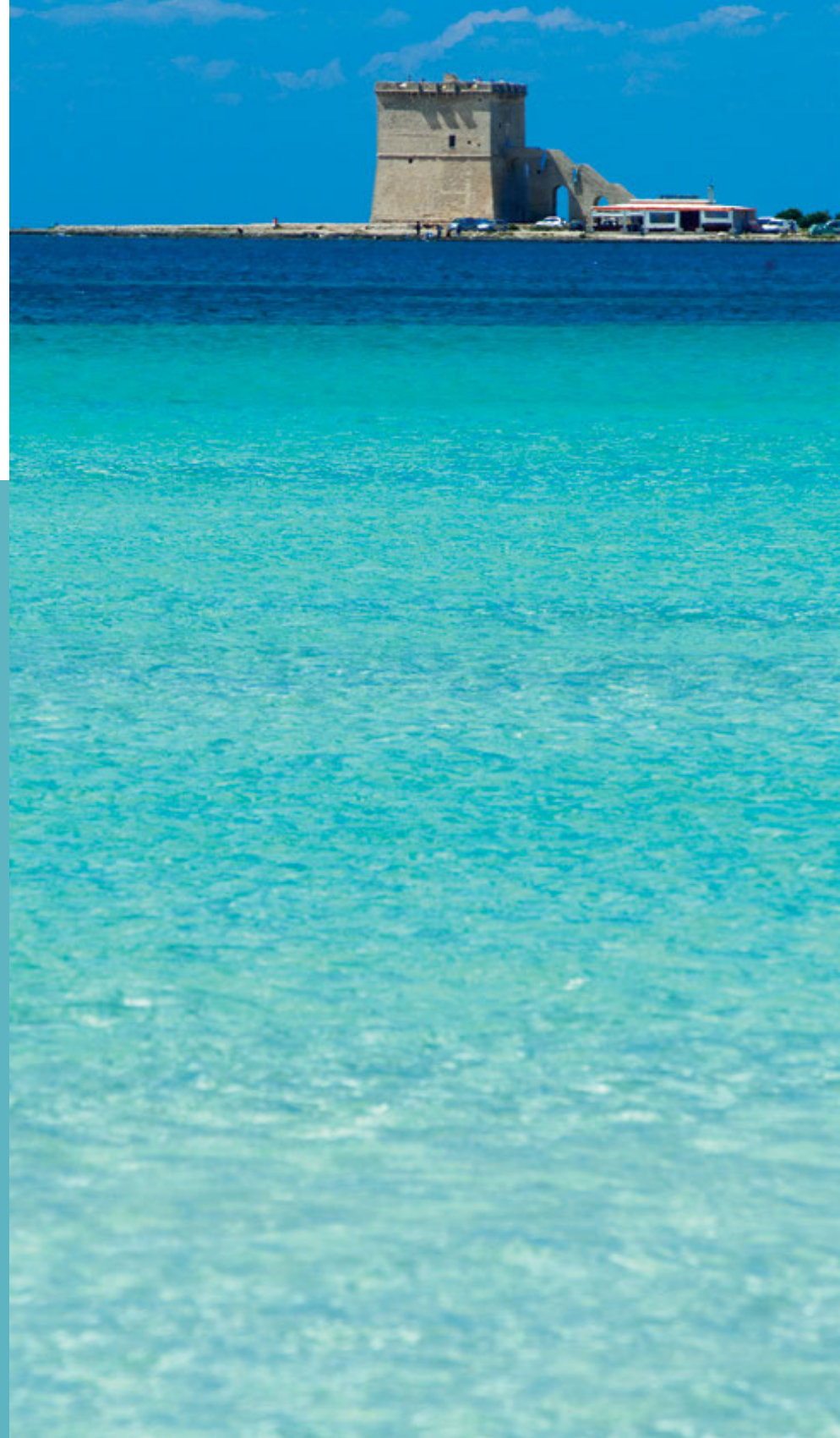
Since these places are ideal sets for any film, are they not perfect for telling the story of their most perfect voice? More than a memory, more than a simple memory... The desire for the cinema that has stirred my fantasy for years and years sees a chain of incredible and diverse stories – even though they are about the same person – starting from the olive trees and the tufa stone, they circle the planet and obstinately return to the tufas and olive trees.

Just as he returned to his city, come what may, every 26 August. We were working on a production of *Elisir d'Amore*, some weeks ago, burnt by the sun in the open air amphitheatre in the square. We were preparing something that we hoped would provide a pleasant evening for our public. Pleasure is our job. But not a moment passed that I didn't think of the sudden flights, breathtaking for me, of the luminous balloons on the night of Sant'Oronzo. And I saw the same enchanted look on his face, as he sat beneath the porticoes, lost in memories, now almost centuries old, that he never wanted to share with us, while, from the same stone auditorium where we were now suffering the heat, those majestic symbols of an enchanting ancient lightness came forth.

He introduced Lecce to the world. Now, in his name, we can bring the world to Lecce. Let's tell this story to the world. Salentine, then universal, then Salentine again.

Itinerary 10
The Ionian Salento

An overture
coasts full of wonder



GALLIPOLI – NARDÒ – PORTO CESAREO
NOVOLI – SQUINZANO – GALATINA
MELPIGNANO – MAGLIE – CASARANO
CASTRIGNANO DEL CAPO

On the previous page: A jade sea and snow-white shore dominated by an ancient watch tower. We are at Torre Lapillo, a very popular hamlet of Porto Cesareo, on the beautiful coast along the Ionian Sea.

Opposite: Noble mansions and temples decorated with frescoes, such as the Church of Santa Caterina d'Alessandria, which dates back to the 14th century. The legend of the “tarantate” began in Galatina, in the well of the parish of Santi Pietro e Paolo.



Let's head back up the Ionian coast, circling Torre San Gregorio (Vinicio Capossela's “den”), Torre Vado, the Maldive Island-like shores of Lido Marini, Torre Pali, Pescoluse, the seashores of the thousand-year old ►Ugento, Torre Mozza and Torre San Giovanni with its rocky beach, the shallows known since the most ancient times and the basins filled with fish.

With a shallow coast, a few little islands, Punta Pizzo, the Caribbean Punta della Suina and we are at Kalè polis, ►Gallipoli, the “beautiful city” rich in art and culture, often chosen as a location for the cinema and TV series. The island of the historical centre (Caddhipuli) is linked to/divided from Corso Roma, identifiable by the Grattacielo (Skyscraper), by a bridge and skirts the commercial and tourist harbour. The Marconi seafront that leads to Lido San Giovanni has become a sort of “Miami,” counterbalanced by the small Purità beach that gives you the impression that you could touch the solitary lighthouse on Sant'Andrea Island. In an itinerary that takes you through history, you will find the castle with a ravelin, the Greek fountain, the Purità church and, in the historical centre, small and simple houses which create a contrast with the noble mansions built between the 16th and 18th centuries. The Baroque harmony of the cathedral of Sant-Agata is the finest of a series of exquisite little churches, in particular the

Church of San Francesco d'Assisi with the statue of the “Malladrone.” Its “horrid beauty” was noticed by Gabriele d'Annunzio in 1895. The sun of Gallipoli, the slipway, with a yacht available for the film crew and the Marconi seafront, all also greeted Banfi-Zagaria & Co. One of the cult scenes from ★*Loose Cannons*, with Scamarcio's dives, Gri-maudo and gay friends, was filmed at Lido Pizzo, in the glassy, crystal-clear waters that reflect the city skyline.

Once past Lido Conchiglie, beyond the “Montagna Spaccata” (Split Mountain), on the coast of Nardò we can find the towers of the Four Columns of Santa Maria al Bagno, on the hill above this sea-shore is the cartoonist Milo Manara's villa, and the refined Santa Caterina, graced with villas and Aleppo pines. Next, we see Porto Selvaggio, a glade of rare beauty, like its creek and sea. A natural reserve, in the '80s it was at the centre of a dramatic incident involving the town councillor Renata Fonte, slain during the period when she was defending the place from attempted building speculation. The film ★*La posta in gioco/What's At Stake*, based on Carlo Bollino's instant-book, was filmed in ►Nardò (1988). Sant'Isidoro is the third marine, the least perfect, but the waves of its bay are said to have inspired *Acqua azzurra, acqua chiara* (*Blue Water, Clear Water*), a song by the songwriting team Mogol-Battisti (1969), who took



refuge in a nearby villa during those years. They composed and sang in the absolute quiet of the area, and often took horse rides on the water's edge and played soccer on the field at Leverano.

► **Torre Squillace**, the La Strea peninsula, and ► **Porto Cesareo**, a marine reserve with a shallow, sandy coastline, were featured in the video ★ *Estate/Summer* by the Salento band Negramaro, directed by Silvio Muccino (2005). In spite of the disruption caused by building without planning permission, the primitive beauty of the beaches and prehistoric traces resist at Cala di Furno. The city is full of small shops, fishmonger's shops and small restaurants. The statue dedicated to the actress Manuela Arcuri as a memento of the fisherman's wife is a pure tourist attraction. The coves of Cisaria are characterised by fabulous sunsets, and beautified by Torre Chianca, Torre Lapillo and the ruins of Torre Castiglione. Outposts of uncontaminated nature can be found at Riva degli Angeli, Punta Grossa, Punta Prosciutto and Palude del Conte, on the border between the provinces of Lecce and Taranto. Waters as clear as those in Blue Lagoon, fine sand and high dunes, a treasure chest of junipers and Aleppo pines, home to flamingoes. These landscapes, including the industrious ► **Leverano**, were the set for a gentle "noir" with a hint of comedy, called ★ *Il pasticciere/The Pastry Chef* (2012), with Antonio Catania, Ennio Fantastichini, Rosaria Russo, Nico Cirasola and a cameo appearance by Emilio Solfrizzi.

The imaginative tension of the coast is the prelude to the treasure house of vineyards in Salento's hinterland. The countryside vibrates over the expanses of the Negroamaro grape, vermilion grapes rise as an emblem of the chain of wine cellars shining with nectar, proud of

Gallipoli is a beautiful city, which is what its original name in Greek means. The historical centre is an island of simple houses intermixed with noble mansions, linked to the rest of the city by a bridge that skirts the port.

their agricultural traditions. They filter the rays of sun between the dry stone walls and the pagghiare, stone trullas where shepherds and "villains" could cool off. The flavours of the Salento are diluted in festivals held in the squares. The scenographic bread loaves that celebrate the liturgy of the "Tables of San Giuseppe" in houses decorated with lace and lights are a prologue to spring. In ► **Minervino di Lecce**, ► **San Cassiano**, and ► **Uggiano La Chiesa** politicians and public officials are called to act out the roles of the saints of the Gospel and to consume delicacies in the squares that become theatres. ► **Squinzano**, home to famous musical bands, has terraced houses with courtyards in the historical centre, and is the site of the Serre di Sant'Elia, a natural oasis, a descendant of a centuries-old forest dotted with noble villas. Next stop, ► **Salice Salentino**, kingdom of DOC wines, founded in the late Middle Ages by Raimondello Orsini del Balzo, and discovered by ★ *Le ali/Wings*, a mini-series by Andrea Porporati. Then Campi, where Carmelo Bene was born. Its fair pavilion hosts the City of Books, attended by authors and editors in the month of November. ► **Novoli** is known for the fòcara, the symbol of Sant'Antonio Abate, protector of fire, domestic animals and miracle worker against herpes zoster. Pagan and religious rites are mixed in the patronal festival (16-18 January), fuelled by the building of a bonfire, 22 metres high, with a diameter of 20 metres, made of over 80,000 bundles of vine branches. The pyre has the shape of a cake with three layers, often with a tunnel that the procession passes through. The crown-



Claudio Santamaria and Valentina Cervi are the couple in love and doomed in *Fine pena mai/Life Sentence*, a film that Davide Barletti and Lorenzo Conte made in 2007 about the Sacra Corona Unita in Casalabate, Galatina, Matino and Lecce.



Through the stations and little trains that the film's name derives from, the Fluid Video Crew group made the railway-film *Italian Sud Est/Italian South East* in 2003 as an act of love for the area around Gallipoli, Tricase, Nardò and Otranto.



ing moment is the lighting of the fireworks, which attracts an enormous crowd of visitors. The bonfire night is full of music, the scent of turcinieddhri (rolls stuffed with lamb entrails) and copeta tosta (a sweet made with almonds and caramelised sugar). The town's 19th century City Theatre is identical to Paisiello in Lecce.

Let's go now to ► **San Cesario**, where the Vaaz d'Andrada Doge's Palace (1626), decorated with niches and statues, contrasts and summarises the "Sanctuary of Patience," museum house of Ezechiele Leandro (1905-1981), "crazy creator" of monsters and figures. A view of the history of the fathers can be found at the Cavallino museum, housed in more than one building. ► **Cavallino** was the town of Duke Sigismondo Castromediano (1811-1896).

In the fief of Vernole, you will find ► **Acaya**, a Renaissance city, a fortified village and home to the military architect Gian Giacomo dell'Acaya. He designed the walls, the crowned towers, the castle that you enter through a portal that bears a statue of Sant'Oronzo carved in Lecce stone (1692). Stop by ► **Castri**, birthplace of Adriano Barbano (1926-1985). It was 1965 when the director and documenter chose his ancestral streets as the setting for ★ *Il Tramontana/The North Wind*, an "elegant and poetic" film that he wrote with Rina Durante. Barbano, to whom the Salento area owes the greater part of its cinematographic inheritance, was a pioneer of free television, and founded Teleleccebarbano in 1974.

► **Copertino** is the town of San Giuseppe and DOC vineyards. On the outskirts there is the Grottella sanctuary, site of many ecstasies of the "flying saint." The historical centre has a strong Renaissance influence and the Angevin castle, designed by the military architect Evangelista Menga, is famous. The manor has trapezoidal bastions, is surrounded by a moat and, in September, hosts a popular antique fair.

Nardò is the land of the cinema. In 1974 it was the set for a film that caused a sensation, ★ *The Visitor*, a famous title in the so-called erotic genre that secretly circulated in the Salento province. The same year, but a different genre, ★ *Bambina* by Alberto Lattuada, with Gigi Proietti, Irene Papas and Therese Ann Savoy. The film, forerunner of subsequent stories, told of an entrepreneur who came to the Salento area to build a holiday village. The Console farmhouse, belonging to the baron of Nardò in the 18th century, was the set for a few scenes, although the scenes in Porto Miggiano, at the time still magnifi-

cently untamed, and the procession in honour of Saint Oronzio in Lecce remain epic. More recently, the mini-series about a thorny gay issue, ★*Il padre delle spose/The Father of the Brides* with Lino Banfi (2006), animated the honey-coloured buildings in Piazza Salandra, recognisable for the spire of the Immacolata and the Magistrate's Courthouse that dominates the agorà with its seven arches. The Brusca farmhouse, its suggestion of hills and the amazing, almost desert-like landscape of the surrounding area created the "Neapolitan" setting for the "neorealistic western" ★*Guardiani delle nuvole/Guardians of the Clouds* by Luciano Odorisio (2005) and were renewed in the burning light of ★*Our Land* by Sergio Rubini (2006). Saying Nardò is like saying "le Cenate," both paradises of eclecticism shared in part with ►**Galatone**. Homes protected by centuries-old parks, full of Moorish, Pompeian, Chinese, Art Nouveau oddities, embellished with arches and peaks. There are more than twenty, including Villa del Vescovo, Villa Cristina dei Personè, Villa Zuccaro, Villa Sangiovanni, Villa Leuzzi and, the oldest of all, Villa Taverna. The "city of the bull," symbolized on its coat of arms, also offered its historic centre for the Rai television programme ★*Cesare Mori: il prefetto di ferro/Cesare Mori: The Iron Prefect*, directed in 2011 by Gianni Lepre, with the Swiss actor Vincent Perez and Gabriella Pession. The story takes place in Sicily in the early 1900s, with a cinematographic precedent from 1977, directed by Pasquale Squitieri and interpreted by Giuliano Gemma. The presence of the former jail, which is located on the first floor of the Carmelite cloister, was deemed perfect for the historical reconstruction of the remake about the prefect from Palermo who fought the Mafia. Stopovers were also made in aristocratic Maglie, with the Fascist scene set in Piazza Aldo Moro, and in the austere seat of the Lecce TAR (Regional Administrative Court), a 17th century monastic ramification of the Bambin Gesù church.

Not far away lies ►**Sannicola**, a town with a Basilian heritage, surrounded in the countryside by 18th century mansions. This is the birthplace of Giò Stajano, the gay symbol in ★*The Sweet Life* by Fellini, nephew of Achille Starace, and, later in life, a lay nun. Stajano left this crazy world on 26 July 2011 at the age of 79.

►**Galatina** is a book in filigree, the pages written by the noble mansions with frescoes of the allegories of the Church of Santa Caterina d'Alessandria (1384-1391), Gothic and Romanesque in their move-



The 17th century cathedral of Gallipoli is reminiscent of the Baroque style found in Lecce. It was designed by the Gallipoli architect Giovan Bernardino Genuino and preserves paintings by local artists in its interior. In the background the sea.



A marine reserve with a shallow, sandy coast, Porto Cesareo preserves its primordial beauty with prehistoric vestiges at Cala di Furno, despite the abuses of illegal building.



Hut, dolmen or sepulchre, the Centopietre di Patù continue in their thousand-year defiance of time. The stone blocks came from the Messapian city of Veretum, later a Roman *municipium* destroyed by the Turks.

ments. Shadows of memory woven together with screams and pain encircle the Santi Pietro and Paolo parish well. The legend of the “pizzica” began here. Between 27 and 29 June, the “tarantate,” young women affected, it was thought, by the demonic bite of the tarantula, invoked a cure for their ills through drinking “miraculous” water and twirling around to the obsessive rhythm of tambourines. You must visit the Salento area’s Greek towns, where the luminosity of the squares, the mansions of noble heritage, the little old ladies dressed in velvet, and the multicoloured ceramics live next to decorated steeples, like the late Gothic one in ►**Soletto**, next to imposing medieval manors, like the castle de’Monti in ►**Corigliano d’Otranto**, and next to the legend of the passage of San Vito through the megalithic stone in ►**Calimera** one Easter Monday. Alessandra Schiavone, professionally known as De Rossi, star of Philippine cinema, has roots in ►**Martano**. Born in England in 1984, she lives in Manila, but her family resides in this town, which is the most populous in the Griko speaking area. Anchorwoman and soap-opera star, she is one of the most famous and popular actresses in the Philippines. She always acts in dramatic roles, from ★**Azucena** (2000) to ★**The Maid** (2005), a box-office smash in Singapore, and ★**Busong (Palawan Fate)** by Aureaus Solito (2011), presented at the “Quinzaine des Réalisateurs” at Cannes. These are towns where the griko language is spoken, studied by famous anthropologists and linguists, sung and praised to the skies

in the spider’s web of the Festival of the Night of the Taranta. Another important concert is held in ►**Melpignano** at the end of August when the large square in the ex-Augustinian convent, unearthly in its “cinematographic” illumination of the cloister and the Baroque church, seethes with the masses of “pizzicati” moving to the most “betrayed” and updated music in the history of the Salento area. The rounds of the *danza scherma*, or “fencing dance,” held the night of 16 August at the Festival of San Rocco, in ►**Torrepeduli**, are even more feral and primordial. Plunges, parries and fake knives (index and middle finger held together to indicate a challenge) spin wildly around in the square of the hamlet of ►**Ruffano**. In the village of “Rufus” (the Roman centurion the town was named after) stories of immigrants and caretakers blend in the ironic and discrete tale of the docu-film ★**Hanna e Viola/Hanna and Viola** (2009) by Rossella Piccinno. In Corigliano d’Otranto, on a dusty football field under a blinding sun, two teams of boys and a noisy grandstand are the backdrop for ★**Piede di Dio/Heavenly Feet** (2009), first film by Luigi Sardiello. It stars Filippo Pucillo and Emilio Solfrizzi, joined by his “partner,” Antonio Stornaiolo, with whom he performed the many gags of the “Toti and Tata” comedy duo, together in the cast with Rosaria Russo, Elena Bouryka and Antonio Catania. It is the story of two men whose lives interweave: Elia, a kind of little Maradona, an incredible player with a gift for penalty kicks, who has never grown out of his childlike candour,



A name and a destiny for the marvellous coast of Porto Selvaggio, with a rough beauty made of rocky ravines, grottoes and pine woods that cling to the slopes. This part of the Ionian is important for both its nature and its archaeological remains.



In *Piede di Dio/Heavenly Feet* by Luca Sardiello, Emilio Solfrizzi is a soccer scout who invests in the bizarre and unique talent of Filippo Puccillo, an actor discovered by Emanuele Crialesi. The film was shot in Corigliano d'Otranto, Melpignano and the Alimini Lakes.

and Michele, a former great football talent, now a cynical observer looking for redemption. The shots filmed on the Alimini beach are magnificent and there is also a “zoom” on Melpignano.

Next come ► **Cannole**, with the fortified Torcito farmhouse, summertime site for cultural events; the quarries of ► **Cursi**, the city of Lecce stone; ► **Scorrano**, the capital of phantasmagoric illuminations. ► **Maglie** is a crossroads of culture and politics; from the house of Aldo Moro, the Christian Democrat statesman assassinated in 1978 by the Red Brigades, to Villa Tamborino Frisari, to the aristocratic central square with the 18th century Palazzo Capece. ► **Muro Leccese** is shaped by the Immacolata and Annunziata churches which face each other across the square, while between them, off to one side, is the Palazzo del Principe, the setting for the Public Prosecutor's office in ★ *Il giudice Mastrangelo/Judge Mastrangelo*. The building's basement – the rooms of the “lady inspector” Amanda Sandrelli and the room with the judge's pool table – were once the oil mill and the prison.

In ► **Cocumola**, a hamlet of Minervino, the Salento area becomes literature, “a little lemon-green coloured doorway” (Vittorio Bodini) while we start out on the road to ► **Poggiardo**. In 1975, Largo Sant'Antonio was the set of a mafia film called ★ *Heat in the Suburbs* by Roberto Bianchi Montero. In 2000, Paolo Villaggio arrived for ★ *Azzurro*, by

Denis Rabaglia, filmed at the train station, in the Pispico hospital and in a private home on Via Santa Caterina da Siena. The adventures of Abatantuono-Ferilli in the sequel to ★ *Eccezzuionale... veramente/ Truly Exceptional* (2006) wreaked havoc in Piazza Umberto I, Piazza Giovanni Paolo II and in Piazza Dante in the hamlet of Vaste. This town was also the set for ★ *Italia 2061* by Carlo Vanzina (2007), starring Abatantuono and Emilio Solfrizzi. Here cinema goes hand in hand with past civilisations examined in the Archaeological Exhibition of Messapian Civilisation, not far from the crypt of Santi Stefani.

Worthy of note, with its 16th century marquis' mansion is ► **Botrugno**. ► **Spongano** and Diso, with the Sud-Est railway carriages, were the set for the final scenes of ★ *Don't Tell* by Cristina Comencini. This director was hopelessly in love with the giant olive trees and purple dirt clods at least as much as Amedeo Pagani, her friend and film producer who owns a farmhouse in the area. Additionally, Monica Bellucci and Sophie Marceau wandered through the halls of Spongano's Palazzo Bacile di Castiglione in ★ *Don't Look Back*. Dolmens and menhirs can be found throughout the Salento area, but the greatest concentration of megaliths is found at ► **Giurdignano**. Together with medieval memories, the area resembles the scenery of



For *The Easy Life* by Lucio Pellegrini, the countryside of Supersano, halfway between the Ionian and Adriatic coasts, becomes Kenya. Apulia transforms itself into Africa yet again and the three actors in the scene are Pierfrancesco Favino, Stefano Accorsi and Vittoria Puccini.

★ *The Lord of the Rings*, where you expect to see gnomes and elves pop up (in the Salento area, these creatures are called scazzamurieddhi).

► **Casarano**, a modern industrial centre with a monumental historical centre, is just waiting for its filmmaker. Casaranello, a rupestrian temple with frescoes from the 5th century A.D., has remained pristine. Halfway between the Ionian and Adriatic coasts, on a slight rise in the Salentine hills, lies ► **Supersano**. Its countryside are the set for ★ *The Easy Life* (2011) by Lucio Pellegrini, stories of love and friendship with Pierfrancesco Favino, Stefano Accorsi and Vittoria Puccini. This is certainly the heart of the Salento, but the magic of the cinema has turned it into the heart of Africa. So, the fiery sun, blinding light and red earth have become Kenya, location for the field hospital at the hub of the story, while the Karol Wojtyła airport in Bari plays the role of a Roman airport.

► **Specchia** lies on plain 130 metres high. It is one of the favourite destinations of directors because of the charm of its squares and mansions (the 18th century Protonobilissimo is awesome) and is one of the “100 most beautiful villages in Italy.” The Murgia of Specchia protects the ecovillage of ► **Cardigliano**, a tiny tourist settlement inundated

by a Mexican light that reflects off the façade of the church that was designed with the basilica of San Marco in Venice in mind. This is the setting, in a breathtaking chase through the olive trees, for ★ *The Big Dream* (2009) by Michele Placido, with Riccardo Scamarcio, Jasmine Trinca and Luca Argentero. A “cameo appearance” desired by the actor and director from Ascoli Satriano, who is fond of the Salento.

Next stop, the rocky rise at Corsano, the town in which the family saga in ★ *Ritals. Domani me ne vado/I’m Leaving Tomorrow* (2011) begins, a poetic and intimate documentary by Sophie and Annalisa Chiarello of the story of Maria and Vincenzo and their siblings who emigrate to Paris in the ‘50s, returning to their ancestral land at the end of the ‘80s. Ritals is the nickname given to Italians in France, first in contempt, but later diluted with the passing of time.

We next pass through the “county” of ► **Alessano**, stop over at the tower-shaped settlement at ► **Macurano** and then reach ► **Castri-gnano del Capo**, where a statue of Saddam was erected in Piazza San Michele for Raoul Bova’s film on Nassiriya. The same choice for the stopover in Salento of ★ *The First Assignment* (2011) by Giorgia Cecere, a local, previously a scriptwriter for Winspeare, starring Isabella Ragonese. Enchanted and mysterious places in which Massimo Fersini, director from ► **Gagliano del Capo**, filmed ★ *Totem blue* (2010). The cast includes Romina Carrisi, who has show business in her blood, her father is Al Bano, an Apulian, worldwide star of the Italian song, her mother is Romina Power, daughter of the Hollywood actors Tyrone Power and Linda Christian. ► **Acquarica del Capo** is the hometown of the director Carlo Michele Schirinzi, an experimenter in digital language, who in 2009 with ★ *Notturmo Stenopeico/Pinhole Nocturne* won the “Italian Shorts” section at the 27th Turin Film Festival. The video brings to life, through dreamlike sequences, the fresco of the Flood found in the Santa Caterina d’Alessandria church in Galatina.

Finally, a nod to the Centopietre in ► **Patù**, which hut, dolmen, sepulchre or whatever it may be, continues its thousand-year challenge, with its solid blocks of stone brought here from Veretum, a Messapian city and Roman municipium destroyed by the Turks. Leuca is nearby, the gardens of the white-washed houses smell of basil, capers and red peppers. You can hear *lu rusciu te lu mare/the sound of the sea* (a popular traditional song), and above see the moon of the Bourbons. If this isn’t cinema...



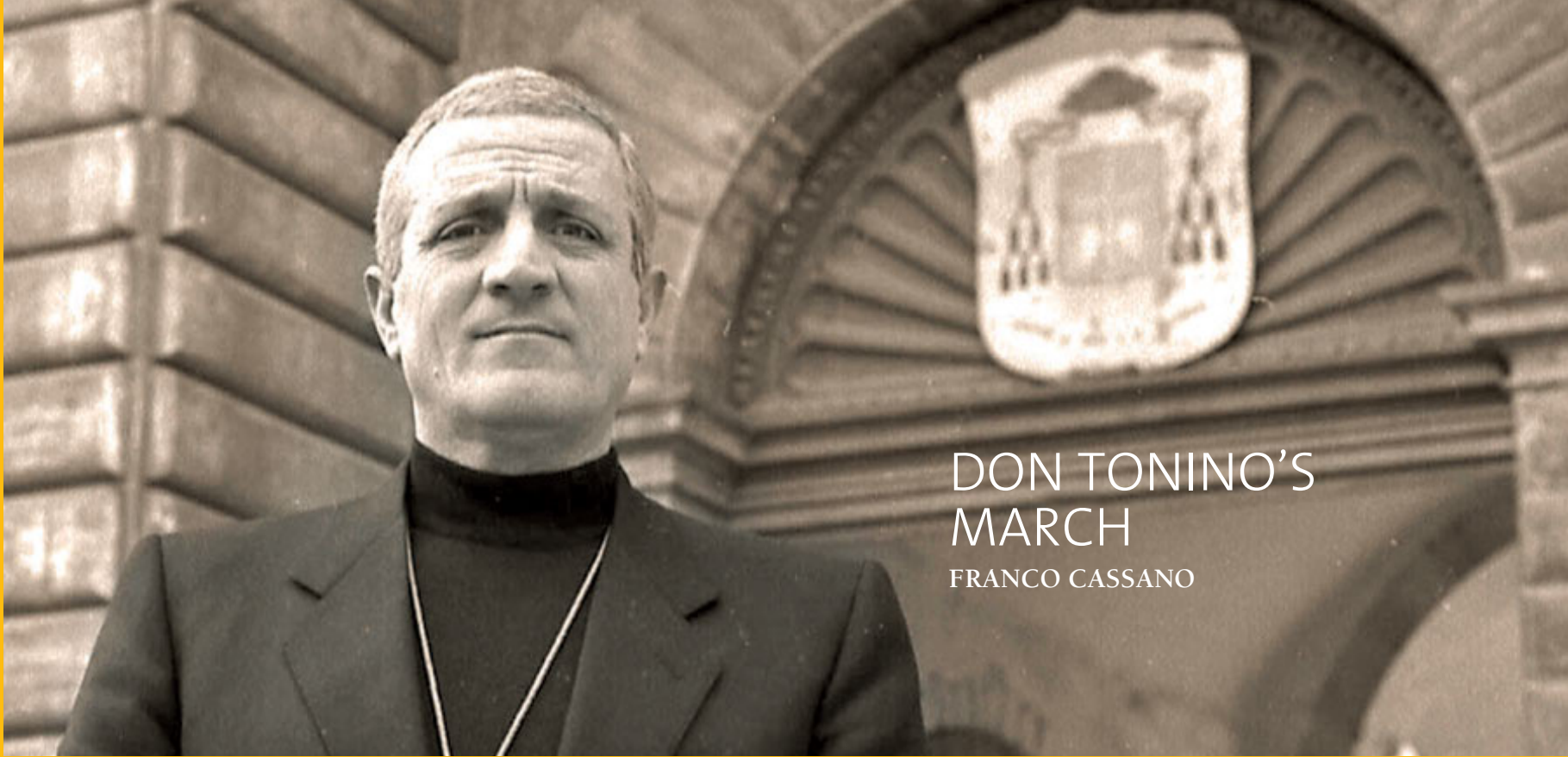
THE NIGHT OF THE TARANTA

ALESSANDRO PIVA

It's the last dive in a summer that I hate to see come to an end. The line of the horizon neatly detaches the sky at a right angle and, lying down, I try to focus on the silhouettes of my children playing in the sun. They begin to gather objects and interrupt the afternoon quiet on the Punta Pizzo beach, I see them jumping about and knocking bottles on the reefs, they are busy. I try to see what they are doing, but all I have to do is go over to them to know. I remember a month ago at Melpignano, when I took them to the Night of the Taranta.

Convinced that they were going to watch a sort of sports event, "the night of Atalanta," the children willingly accepted the outing. We left the sunset behind us and with some help we were able to find a place close to the stage. With no ball in sight I expected my children to be disappointed, but instead, captivated by the hypnotic rhythm of the taranta, the children remained immobile for over an hour. A surreal situation in which the stillness of two children contrasted with a mass of adults who

thrashed about with dust in their eyes. Images reflected off the large screen next to the stage, soundwaves arrived like vibrations on the skin. I have attended the Night of the Taranta many times, but this year the rapport between singers, orchestra, artists and the public was so intense that 100,000 people seemed to dance as one, for a single night. The morning after there was another type of show: dozens of workers took down the stage, a few garbage collectors cleaned the enormous esplanade, but, above all, bizarre characters moved about with their faces to the ground searching for who knows what objects of value. And here, almost a month later, at the sea, the side effects of that evening. I walk over to the children who, having taken over a reef and gathered petrol cans and other objects at the water's edge, have transformed the rock into a stage and everything else into sounds: with pieces of wood they beat out the rhythm of *Vieni a ballare in Puglia/Come Dance in Apulia*. One thing is sure, that night gave them reason to love music.



DON TONINO'S MARCH

FRANCO CASSANO

Don Tonino Bello was the opposite of a set design. Where for many believers the important things are faith and the pulpit, power or miracles, for Don Tonino the path of the supernatural was simple and direct, subversive because it was explicit. To a young priest who, on the day Bello became bishop of Molfetta, had exhorted him to take the reins of command in hand quickly “to avoid a power vacuum,” Don Tonino responded, amused but with firmness, “But, I accepted the position of bishop specifically to fight for power vacuums.” This simple and straightforward idea of the supernatural had always animated Don Tonino Bello: no one can turn Christ into a tool for profit on earth, and true faith is that which is able to demonstrate His presence through actions or testimony. It does not reside in the mansions of power, but in helping the weak, in breaking down the barriers that keep us distant from those in difficulty. “Taking in evicted tenants does not resolve their problems, but it means sending a message about how we should act as a Christian community.”

Nor does faith mean closing oneself up in a hermitage, separating oneself from the people. The Word is not a password that allows an elect few access to heaven, but an announcement that asks people to change their lives. For the Christian, approaching the world does not mean adapting to it, becoming like other people: the Christian must un-adapt to the way things are, turn the world upside-down, approach those on whom history and society have turned their backs. Christ did not associate with rich or powerful people, but with the humble, and he suggested that the Church do the same. And do it immediately, without waiting and mediating, without calculation. This is what spurred on Don Tonino’s pacifist commitment, what led him, already ill, all the way to Sarajevo during the war in Bosnia. And from this impulse came the proposal to transform the Mediterranean, a sea of borders and opposition, into an ark of peace, a site of conviviality and a meeting point for all people.

A METHOD TO HIS MADNESS

GIANCARLO DE CATALDO



“Look at this guy! *Ete nu pacciu*, he’s mad. He’s a genius. He went to Paris and everyone there went crazy over him, because the French understand a genius, not like us, we only reward the mediocre. He’s from Lecce. They’re all a bit mad there. But only a few of them are geniuses.”

Now, I couldn’t swear that these were the exact words that my father, a professor of French, said to me that evening. The idea, however, was unmistakable. I would follow Carmelo Bene, as a silent spectator, a devoted subject, for all the years to come. Just once, after gathering up all my courage, did I go close enough to touch him. It was backstage at the Teatro Tenda and Bene had brought S.A.D.E. to Rome – with the complicity of another valorous “countryman,” Cosimo Cinieri. The girl who was with me – who would become my wife – was able to interview him for the radio station we both worked for. But, I was too intimidated to intervene. I held back. I heard bits and pieces of the conversation. Bene was polite, obliging, incredibly simple. A few minutes after the end of the interview I erased the whole registration by accident.

Over the years, always observing from the audience, or watching his rare television performances, and then in Bologna, when he read Dante from the top of the Towers, shouting out from on high against the terrorists who, the previous year, had shattered another piece of our precarious democracy, I became convinced that, in the end, there was a secret to the simplicity in his genius that could be grasped only if you handed yourself over to him naked. An innocent nakedness that hid nothing and went straight to the heart of emotion. Purified by the essence, everything else was history, present, activity, conjuring, deceit.

A mutual friend told me that Bene had read the affectionate and, I insist, devoted, profile that I had written on him in “Terroni.”

“He enjoyed it.”

“What else?” I asked, hopeful.

“And then he said, ‘What does this De Cataldo do?’”

“He writes. And he’s a judge.”

“A judge? Well, he could be useful one day!”

Apulia Film Commission A Profile

“In three years it has hosted approximately 100 audiovisual production companies. What is it that makes this region so attractive? The light, the places, the services? To begin with, there is the idea of a land that has made hospitality its cultural identity. Through the Apulia Film Commission, with the help of the regional government, it has established a Film Fund, two Cineports, a Circuit of Quality Theatres, and a network of festivals, putting together the pieces of a ‘cinema system’ in Apulia.”

from “Cinema&Video International,” February 2010

The Apulia Film Commission (AFC) is a foundation of the Apulia Region that over 20 local agencies take part in, established with regional laws in 2004 and set into motion in 2007 with the objective of attracting audiovisual production companies thanks to the competitiveness of its services, the professionalism of its workers and - by means of a fund - with the conviction that cinema produces wealth in the territory that hosts it.

The film commissions, begun at the end of the 1940s in America as a Chamber of Commerce initiative, addressed an economic and strategic need, rather than a cultural one, to promote territories to the large production houses for use as cinematographic sets and to gamble on the economic returns of the income guaranteed by the presence of the troupes in the area. Those were the golden years of the American western and the vast arid and uninhabited expanses offered a unique occasion which could not be left to chance or to the initiative of individual free-lance photographers and reporters. The economic benefits resulting from the shooting of a film in a certain region were immediately obvious. In Italy, the film commissions arrived almost 50 years later (the first in Emilia Romagna, 1997) and they have to reckon with this delay.

The AFC accepted the challenge, it immediately focused on the competitiveness of its resources, the revival of industry workers, the professionalism that animates the region and makes it so attractive today. It is investing in a revival, of masters as well as young talents and on their permanent training in the field. Without ignoring the industrial aspect and its direct and indirect economic impact.

In four years of activity, for every euro allocated by the AFC, more than six have been spent in the territory on goods and services. And then there are the incalculable benefits. The enhancement of image and the incidence of film tourism.

The Foundation supports and coordinates the entire cinematographic and audiovisual chain with two funding sources: **Apulia Film Fund** allocated in three annual sums (31 January, 30 April and 31 August) and, on the same schedule, the **Hospitality Grant**, that can be accumulated with the first and is destined to cover expenses incurred during the recipients’ stay in Puglia.

The AFC offers a series of free services such as the immediate solution to any logistical problem, location manager professional consultancy, reduction of the costs of occupying public land, spaces for casting and offices. The logistical centers are two cineports, one in Bari, headquarters of the AFC, and one in Lecce.

More than 130 production companies have been hosted in Puglia in a few short years of activity. And an industry has been created around them. To keep up with the increasing demand, industry leaders in the field, like Movie People, Panalight or Stifi, have opened branches in Puglia.

The AFC is part of Cine-Regio, a European network of regional funding for audiovisual companies, a member of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), on the coordinating committee of the Italian Film Commission (IFC) and the European Film Commission Network (EUFCN), part of the Permanent Conference of Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators (COPEAM) and regularly participates in ministerial planning sessions on film industry policy. The Foundation, together with www.peaceful-fish.com, Western Norway Film Centre and Programma MEDIA, launched the training course “Closing the Gap: Investment for 360° Content.” Designed for European film producers, the full immersion course focuses on how to work with networks of business angels, regional equity funds, mediatech financial backers and creative industry investors. The AFC participates in national initiatives to promote Italian tax breaks like the tax credit, which allows a financial backer to obtain a tax credit up to 25% of the cost of the film.

Closing Credits

The AFC supports and funds transversal projects carried out thanks to the cultural policies of the Apulia Region which, through untiring work, it was able to include in the financing project for culture and creativity in Asse 4, Linea d'Intervento 4.3 of OP ERDF Puglia 2007-2013.

The Puglia Region, with the support of its representation in Brussels and the AFC Foundation, participated in the 2011 Open Days, along with 206 regions and cities from 35 nations, as part of a vast partnership in the workshop “Creative Cities and Regions for an Innovative Europe,” illustrating the regional policy and its support for the cultural and creative industry, with particular emphasis on the audiovisual sector.

Thanks to the strategic use of structural funding, the AFC is today a model of good work worthy of being both exported throughout Europe and implemented on a local level. One of the initiatives financed by the FESR is “Apulia Experience,” a three-week international screen-writing workshop which alternates lessons with location scouting, offering on its Pitching Session Day a concrete occasion to place the stories written in Apulia on the audiovisual market. An entire day is dedicated to individual pitching sessions with 50 producers hosted by the Euro-Mediterranean CoProduction Forum. One of the AFC’s European objectives is the Festival Network, an international season of festivals like the Bif&st and the Festa del Cinema del Reale (The Festival of Real-Life Cinema) in Specchia (LE). Finally, not to forget the public, 25 theatres are part of the Circuito d’Autore, a network of cinemas in which 51% of the films programmed are Italian and European, along with art film seasons, thanks to an annual contribution of 35 thousand euros plus VAT for each theatre.

In the two seasons of the “Memory Project,” the AFC has produced film projects, funding shorts on important historical characters and situations from the Apulia of the 1900s.

So, thanks to extra-core business projects, thanks to the logistical-organizational assistance provided for audiovisual production companies, thanks to the allocation of financial support like the Film Fund and the Hospitality Grant, thanks to production guidance, to the Apulia cinema system and the unbeatable centuries-old culture of hospitality of a border territory like ours, thanks to its services and professionalism, the AFC has created the conditions necessary to step forth onto the international market.

Apulia finances, hosts, supports and assists those who choose the area in every phase of their project. And there is still a wealth of choices that makes this a land ready to be discovered and filmed.

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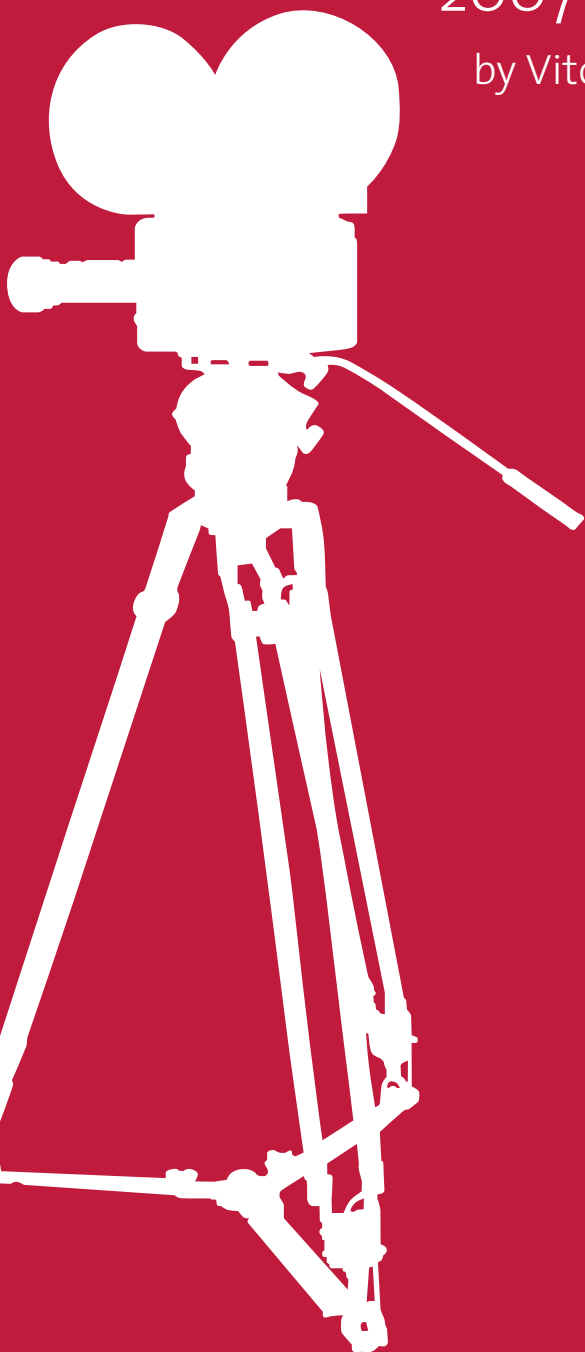
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COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Daniela Tonti

Filmography 2007 - 2012

by Vito Attolini



The following is a list of the cinematographic productions filmed, entirely or partially, in Apulia in the period between 2007-2011 with the support of the Apulia Film Commission. For each film, in addition to the name of the director and the main cast, there is a brief summary of the plot and a description of the Apulian locations.

2007

SIG. GI. BI. BOCCASILE/MR. G. B. BOCCASILE by Nico Cirasola

A short biopic on Boccasile (1901-1952), a famous poster designer, illustrator and publicist of the 1930s and 1940s. A short film shot in Corato and Bari.

film they took inspiration from the autobiographical book by Antonio Perrone *Vista d'interni* (Manni Editori), which narrates the story of a small time outlaw from the South, whose wrongdoings take place in a few small towns in the Salento area. His criminal activity naturally leads him to the Sacra Corona Unita and ends with a life sentence. A small *crime-movie* against a rural backdrop. Filmed in Lecce and in the Salento area.

VINO AMARO/BITTER WINE by Enzo Pezzuto

Documentary on wine production in the Salento area in the 1950s. Filmed in Lecce.

2008

LIFE SENTENCE by Lorenzo Conte and Davide Barletti with Claudio Santamaria, Valentina Cervi, Daniele Pilli, Giorgio Caroccia, Ippolito Chiarello

The screenwriters of this film are the animators, together with Edoardo Cicchetti and Mattia Mariani, of "Fluid Video Crew," a short film, video and documentary production house. For their first feature-length

THE PAST IS A FOREIGN LAND by Daniele Vicari with Elio Germano, Michele Riondino, Chiara Caselli, Daniela Poggi, Valentina Lodovini

Two young men with different characters begin to spend time together regularly. But their friendship has negative consequences on one of them, who is increasingly attracted to the arrogant self-confidence of the other, who leads him into a reckless lifestyle on the edge of illegality. The film, based on the book of the

same name by Gianrico Carofiglio, creates a previously unseen image of the Puglian capital city, represented by a series of equivocal and treacherous characters. Filmed in Bari and vicinity.

GALANTUOMINI/ GENTLEMEN

by Edoardo Winspeare
with Fabrizio Gifuni, Donatella Finocchiaro, Beppe Fiorello, Giorgio Colangeli, Marcello Prayer

After a long period in a city in the North, a young judge returns to his native land, the Salento area, and meets up with a childhood friend with whom he has always been in love. The woman, who has married a local mafia member, is now the leader of a clan of smugglers and the discovery of this activity is upsetting to the judge and puts him in a difficult position, both personally and professionally. The story of an emotional crisis and the description of one of the most widespread illegal phenomena in the South. Filmed in Bari, Lecce and other sites in the Salento area.

PUGLIA TERRA MADRE/ MOTHER EARTH APULIA

by Leandro Castellani
with Rita Statte, Maria Cristina Heller

Medium-length semi-documentary film, which is part of a vaster programme including other episodes, to publicize the natural and artistic beauties of Apulia. Filmed in Lecce and the Salento area.

PAOLO VI/POPE PAUL VI

by Fabrizio Costa
with Fabrizio Gifuni, Mauro Marino, Fabrizio Bucci, Massimo Triggiani, Claudio Botosso, Licia Maglietta

Pope Paul VI begins with the assas-

ination attempt on Via Fani, where Aldo Moro was kidnapped and his bodyguards were killed. The film starts with this dramatic event to trace the ecclesiastical career of the Pontiff, who was always motivated by democratic principles. From the Matteotti Affair to the days of the papacy, coinciding with a phase of our civil and political history characterized by profound changes. A television mini-series filmed in Grottaglie and Taranto.

U MEGGHIE PAISE/THE BEST TOWN

by Vanni Bramati

Medium-length film on so-called "Bari-ness" and on the passion for football, illustrated through interviews with nine "authentic" Barese. Filmed in Bari.

DIREZIONE OBBLIGATORIA/ MANDATORY DIRECTION

by Mimmo Mancini

Short film on a criminal who is an expert in the assault and robbery of tractor trailers on Puglian roads. Filmed in Bitonto and in the province of Bari.

I CANTORI DI CARPINO/THE STORY-SINGERS OF CARPINO

by Thierry Gentet

Documentary on the rediscovery and new appreciation of Italian popular music through the story of the story-singers of this small town on the Gargano peninsula. Filmed in Foggia and in Capitanata.

2009

PIEDE DI DIO/HEAVENLY FEET

by Luigi Sardiello
with Emilio Solfrizzi, Filippo Pupillo, Rosaria Russo, Antonio Catania

A boy from the South has an extraordinary talent for football. A coach, an ex-footballer who had to cut his career short because of an injury, notices his ability. The youth, despite his actual age, behaves like a child, with the same disarming candour. But that does not discourage the coach from his intent on making a famous champion. The film is the story of a friendship and, at the same time, the representation, also through the use of documentary footage, of a collective passion for football. Filmed in Corigliano d'Otranto, Melpignano and the Alimini Lakes.

NON SOSTARE/I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE

by Gianluca Sportelli
with Paolo Sassanelli, Delia La Gala

Giorgia and her father work to fix a shutter. Short film shot in Gioia del Colle and Laterza.

HONEYMOONS

by Goran Paskaljević
with Nebojša Milovanović, Jelena Trkulja, Jozef Shiroka, Mirela Naska, Fabio Buompastore, Domenico Mongelli

Two immigrant couples, one Albanian and the other Serbian, begin their journey towards Italy which they see as a mirage and a solution to the difficult situations in their

home countries. By the director of *La polveriera (The Tinderbox)* and *How Harry Became a Tree*, a writer of bitter and grotesque parables about his homeland, a parallel drama of prejudice, but also the delicate situation of borders and "walls" that have never truly fallen. Presented in 2009 at the Venice Film Festival, at the "Screenwriters' Days." Filmed in Brindisi.

MAR PICCOLO/SMALL SEA

by Alessandro di Robilant
with Giorgio Colangeli, Valentina Carnelutti, Giulio Beranek, Anna Ferruzzo, Michele Riondino

In a working-class area of Taranto, whose residents live in conditions of both material and social decay, young Tiziano is inevitably destined to a life of delinquency. In fact, he starts to associate with the small local mafia bosses who hire him. He ends up in a reformatory where, under the illuminated guide of a social worker, he tries to redeem himself and set the stage for a different future. A film with clearly social overtones and a "didactic" narrative structure. Filmed in Taranto.

HOUSING

by Federica Di Giacomo

A documentary on a dramatic social problem: the assignment of public housing in Bari. Needy families' requests for accommodation are not always fulfilled by the public institutions. This is further compounded by another common phenomenon: the illegal occupation by squatters of houses assigned to others. Often the squatters take advantage of even brief absences by the legitimate residents to move into their homes. Filmed in Bari.

MARIA, HE DOESN'T LIKE IT!

by Neele Leana Vollmar
with Lino Banfi, Christian Ulmen,
Mina Tandem, Sergio Rubini,
Ludovica Modugno

In a German town, a young couple, Jan and Sara, have decided to marry. The young woman is the daughter of a worker who had moved to Germany from Puglia many years ago. Despite being accustomed to the lifestyle of his new country, he has maintained the mentality and customs of his birthplace, so he wants the wedding to be celebrated in his town. Here the bride's family will surprise Jan in many ways. A contrast between the South and the northern countries exemplified by an actor with a consolidated southern identity. Filmed in Bari, Torre Canne and Gravina in Puglia.

UERRA/WAR

by Paolo Sassanelli
with Dino Abbrescia, Totò Onnis,
Andrea Montani

The Second World War is over, but the antagonism that provoked it persists in the good-natured rivalry between Paolo, the fascist, and Vitino, the socialist, both working class men, cut-throat card players, in a small southern town, who constantly quarrel over politics. The young Antonio finds his father Vitino a wooden gun so he can settle the score with his enemy. A sarcastic portrait of two typical characters in a decisive moment in Italian history. Short film shot in Casamassima and Noci.

TATAMI

by Sergio Angelillo

A short film on the slow return to life by the victim of a serious road accident. Filmed in Bari.

DON'T LOOK BACK

by Marina de Van
with Monica Bellucci, Sophie
Marceau, Thais Fischer, Andrea
Di Stefano, Brigitte Catillon

Jeanne, a writer, married with two children, feels that something about her is changing, and this obscure sensation causes her to feel dissatisfied and uneasy. The simultaneous change in her physical identity is attributed to her exhaustion while writing a new novel. A photograph of a place in southern Italy catches her eye, so much so that she decides to visit it. Here she will try to resolve her problems. Filmed in Lecce and Spongano.

FOCACCIA BLUES

by Nico Cirasola
with Dante Marmone, Tiziana
Schiavarelli, Renzo Arbore, Lino
Banfi, Michele Placido

Docu-fiction of an episode which happened in Altamura, a small city on the Murgia, where a McDonald's restaurant was forced to close, "defeated" by the delicious local focaccia. Because of its alimentary virtues a campaign convinced the multinational colossus to give up. A scene in the film features Renzo Arbore and Lino Banfi, who have a lively and friendly culinary argument. Filmed in Altamura and Gravina di Puglia.

**CADO DALLE NUBI/I'M
FLABBERGASTED**

by Gennaro Nunziante
with Checco Zalone (Luca
Medici), Giulia Michelini, Dino
Abbrescia, Ivano Marescotti

Checco, a young man who lives in a town in the South, would like to make a name for himself in the music business. In the meantime, he works as a builder with his uncle. His girlfriend does not

share his vision of life and breaks up with him. This drives Checco to go to the North to try his luck as a singer. But here he runs up against the different mentality of northerners, particularly members of the Northern League, who are the sarcastic target of this film. Filmed in Polignano a Mare.

**LA VITA, UN LUNGO VIAGGIO
IN TRENO/LIFE IS A LONG
JOURNEY BY TRAIN**

by Thierry Gentet

Documentary on the life and works of Ferruccio Castronuovo, whose cinematographic work coincided with the most intense period of our cinema during the 1960s. After abandoning his town, San Menaio on the Gargano, where as a filmmaker he had shot scenes of local life with his 16mm, he collaborated with great Italian directors, including Loy, Scola, the Taviani brothers and, above all, Fellini, who welcomed him as one of a privileged few into his inner circle. Gentet visits the places that Ferruccio Castronuovo started out from and he follows his career. Filmed in San Menaio.

**HANNA E VIOLKA/HANNA
AND VIOLKA**

by Rossella Piccinno
with Hanna Korszla, Antonio
Cacciatore, Violka Korszla

Docu-fiction about Hanna, a Polish caregiver who takes care of an old man with Alzheimer's in a small town in the Salento area. To be able to go back to Poland for a short holiday, Hanna calls her daughter Viola to take her place while she is away. This will be a difficult task for the young and inexperienced girl. On the backdrop of a small southern town, with its rituals, even religious rituals, the film draws atten-

tion to one of the most important recent phenomena, immigration. Filmed in Lecce and Ruffano.

**MARK PICCOLO DETECTIVE.
TRACCE D'IDENTITÀ/
MARK, THE LITTLE
DETECTIVE. TRACES OF
IDENTITY**

by Dario Diana

TV movie based on the character of Mark, fledgling detective, based on the novel by Pietro Battipiede. Filmed in Bari.

THE BIG DREAM

by Michele Placido
with Riccardo Scamarcio,
Jasmine Trinca, Luca Argentero,
Massimo Popolizio

Nicola leaves his small town in the south, joins the police, but still cultivates an ambition to become an actor. It's the 1960s, the period of student protests, and he is sent on a secret mission to infiltrate their ranks. Here he meets two students: Laura, from a Catholic background, socially active, and Libero, the leader of an extremist clique. Both contribute to the change Nicola wants to make in his life: to act in the theatre. An autobiographical film by the director and, at the same time, a portrait of Italy in a dramatic phase of its social life. Filmed in Gallipoli.

THE CÉZANNE AFFAIR

by Sergio Rubini
with Fabrizio Gifuni, Sergio
Rubini, Valeria Golino, Riccardo
Scamarcio, Guido Quaiato, Vito
Signorile

Gabriele returns to the South on the occasion of his father's death. The sad event evokes his memories of the past, of his happy child-

hood, comforted by the affection of his parents and enlivened by the eccentricity of his uncle. His father, an amateur painter, had been subjected to the mortifying negative criticism of his artistic work by provincial pseudo-intellectuals. Gabriele's childhood fantasy was concentrated in the image of the boogeyman, subject of his curiosity and his fears. Another somewhat autobiographical chapter in the filmography of Rubini dedicated to his homeland. Filmed in Bari, Brindisi, San Vito dei Normanni, Mesagne, and Oria.

LE DUE STORIE DI ADAMÀ/ ADAMA'S TWO STORIES

by Annamaria Gallone

The story of Adamà, a boy from Burkina Faso, who arrived in Italy after a difficult childhood in his country where he was forced to work in the mines. Filmed in San Vito dei Normanni.

2010

HOUSEFULL

*by Sajid Khan
with Akshay Kumar, Deepika
Padukone, Lara Dutta, Randhir
Kapoor*

Young Rapush, who works in a casino, is dogged by misfortune. All the girls he has dated have left him after a short time. However, his natural enthusiasm makes him hope to meet the woman of his dreams one day and this seems to be coming true with Sandy, who is in love with him. Rapush is happy about this new love and starts

planning the wedding. But the girl's brother and two friends try to thwart him in every way. *Housefull* is an Indian musical comedy, the typical expression of the popular cinema known as Bollywood. The Italian part was filmed in Vieste and Mattinata.

ZEFAT, SAN NICANDRO. IL VIAGGIO DI ETI/ETI'S JOURNEY

*by Vincenzo Condorelli e Romi
Aboulafia*

Documentary on the religious experience of Donato Manduzio, a resident of San Nicandro who, with other townsmen, converted to Judaism during the Second World War. Filmed in San Nicandro Garignano.

NOI CREDEVAMO/WE BELIEVED

*by Mario Martone
with Luigi Lo Cascio, Valerio
Binasco, Francesca Inaudi,
Andrea Bosca, Edoardo Natoli,
Toni Servillo*

Domenico, Angelo and Salvatore are three young men from the South who, starting from the Bourbon suppression of the uprisings of 1828, begin the journey that leads them to join Giuseppe Mazzini's Giovine Italia. Their story, divided into four episodes, goes as far as the unification of Italy, passing through battles, attacks, meetings, imprisonment, victories and defeats. The Risorgimento told through lights and shadows to create an impressive fresco, which passes through Puglia in the great "prison" episode. Presented at the 68th Venice Film Festival. Filmed in Bovino and Deliceto.

LO SCEICCO DI CASTELLANETA/THE SHEIK OF CASTELLANETA

*by Giuseppe Sansonna
with Dante Marmone*

Short film inspired by the great Hollywood star Rudolph Valentino. An eccentric youth thinks he is his incarnation. Filmed in Castellaneta.

TOTEM BLUE

*di Massimo Fersini
con Mirko Bruni, Massimo
Fersini, Deborah Malatesta,
Elena Argivo, Romina Carrisi,
Anais Réan*

Massimo and Willi, young experts in computer science have invented a videogame that they intend to sell. They get in touch with the mafia boss who controls the game sector, but he rejects them coldly and mocks them. Returning home they meet two girls and spend the night with them on the beach. In the morning they find a dead man on the beach, perhaps an illegal immigrant, and to their great surprise they discover he has a totem tattooed on his back which is identical to the totem in their videogame. At this point, the story becomes a mystery. Filmed in Brindisi and in the Salento area.

PASSING TIME

*by Laura Bispuri
with Giorgio Colangeli,
Simonetta Gorga*

A girl from provincial southern Italy roams around the rooms of her house. Her grandfather's cadaver has been arranged on the bed until the funeral which the girl's parents are preparing for. Without dialogue – the few characters that appear repeat a gesture asking her to be quiet - *Passing time*, in its refined writing, is an enigmatic and engrossing cinematographic

"novella." A short film that won the David di Donatello, with locations in Alessano, Otranto and Santa Maria di Leuca.

BIONDINA/BLONDIE

*by Laura Bispuri
with Anita Caprioli and Celeste
Cuppone*

The director filmed this short film, part of Banca Intesa's project "Per Fiducia," in Lesina. More dreams in the daily life of a little girl.

ICE SCREAM

*by Roberto De Feo and Vito
Palumbo
with Damiano Russo*

Micky enters a bar because he wants an ice-cream, but he literally bumps into two ugly mugs who force him, with threats, to go for a drive in the countryside in his car. Unfortunately, it is a trap: the two subject the young man to a series of violent acts that, in the end, will provoke a terrible vendetta. A short film taken from an actual news story, filmed with a fair dose of tension and interpreted by Damiano Russo, who died young in an accident. Filmed in Bari.

DREAMLAND. TERRA DEI SOGNI/ DREAMLAND

*by Sebastiano Sandro Ravagnani
with Franco Columbu, Tony
Sperandeo, Ivano De Cristofaro,
Diego Calzolari, Elena Presti*

The story, after an initial part set in southern Italy, takes place in the 1950s, in Wisconsin, where an ex-boxer is being harassed by a gang. He discovers with painful surprise that the leader of the gang is his adoptive son. From this point on,

he will try to save him from the life of crime he is headed towards and to prepare him for a better future. Filmed in Corato, Barletta, and Andria.

CRIMINI/CRIMES

by Anna Negri
with Emilio Solfrizzi, Anita Caprioli, Mimmo Mancini, Lydia Liberman, Paolo De Vita, Gigi Angelillo

Marco Spinelli, a literary agent, is on a promotional tour of a few cities to present his book on how to write a best seller. In Bari he meets a girl who shows him a thriller she has written. During his stay in the Puglian capital he realizes that a violent crime in the news has surprising similarities to the story narrated in the girl's thriller. From this point on, the literary agent finds himself implicated in a series of events, narrated in the noir style. TV movie filmed in Bari.

MANNAGGIA ALLA MISERIA!/ DARN IT ALL!

by Lina Wertmüller
with Sergio Assisi, Gabriella Pession, Tommaso Ramenghi, Ennio Coltorti, Angela Pagano

Three socially active students from Naples, during a vacation in India have the possibility to live in close contact with the misery of the people. Upon their return to Italy, they decide to try out the principles of Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus in their city. Yunus, to help the poor, had founded a private bank to loan small sums of money without asking for collateral. However, imported to Naples the model does not work, because the students soon run up against people's scepticism and, above all, the interests of the mafia. In the characteristic style of her films, another portrait of the South by a director

who has always been interested in the region. Filmed in Martina Franca and Taranto.

LOOSE CANNONS

by Ferzan Ozpetek
with Riccardo Scamarcio, Alessandro Preziosi, Ennio Fantastichini, Nicole Grimaudo, Ilaria Occhini, Elena Sofia Ricci, Lunetta Savino

The owner of a pasta shop in Lecce decides to hand over the management of the business to his son Tommaso, a university student in Rome. However, his son has no intention of going along with his father's plans, instead he has literary aspirations. Upon his return to his city, he confesses to his family that he is gay, like his brother who also comes out at the same time, causing his father to have a breakdown. To save appearances Tommaso pretends to be interested in a girl, reassuring his father of his "normality." A satirical comedy of manners that mocks the homophobic mentality, not only in the South. Filmed in Lecce, Otranto and Gallipoli.

A WOMAN

by Giada Colagrande
with Willem Dafoe, Stefania Rocca, Jess Weixler

Max Oliver, a famous American novelist, falls into a deep depression after the death of his wife. Meeting the young Natalie seems to bring back a bit of his lost happiness, so much so that he invites her on vacation in his house in Apulia. Despite a friend who discourages her, Natalie accepts the invitation, but she will regret it when she realizes that Max is still tied to the memory of his lost wife, still present in his thoughts. Filmed in Otranto.

MY MARLBORO CITY

by Valentina Pedicini

The writer of this documentary returns to her hometown Brindisi to reconstruct the memory of a city once known as the hub of cigarette smuggling. Four interviews with smugglers reveal a few of the aspects of social degradation that lead youths without job prospects into illegal behavior. The men interviewed confess to having histories of dramatic experiences, between prison and precariousness, which have not, however, wiped out their hopes for an honest life. Filmed in Brindisi.

IL GIORNO CHE VERRÀ/THE COMING DAY

by Simone Salvemini

Documentary made by Kinebottega, a southern Italian production house specializing in short films and videos. Filmed in Brindisi.

L'ALTRA METÀ/THE OTHER HALF

by Pippo Mezzapesa
with Piera degli Esposti, Cosimo Cinieri, Tiziana Schiavarelli

Gina, resident in a rest home for the elderly, dodges the watchful eye of the doorkeeper to go to the church where her granddaughter Rosalba, to whom she is very close, is about to get married. Along the way she meets the elderly Giacomo, who offers her a ride in his car and invites her to lunch in a restaurant. Here, to the notes of a song sung by Jimmy Fontana, they dance like two young lovers. A tender and melancholy sentimental interlude for senior citizens. A short film shot in various locations in the Salento area.

LA SVOLTA. DONNE CONTRO L'ILVA/THE TURNING POINT. WOMEN AGAINST ILVA

by Valentina D'Amico

A documentary on the battle of six women from Taranto against the "monster" – the Ilva industrial complex – that pollutes the city and is a constant threat to the health of its citizens. The reportage intends to reveal truths that are hidden, often because of the interests and proprietary arrogance which exploit many workers' need to work. The wake-up call starts a hard working day, at times made more dismal by the "punishments" inflicted by the management on those who refuse to carry out tasks inferior to their qualifications. Filmed in Taranto.

ROCKMAN

by Mattia Epifani

From the book *Dai Caraibi al Salento (From the Caribbean Islands to the Salento)* by Tommaso Manfredi, a documentary on reggae music and on the founder of the group Sud Sound System. Filmed in Bari, Lecce, Brindisi, Ostuni and Melendugno.

MARTINO'S SUMMER

by Massimo Natale
with Luca Ciardo, Treat Williams, Matilde Maggio, Pietro Masotti

The film is set in a town on the Apulian coast, during the summer of 1980, between two dramatic episodes: the airplane crash in the sea off Ustica and the attack on the Bologna train station. Martino, a young surfing enthusiast, meets the American captain Clark and becomes his friend. He tells him the fable of Dragut, which he hopes can one day come true. Beyond the rainbow, in the sea's depths, is hidden a magic jar which in the future

will ward off all the evil afflicting the world. A “moral” tale staged in a sunny seascape. Filmed at the Torre Guaceto nature preserve in the province of Brindisi.

SCUOLA MEDIA/MIDDLE SCHOOL

by Marco Santarelli

A documentary on a middle school in Taranto, a city oppressed by the smoke from the Ilva complex which pollutes the town's outskirts, above all. The students, mostly children of workers in the steel factory, meet here after school. They are all aware of how difficult it is to solve the serious problem of pollution, since the closure of the Ilva complex would mean their parents would lose their jobs. Presented at the Turin Film Festival. Filmed in Taranto.

MIA MADRE/MY MOTHER

by Ricky Tognazzi
with Bianca Guaccero, Marco Cocci, Primo Reggiani, Marco Iermanò, Mattia De Vito

We are in a town in Apulia, in the 1950s. Marino has taught his daughter Nunzia to live without the biases of a community still tied to a peasant morality. The girl is in love with Uccio, a young field hand who has health problems, but she marries him nonetheless. They have three children and one of them, many years later, will tell the story of his family and his people, often forced to seek fortune in other countries. Southern provincial life is represented during a difficult phase of its evolution in a television miniseries filmed in Cisternino.

2011

DA CHE PARTE STAI/WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

by Mario Bucci, Pierluigi Ferrandini, Francesco Lopez
with Pierpaolo Vitale, Serena Brancale, Gaetano D'Amore, Raimondo Cucciolla, Dino Loiacono

A few disadvantaged families in a working-class neighborhood in Bari risks being evicted from their houses. When this kind of thing happens, the consequences are at times unforeseeable. The film shows one possible consequence, the most extreme. *Whose Side Are You On?* stages one episode as told from three different points of view, corresponding to the main characters. Each “chapter” was filmed by one of three directors. The semi-documentary film is made in a style that simulates live filming. Filmed in Bari.

NEBBIE E DELITTI/FOG AND CRIMES

by Gianpaolo Tescari
with Luca Barbareschi, Natasha Stefanenko, Anna Valle, Celeste Cupponi

An episode of the television detective series about the investigations of Commissioner Soneri, based on the novels by Valerio Varesi. Filmed in Otranto.

W ZAPPATORE/LONG LIVE ZAPPATORE

by Massimiliano Maci Verdesca
with Sandra Milo, Marcello Zappatore, Guia Jelo, Monica Nappo

The guitarist Marcello Zappatore is a member of a musical group. Dressed in black, in the style of heavy metal

bands, at a certain point he finds himself in disagreement with his band members when an imperious religious call distances him from the manners and customs of the rock image. An unexpected episode resolves his situation. Filmed in Lecce.

APPARTAMENTO AD ATENE/APARTMENT IN ATHENS

by Ruggero Dipaola
with Laura Morante, Gerasimos Skiadaresis, Richard Sammel, Vincenzo Crea

The story takes place in Athens in 1942 during the occupation of Greece. A German official, after having requisitioned it, settles into the house of a married couple: the man is an intellectual who owns a small publishing house, the wife is a housewife. They have two children, a 12 year old daughter and a 10 year old son with a pronounced inclination to fantasize, which makes him imagine a vendetta against the enemy official. Unexpectedly, it will be the forced guest who solves the family's problems. Based on a novel of the same name by Glenway Wescott. Winner of the Audience Award at the Rome International Film Festival. Filmed in Gravina in Puglia and in the Alta Murgia National Park.

THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT

by Giorgia Cecere
with Isabella Ragonese, Francesco Chiarello, Alberto Boll, Miriana Protopapa, Rita Schirinzi

Nina, a young Apulian teacher, is transferred to a different school, in a southern town. The sudden news causes her some displeasure, partly because she has a sentimental relationship with a young man of the upper middle class in her town, and she is afraid that it will be compromised by her distance. The

new environment will cause Nina a few problems, partly because she learns of a her boyfriend's new relationship with another girl. A high quality film by a screenwriter who has moved behind the movie camera. Filmed in Cisternino.

ISLANDS

by Stefano Chiantini
with Asia Argento, Ivan Franek, Giorgio Colangeli

A young construction worker who has immigrated from Eastern Europe in search of work in Italy meets a mute girl who lives in a house on the Tremiti Islands, where the film was shot.

LA REGINA CHE VENNE DAL MARE/THE QUEEN WHO CAME FROM THE SEA

by Carmine Fornari

A short film by the director of *The Arab Friend*, filmed in Trani, Castel del Monte, Torre a Mare, and Bari.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY

by Gennaro Nunziante
with Luca Medici (Checco Zalone), Nabiha Accari, Tullio Solenghi, Ivano Marescotti, Annarita Del Piano, Rocco Papaleo

Checco, an unemployed young man whose family comes from Apulia, would like to enroll in the Carabinieri, but thanks to help from his uncle who has contacts in the ecclesiastical world he gets a job as a security guard at the Milan Duomo. Here he meets and befriends a pretty Arab girl, but when the audience discovers that she is part of a terrorist group that is planning an attack on the Duomo, his relationship with the girl becomes dangerous. This is

Checco Zalone's second film and it reached an all-time record: the highest Italian box-office earnings of all time. Filmed in Alberobello.

THE CARDBOARD VILLAGE

by Ermanno Olmi
with Michael Lonsdale, Rutger Hauer, Massimo De Francovich, Alessandro Haber, Irma Pino

The priest of a church that is about to be deconsecrated suffers as he watches the place where he has carried out his pastoral duties for many years be emptied of its sacred furnishings. In the meantime, a group of illegal immigrants fresh off the boat take refuge in the church and transform it into a temporary "village," before continuing their journey to other destinations. In this way, the holy place maintains its function of charity and aid for the weak, but the law enforcement agencies have a different idea and insist that the refugees leave their precarious dwelling. A master of Italian cinema stages a sort of lay oratory on one of western society's greatest problems. Filmed in Bari.

RITUALS. DOMANI ME NE VADO/I'M LEAVING TOMORROW

by Annalisa and Sophie Chiarello

Documentary on two Apulian brothers who, in the 1950s, emigrated to France. Filmed in the lower Salento area.

IL COLORE DEL VENTO/THE COLOUR OF THE WIND

by Bruno Bigoni

Documentary on the journeys of a mercantile marine ship through the Mediterranean. It starts in Tan-

giers, where many youths look to the nearby Spanish coasts as a promised land. One of the ports visited is Bari and here a young Albanian speaks of his experience and his attempts to integrate into the local community, which are made difficult by bureaucratic obstacles. The ship sails on to Sousse in Tunisia, and Lampedusa. Filmed in Bari.

FRANCO. UN UOMO IN PIEDI E LA SIGNORA VESTITA DI NEBBIA/A STANDING MAN AND THE WOMEN DRESSED IN FOG

by Mimmo Mongelli
with Ivan Franek

Docu-fiction on the case of Mario Marcone, an official of the Financial Police, killed in 1995 in Foggia, in the offices where he worked. Filmed in Foggia.

LA DECIMA ONDA/THE TENTH WAVE

by Francesco Colangelo

Short film about three fishermen who find the cadaver of an illegal immigrant on the beach. Filmed in Conversano.

BABIS FIGLI DEI ROSPI/BABIS TOADS' SONS

by Niccolò Manzolini

Documentary on a group of "babis" (toads) who emigrated to France in the early 1900s in search of work. Filmed in Conversano, Cozze, Egnazia, and Brindisi.

MAKE A FAKE

by Giovanni Albanese
with Giuseppe Battiston, Vincenzo Salemme, Donatella Finocchiaro, Paolo Sassanelli

The owner of the Tammaro pasta factory suddenly decides to close shop, leaving his employees without jobs. In truth, he plans to transform the factory into an art gallery. The three dismissed workers, after having been hired as custodians of the "gallery" and after having seen the eccentricity of the artistic products, try to make some themselves, hoping to pass them off as works of art. With this ploy, they are able to supplement their paltry salaries. A satirical film that pokes fun mainly at contemporary art. Filmed in Palmariggi, Otranto and Maglie.

OLTRE IL MARE/BEYOND THE SEA

by Cesare Fragnelli
with Alessandro Intini, Alberto Galetti, Micol Olivieri, Giulia Steigerwalt

A group of students on vacation in a campground near Martina Franca. The group is quite varied: there's the cool guy, the night-time reveler who goes from one bar to another, the one devastated by a recent sentimental disappointment, the "revolutionary" and even a lesbian couple. The arrival of one of their professors upsets them at first, but all ends well when they meet three pretty English girls, in the tow of the teacher. A youth comedy set in beautiful Puglian scenery. Filmed in Martina Franca and Otranto.

THE EASY LIFE

by Lucio Pellegrini
with Pierfrancesco Favino, Stefano Accorsi, Vittoria Puccini, Camilla Filippi, Ivano Marescotti

Mario and Luca, both doctors, have loved the same woman, Ginevra. She married Luca, who cares more about success and money than taking care of patients. Instead, Mario has moved to an African country to help the poor. First Luca joins

him there to escape from Italy because of legal problems due to a few professional improprieties. Then Ginevra arrives and creates an embarrassing confrontation between the two friends. Filmed in Supersano, where the countryside was transformed painstakingly into an exact replica of an African village.

IL COMMISSARIO ZAGARIA/ COMMISSIONER ZAGARIA

by Antonello Grimaldi
with Lino Banfi, Marco Cocci, Ana Caterina Moriaru, Rosanna Banfi, Manrico Gammarota

A couple of policemen, one old, the other young, have different ideas about their job. The first trusts his intuition, above all, because it has never failed him. The second is all deductive logic, indispensable for resolving a wide variety of criminal cases. A particular case is assigned to them: to discover who is at the head of a mafia clan operating in southern Italy. Commissioner Zagaria suspects it is an important local man. Things get complicated after the kidnapping of the daughter of a friend of his, who is linked to one of the clans. Television mini-series filmed in Lecce, Gallipoli and Otranto.

FIREWORKS

by Giacomo Abuzzese
with Saleh Bakri, Katia Goulioni, Julien Anselmino

A short fiction film about the presence of the Ilva industrial complex in Taranto, which causes a high level of pollution. During New Year's Eve, taking advantage of the fireworks show that celebrates the arrival of the new year, a group of young ecologists from a variety of countries plans an attack against the large Taranto steel industry complex. Their dream is a city

without the Ilva smokestacks on its horizon, continually vomiting dioxin. Presented at the 29th Turin Film Festival. Filmed in Taranto.

FAN PIO/PIO FAN
by Graziano Conversano and Gianni Troilo

Film on Padre Pio, later Saint Pio. Filmed in San Giovanni Rotondo.

**SE SEI COSÌ TI DICO SÌ/
IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU ARE,
I'LL SAY YES TO YOU**
by Eugenio Cappuccio
with Emilio Solfrizzi, Belen Rodriguez, Iaia Forte, Fabrizio Buompastore, Totò Onnis

Piero Cicala was a successful singer: one of his songs, *Io, te e il mare (You, Me and the Sea)*, sold a million copies. Now he works as a cook in the restaurant of his ex-wife, where he runs into an old friend who convinces him to participate in a television programme dedicated to singing stars of the past. So, Piero sets off for Rome for the television tryouts and there he meets an American top model who invites him to America, where she introduces him to a community of people of Italian origins. Filmed in Savellettri.

**IL PAESE DELLE SPOSE
INFELICI/THE TOWN
OF UNHAPPY BRIDES**
by Pippo Mezzapesa
with Aylin Prandi, Rolando Ravello, Antonio Gerardi, Valentina Cernelutti, Luca Schipani, Nicolas Orzella, Vito Lopriore

A story of friendships between working-class boys. Francesco would like to be part of a group of friends, who, like him, are great football fans. He is

accepted only when ZaZà, the group leader, recognizes his football ability. In the meantime, a surprising event attracts the attention of the boys: a young woman dressed in white is about to jump off the top of a bell tower. This event stimulates their curiosity, leading them to search for information about her past, to try to understand the reasons for her unusual, theatrical gesture. Taken from the novel of the same name by Mario Desiati, an original representation of the South, with a visionary vein. Filmed in Massafra and Taranto.

**DICIANNOVE E
SETTANTADUE/NINETEEN
AND SEVENTY-TWO**
by Sergio Basso

Docu-fiction about Pietro Mennea, world record holder and Olympic gold medal winner. Filmed in Maglie.

**MOHAMMED DALÌ. INSTANT
MOVIE**
by Antonio Laforgia

The story of Mohammed, a young Tunisian, who leaves his country to come to Europe. Filmed in Oria, Manduria, Sava, Bari, and Taranto.

**GITANISTAN. LO STATO
IMMAGINARIO DEI ROM
SALENTINI/GITANISTAN.
THE IMAGINARY STATE OF
SALENTINE ROMAS**
by Pierluigi De Donno e Claudio Giagnotti

Documentary about a Roma community which settled in the Salento area in the early 1980s and set down roots, integrating with the people of the place. Filmed in Muro Leccese, Taurisano, and Campi Salentina.

**CUCITO ADDOSSO/TAILOR-
MADE**
by Giovanni La Parola

A short historical film set in the Italy of 1860. Filmed in Uggiano La Chiesa.

CANNED DREAMS
by Katja Gauriloff

Documentary produced by a Finnish production company about the work of a few workers in the food industry. However, the film's prologue takes place in a quarry in Brazil, where, dodging the excavators, a group of young people hope to find something of value. This is followed by scenes of work life in Europe, from Rumania to Poland, from France to Italy. In front of the movie camera the workers confide their stories and speak of their living conditions. A few scenes show the slaughter of animals in slaughterhouses, before the resulting products are put into packaging and organized on the supermarket shelves, the last image in the film. The part in Italy is about gathering tomatoes in Apulian fields. Filmed in Ostuni, Manduria, and Supersano.

2012

DEEP WITHIN
by Federico Rizzo
with Nino Frassica, Dorotea Mercuri, Giorgio Forges Davanzati, Carmelo Galati

In a small town in the province of Brindisi a young man, overtaken by a homicidal raptus, kills his whole family and then immediately turns himself in. He undergoes a psychiatric examination, carried out by a woman doctor from his

town, who had moved to the North a long time ago, but has returned to take care of her elderly father. In the past, her brother had been killed by a homicidal maniac: a horrible violent crime which led her to study the mental processes that lead to these extreme acts. A psychological thriller by the writer of *Escape From the Call Center*. Filmed in Brindisi, Torchiariolo and San Pietro Vernotico.

**TUTTA LA MUSICA DEL
CUORE/ALL OF THE HEART'S
MUSIC**
by Ambrogio Lo Giudice
with Francesca Cavallin, Lucrezia Lante della Rovere, Ugo Pagliari, Fabrizio Traversa, Johannes Brandrup, Laura Glavan

A six-episode television series set in a music conservatory in the South, where musicians and students meet and interact. Filmed in Monopoli.

**IL GENERALE DEI BRIGANTI/
THE BRIGANDS' GENERAL**
by Paolo Poeti
with Daniele Liotti, David Coco, Raffaella Rea

A two-episode miniseries about the life and character of the famous brigand Carmine Crocco, one of the most feared outlaws in the civil war after the unification of Italy. Filmed in Vieste, in the Umbra Forest and in Gravina in Puglia.

**E LA CHIAMANO ESTATE/AND
THEY CALL IT SUMMER**
by Paolo Franchi
with Jean-Marc Barr, Isabella Ferrari, Filippo Nigro, Luca Argentero

Dino and Anna are an unusual married couple: they have never

had sex, Dino had a difficult childhood, with an oppressive mother and a brother who committed suicide, which is the probable cause of his behavior. Dino hangs out in shady spots, trying to persuade his wife's ex-boyfriends to renew their old ties with her. The film is almost experimental, it mixes past and present to attempt an analysis of the less decipherable impulses of the human soul. Filmed in Bari, Ostuni e Monopoli.

È STATO IL FIGLIO/IT WAS THE SON

by Daniele Cipri
with Toni Servillo, Giselda Volodi, Alfredo Castro, Fabrizio Falco, Giuseppe Vitali

In a firefight between mafia clans, Nicola, a worker, loses his daughter, killed by a stray bullet. He is to receive a large sum of money as compensation. But before he receives it he starts to run up debts with loan sharks, who he goes to for loans, and spends the money recklessly, buying himself a luxury car which will be the cause of his violent death. His son, with whom he had had an argument, is accused of killing him. But something different hides behind the apparent truth. First film by Daniele Cipri written without the co-writer of his previous films, Franco Maresco. Filmed in Brindisi.

NON ME LO DIRE/ DON'T TELL ME

by Vito Cea
with Uccio De Santis

Lello, a successful comedian, sacrifices his married life to the theatre, leading his wife to ask for a separation, which causes him to become seriously depressed. The doctor he goes to prescribes an unusual therapy, but which is sure to be successful: return to acting to regain

self-confidence, comforted by the adoration of the public who love him. First film for the popular Bari television actor. Filmed in Bari, Monopoli, Trani, Barletta, Margherita di Savoia and Sant'Agata di Puglia.

SI PUÒ FARE L'AMORE VESTITI?/CAN YOU MAKE LOVE WHILE DRESSED?

by Dario Acocella
with Bianca Guaccero, Corrado Fortuna, Maurizio Battista, Bonaria Decorato, Paolo De Vita

Aurora, who has come back to her hometown Polignano from Rome to take care of her sick mother, temporarily suspends her work as a physician specializing in sexology, a profession that attracts the morbid curiosity of the townsfolk. Therefore, she has to deal with their prejudices which is what led her, about 10 years earlier, to escape to the capital. However, an old friend will show her that even life in the provinces has positive aspects. Filmed in Polignano a Mare.

100 METRI DAL PARADISO/100 METERS FROM PARADISE

by Raffaele Verzillo
with Jordi Mollà, Filippo Scicchitano, Lorenzo Richelmy, Giulia Bevilacqua

A father who was a successful athlete in the past would like for his son to follow in his footsteps. But the young man has a different idea, he intends to follow his religious vocation, a choice that is a great disappointment for his father. To make him happy, if only in part, the young man organizes a team for a football match at the Vatican with his fellow seminary students. Filmed in Bari and Ceglie Messapica.

IL PASTICCIERE/THE PASTRY CHEF

by Luigi Sardiello
with Antonio Catania, Rosaria Russo, Ennio Fantastichini, Antonio Stornaio, Ivan Zerbinati

Achille has worked with his pastry chef father since he was a boy, and he intends to follow in his footsteps in this world made of dedication and passion for perfection. However, one day he has to interrupt his work to take a journey, and along the way he meets various people, including a swindler, one attractive woman and another who is very diligent in her work. In this way, Achille's itinerary becomes an exciting adventure. Filmed in Porto Cesareo and Nardo.

IL SOLE DENTRO/THE SUN WITHIN

by Paolo Bianchini e Paola Rota
with Angela Finocchiaro, Diego Bianchi, Giuseppe Vitale

Parallel and opposite stories about four young people. The first two, Africans from Guinea escaping the misery of their land, are searching for a future in Europe, and to get there they illegally board an airplane flying to Brussels. They will meet a sad end, however. Ten years later, two young men, one African and the other Sicilian, travel in the opposite direction, from Europe to Africa, where they plan to prove

themselves as footballers. They debut in a stadium dedicated to the two young men who, many years earlier, left Africa, and froze to death in the airplane that was taking them to Brussels. Filmed in Bari where a corner of Africa was reconstructed.

CESARE MORI: IL PREFETTO DI FERRO/THE IRON PREFECT

by Gianni Lepre

The story of Cesare Mori, a prefect who was sent from the north to Sicily, during the Fascist period, to combat the mafia. A television mini-series filmed in Otranto.

MADE IN ALBANIA

by Stefania Casini

Documentary on the working life of modern day Albania. Filmed in Otranto.

FILM A PEDALI/PEDAL FILM

by Agostino Ferrente

Documentary about the first concert completely powered by pedals pushed by voluntary cyclists. On the stage, set up on the esplanade at the Bari harbor, the Têtes de Bois. A film by the writer of *Film di Mario (Film About Mario)* and *The Orchestra of Piazza Vittorio*. Made with the Bari documentary filmmaker Mariangela Barbanente.

Apulia, the region with cinema on its mind



The umpteenth cinematographic event? And it's in the South? And in a city without a long history of cinema and a budget up to 10 times smaller than the most important Italian festivals?

The premises for yet another umpteenth cultural event just like all the others were all there. And instead, the story of the Bif&st (Bari International Film Festival) presided over by Ettore Scola and with artistic direction by Felice Laudadio, two names that guarantee quality, is the story of a great little success.

The phenomenon cannot be explained by only the breadth and high level of its cinematographic offerings, from the non-competing selection of national and international previews (which brought films like *The King's Speech*, that later won four Oscars, or *The First Man* by Gianni Amelio, to Bari) to competitive sections dedicated to Italian and foreign feature-length films (in the "ItaliaFilmFest" and "Panorama Internazionale" sections), up to awards for the best Italian first film, documentaries and short films.

The **Bif&st** was created to satisfy an increasingly demanding public who want to interact as much as possible with everything that has to do with the cinema. And to meet that desire the festival – in 2012 enriched by an important special event, the "Carmelo Bene Festival," a tribute to the Apulian artist on the 10-year anniversary of his death – includes seminars (actual "cinema lessons" held by directors and actors), conferences and laboratories on professions in the cinema (from the actor to the producer, from the screenwriter to the film critic), and even the formation of popular people's juries.

There was an immediate response and an enormous level of participation by the public (approximately 52,000 spectators in 2011), as well as appreciation from the guests and industry experts, who were won over by a festival which can boast of having found an identity that is so strong that it transforms the city in which it is held, while it is underway.

Bari, comfortably situated on the Adriatic Sea with its slow-moving Mediterranean charm, once far removed from the milieu of international culture, easy to love for its provincial ways, becomes a cosmo-

politan and frenetic place, in which the main business of many of its citizens (as well as a growing number of visitors) is to be able to see the greatest number of films possible, attend as many lessons on cinema as possible, while certainly not disdaining the possibility of meeting actors and directors along the streets of their city. It is easy, in fact, to call it a Festival. And in the case of the Bari Festival it must be admitted that there is no better word to describe it: the **Bif&st** is a true "festa," or party, for all lovers of the seventh art.

But Apulia is much more than its capital city, which in September 2011 hosted *Frontiere* (Frontiers), a unique and complex event that wiped out the differences between the visual, sound, and plastic arts.

High-quality cinematographic events with long traditions exist throughout the Salento area, for example in Capitanata, as testimony to an interest in the cinematographic narrations that accompany the industrial growth of the production sector.

In the province of Lecce, in Specchia, one of the most beautiful villages of Italy, the **Festa del cinema del reale (Reality Cinema Festival)** is in its seventh year. It is a unique film show that proposes the most daring, curious and inventive cinema that you can see and listen to. Four days in July, rich in viewings, exhibits, installations, meetings, seminars and live music to discover the documentary cinema being made around the world today.

Also not to be missed are, in April, the **Festival del cinema europeo di Lecce** (Lecce Festival of European Cinema), in its 12th year, which presents the Mario Verdone award to the best European first film of the year and which presents the most interesting examples of continental cinema amid the dazzling Lecce Baroque stones; and the **Festival del cinema indipendente di Foggia** (Foggia Independent Cinema Festival) in December, which presents awards to the boldest films by international writers and producers. Unique and diversified events that cross the region from north to south. Because Puglia has cinema on its mind.



MEMORY PROJECT

Weaving together threads from the past and the future. Stories, characters, places and memories transmitted by Apulian directors under age 35 on the basis of outlines provided by the Apulia Film Commission. These are the guidelines of the "Memory Project," carried out by the AFC, first thanks to the resources of "Sensi Contemporanei," in collaboration with the Apulia Region and the ministries of Economic Development and Cultural Heritage and Activities, and later making use of its own regular budget. The various nuances of the Apulian identity in the 1900s, told through short films, documentaries of television programmes, were indicated by a review panel and selected by a panel of judges. The first "Memory Project," in 2008, resulted in the following seven projects:

DANZE DI PALLONI E DI COLTELLI/DANCES OF BALLS AND BLADES

by Chiara Idrusa Scrimieri

The winter of Leonardo Donadei, "ballanaru" and fencer, is marked by the preparations for the feast of Saint Anthony Abate, in Parabita.

OTNARAT - TARANTO A FUTURO INVERSO/ OTNARAT - TARANTO TO A BACKWARDS FUTURE

di Nico Angiuli

Steel, water, and the sculptures of Nicola Carriano are the elements a few researchers start from to find themselves in Otnarat: another possible Taranto.

GARDEN OF LIGHT

by Lucia and Davide Pepe

The festival of Saint Tryphon in Adelfia: amid brilliant rhythms and sincere devotions, every sound becomes an explosion of color. In competition at the 2009 Berlin Film Festival.

SALENTO TERRA DI POPOLI/SALENTO, LAND OF PEOPLES

by Paola Manno

Faces and stories of the Salento area. The experience of the meeting of cultures illustrates the evolution of society in the last 20 years.

KALIF

by Raffaele Fusaro

Docu-fiction about Kalif, an African boy who lives in Bari and tells a new story about the city.

VITUCCIO, TERRA E CANTI/ VITUCCIO, LAND AND SONGS

by Matteo Greco

The life of a singer-shepherd, Vito Nigro of Villa Castelli, speaks of the South: the hard work, the pain of the emigrant, amorous passions.

DI CHI SEI FIGLIO/ WHOSE SON YOU ARE

by Corrado Punzi

Behind an intimate portrait of a family of tobacco producers in Lizzanello, a generation of passionate women, the "tabacchine," or female cigarette and cigar makers.

The Apulia of social and cultural redemption performs in the second edition of "Memory Project" 2010-2011, telling the stories and deeds of extraordinary men, expression of the political and economic life of our region which produces, renews itself, communicates and distinguishes itself: Vito Laterza, Domenico Modugno, Giuseppe Di Vagno and Vittorio Bodini.

BINARI/RAILWAYS

by Alessio Giannone

The dreamlike journey of Vito Laterza, a man who in his work as an editor knew how to capture the various psyches of our nation.

MIMMO MIMINO & MIMI, OSSIA DOMENICO MODUGNO/MIMMO MIMINO & MIMI, ALSO KNOWN AS DOMENICO MODUGNO

by Michele Roppo and Antonella Sibilia

The first in-depth examination of the territorial belonging of Domenico Modugno through the accounts of the people who knew him. Broadcast on TV on RaiDue.

LUTTO DI CIVILTÀ/ CIVILITY MOURNING

by Pierluigi Ferrandini

The premonitory signs of Fascism told through the human and political experiences of Giuseppe Di Vagno, whose murder coincided with Benito Mussolini's entry into Parliament. Broadcast on TV on RaiStoria.

PÒPPITU/PÒPPITU

by Vito Palumbo and Roberto De Feo

Two young brothers, Oronzo and Giulio, peacefully pass the days of their childhood. The poetry of the Salentine poet Vittorio Bodini bursts into their games.

IL BANDO/THE CALL

by Gianluca Sportelli

A short film dedicated to the four main characters and the "Memory Project" call.

Events in Apulia

Itinerary 1 The Gargano and the Tremiti Islands

FEBRUARY

Manfredonia Carnival

Daunian Carnival in Manfredonia

Now in its 59th, Manfredonia's Daunian Carnival, recognized by the Apulia Region as an "event of regional interest," animates the city with masks, music and carnival floats. The parade of floats and masked groups, held on the Sunday prior to Easter and Shrove Tuesday, attracts people from the entire region and marks Manfredonia's carnival as one of the most important in southern Italy. The typical character of the festival is Ze Peppe, a happy farmer who comes to town for the celebrations, overdoes it with food, dancing and drink, gets sick and dies. His cremated body is burnt on the last day of Carnival. Don't miss the "Parade of Wonders" reserved for the very young. Some of the traditional carnival foods are the "farrata," a sweet made of wheat berries and sheepsmilk ricotta, and the "sgaglioze," small portions of fried polenta.

Vico del Gargano

14 February

Patron Saint Festival of Saint Valentine

The statue of the saint is carried in procession, covered with oranges and orange-blossoms, locally produced citrus fruits which are the characteristic element of the festival. During the festival, branches of citrus fruit decorate the church, the balconies and the streets of the historical centre.



Monte Sant'Angelo, Patron Saint Festival of Saint Michael

MARCH/APRIL

San Marco in Lamis

Good Friday

Rites of Holy Week. The "fracchie" and the procession of Our Lady of Sorrows.

This event is unique in Italy. Enormous tree trunks, cut into the shape of a cone and filled with wood and highly inflammable materials, are carried on special floats. The youths of various neighbourhoods prepare these spectacular "fire machines," which weigh up to 3,000-4,000 kilograms, a few days before the event. The long procession of fire, with high flames that reflect off the façades of the buildings, accompanies the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows.

MAY

Monte Sant'Angelo

8 May

Patron Saint Festival of Saint Michael (Festival of the Apparition of Saint Michael Archangel on the Gargano)

So-called "compagnie," or "parties" arrive in town from Lazio, Campania, Abruzzo, Molise, Lucania and, of course, many Apulian cities. These are picturesque processions of devotees, who travel to the bottom of the grotto where Saint Michael appeared, carrying standards, flags and crucifixes, reciting ancient prayers. The patron saint's feast is held on 29 September. On this occasion, only the sword of the statue venerated in the sanctuary is carried in procession.

JULY

Rodi Garganico

2 July

Patron Saint Festival of the Madonna della Libera and Saint Christopher

The procession of many statues of a wide variety of saints starts



Vico del Gargano, Patron Saint Festival of Saint Valentine

at sunrise. The festival ends with fireworks, which are let off over the beach at midnight.

AUGUST

Carpino

First half of August

Carpino Folk Festival

Since 1996, Carpino has held one of the most interesting and original music festivals in southern Italy. The programme includes, in addition to the “tarantelle,” the rhythms of folk music from all over Italy.



Borgo dell'Incoronata, Foggia, Cavalcade of Angels

APRIL

Foggia (Borgo dell'Incoronata)

Last Saturday of April

Patron Saint Festival of Incononata. Cavalcade of Angels

The Cavalcade of Angels is held near the Incononata Sanctuary. It is a spectacular and scenographic parade of floats with hundreds of actors, including children and youths dressed as angels, saints and Madonnas. The parade represents the descent of the angels into the Incononata Forest in April 1001, when the Virgin appeared to two local men.

Itinerary 2

Foggia and the Tavoliere

MARCH/APRIL

Orsara di Puglia, Troia

Good Friday

Rites of Holy Week. Mysteries Procession

All of the cities of Apulia enact this characteristic, slow procession, which can include from one to 37 groups of statues or machines. Each city varies the style of decorating the images, the time of the event (morning, afternoon or in the dead of night), the number of bands that play the so-called funeral marches, the devotees who proceed or follow the procession, the number of confraternities involved. In Orsara, the cross bearers parade barefoot, hooded and dressed in white. In Troia, the “procession of chains,” involves a large number of the faithful who consider themselves to have been pardoned by divine intervention, and who visit the sepulchres set up in the city churches, barefoot and covered in chains.

Troia

Easter Sunday

Easter Rite. Procession of the Kiss.

During the procession on Easter Sunday, the meeting between the statue of the Virgin and that of the Resurrected Christ, which takes place in the square in front of the cathedral, is characteristic and very emotional.

MAY

Pietramontecorvino

16 May

Feast of Saint Albert

The statue of the saint is carried in a procession along a route that winds through the historical centre of Pietramontecorvino and the ancient town of Montecorvino. The procession is characterised by tall poles, up to 15 metres high, decorated with multi-coloured pieces of fabric and handkerchiefs. There are two “pole carriers,” but the team of carriers also consists of other helpers who keep an eye on the cords used to balance the poles.

At the end of the procession, the statue of Saint Albert is carried to the four corners of the ruined cathedral to bless the fields at the four cardinal points.

San Severo

Third Sunday of May and the following Monday

Patron Saint Festival S.S. Maria del Soccorso

The characteristic of this festival is the great number of San Severo-style fireworks displays, in which hundreds of youths run just ahead of the explosions of the bangers. The thrill of the run and the time spent waiting are reminiscent, in some ways, of the festival of San Fermio of Pamplona in Spain. Also worthy of note during the festival is the procession of the Virgin of Succour and, at the end, “the fireworks race.”



Pietramontecorvino, procession of Saint Albert

Carlantino

25 May

Ricotta Festival

Among the dairy products produced in Apulia, and on the Gargano in particular, a place of honour is reserved for ricotta. In Carlantino, this special food is celebrated in an *ad hoc* festival that goes together with a celebration in honour of the Madonna dell'Annunziata, known, in fact, as the Ricotta Madonna. The religious festival, of ancient origins, united the shepherds of Puglia, Abruzzo and Molise who stopped in Carlantino along the course of their migratory herding, to leave milk, cheese and, naturally, ricotta at the feet of the Madonna dell'Annunziata, at her sanctuary in the country.

AUGUST

Castelnuovo della Daunia

Sunday before August 15

Festival of the Zanchette

“Zanchette” are a special homemade pasta, typical of Castelnuovo della Daunia. During the festival, the bran and egg pasta is made in the squares and cooked in large cauldrons, then distributed to locals and tourists.

Torremaggiore

Saturday and Sunday after August 15

Federico II Pageant

A medieval parade in costume with a related race between rival neighbourhoods. The parade ends the festivities in honour of the

Madonna della Fontana, the patron saint carried in a procession in memory of an appearance she made to save a local farmer.

San Marco la Catola

Sunday following August 15

Jaletta Joust

The Jaletta Joust is a competition of skill on horseback, clearly derived from the Middle Ages, held in honour of Saint Liberato and the Madonna delle Vittorie, patron saints of the city.

Seven neighbourhoods participate: Port'ammont,' Portabase, Sant-Laurenz, U'iardin, Stanc'cavall,' Via nova de sott,' Val Saccon.

Biccari

August

Festival of the “Pizza a furn'apijert”

“A furn' apijert” indicates a type of cooking in which the oven remains open, resulting in a particular type of baking for typical local products. The products made in the open oven are mostly pizzas and pies, but also troccoli (a handmade spaghetti), served with tomato sauce. The “open oven” pizza has been recognized by the city administration as a “municipally designated product.”

NOVEMBER

Sant'Agata di Puglia

1 November

Festival of the “Ciccecuotte”

The “ciccecuotte” is a typical sweet, also commonly found in other areas of Apulia, made with boiled wheat mixed with walnuts, vin-cotto (a product made by boiling down grape must), pomegranate grains and chocolate. This very popular festival coincides with All Saints' Day and the rites in honour of the dead.

Orsara di Puglia

1 November

Fuoc acost e cocc' priatorj

A bonfire of dry broom twigs and pumpkins carved in the shape of skulls are the symbols of the All Saint's Day festival celebrated in Orsara. The festival falls on the night between the 1st and 2nd of November and not, in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Halloween, between 31 October and 1 November. According to tradition, the souls in Purgatory return to earth to greet the living, hence, the welcoming rites, including the “fuoc acost,” which are fires built around the town, and the “cocc' priatorj,” the skulls of the dead, symbolized by the carved pumpkins.



Barletta, the Challenge Joust

DECEMBER

Rignano Garganico

23/26/30 December and 6 January

Live Nativity Scene

One of the largest live nativity scenes in north-central Apulia is held in the smallest of the Gargano's towns. The scene includes workshops and trades of times gone by.

Itinerary 3

Barletta, Andria, Trani

FEBRUARY

Molfetta

Carnival

Toème's Funeral

Toème is the typical mask of Molfetta. It is a straw puppet which is carried in a funeral procession and then burned in the square to celebrate the end of Carnival and the beginning of Lent. The festival, usually animated by the city's high schools and held in tandem with a "cucina grascia" festival which features homemade pasta, garbanzo beans and ragout.

MARCH/APRIL

Barletta, Andria, Molfetta, Canosa, Bisceglie, Trani

Holy Friday

Mysteries Procession

In Andria, the Holy Thorn is exhibited in the Mysteries Procession.

In some towns, the processions of the Mysteries and/or the Piety continue on Saturday (Molfetta, Canosa).

JUNE

Trani

Second Week of June

The Trani Dialogues

A cultural event focusing on books, ideas and authors, held in Trani's Swabian Castle. Intellectuals and writers from around the world participate in the event, which lasts over three days.



Canosa, rites of Holy Week

JULY

Barletta

Second half of July

Challenge of Barletta

Every year, in the second half of July, Barletta relives the events of the Challenge, the knightly joust held on 13 February 1503, in the territory of Trani, on the plain between Corato and Andria. A dispute arose between 13 Italian knights stationed in Barletta and the same number of French knights quartered in Canosa di Puglia, following denigratory words by Charles de la Motte regarding the valour of the Italians. The challenge was won by the Italians. The reconstruction of the Challenge brings back the atmosphere of the 1500s through stories, places, foods, clothes, weapons and suits of armour. The streets and squares of Barletta's historical centre are animated by knights, ladies, flag-wavers and street artists.

AUGUST

Giovinazzo

First week of August

Festival of Grandmother's Sandwich

Now in its 16th year, the Festival of Grandmother's Sandwich, the profits of which go to charity each year, fills the city with music, dancing and song. The sandwiches, for which the festival is named, are made completely from local products which risk being forgotten or undervalued. On the occasion, excellent wines are also served.

Giovinazzo

Mid-August

Patron Saint Festival of Maria S.S. of Corsignano

In honour of the Madonna of Corsignano, a parade in historical costume passes through the city's streets.

Andria

Late August-Early September

Castel dei Mondi Festival

International theatre festival. The halls of Castel del Monte host the most interesting theatre companies on the international circuit. Related events are also scheduled in the city squares. The event is normally preceded by a preview in July.

SEPTEMBER

Molfetta

8 September

Patron Saint Festival of the Madonna of the Martyrs

A procession in the sea for the Madonna of the Martyrs. The statue of the Madonna of the Martyrs is accompanied onto a fishing boat near the sanctuary of the same name, and then travels across the harbour to disembark on the wharf near the Duomo. Worthy of note are the many youths who swim behind the religious procession. The festival ends with fireworks.

Itinerary 4 The Murgia

FEBRUARY

Palo del Colle

Shrove Tuesday

The "Viccio" Race

The "viccio," or turkey, nowadays substituted with a bladder full of water, is at the centre of this medieval-style race which involves various knights on the last day of carnival. The participants must spear the viccio, while standing up on a galloping horse, to take home the trophy.

MARCH/APRIL

Altamura, Bitetto, Faeto, Ginosa, Pulsano, Mottola, S. Giorgio Ionico, Bovino, Deliceto, Troia, Turi

19 March

Bonfire of Saint Joseph

The festival of Saint Joseph is celebrated in many towns in Apulia with numerous big bonfires.

Bitonto

6 April

Fair of Saint Leon

This is one of the oldest fairs of various merchandise in Italy. Boccaccio speaks of it in his *Decameron*. In conjunction with the fair there is an evocative parade in medieval costume in the historical centre.

Ruvo di Puglia

Holy Thursday

Procession of the Eight Saints

A single statue, composed of eight characters, set on a single base, is carried in a procession from 2 a.m. until dawn. More than 40 men silently carry this extremely heavy statute through the cold night. The honour of carrying this statue is handed down from father to son.

Bitonto, Valenzano, Ruvo di Puglia, Gravina, Modugno

Holy Friday

Mysteries Procession

All of the cities of Apulia enact this characteristic slow procession, which can include from one to 37 groups of statues or carriages. Each city varies the style of decorating the images, the time of the event (morning, afternoon or in the dead of night), the number of bands that play the so-called funeral marches, the devotees who proceed or follow the procession, the number of confraternities involved. The processions held at night or those with hooded cross-bearers or veiled women are very evocative. In some towns, the Mysteries Procession and/or the Piety continue on into Saturday (Bitonto).

Ruvo di Puglia

Easter Sunday

Procession of the Resurrected Christ and the explosion of the "Quartane"

On Easter Sunday, children accompany the statue of the Resurrected Christ through the streets of the city. On the same morning, the "quartane," cloth puppets hung at the corners of the streets as a reminder of fasting for Lent, are exploded and burned. The last "quartana" to be exploded is the one in Piazza Bovio, at midday.



Terlizzi, Patron Saint Festival of the Madonna of Sovereto

Minervino Murge

April-May

Festival of the Lamb and Pecorino Cheese

The main dish served at this festival is, naturally, lamb, roasted in the street on special cookers specially set up. Wine and the typical bread of Minervino are served with the lamb, but also dairy products and wild herbs typical of the rural culinary tradition: chicory and "sifoni." The festival also includes music and dance.

MAY

Bitonto

Second half of May

Parade in historical costume

A parade in historical costume is held in memory of the so-called Battle of Bitonto, fought between the Spaniards

and the Austrians on 16 May 1734 during the Wars of Succession. The parade passes through the streets of the city and ends with the ceremony of the consignment of the keys. This festival is also celebrated in Monopoli.

JULY

Grumo

29-31 July

Festival of the Madonna of Mellitto

The Madonna of Mellitto, the patroness of the fields, is venerated in a small church that was built in the countryside, near Mellitto, in the 16th century. In ancient times, during the harvest floats pulled by oxen, harnessed with trappings in copper and leather and adorned with flowers and ribbons, went to this church. Still now the procession is accompanied by the rite of the loaves, or blessed bread, baked at home and distributed to the needy. At the end of the mass and the procession, the townspeople gather in the fields for a meal of typical local products: bread, roast meats, cold cuts, olives, celery, cheese and fruit.

AUGUST

Terlizzi

First Sunday of August

Patron Saint Festival of the Madonna of Sovereto

Sovereto, a small hamlet of Terlizzi, celebrates the Festival of the Madonna of Sovereto with a grandiose and spectacular triumphal float pushed each year by dozens of devotees. The festival ends with illuminations, music in the square and fireworks.

Altamura

Sunday following August 15

Patron Saint Festival of the Madonna del Buon Cammino

The patron saint's festival is celebrated with the famous Cavalcade in honour of the Madonna of the Buon Cammino. A triumphal float pulled by oxen, preceded by a parade of knights, carries the image of the Virgin into the city. Don't miss the "flagpole."

SEPTEMBER

Gravina

Mid-September

International Rally of Medieval Parades

The most beautiful and characteristic medieval parade groups gather in Gravina with bands, parades in costume, tournaments, historical reenactments, weapons demonstrations, duels, exhibitions by jesters, demonstrations of medieval life and various types of shows. The gathering is in its 9th year.

Palo del Colle

14-24 September

Festival of the Holy Cross of Auricarro

Solemn celebration in honour of the Holy Cross of Auricarro, a rural district near Palo del Colle. Besides the religious rites, music, shows and tasting of typical products are on the programme.



Gravina, Rally of Medieval Parades

OCTOBER

Sannicandro

7-8 October

Olive Festival

The festival, in its 25th year, is held in the halls of the castle. The olives are prepared following various traditional recipes. Of particular interest is the exhibition of rural culture.

Bitonto

Third Sunday of October

SS. Medici Cosma and Damiano

Characteristic procession of the SS. Medici Cosma and Damiano,



Monopoli, celebration of the SS. Medici

known as the “Intorciata,” through the streets of the city. The statues of the saints are preceded by devotees, often barefoot, who drag large, heavy candles.

Solemn celebrations are also held in Monopoli, Alberobello and other Apulian towns.

Terlizzi

23 October

Oil and Sweet Olive Festival

Pasola and nolca olives are the two main varieties that this festival is dedicated to. The festival menu includes: fried olives, olives prepared in lime, Pasola olives in wild fennel, fried Nolca olives, bruschette (toasted bread topped with chopped tomatoes, olive oil and arugula), fava beans and chicory, all flavoured with top quality olive oil.

Gravina

Starts 30 October

Following the Trail of the Cardoncello Mushroom

The cardoncello, “king of the mushrooms,” is a type of mushroom typical in this area of the Murgia. The itinerant festival, held in various nearby towns, offers not only the possibility to taste these delicacies, but also the chance to gather them with expert hunters. The festival menu also includes wine, oil, bread, taralli (similar to a pretzel) and cheeses.

NOVEMBER

Spinazzola

First Sunday of November

Cardoncello Mushroom Festival

The menu of the festival, in its 13th year, proposes cardoncelli mushrooms, generally thinly sliced and cooked with olive oil, parsley and garlic, with locally produced pork sausage, fried sweet olives, cheese and ricotta, and local wine. Tasting is held in Spinazzola’s historical centre. On the occasion of the festival, guided tours of the city’s historical and artistic assets are organised.

DECEMBER

Corato

12-13 December

Festival of Saint Lucy

Around a large bonfire burnt in honour of the saint of the eyes, it is possible to taste a wide variety of typical traditional products: pasta, legumes and sweets.



Castellana Grotte, Night of the Fanone

Itinerary 5 Terra di Bari

JANUARY

Castellana Grotte

11-12 January

Patron Saint Festival, “The Night of the Fanone,” Madonna della Vetrana

The patron saint’s festival celebrates the Madonna della Vetrana who, in 1691, freed the city from the scourge of the plague. In honour of being “saved from the plague,” over 50 giant bonfires are burnt in the city. After the Virgin’s procession, fireworks and music in the square.

MARCH

Bari Palese Macchie

19 March

Festival of the Master Bonfire

On the occasion of the festival of Saint Joseph, 19 March, in the Piazza del Mercato, near the small Church of San Giuseppe, a large bonfire is built. It is made with faggots of almond and olive branches, as well as grapevines, pruned during the winter. It is a propitiatory bonfire, linked to rites of rebirth. Around the fire, devotees and onlookers taste chick peas, fava beans, bread that has been blessed for the occasion, onion pies and top quality wine. At the end of the festival, the ashes from the bonfire are spread in local fields. The ashes, used as fertiliser, are also used to keep evil away from the farmers’ homes.

MAY

Bari

7-9 May

Patron Saint Festival of Saint Nicholas of Bari

Bari’s festival lasts over three days. On the evening of the first day, 7 May, the classic Caravella historical parade is held, with hundreds of extras in medieval costumes who reenact the transfer of the saint’s bones from Mira to Bari. The next day, there is a procession in the sea with the “holy manna.” At dusk, the statue of Saint Nicholas disembarks and, after a long and evocative procession, is hoisted onto a throne in Piazza Mercantile. On the last day, 9 May, there are illuminations, firework competitions and music in the square.

JUNE

Conversano

Early June

Cherry Festival

In conjunction with the cherry harvest, Conversano holds this important festival in the heart of its historical centre, around the castle of the Acquaviva d’Aragona counts. Stalls are set up by local producers and operators. The undisputed star of this festival is the “ferrovia” cherry, the most common and best-loved table cherry. The main aim of the festival is to promote and protect this high-quality product typical of the Terra di Bari.



Bari, Patron Saint Festival of Saint Nicholas

Turi

First Week of June

Cherry Festival

The festival in Turi, in its 21th year, completes and enhances a similar festival in Conversano. A traditional festival dedicated to the delicious and sought-after “Railroad Cherries.” This small fleshy fruit which is red, extremely tasty and cultivated in Turi and nearby Conversano, is called the “railroad” cherry.

Polignano a Mare

14-16 June

Patron Saint Festival of Saint Vito and Festival in the Sea

Polignano celebrates its patron saint with an evocative sea procession that culminates in the disembarking of the saint and his enthronement on an altar in the city’s central square. In addition to the religious rites, music in the square and fireworks.

Fasano

15-18 June

Patron Saint Festival of the Madonna di Pozzo Faceto and Saint John the Baptist. “Scamiciata” parade.

The historical parade is one of the largest organised in Apulia, with 600 costumed extras. It is a majestic theatrical production with Baroque influences. A characteristic element is the Triumphant Boat trophy.

The parade begins with groups of flag-wavers, trumpets, tambourines and flags. Next follow groups that represent the noble families of the 1600s, each group is preceded by a banner with the family crest. Some youths, in costume parade on horseback, followed by the local civil, religious and military authorities of the period in their uniforms, aboard period carriages pulled by horses. Next come the armed knights, the halberdiers, including the Turkish invaders, and, finally, the populace in typical traditional costume, who dance and sing around the triumphal boat. The parade passes through the main streets of the city, until it reaches Piazza Ciaia where it stops. An actor impersonating the Mayor offers the Madonna del Pozzo Faceto the keys to the city.

JULY

Acquaviva delle Fonti

Mid-July

Onion Festival

Acquaviva’s red onion is one of the most famous gastronomic items in the Bari area. This festival, in its 14th year, is very popular in town and attracts many tourists and onion-lovers from nearby regions. Onions are prepared and served in many ways in numer-

ous stands set up in the town square. The scent and flavours are what makes this festival special. During the festival, don’t miss the exhibits prepared by local schools and painters.

Castellana Grotte

Third Week of July

Puglian Wine and Food Festival

The small historical centre of Castellana Grotte is the site for a Fair of Flavours where you can try an infinite variety of typical local Puglian products. Experts in the food and wine sector, both producers and tradesmen, as well as many tourists and lovers of gastronomy all participate in the festival.

AUGUST

Mola di Bari

August

Octopus Festival

The main characteristic of this festival is that the fishermen themselves set up the food stalls near the fish market. In conjunction with the festival, the Italian Navy League puts on an exhibition dedicated to the sea. The event includes folklore shows, music in the square and fireworks.

Rutigliano

August

Festival of Saint Lawrence

This is an ancient festival, begun the special authorisation of the Queen and Duchess of Bari, Bona Sforza, in 1536. In 1700, the period was changed from July to August. It is a night-time trade fare, offering every sort of product.

Cassano Murge

18 August-5 September

Beer Festival

A taste of Germany in the province of Bari. The Beer Festival, held since 1990, is considered the most important one in the south and one of the top beer festivals in Italy for its length and quality. In addition to beer, the festival menu includes the classic wurstel and sauerkraut sandwich, but also sandwiches with roasted meat and bruschette. Music and entertainment liven up the festival for the numerous visitors.

Capurso

Last Sunday of August

Patron Saint Festival of the Madonna del Pozzo

The Madonna del Pozzo of Capurso is highly venerated through-

out Apulia and her festival attracts numerous devotees and pilgrims. The statue of the Madonna is carried in a procession on a characteristic triumphal float. In addition to the religious rites, the event includes folklore shows, music in the square and fireworks.

Adelfia

Late August - Early September

Grape Festival

The festival gathers all the best of the area's table grapes in the town square. Of particular interest is the competition between grape growers for the largest bunch. Folklore shows, music in the square and fireworks complete the event.

SEPTEMBER

Acquaviva delle Fonti

First Tuesday of September

Patron Saint Festival. Hot air balloon launch

The launching of the largest and most evocative hot air balloon made in Apulia is held precisely at midnight, at the end of the patron saint festival - in honour of the Madonna of Constantinople, which also includes, among other things, a parade of groups dressed historical clothes and a court festival in the town square. A hot-air balloon has been launched every year since 1848.

Castellana Grotte

7-8 September

Chicken and Rabbit Festival

A special and easy-going festival which, for the past 40 years, proposes a menu almost exclusively of grilled chicken and rabbits. What makes this festival unique is that the stalls, the city streets and the 15 butcher's shops involved decorate the town with chicken in every imaginable way.

Rutigliano

End of September

Grape Festival

In its 47th year, Rutigliano's Grape Festival displays the abundant production of the area. For the festival, sellers and producers decorate the city with the most beautiful bunches of grapes. The festival also hosts numerous bands from the region and the famous flag throwers of Carovigno. At the end of the festival, an awards ceremony for the largest bunch of grapes.

Sammichele

End of September

Zampina Festival

The zampina is a sausage of mixed meats, rolled up in a spiral, that is grilled in the street during the festival and eaten at open-air tables. At the same time, it is possible to taste various dairy products like mozzarella, and freshly baked bread. The festival is located in Sannicicola's historical centre, near Castello Caracciolo.

OCTOBER

Valenzano

Mid-October

Focaccia Festival

In addition to Bari style focaccia, the festival menu includes other baked goods (taralli, bread, calzone), olives and vegetables seasoned with local produced olive oil.

NOVEMBER

Adelfia

11 November

Patron Saint Festival of Saint Trifone

One of the most heartfelt festivals in Apulia. After the procession of the saint, one of the largest fireworks displays in Apulia is held. In conjunction, a festival of new wine and "gnummeridde," stuffed rolls of entrails cooked on the grill.

DECEMBER

Triggiano

First Week of December

Bread and Oil Festival

Triggiano's bread is special because it is always cooked in a wood-burning oven. It is cooked and then flavoured with freshly pressed oil. The pressing takes place in early December.

Fasano (Pezze di Greco)

23/26/30 December

Living Nativity Scene

At Christmas, in Pezze di Greco, more than 300 costumed extras bring back to life the arts and trades of times gone by in one of the largest and most scenographic living nativity scenes in Apulia.

Itinerary 6

Massafra and the ravines

FEBRUARY

Putignano

Third to last, second to last and last Sundays of Carnival; Shrove Tuesday
Carnival Parade Floats

A parade of floats and costumed groups.

One of the most important Carnival events in Italy, certainly the largest and most famous parade of floats after Viareggio.

Putignano's carnival begins on 26 December with the so-called festival of the "propaggini." For this reason, it is considered the longest carnival in Italy. The last parade takes place on Shrove Tuesday at 6 p.m. The character that represents the carnival of Putignano is Farinella.

MARCH/APRIL

Ginosa

Holy Week

Passio Christi

One of the beautiful holy representations of the passion and death of Jesus held in Apulia. The theatrical action takes place entirely inside a ravine, which, together with the poetry of the dialogue, renders the show particularly evocative.

OCTOBER

Noci

First half of October

Mushroom Festival

During the best period for mushroom gathering, especially the mushrooms of the Murgia, Noci organises this festival in the town square. For about 10 days, street stalls display their best wares. Fried cardoncelli mushrooms are the festival speciality.

Putignano

October-November

Mushroom Festival

The Putignano mushroom festival offers the possibility to see, buy and taste exceptional mushrooms gathered from the regions of Lazio to Calabria. The mushroom-collectors, organised in teams of 10, display their harvest scenographically, under the careful eye of experts who evaluate and taste-test the quality of the mush-

rooms gathered. For the occasion, Putignano also proposes a float, in anticipation of its carnival.

NOVEMBER

Noci

November

Bacchus in the Gnostre: New Wine and Roast Chestnut Festival

The festival menu proposes "the bread of the poor," or roast chestnuts, as the main dish, accompanied by the local red wine. At the same time, in the square, there is a colourful show of acrobats, jugglers, fire-eaters and hundreds of other dance and music events. "Bacchus in the Gnostre," in its 12th year, also proposes a Christmas festival called "Pettole in the Gnostre and Chocolate in the Festival," held the first weekend of December after the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

DECEMBER

Putignano

26 December

Propaggini Festival

The "Propaggini" festival, which starts off the longest carnival in Italy, is held in memory of the exultation of the local population for the arrival in town of the relics of Saint Stephen.

Itinerary 7

Brindisi and the Itria Valley

MARCH/APRIL

Cisternino

Monday after Easter

Pasquaredde Festival

The Pasquaredde festival is celebrated every year on Easter



Putignano, Propaggini Festival

Monday, with a special pilgrimage to the Madonna d'Ibernia (Madonna de Bernis). The tradition is to prepare "u churruchele," a characteristic sweet that is a good omen, in the shape of a small bag with two hard-boiled eggs for the men and in the shape of a doll with a hard-boiled egg in its lap for the women. The apotropaic meaning is evident: the Virgin of Ibernia is known as the Madonna of happiness, abundance and newborn life.

Carovigno

Monday and Tuesday after Easter

Festival of Maria Santissima del Belvedere

The traditional procession in honour of the patron saint is accompanied by flag-wavers with the traditional "nzegna," the flag with the "Marian insignia." Square, with coloured triangles, the "nzegna" has a mystical rose at its centre, the Marian symbol, of Byzantine origin.

JUNE

Brindisi

Sunday of Corpus Domini

Procession of the Corpus Domini or of the Decorated Horse

On the occasion of the Corpus Domini, the local church holds a procession that since 1500 has had the archbishop of Brindisi carrying the Ostensory on the back of a white horse.

JULY

Brindisi

Mid-July

Classic Car Trophy

An international trophy of classic cars, with a tour around the area of Brindisi and along the streets of the Emperors. The event, in its 14th year, also includes a parade of cars around the province.

AUGUST

Oria

Second Saturday and Sunday of August

Federican Procession and Neighbourhood Tournament

In the name of Federico II, a characteristic and scenographic medieval procession. Representatives from the city's four neighbourhoods compete in the tournament.

Locorotondo

16 August

Patron Saint Festival of Saint Rocco

Don't miss the spectacular fireworks.

Ostuni

Second half of August

Patron Saint Festival of Saint Oronzo

The Saint Oronzo cavalcade, in honour of the patron saint, a procession on horseback and a historical parade.

SEPTEMBER

Brindisi

First half of September

Patron Saint Festival of Saint Theodore and Saint Lawrence of Brindisi

In honour of saints Theodore and Lawrence, the city organises a historical regatta, with the Ark competition. The statues of the saints are led in a procession and, at the end of the festival, fireworks are let off over the water.



Oria, Federican Procession



Ostuni, Cavalcade of Saint Oronzo

OCTOBER

Latiano

First Sunday of October

“Stacchioggi” Festival

The festival menu proposes “stacchioggi,” a variation on Bari’s “orecchiette” pasta, made with warm water, salt and bran. They are usually served with cauliflower.

Alberobello

Mid-October

Legume Festival

The festival menu proposes appetizers of lupins, toasted chick peas, fried fava beans, sparkling wine and 12 different dishes made with legumes, usually flavoured generously with chilli pepper. Another characteristic of the festival is that the legumes are served in a hand-made ceramic dish and eaten with a wooden spoon.

Taranto

Holy Thursday

“Perduni” Procession

Barefoot and hooded, in pairs and with heavy steps, the “perduni” make emerge into the street the evening of Holy Thursday in Taranto and other towns in the province. They are penitents, members of the Purgatory Fraternity, who cross the city to visit the altars of repose, the so-called “sepulchres,” on the night after the Last Supper mass. In Pulsano the pilgrimage of the “perduni,” who are reminiscent of the Carmelite monks of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in their apparel and gait, attracts many tourists seekers and the faithful who join the penitents visiting to the sepulchres.

Taranto

Good Friday

Our Lady of Sorrows Procession

The Our Lady of Sorrows procession begins on the night between Holy Thursday and Friday, coming out of the Church of San Domenico in the old town. It is accompanied by numerous city bands that intone evocative funeral marches. The procession continues until noon on Good Friday.



Taranto, Festival of Saint Cataldo

Itinerary 8 The Gulf of Taranto

MARCH/APRIL

Fragagnano

13-14 March

Festival of Saint Joseph or the Mattre

The “mattre” are long tables set up in the street or in the square with typical local food products: homemade pasta, meatballs with tomato sauce, meat, vegetables and various types of sweets made from almonds. The ancient tradition is for the tables to be set up immediately after the mass of Saint Joseph which is usually celebrated a few days before the official liturgical date.

MAY

Taranto

8-10 May

Festival of Saint Cataldo

The Festival of Saint Cataldo is celebrated with a procession in the sea and the characteristic cascade of fireworks from the the Aragonese castle. The festival includes music in the square and, above all, a reenactment in period costume of the wedding of Maria d’Enghien and Ladislao d’Ungheria. Finally, the Taranto Palio is held with competitors in 15th century costumes.

JULY

Crispiano

Second half of July

Chicken Liver Festival

An unusual carnival in the middle of summer: a parade of floats and costumed groups from all the main Italian and foreign cities with a strong carnival tradition (Fano, Viareggio, Venice, Alba, Nice, etc.) accompanies the Chicken Liver Festival. This food is one of the most famous gastronomical specialities in Apulia.

Martina Franca

Last half of July and first half of August

Itria Valley Festival

The Itria Valley Festival, second only to the Festival of Spoleto, presents operas by Italians and foreigners that have rarely or never been performed. A special interest cultural event with a large number of aficionados.

AUGUST

Mottola

First Sunday of August

Meat Festival

The festival of roasted meat offers the people of Mottola and numerous tourists a Sunday completely dedicated to grilled meat. Specialties include meat “bombette,” stuffed rolls of seasoned veal, and “gnujumeriedde,” rolled meat stuffed with entrails, all grilled. The festival is held in Piazza Plebiscito.

Maruggio

Third Weekend of August

The Road of Learning and Tasting

The menu of this event includes three specialities: “pizziarieddi,” macaroni made with a typical iron tool (called frizzulu or catùru) served with tomato sauce and goat meat or lamb or turnip greens; “puddiche,” doughnuts with an egg in the middle; and “pezzuri,” another baked dish. The festival is in its 9th year.

Grottaglie

August

Grape Festival

During the festival, locally produced wine is poured into “vacaturu a secretu” (pitchers and mugs with a secret): these are terracotta pitchers and mugs, with a hole in them. You have to close and

open the hole at the right time to be able to drink without pouring the wine on yourself.

Martina Franca

Late August - Early September

The Ghironda

The Ghironda is an international exhibition of popular art and culture from the five continents, which began in Martina Franca in 1995. The exhibition’s name derives from an ancient stringed musical instrument, of medieval origin. In its 16 years the exhibition which is now held in towns throughout Puglia, has welcomed musicians from around the world to the region’s most important historical centres. Since 2008, the Ghironda has also been held in winter.

DECEMBER

Crispiano

24 December and Christmas season

The Nativity Scenes of Crispiano

Two nativity scenes are prepared during the Christmas season in this small town: a living nativity scene, with over 300 costumed extras and artificial snow, and a life-sized wooden nativity scene with 120 characters. Both are set up in the rupestrian grottoes of Vallone. They can be visited throughout the Christmas season.

Itinerary 9 Lecce and the Adriatic Coast

APRIL

Castro

24-26 April

“A sarsa” Festival

Castro’s gastronomy is obviously based on fish, and, in particular, fried fish. The typical recipe of the town is “a sarsa” fish. These are “vope” that have been gutted, de-scaled, had their heads cut off, been dipped in flour and fried in olive oil. Next, in a glazed dish, layers of breadcrumbs soaked in vinegar and fried fish are alternated and flavoured with garlic and lots of mint. This is left to marinate for a few days before being served. A very common variation calls for fried squid instead of “vope.” The festival is the

final event in the festivities held in honour of the town's patron Maria Santissima Annunziata.

JULY

Castiglione di Andrano

Second to last Saturday of July

“Te lu taraddhru” Festival

The tarallo, small, round and pretzel-like, is a typical food in southern Italy: it is made with fennel seeds, pizza flavouring, or olive oil. In Castiglione, they also serve barley taralli flavoured with fresh tomatoes and sweet peppers.

Nociglia

Last Saturday of July

Walnut Festival

The city of Nociglia pays tribute to the nut that its name derives from: the walnut (“noce” in Italian). The festival, in its V year, is held in the city's Castello Baronale.

AUGUST

Melendugno

2-5 August

“Te lu purpu” Festival

A gastronomic menu featuring octopus only.

Otranto

13-15 August

Festival of the Martyred Saints

The festival of the Martyred Saints is held on 13, 14 and 15 August in memory of the massacre by the Turks in 1480. Besides the religious rites, there are also concerts held in the castle moat, at the entrance to the historical centre's monumental door. The crowning moment of the last day is the shooting of fireworks from boats in the sea, creating an unforgettable, charming show. It is one of the most popular events in the Salento area, partly because of the rivalry with the festival held at the same time in Santa Maria di Leuca, on the Ionian shore.

Ortelle

Third Week of August

“Pirilla” Festival

The “pirilla” is another typical baked food from the Salento area. It is bread baked in the oven, rolled out by hand, flavoured with olives, tomatoes, fried peppers and capers.



Lecce, Patron Saint Festival of Saint Oronzo

Lecce

Second half of August

Patron Saint Festival of Saint Oronzo, Saint Giusto and Saint Fortunato

The patronal festival in the capital of the Salento area. For the occasion, there are processions with the saints' statues, fireworks, music in the square and a variety of shows.

SEPTEMBER

Carpignano Salentino

First Weekend of September

“Te lu mieru” Festival

Since September 1975, on the last day of celebrations dedicated to its patron saint, the Madonna of the Graces, the city has organized the “Te lu mieru” festival, which takes its name from the wine which is distributed free in the square during the performance of folk dances, songs and games. At the end of the festival, a large bonfire is lit in the square.

Lecce

16-17 September

“Cecora Resta” Festival

The festival is dedicated to a wild plant, the dandelion or lion's tooth, known in the local gastronomy as “cicoriella,” used to prepare one of the most famous Apulian dishes: purée of fava beans

and chicory. The menu of the festival includes “cecora resta,” or wild chicory, served with pork, wine and bread.

DECEMBER

Lecce

13-14 December

Fair and Market of Statuettes

Held at the ex-convent of the Teatini, this is a characteristic display of thousands of nativity scene statuettes, made of clay or papier-mâché, in every size and type. The most valuable pieces are usually snapped up the first day of the event.

Itinerary 10 The Ionian Salento

JANUARY

Novoli

16 January

“Focara” of Saint Anthony Abbot

An enormous bonfire is built in honour of the hermit saint, who had, but was also the curer of herpes zoster (the so-called Saint Anthony’s fire). Building this bonfire takes at least 70,000 bundles of wood taken from the pruning of the grapevines in the surrounding countryside. Historically, the bundles were donated by the farmers in honour of the saint. This large bonfire, locally called the *focare*, *fanole*, *fanove* or *fucarazzi*, is an ancient tradition in the Apulian community. Its origins can be traced back to pagan rites used in the cult of fire. These rites were later incorporated into Christianity and are now related to liturgical events.

FEBRUARY

Gallipoli

Last Sunday of Carnival and Shrove Tuesday

Parade of Carnival Floats

Parade of floats and costumed groups.

MARCH/APRIL

Acaya

First Friday of March

“Te li pampasciuni” Festival

Acaya, a hamlet of Vernole, dedicates its festival to “lampagioni,”



Novoli, Saint Anthony Abbot’s bonfire

onions with a red bulb and a characteristic bitter taste that grow in the wild only in Apulia. The festival is connected to the celebration of Our Lady of Sorrows, also known as Our Lady of “te li pampasciu-ni,” held each year on the first Friday in March.

JUNE

Galatina

29 June

Festival of the Taranto Pizzica

This is the festival of Saint Paul, protector of people bitten by poisonous animals. The therapeutic dance with origins in the ancient rite of healing the “tarantate” (women thought to have been bitten by a tarantola), held during the exorcism-mass on 29 June, takes place in the saint’s chapel. Exorcisms were also often held in private with the aid of tambourines, violins, harmonicas and other musical instruments. The patient (tarantata) danced for hours in the grip of the epilepsy caused by the poison, until she was exhausted and she collapsed to the ground in a dead faint,

so as to rest temporarily. The torment of the poison was not yet finished, however, and would return the following summer. The rite, a mix of the sacred and the profane, slowly disappeared from local culture, becoming synonymous with ignorance and shame. Today tarantism, connected to entertainment, traditional rhythms and the rediscovery of native cultures, has become popular again with its songs, legends, music and words.

JULY

Cursi

12-26 July

Bread Festival

The Bread Festival is linked to the cult of Our Lady of Abundance. From 15 to 26 July, in Piazza Pio XII, it is possible to taste horse meat, potato pies and various Salento area products in addition to various types of bread.

Porto Cesareo

13-20 July

Fish Festival

The Fish Festival, now in its 36th year, is one of the oldest and most famous festivals in the Salento area. Wine and food stalls are set up throughout the city with delicacies from the sea flavoured in various ways.

Alliste

15-16 July

Festival of the “Sieglinde” Potato

The festival is entirely dedicated to this particular variety of long, yellow potatoes. The event takes place at Fellingine, a hamlet of Alliste.

AUGUST

Ugento

First Week of August

“Puccia” Festival

One of the most famous seaside towns in the Salento area hosts the “Puccia” Festival, celebrating one of the most characteristic dishes in the area. It is a roll made of wheat and bran with black olives. It is also served stuffed. The festival is the final event in the festivities celebrating the Madonna.

Cannole

10-13 August

“Municeddha” Festival

The “municeddha” is a snail, a simple dish that is part of the rural



Torrepaduli, danza delle spade

tradition. The inhabitants of Cannole, called from time immemorial “cuzzari,” or snail gatherers, decided to invest in this tradition, organising a festival that has been held for the past 20 years. The snails are prepared and served in various ways: fried, roasted and in tomato sauce. Groups of “pizzica” dancers also perform.

Montesardo and Alessano

12 August

“Porco pri-pri” Festival

The festival, one of the most important in the area, is in its 13th year. The gastronomic speciality is the local swine, called “porco pri-pri.”

Torrepaduli, hamlet of Ruffano

15-16 August

Sword Dances

The dance of the swords almost certainly derives from rural duels,

competitions of ability and strength during fairs and markets. Almost certainly it was the nomads, who sold livestock, who created this sort of fencing/dance, to the rhythm of the pizzica. At one time, the duellers fought with sharp weapons. Later, the knives were substituted with a particular position of the hand: the index and middle fingers are held out like a blade. What has remained unchanged is the manner of dancing while simulating attacks, plunges and defensive moves. The dance of the swords continues from sunset on 15 August to sunrise of the next day in the churchyard of the Church of San Rocco di Torrepaduli, hamlet of Ruffano.

Melpignano

August

Festival and Night of the Taranta

The rite of exorcism from the bite of the taranta, the poisonous spider that is behind the origins of the pizzica has become one of the most famous and popular Salento area festivals throughout Italy and abroad. Throughout the summer, the cities of the Grecia Salentina propose evenings to the rhythm of the pizzica and taranta. The nights, which were previously interspersed throughout the summer, have become part of a single calendar that culminates, at the end of August, in the famous “Night of the Taranta” in Melpignano. The tiny Salento city hosts, in the Augustinian convent square, tourists and locals who sing and dance. Thanks also to the participation of artists of national and international fame who perform with the local musicians, the festival has become one of the most popular summer events in all of Apulia. The local tradition confirms and nourishes the charm of the Region of Remorse.

Apulian Consulates

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Zagare Bay,
on the set of the film *Bachna Ae Haseeno*
by Siddharth Anand
(Picture courtesy:  Yash Raj Films / Scrix Srl)

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Apulia in the cinema,
the cinema in Apulia.
Ten itineraries
in the light of a region
where films come to life.

