



CASE STUDIES

# BUCOLICO



ITALY



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# Introduction

BUCOLICO PROJECT

## Building Community Resilience through Communication & Technology

Despite signs of stagnation from the EEA's two major economies, the latest available Eurostat data showed that as late as December 2019 the unemployment rate in the EU (6.5%) continued on the downward course it began at the start of the series (2000), marginally and stably exceeding those of the US (4.2%) and Japan (2.4%). [Eurostat (February 2020) Unemployment rates by country, December 2019 update].

These assumptions held true at the time the proposal was initiated (Jan 2020), but research soon showed that a 4/5 of the global workforce was affected by the Coronavirus pandemic in Q1 of 2020, and that large reduction of working hours may affect Europe (7.8%) in the following Quarter.

A TRANSNATIONAL ISSUE Within the Union, inter-national and intra-national employment rate differences are extreme and, at times, on the rise. One demographic segment in particular, the young adults aged 15 to 29 epitomises the NEET phenomenon, one bearing profoundly troubling consequences on the socio- economic fabric of some Southern and Eastern countries.

To this end, BUCOLICO aims to address a structural problem, likely to be heightened by the lockdown of the world economy, i.e. low labour force participation among marginal groups and areas via social and local development interventions.

Bucolico project has been funded with support from the European Commission.



The consortium project is composed by the following partners:



Asturia vzw





# Cirrincione Estate

## INTRODUCTION

*TENUTA CIRRINCIONE was established in 2012 by the Salvatore, Mariangela and Alfonsa Cirrincione, three siblings united in the decision to give a new course to their family company, each contributing with their own wealth of experience and knowledge:*

- Salvatore, a skilled worker, is the pillar of the company, responsible for production where he makes use of years of experience in the sector, dealing with business planning, crop management, crop improvement and harvesting.*
- Mariangela is a practicing lawyer in Palermo, the legal representative of the company and deals with finance and administration;*
- Alfonsa, with years of experience in the news field is the head of communication and business.*

*A large part of the company deals with fruit, particular pears, while the rest concentrates on growing vegetables, almonds, prickly pears, aromatic herbs and some of the seasonal produce at the foundations of the Mediterranean diet.*

*Since 2020, thanks to support of specialised labs, the company has undergone a transformative process from traditional to certified organic products, such as:*

- Pears and wine, inspired by Italian regional traditions, but with all Mediterranean essences, wrapped in a high quality Nero d'Avola, is an excellent appetiser or an after-hour dessert served cold or slightly heated for a mulled wine effect;*
- Extra pear jam, rustic, but naturally delicate, very fragrant, is an excellent breakfast companion as well as ideal filling for cakes and croissants a base flavour for cream, ice cream or cheese;*
- Pears in syrup, a full-bodied and fragrant fruit integration for every season;*
- Datterino tomato sauce, from tomatoes grown in Siccagno, as homemade, dense, full-bodied, ready to use;*
- Home-made Siccagno Tomato sauce.*

*Having spent a decade in Venice for study and work-related reasons, the Cirrincione sisters have recently returned to their homeland where they to reinvest the skills set they learned in an industrious and prosperous land.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

In terms of environmental sustainability, the company abides by organic agriculture norms: "We are convinced that organic farming is not a result of modernity, but that it is written in the natural code and in the history of man producing the best food for himself and for his children. It is an act of rediscovery. The method involves the use of renewable resources, natural fertilisers and processing techniques that improve the structure of the soil in harmony with the natural cycles, and unmodified seeds with a preference for ancient varieties".

The conversion path towards organic is long and burdensome: "It is good to underline - explains Mariangela - that companies today are experiencing deep liquidity crises and conversion requires an initial investment with 'deferred' results. It is a bet".

Since 2020, the CIRRINCIONES have tried the transformation card to avoid "being slaves of time and price, in a sector where we are subject to many dangers, first of all, the climatic ones". Although, "The conversion to organic has finally allowed us to sell fresh products within a more acceptable market logic, even if the sector still has a lot to improve " says Salvatore, while outlining the unresolved issues of the Sicilian agricultural sector.

Tenuta CIRRINCIONE also combines economic and social sustainability by adding many collaborators and professionals to their core family structure: "Our company would not exist without the qualified support of our agronomist and our consultants who follow us with professionalism, patience and competence".

## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Salvatore explains how "in the company we operate traditionally, in the most traditional sector of all", aiming towards the rediscovery of ancient crops, such as the thigh pears (it. pere cosce), we retrieve long-bygone methods to make new produce "which is nothing else than the ancient natural code returning", adds Mariangela.

"We have combined tradition with innovation in many ways. From sustainable packaging made by hand in limited editions using the fabric in various always very welcome patterns, to the author's labels inspired by Sicilian embroideries, input this well interpreted by our designer Daniela De Vita "explains Alfonsa. "Our goal is to convey a non-stale image of the South, rejecting the obvious representations. Sicily is much more". The CIRRINCIONES are all for smart innovation: "we realised that for the marketing of such an intensely cultural product, direct sales supported by storytelling make it more sense than a cold e-shop which, at the moment, we are avoiding. Secondly, we launched synergistic co-marketing actions, combining our preserves with other local food and non-food products" the sisters say. Products are sold in the neighbouring city of Palermo in two retail outlets and, thanks to a highly qualified shipping company, throughout Italy, Germany, France and Belgium.



## LANDSCAPE

"We would like our produce to respects nature and humans alike, returning to the tradition of the organic method and enhancing the enormous cultural heritage of the Mediterranean that is best expressed in its food", but not only. Tenuta Cirrincione believes in the protection of the rural landscape and plans to re-functionalise the ancient paths cutting across the property to make them the very arteries on which to tell visitors the story of their vegetable metropolis. The new company plants follow this plan, together with that of preventing hydrogeological instability.

## VALUES AND STANDARDS

Tenuta Cirrincione is a member of Simenza - Cumpagnìa Siciliana Sementi Contadine, a 100+ business association focusing on biodiversity, short supply chains, regenerative agriculture and sustainable distribution.

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

"We aim for qualitative scalability. We want to exaggerate with craftsmanship, putting a lot of value in our products" Alfonsa points out. "For the future, we aim to increase crop diversification in line with the Community guidelines of the Common Agricultural Policy, aiming at niche productions".

"We do not know yet how to deal with the Covid-related economic crisis or, indeed other ones. Having started from scratch, we have lived and are living it all with gratitude. Our experience is not unique: there are those who do what we started before us and better than us. All virtuous businees are precious examples for us, even if we have obviously remodelled the business model to make the most of our idea of agriculture and food. The fact that they customers appreciate us pays us back of our efforts and is quite humbling" concludes Mariangela.

<https://www.tenutacirrincione.it>





# Sicilian Sheep Farmers' Network

## INTRODUCTION

*Tonino Rizzico is a rare farmer, one of those who look far beyond the crests of the Leonardo Sciascia's sealess Sicily, where his company is based.*

*In 2006, with a degree in Agronomy (University of Palermo) in his pocket, he went off to London together with his friend and brother-in-law, who also just graduated in Economics (Bocconi University-Milan). In the British capital, Tonino ended up holding the reins of the kitchen at a small restaurant in South Kensington's Fulham Road, The Aglio e Olio.*

*When asked what he recalls about the United Kingdom he says the bad food on the one hand, and "honesty in the workplace and the praise given to competence and merit, instead of name or origin. As Italians - he holds - we have a lot to learn from the British in terms of work ethics and management. And then there's the language, which is essential if you want to seriously grow internationally".*

*This is perhaps the first stepping stone upon which Tonino built his own professional training path.*

*On returning to his Sicilian Peaks, he spent a decade managing relations with tour operators on behalf of Villa Giatra Hotel and restaurant.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

In 2015, he went back to his roots, taking over the company founded by his great-grandfather a century ago, which today is a family-run business assisted by 2 seasonal collaborators. Social sustainability at Agricola Rizzico e Giambrone - he says - is guaranteed by "providing employees working conditions and sharing with them the company know-how. There are no business secrets here because we believe in the story of the farmer and his award-winning corn. Asked by a reporter: 'How can you afford to share your best corn seeds with your neighbours, if they compete with yours every year?', The farmer replied: 'the wind collects pollen from the ripening corn and it swirls it from field to field. If my neighbours grow lesser corn, cross-pollination will constantly degrade the quality of all corn, including mine.'"

Therefore, a fair approach to doing business pays both a social and an economic dividend. And it is by sharing his method that Rizzico has guaranteed not only his own economic sustainability, but also that of 43 other companies, who joining his in the Sicilian Sheep Farmers' network (2016), which - by networking and creating critical mass - finds customers and target markets for its members, elevates the producers' bargaining power, leads intermediaries and consumers to acknowledge the product value, and therefore, assigns it its fair price.

## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Starting from the thousands year old tradition of sheep farming, Rizzico retrieved and continues the traditional cheese making, in the form of pecorino di masso (literally rock sheep cheese), aged in Cammarata's bare-rock faced cellars. To such tradition he added some elements of process and technological innovation. At individual farm level, a biologist takes samples and analyses them.

At network level, shepherds and breeders share their good practices via Whatsapp, thus creating an internal quality standard. While at a higher level of the value chain, they took up the block chain tracking system, which makes it possible to inform the consumer about all the nutritional, geographical and zootechnical data gathered of dairy products gathered by the biologist, shepherds and breeders. All through a simple QR code. If this were not enough, Rizzico and Giambrone Farm has recently been identified as the regional representative of one of the 5 supply chains (lamb) of the Guaranteed Safe Quality (GSQ) project, by which the Sicilian regional government entrusts independent control bodies with the quality monitoring in line with the ISO17065 standard and with such indicators as animal health and welfare, protection of agrobiodiversity and genetic resources, environmental protection and produce wholesomeness, produce intrinsic features, ethno-social and economic quality.

## LANDSCAPE

Particular attention is paid to the protection and integrity of the landscape surrounding the farm and to economic circularity, which - Rizzico holds - "are mostly taken care of by our sheep that live in the wild and graze for 10 months a year and which supplement their diet with animal feed. based on cereals produced in the part intended for the purpose, always in the company. It follows that the fertilisers are organic because the manure remains on the ground when the animals are grazing and it is scattered around by the farm staff when the sheep take shelter in the stables during the coldest months."

## VALUES AND STANDARDS

In addition to GSQ Sicilia, Agricola Rizzico e Giambrone is also a member of other quality standards being a member of Slow Food's Monti Sicani Convivium. which he represented at Terra Madre - Salone del Gusto, the yearly Internation Food Fair in Turin. His efforts over the last five years are bearing fruit. Indeed, Pegaso University listed the Sicilian Sheep Farmers' Network as Italy's only case of business aggregation in the field, being all the more welcome considering it originates from the last province in terms of GDP and average per capita income. In November 2020, his initiative received the SMAU innovation award in Milan. On January 19th 2021, the Network will hold a conference at the Chinese Board of Trade in Italy.

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Looking ahead, Rizzico is interested in the scalability of just one company dimension: that of value, profit being its consequence, not its cause. And it is precisely value that he points to when he advises the young beneficiaries of the Bucolico project on how to start a business in times of crisis or to resist a crisis by having recently started a company:

“We resist” - he argues - “by getting together, and creating an amplified marketing system. And we also resist thanks to the internet and the value it generates (Internet value), making it possible - for those who want to understand it - to return to those small rural communities, which have until recently been the point of origin of the emigration wave, and may become the new destinations. If you produce value, you can achieve your goals, regardless of where you live. This is my reason for living.” says Rizzico.

<https://www.retipmi.it/index.php/rete-di-impese/rete-ovinicoltori-siciliani>





## CASE STUDY

# Olive-Mill Santa Chiesa

## INTRODUCTION

*Santa Chiesa was founded in the twenties of the twentieth, when three young people and entrepreneurs associated with Azione Cattolica gave life to a mill and then to the first oil mill of the area of Monte Cammarata, limestone offshoot in the constituting Parco dei Monti Sicani, away from major sources of pollution. After the death of the co-founder and director cav. Luigi Lupo, the activity was continued by his wife, initially within the city and subsequently outside, as required by Community legislation. The current management company was founded in 2000 by Marisa Russotto, daughter-in-law of Cav. Lupo, making use of the skills acquired as an accountant in a local construction company. "Twenty years ago" - she says - "an opportunity which couldn't be missed arised" and so, looking at the third generation of the company, a 32-year-old daughter and a 28-year-old son, she confesses: "to continue what my father-in-law started was a truly fulfilling wish."*

## SUSTAINABILITY

Frantoio Oleario Santa Chiesa cares about environmental sustainability more than any other factor. In fact, it has been working organically since its foundation, being a substantial part of the agricultural land planted in the woods (50 hectares of Nigra): this is the result of an investment, thanks to a funding which came from the Community (2080/92). Secondly, the economic circularity is respected since the olive producers withdraw and reuse the pomace, the residual waters of any process are given to a company which takes care of its dispersion (avoiding the dispersion in the rivers and in the sea). The vetch and leavening waters are used as fertilizer, excluding chemical fertilizers. The ecological approach is prominent in the production phases: the company treats the olives using only and exclusively the cold process: this approach is fundamental in order to preserve the organoleptic properties and the integrity of the oil fragrance. Finally, by having its own oil mill, Santa Chiesa eliminates the carbon emissions that would be produced if the olives had to be transported by road, to be pressed elsewhere. As for social and economic sustainability, Marisa Russotto says: "we move forward thanks to the family-based structure of the company: this aspect keeps costs to a minimum. But we occasionally make use of a seasonal employee".

### TRADITION AND INNOVATION

At the Frantoio Santa Chiesa, the tradition of a practice as old as the Homeric poems meets innovation several times:

1) technological, because the mill is the only one plant with presses and mixers in the area which, along with kneading machines and decanter, is able to provide a product that enhances the scent of the finest cultivars

2) process, through the anticipation of the harvest in October, instead of December-January, subverting a centuries-old tradition once dictated by the need of small landowners to take care of the olives only once the sowing was completed. The result is an oil with a very low acidity rate.

A further element of innovation is the result of a recovery.

Marisa Russotto had the idea of flavoring the oil thanks to the memory she keeps of her father-in-law: he used to degrease the mullers with lemon juice. The memory of the intense scent released in this process suggested to the current owner to use the lemon for aromatic purposes. That intuition paid off and in October 2020, Santa Chiesa was awarded the bronze medal among aromatic oils at the 18th Les Huiles du Monde AVPA international competition in Paris.

The oil mill is open to school visits with flows of 100-150 people per day, and looks with interest at the possibility to receive visits with smaller numbers, in detail by oil culture enthusiasts.

Consequently, Santa Chiesa Extra Virgin Olive Oil reaches all regional destinations and is, to date, distributed in Lombardy, Liguria and Tuscany.

### VALUES

Santa Chiesa has joined the Protected Geographical Indication, but – as Marisa Russotto says – the relationship between costs and benefits of the specification as for now lacks of benefits because the costs of processing and certification do not produce any added value yet, which should produce in turn a fair increase in the selling price.

However, Frantoio Santa Chiesa's in-house disciplinary has already involved several customers, who have become more aware of the quality of organic oil than the commercial variants available on the shelves of large-scale distribution. The disciplinary influenced neighboring companies as well: they have adapted to the good practice of harvesting olives in early Autumn, rather than early winter.

## OLIVE-MILL SANTA CHIESA, CAMMARATA

### SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Santa Croce thinks of a qualitative, not quantitative, scalability, to be divided into three actions:

1. Replacing the Nigra wood with the native equivalent;
2. Planting new olive trees;
3. Avoiding to process olives on behalf of third parties in order to focus exclusively on their own production.

In terms of crisis and resilience, the one of 2007 was not felt by the company, while the one of 2020 is leaving deeper signs: "the only way ahead lies on the earth because, while everything in the other sectors tends to suffer a severe break, people must continue to eat and, where possible, with greater awareness" says Marisa Russotto.

<https://www.oliosantachiesa.com/>





# Columbia Coffee Roasting & Coffe

## INTRODUCTION

*Giuseppe Burzotta came back to Lercara Friddi after a solid training obtained at the Liceo classico Garibaldi in Palermo and a three-year period at the Faculty of Law of Trento, the first university in Italy in terms of quality of the training offer, being also the only one university to have an authentic European orientation, thanks to its international panel of teachers. Passionate economist and marketing scholar, for five years he has been using his transversal skills in running the historic Columbia roasting company, founded in 1963. Burzotta took over the company from the previous owner, although he had never worked in the sector. Moreover, he has associated to the pre-existent business a new company branch named Coffe, a training platform for coffee connoisseurs and sommeliers with the purpose to satisfy the needs of the medium-high segment of customers within the coffee sector.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental and social sustainability is at the center of Columbia and Coffe's considerations. The only emissions are produced by the roasting process and are constantly monitored by the Regional Agency for the Protection of the Environment, using specific methods of analysis. By dealing exclusively with sustainable agriculture products, coming from crops located in Brazil, India, Ivory Coast, Uganda, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, the brands Columbia and Coffe brands actively promote specialty coffees, especially of the Arabica species, distinguished by a very lively aromatic note and a sweet taste. Therefore, the company draws on processed products that go against the trend of the commercial brands, which are focused on the standardization of the processes. The environmental issue is fundamental and the coffee's supply chains leaves an extremely visible imprint due to the portioned: the coffee which is packaged and then served in single doses, often in plastic capsules or other non-perishable materials. In the medium and long term, Giuseppe Burzotta hopes to overcome these critical issues by implementing domestic portioning projects and / or by working on the transition from current domestic electric machines, which have a very short life cycle, to durable and eco-sustainable coffee makers such as Kamira. Economic sustainability is provided by the online training platform for coffee sommeliers which now integrates the traditional business model of the local roasting: this aspect of innovation has produced a significative increase of the number of customers

## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Coffer is based on the cultural heritage, on the knowledge and on the know-how started half a century ago by Columbia, being the former the direct evolution of the latter. In this sense, the main element of technological innovation is the online store. The second - which is both a technological and a processing innovation - lies in diversifying the relationship with customers, distinguishing those of proximity (the customers the roasting), from those who are sometimes far away and reachable through social media platforms and dedicated apps. The third step was the creation of a training platform through which both Ho.Re.Ca., as well as coffee lovers, can take advantage of consultancy being also able to follow a self-training path up to the achievement of the qualification of coffee sommelier. Finally, the owner realized a diversification of both brands and target segments. Coffer, in addition to being the name of the platform, is also the high-end brand and product, which aims at new and non-local markets, while Caffé Columbia is still the brand used for the local market. Process innovation is evident in the great focus on specialty coffees, as an important and contemporary trend but also a guarantee of high quality in the coffee market itself.

## VALUES

The founding values of the company are expressed in:

1. The roasting process, during which the quality continues to be controlled manually by the roaster, rather than by machines whose sole purpose is to treat coffee as a mass consumer good, with consequent decay of the quality of the blends;
2. The use of ancient blends, a choice that Columbia / Coffer has in common with Torrefazione Stagnitta (Palermo).



## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Although Giuseppe Burzotta does not exclude the possibility to open other stores in several commercially attractive locations, he is keen to emphasize that "the future is online and the economy is changing". Therefore, corporate investments are as for now focused on digital.

The Columbia / Coffer recipe in order to face possible crises means at first to keep a careful eye on global economic trends and, secondly, to produce a proper market and feasibility analysis before the execution of any business project.

<https://www.torrefazionecolumbia.it>



# Rocca Reina Art Farm

## INTRODUCTION

*Fattoria dell'Arte Rocca Reina – Teatro di Andromeda is a multifunctional ecosystem, built in the late 1980s by the will of its founder and sculptor Lorenzo Reina. It consists of a farmhouse, a donkey farm, some crops, a vegetable garden, and orchards gravitating around an outdoor stone theatre located at almost 1,000 metres (3,000 ft) above sea level, in the place where the creator wanted to concentrate positive energies, which he believes were revealed to him by his herd of sheep.*

*It is there that they would always "linger to graze, seemingly caught by enchantment". The development of the complex was long and troubled, as his father wished the young Lorenzo to carry on being exclusively a shepherd. Lorenzo spent his amongst sheep, dogs, a single book. At night, he would carve alabaster into blocks, by the light of a torch in a stable.*

*One of those nights, he turned his eyes to heaven, to which he asked to make him "insatiable with his art" and his call was heard.*

*As to the origin of the theatre, Lorenzo quotes St John's Gospel: "The Spirit, like the wind, blows where it wills" (Jn, 3.8). The 108 constituent blocks refer to the number of stars in the Constellation of Andromeda whose galaxy (M31) "will collide with ours in about two and a half billion years" while the orientation of the cavea points to the stretch of the Sicilian Channel from which the sun rises on the summer solstice.*

*This family business is made up of 3 partners and is aided by 2 seasonal collaborators.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

Every process within this ecosystem is based upon environmental sustainability, starting from the stone building material, which comes from the ploughing of the hilly fields nearby. The life cycle of the theatre follows that of Nature, thus activities hibernate in winter and restart in spring. The visual impact is mitigated by blending it into the landscape, rather than superimposing unto it; acoustic pollution is limited by the company policy of letting in groups of no more than 30 people, and only by reservation, in order to preserve the quiet of the place.

This philosophy is also applied to the other branches of the company where not only organic farming and breeding are practiced, but a wide range of cultural events too, such as:



1. Cumpanis (2015) on the production cycle from wheat to bread, and
2. Water points (2021), a contemporary art exhibition on the universal theme of water through which 10 artists meet on the occasion of the Sustainable Development Week sponsored by the Italian National Commission for UNESCO. The exhibition has a triple value of environmental, social and economic sustainability in an area hosting one of the richest springs in Sicily, one whose exploitative by an International corporation paradoxically causing locals occasional supply shortages!

The proximity to a well-known attraction, St Rosalia's medieval hermitage, combined with the healthiness of the places, have spontaneously generated a small tourist hub contributing to the social and economic welfare of many catering and hospitality businesses in Santo Stefano Quisquina, the closet town, 200 metres downhill from Rocca Reina.

## VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

Rocca Reina and the Andromeda Theatre have not yet joined any disciplinary for the simple fact that they none exists in their artistic field, but are certain of hope to have passed their energy to those around them and the visitors. "People leaving Rocca Reina are happy" says Libero Reina, 26, the founder's eldest son and company director. "My father was considered crazy". The values that the ecosystem pursues are those of art. Libero has, in fact, embraced his fatherly inspiration, deciding to train as a musician and - as such - has participated in the 19th Fabrizio De André Prize. Thanks to music, he has been able to travel around the world, but remarks that "every departure ticket from the Sicilian Mountains implies a return".

<https://teatroandromeda.it/>

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Libero thinks that - aside from the uniqueness of the Theatre - the ecosystem model can be replicated and declined as a multifunctional farm (or other enterprise). What matters is that "it is not lost in the void like Stonehenge, but integrated into the landscape".

The Reina model, therefore, does not reduce cultural and environmental resources into fossils to be looked at, but rather breathes life into them, by extracting their inherent value. As for crises in general, and in this case of the most recent one originating from Covid19 in particular, it has "shuffled the cards, telling everyone that the real quality of life is in the small towns and that it is made up of simple and essential things such as the possibility of walking in the open air, to be able to stay clear of crowds during a pandemic and from sources of pollution for the rest of the time".



## CASE STUDY

# etaPHARMA

### INTRODUCTION

*Over the course of a degree in civil engineering, Toti Nigrelli acquired the digital marketing skills that would later benefit him and drive him into establishing etaPHARMA, a company aiming to provide holistic well-being, high quality of life and health, focusing on the environment and sustainability. Since 2016, etaPHARMA has produced and distributed nutraceuticals and cosmeceuticals, employing 2 local members of staff and 1 developer supporting the founder and CEO.*

### SUSTAINABILITY

According to Regulation 432/2012 of the European Commission on health and food products, a small number of nutrients, such as probiotics, antioxidants, enzyme complexes, vitamins and polyunsaturated fatty acids can be beneficial to health.

Nutraceuticals, drawing little on Hippocratic tradition and Ayurvedic medicine, group together a set of functional foods (also known as farmafood) containing those nutrients, making them available for mindful consumers in the form of beneficial natural food integrators. Within the same framework, a Etapharma's second branch, cosmeceuticals concentrates on products that go beyond the chemist's galenic prescription, based solely on the cosmetic technologist's indications, by adding a dermatologist's approach in order to prioritise skin care over temporary aesthetic improvement.

EtaPHARMA promotes environmental sustainability by dealing exclusively with recyclable shock-proof packaging and chipsters made in Italy (nutraceuticals in Ragusa, cosmeceuticals in Bologna). This has an impact on production costs, but they allow the company to lighten its footprint and to offer customers only certified, guaranteed and verifiable products. EtaPHARMA also limits its impact by keeping its headquarters in pre-existing buildings within the historical urban fabric of Mussomeli, thus zeroing soil consumption.

etaPHARMA

## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Technologically, etaPHARMA has striven to immediately create an in-house management and sales platform, which has significantly reduced operational costs, compared to other businesses that outsource its implementation. Such initial savings freed up funds which were allocated to the exploration of potential destination markets. Four years after starting up, etaPharma has a presence in all Italian regions of Italy, as well as Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Spain.

## VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

In terms of disciplinary, etaPHARMA complies national provisions (which incorporates the EU legislation) on nutraceuticals, and directly with the EU legislation in the case of cosmeceuticals.

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

From the beginning, the business model was conceived to be easily scalable, so much so that the get marketing platform eased sales enormously. Toti Nigrelli believes that he has infected the spirit of doing business to those close to him, and among them, to a person operating in the highly competitive eyewear sector at a national scale; this friend too has adopted a business model similar to etaPHARMA.

Online nutra- and cosmoceutical sales has experienced no crisis. Turnover has increased by 40% from 2019 to 2020. "So, for those who approach the business in times of crisis, I would suggest thinking of something scalable with a strong digital component because the capital required is often small, but the growth it is potentially sustained and rapid" concludes Nigrelli.

<https://www.etapharma.com/>





# Ancient Sicilian Cross - Country Trail

## INTRODUCTION

*Antica Trasversale Sicula is a 600-km long country trail cutting across Sicily from to the ancient Greek colony Kamarina in the South East to the Phoenician trading outpost on Mozia Island in the West.*

*Moved by an unconditional love for Sicily, the initiators designed a path through cultural traditions and natural monuments, allowing hikers to throw themselves into a maze of a history and passion, a spiritual journey along old abandoned railway lines, nature parks and UNESCO World Heritage sites.*

*The idea is based upon Biagio Pace (1889-1955, an archaeologist and one of the founders of ancient Italian topography) and Giovanni Uggeri (a professor focusing focusing more specifically on Sicilian topograph ) who have identified a network of cross-country trails dating back to at least the Greek period the Eastern Hellenic to the Western Phoenician end of the Island. This was a thousand-years old road network connecting salt, wheat, oil, wine, honey and sulphur producers and users.*

*The network was reconstructed and walked by a group of archaeologists and passionate hikers who geo-referenced, with the support Sicilian Tourist Observatory GIS Lav, making this one of the few of its kind connecting so many sites of valuable sites: Kamarina, Pantalica, Akrai, Palikè, Morgantina, Lake Pergusa and the Rocca of Cerere, Grotte della Gurfa, Castronovo's Kassar, Hippana, Entella, Mokarta, Segesta and Mozia. But not just that, Trasversale Sicula revealed to scholars and enthusiasts who have retraced all the complexities of its landscapes and the multiplicity of its dialects, languages and traditions, the latter beautifully expressed in the variety and quality of its crafts and local cuisine.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

The trail was bought to a wider audience through the 1st International cross-country trail sponsored by Italian Ministry for Culture and the Sicilian Regional Tourism Department, which secured its economy sustainability. Hikers were asked to live their experience in a plastic free mode and to plant trees along the way the 2 year old trees



donated by the Forestry Commission and held within cardboard cocoons, each featuring a 20 litres water reservoir designed by the Italian National Association for Naturalistic Engineering (AIPIN), as a tangible sign of fighting desertification. All types of plants from dwarf palms to oaks were given a new home on the grounds of the climate that would host them.

Social sustainability was automatic for all segments and ages of society took part. The total turnover in the 2nd international edition (2019) was 600 people, 80 of which completed the it from the beginning to the end. Half of them were from Sicily, while the remaining half were from Paraguay, Argentina, Canada, France, UK, and US. Walkers

More than one hundred endemic floral and fauna species were spotted in 271,005 hectares of protected nature in 8 natural parks.

## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

The trail belongs to the long-established Mediterranean tradition of pensive walking, recorded from Plato to Benedictine monks, and hospitality, which has its first written expression in Homer's poems for, just as 3,000 years, hikers do not rely on hotel accommodation, but rather favour local family accommodation, a deeper vehicle to getting to know any given location. Just like ancient wanderers, today's Trasversali hold the owl, the symbol of Wisdom, Demeter and Kore, as their protector.

## VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

The values supported are the UN's 2030 sustainable agenda goals, and the disciplinary is that of the Mediterranean Diet World Park, headquartered in Caltanissetta.

In so doing, Antica Trasversale Sicula aims to be the landscape integrity watchdog, both from a natural and social point of view a sit is hoped that the hikers's economy may help mitigate negative demographics, spur civic activism, the creation of single associations and networks of associations. In its small way, it may also make a small economic contribution to locations normally off the beaten track and conventional coastline routes.

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

There is no plan to scale up or replicate the trail elsewhere.

As to resilience, Antica Trasversale and other walks alike may well stimulate much needed human well-being via the bountiful enjoyment of artistic and natural resources, curtail digital consumption and – in some cases – prevent or cure work-related burn-out.

<https://www.trasversalesicula.it>



# Castellucci Miano Wines

## INTRODUCTION

*Founded in 2004, Castellucci Miano's roots lie under the shadow of the 2,000 metre-tall Madonie range, in Valle dell'Olmo district, where vines are continuously recorded since 1570. Starting as social wine-making co-operative in the 1960s, Castellucci Miano is now a limited company's features organic wine from vineyards aged between 30 and 50 years, located at an altitude between 700 and 1050 metres above sea level, taking advantage of the strong day-night temperature variations in order to produce a crispy-tasting wine based on such native grapes as Perricone, Catarratto, Inzolia and Nero d'Avola.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

"Environmental sustainability is part of core of Castellucci Miano's business vision" says Domenico Piazza CEO.

The management has retrieved old sapling vineyards left over from the great extension of the past, making them unique examples of biodiversity in the Valledolmo area. The wines produced from these grapes represent an example of the preservation of territorial identity. Solar panels help reduce energy production costs.

Socially speaking, employees are the heart part of the company, since the 6 members of staff are charged with the manual picking and processing. Employees are all local, and grapes produced outside the company perimeter are also welcome, as long as they come from Valledolmo vines. In fact, Piazza adds: "we keep working as a high price cooperative winery, which also entails an added environmental and landscape value since the hinterland hills would otherwise be entirely fall prey to cereal monoculture. Around us there, there is no blonde Leopard-like desert, but small rather indigenous vineyards extending 2 hectares each, which, put together, make up Castellucci Miano's 75 hectare estate"



## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Being the evolution of a pre-existing co-op winery, the family business structure and setting remain intact, so much so that the current owners are the third generation, while the legal nature has changed and is currently a joint stock company. This step has been accompanied by an adaptation of the company philosophy, which has set itself the goal of quantitatively reducing and qualitatively raising production, by combining the ancient sapling vineyards with the more recent espalier ones.

This is why he 3,500-4,000 hectoliters vinified annually are no longer tailored for local consumption, but for 70% to the regional and Italian market (especially Lazio, Tuscany, Lombardy, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia) and for the remaining 30% to international ones ( France, Germany, United Kingdom, Poland, Belgium, Netherlands, United States, Canada, Japan, China).

From a technological point of view, the equipment is of the latest generation and – once renewed – the sparkling wine production plant will soon be brought back from Veneto.

<https://www.castelluccimiano.it>

## VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

The vineyards are located within the Valledolmo CDO established together with Regaleali, previously called CDO Conte di Sclafani. Castellucci Miano has worked hard to transfer the DOC quality standard to the other producers of the area and from this derives the highest price of the grapes, subjected to continuous inspections and punctual evaluations by the company oenologist who assigns the vineyards to one another bottle.

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Domenico Piazza is satisfied with the size of the company and does not aim for either vertical or horizontal scalability, but rather a qualitative one.

As to customer services, he claims he wants to "improve the hospitality offer". While, in terms of wine research he claims to be looking forward "to bringing other grapes to Valledolmo in order to develop them in our unique climatic conditions of daily temperature range."

As in many other cases, Piazza notes that a factor limiting resilience is bureaucracy and that to resist and grow in phases of economic contraction "one needs to focus on the environmental properties of the landscape, on zero pollution and – above all – to have a good idea."



CASE STUDY

# Sicily Aromas

## INTRODUCTION

*"Nature has given us the earth, the sun and the wind. We have done nothing but support it" This is SiciliAromi's company motto, a co-operative founded in 2011 by the initiative of a group of young people eager to dedicate themselves to growing natural and officinal herbs at an altitude of 900 metres (2,700 ft) above sea level, right in the centre of Mt Carcaci Natural Reserve and soon-to-be Sicani Peaks Natural Park.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

Social sustainability derives from having associated an almost exclusively family-run business with the cooperative model, in which 3 permanently employed members are assisted by 4-5 seasonal operators.

Environmental sustainability derives both from the location of crops, their altitude, the remoteness from sources of pollution and the organic approach to production applied to sage, oregano, rosemary and saffron, planted over an area of 3.5 hectares, surrounded by natural and new woods, such as the 25-hectare walnut grove with which SiciliAromi planted to shelter crops from bad weather, increase local biodiversity and preventively contain erosion and landslides. In the short course of the first decade of activity, the co-operative further diversified the area with pastures, 8 hectares of arable land and 7 hectares of new plantations.

## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

In terms of cultivation, innovation lies in the recovery of traditional natural methods, such as crop rotation, via system that combines pasture and forage and operates the weeding manually, for the sake of increasing biodiversity.

## VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

At present, SiciliAromi does not abide by other regulations than those dictated by Natura and by the National organic certification body.

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

The Co-operative does not currently envisage scalability, but its president believes that the way to resist crises and to ensure operational continuity for a company lies in the combination of "experience and containment of expenses and investments".

<https://www.siciliaromi.it>



# Passalacqua Cheese - Makers

## INTRODUCTION

*You not be a cheesemaker by birth, but you can certainly become one out of passion.*

*This was Salvatore Passalacqua's case, who came from a family bakers and later became a dairy researcher and later an entrepreneur for fun when, at the end of the 1980s, the results of his experiments gave rise to great interest amongst professionals.*

*Using exclusively milk from farms in the neighboring municipalities (Palazzo Adriano, Prizzi, Santo Stefano Quisquina, Bivona, Cammarata and Castronovo di Sicilia), Passalacqua transfers all the organoleptic properties, the identity-cultural value and the thousand-years old husbandry and dairy practice to his cheese, which - he proudly says: "comes form the high pastures in the Siccan Peaks, the home to the best quality milk in Sicily according to Regional Consortium for Dairy Supply Chain (CoRFiLaC).*

## SUSTAINABILITY

Social sustainability is guaranteed by offering employees above average salary and well-being as well as providing workers rights in the workplace. Economic sustainability is the result of carefully balancing between expenses and investments and - occasionally - borrowing to pay suppliers, which includes the possibilità for a businessman/woman to financially expose him/herself personally.

The environment in general and the territory in particular are at the heart of Passalacqua's corporate philosophy, with a specific focus on animal welfare and the quality of the pasture. It is necessary - he claims: "to make sure the animals have accesses to as much grazing as possible in th best suitable territory" so as to favour "a wild or semi-wild type of breeding system, capable of exploiting the vegetational features of the local flora and woods," . Other important factors are the climate, the seasonal cycle and cooling practices, which influence in the micro-biological, nutritional, aromatic and flavour properties of the end product.

The company leaves 5 hectares of land surrounding it uncultivated to protect the integrity of the slopes and to prevent hydrogeological instability.

## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Starting from the traditional cheeses of the Sicilian hinterland, recorded since the Odyssey (ricotta and sheep primosale, Pecorino Siciliano and Canestrato), Passalacqua

## PASSALACQUA CHEESE-MAKERS, CASTRONOVO DI SICILIA

combined real historical reconstructions (Tuma Persa, Fior di Garofalo) and inventions from scratch (Narangi).

Tuma persa, in particular, is the rescue operation to which the Passalacqua owes his fortune. Mentioned by Targioni-Torzetti in 1878 and again by Romolotti in 1936 as Cacio bufalo, and contrary to what the original name suggests, it is a cheese made with milk of semi-wild cows fed with pasture and an integration of hay. Tuma persa intentionally undergoes two cycles of abandonment (hence persa, it abandoned/lost) of 8-10 days each to allow noble molding and, subsequently, washed, brushed, salted and seasoned, capped with olive oil and black pepper, and left to mature for 9 months in cooled oak or holm shelves. The same way it was made 150 years ago.

But one must not let ourselves be caged in by the past, and indeed "to look into the future means that tradition can be improved, that wings can be added to the roots". So, Passalacqua claims that "If fire wood is not essential, why not use the gas, which is cleaner?" and again: "if soft cheeses were not part of the dairy tradition in Sicily, what prevents us from trying our hand at their production today?".

### VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

Passalacqua is a founding member of the National Association of Cheeses under the Sky, of the Consortium for the protection of Metodo Nobile, the latter urging farmers to avoid overusing natural resources. He also contributed to the establishment of CoRFiLaC together with prof. Giuseppe Licitra (University of Catania). It is difficult to list all the prizes, but among them, two stand out in Passalacqua's thought: the National Gold Medal for best canestrato cheese, which he was awarded in Milan (2016) and the National Silver medal in the pasture cheeses category, which he got at Pandino Festival.

### SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Once the ongoing expansion plan is completed, Salvatore Passalacqua expects the company turnover will grow by a factor of 5-6. Referring to crises, he argues that "you resist them by believing in the project and by [asking yourself] what you are willing to give up for its implementation."

<https://www.caseificiopassalacqua.com>



# Mangiapane Farm

## INTRODUCTION

*At the source of the Platani River, there is a place wedged within the innermost reliefs where the last specimens of the oldest endemic Sicilian cattle continue to be raised, the Modican, characteristically red-coated cows, vinous to black shaded bulls. The warden of such biodiversity treasure is Domenico Mangiapane, CEO of Mangiapane Farm.*

*Post-war mechanization of agriculture, poor milk (3000 litres/year), low meat yield (less than 55%) and the thinning out of milk-to-cheese processing farms have jointly led to a decline in livestock from 25,000 to just 2,000 in just half a century and to a simultaneous increase in the Friesian breed, despite the Modican being considered one of best triple-aptitude cattle breeds and its rusticity allowing it to tolerate the torrid Mediterranean summers, feeding mainly on a mixture of pasture and stable hay.*

*These cows are reared in the a semi-wild state, providing the milk the very quality and aromas that lie at the base of one of the most representative traditional cheeses in Sicilian history, Caciocavallo, the descendant of the Kashkaval, which the Ottoman Turks absorbed from the Hebrew Kasher (pure) in the 15th century, when Jews were expelled from the Kingdom of Spain.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

The company secures its social sustainability by relying on a predominantly family management model in which 4 collaborators are associated (2 of which work full-time), who are the end-receivers of the socio-economic and symbolic value of what is produced.

The cows graze on an area of about 100 hectares, thus reducing slurry, which is used as a natural fertilizer instead of chemical equivalents, as prescribed by the circular agriculture and natural breeding. Environmental sustainability and animal welfare are guaranteed by keeping the cows roaming all year round and by milking with the calf by their side. The result is an extraordinary milk, a little fatter, but much richer in beta-carotene which - during processing - takes the form of an ingot with an intensely golden crust after the cheesemaker forces the sphere of spun dough obtained from natural acidification of the curd with the help onto a wooden table on which the cheese is placed, modelled and then laid into a case. The production period is from October to May and the minimum maturing period is four months. The Mangiapanes convert the milk into fresh, semi-matured, smoked Caciocavallo and Guastedda del Nonno.

## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

If the photographic documentation of the great-grandfather's commitment to cows dates to the 1930s, the family oral tradition traces the beginning of the activities to at least 5 generations behind, making Domenico Panepinto and his collaborators the sixth without interruptions.

Tradition and innovation are difficult to distinguish in agriculture, and it would be more appropriate to speak of retrieval. In fact, although it is bred only by 3 companies in Sicily, Modican cows are experiencing a renaissance and the population has more than doubled from 2,000 to 5,000 in the course of a few years. Mangiapane has re-instated milking with the calf alongside the cow and convinced other farmers to imitate him; milk is collected in metal vats just like 200 years ago, with no additives or ferment.

An element of process innovation authentic innovation is the Adopt a Modican cow scheme by which Mangiapane intends to stimulate the repopulation of this endemic breed through the participation of mindful consumers.

## VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

Mangiapane's Caciocavallo is a Slow Food Presidium, and - together with 40 other dairies - the company is a member of QGSS - Sicilian Guaranteed and Safe Quality.

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Domenico Mangiapane is open to expansive perspectives, but believes that - especially when addressing niche segments - one can resist crises by constantly raising quality and drawing on passion: "when I was younger and my friends kept up late until 5 in the morning, I was home by midnight because my alarm would go off at 4.00. It never weighed on me because I made a modelled my passion into a job."

<https://www.caseificiomangiapane.it>





# Perricone Brothers

## INTRODUCTION

*In the late 19th century Michele Perricone tended to his land in small villages of Contessa Entellina, Bisacchino and Chiusa Sclafani, where he produced oil, wheat, tomatoes, cherries, almonds and wine.*

*His company was then run by his son Nicola, between 1935 and 1985, and then Peppino, and until 2010 by Peppino, the father of today's fourth managing generation.*

*The company produces, transforms, packages and markets the base products of the Mediterranean Diet, offering customers a feeling of rediscovery of values, tastes and ancient flavours of the landscape, a summary of a historical and culinary tradition that can be traced back to the eighth century BC, one that is now enriched by an organic-oriented philosophy.*

*So In 2015, the company led by Rosario, Domenico and Caterina built a plant for the production of jams, marmalades, sauces and for the bottling of extra virgin olive oil.*

*The company mission is to produce and market quality agro-food.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability is a prime concern so the company is headquartered right in the middle of a cherry-tree orchard, and the use of plastic is compensated by glass, cans and cardboard. Having completed the conversion to organic agriculture, Perricone now produces cherries, transformed into extra jam, which makes them marketable all year round. Cherries are harvested strictly by hand, prior to their packaging and labelling.

Likewise, olives are harvested by hand according to techniques that combine elements of tradition with current innovations. The extra virgin olive oil is pressed and stored within 24 hours.

The cultivation of organic vegetables and medicinal plants: they represent an alternative production to the usual cultivation of cereal soils in Sicily. The freshly harvested products are packaged on the same day and swiftly driven to the markets.

Oranges, plums, apricot, clementines, figs, pears, cinnamon, walnuts, perches, strawberries and pomegranates, tomato juice, olive oil, and medicinal herbs and spices such as oregano, bay leaf, mint, rosemary and martora make the company an all-round agro-firm.

Organic material such as orange peel and fruit is used for compost.



## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

While the 4th generation is in the office, the 5th - aged 13 and 14 - is being trained for their take-over by being brought to the fields and made aware of the value and potential they hold. Family structure is the traditional management model, which requires to be expanded by the support of three agronomists and four seasonal workers today and innovated with children's take on agriculture for Tomorrow. Perricone hosts local middle school pupils and children with disabilities to engage them in land tending and to listen to how the new generation relate to it. Additionally, every year the Reina Comprehensive Institute of Chiusa Sclafani and the Agricultural Institute and with the ITC Don Colletti of Bisacquino visit the plant.

Technologically speaking, the company makes use of an adaptable automated filler for the various sizes of oil jars, which saves processing a lot of time. There are only 2 such machines in Sicily at present.

Saving time allows for market exploration. That is why, although organic certification was only certified in 2015, Perricone has been able to set its foot in National strongholds such as Turin, Milan, Florence, is willing to expand in the UK, once the details of the agreement with the EU are published and is ready for the American market, having received accreditation from the Food and Drug Administration.

In the near future, the UAE and China will be addressed.

## VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

Perricone's PDO and PGI certified for olive oil.

The managers are very picky when it comes to the tracing and to quality of what we produce directly and what we pack for third party suppliers (for example oranges). In terms of quality standards. There is an in-house food safety plan, which has been transferred to some local operators for which Perricone provides advisory.

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

There is an idea to scale up the company, albeit locally. Yet, the growth plan on pause because some investments are on course of being complete. As demand evolves, so will the company.

"For a young business or businessman/woman to be resilient, he/she has to be introduced into the system and shown how passion transformed into work returns further passion and recognition."



# Giuliano Colletti Church Organ Workshop

## INTRODUCTION

*Colletti Bottega Organaria has been restoring and manufacturing pipe organs in 1952. Giuliano, today's owner and soul of the company, learned the trade from his father Michele, the founder of the company, who started the business in the 1950s by learning the trade from a German officer during the 2nd World War.*

*Since childhood, Giuliano was passionate about the organ and its sound world, dedicating his free time to learning the secrets of the trade. After graduating, in 1994 he trained in the Organ Culture and Art at Crema Professional Training Centre, in Lombardy. Today he is a member of the National Register of Cultural Heritage Professionals.*

*His workshop carries out 4 are main activities:*

- *Historical research precede restoration so whatever the instrument full respect is paid to save all the recoverable material and the reconstructions of the missing pieces takes place with materials and processing techniques in the same way as when they were built.*
- *Restoration has a privileged place in the process. Organs from various eras are restored, tank to the collaboration with the Heritage board.*
- *The construction of the new musical organs is carried out by seeking the best balance between craftsmanship, aesthetic and functional modernity. Particular attention is paid to the elegance of all the details that must be simple in use and understanding, because we must not forget that the organ is used not only at mass, but also for concerts.*
- *The ordinary and extraordinary maintenance of all types of musical organs is the most important and vital activity to ensure functionality and durability over time.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability comes indirectly from being set in the countryside and directly from the banning of chemicals and solvents in favour of natural resin.

The workshop consists of a 500 sqm, 7 metre high room, divided into two parts (carpentry area and assembly area), which allows to complete assembling and verification of the organ before transportation and final on-site assembling.

State-of-the-art machinery is used both for the construction of wooden parts and for other materials.

## GIULIANO COLLETTI CHURCH ORGAN WORKSHOP, CHIUSA SCLAFANI

In addition, in 2014 the company has installed a solar panel system which meets the energy needs while zeroing the footprint.

Social and economic sustainability is secured by employing collaborators/trainees and by serving customers in every Italian region plus Germany and France.

### TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Being it a 70-year old business, of course tradition is in the air all the time, and whatever skill was acquired in the past is highly valued in the present. The real element of technological innovation that the second generation has brought into the workshop is the ability to deal with electronic organs and traditional remote instruments, which demand a whole new set of electronic skills on top with the traditional ones of metal and woodwork.

### VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

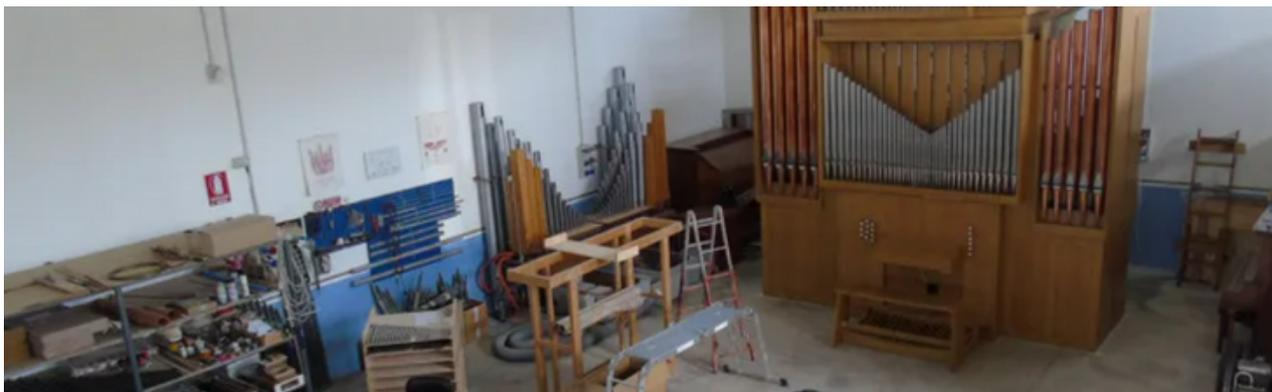
Giuliano's workshop does not abide by any specific disciplinary other than the set of restoration rules and legislation governing the craft released and periodically reviewed by the regional and national cultural heritage boards.

### SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

No upscaling is envisioned to date.

As for the ability to navigate crisis, Giuliano believes that while there is a lot of luck entailed, the trick is to rely on hand made crafts because rarity pays off. Humbleness is a resource, and one should accept to take on an apprenticeship in order to understand and believe in the importance of one's own project.

<https://www.giulianocolletti.it>





# Ficuzza Ancient Railway Station

## INTRODUCTION

*In 1863 the first Sicilian railway line connecting Palermo to Bagheria (13 km) was launched. Three lines were completed along the coastline between 1874 and 1884. Then came the many lines connecting the mineral- and agricultural-rich outback with the harbours, whence raw materials and goods were exported.*

*One of the narrow-gauge inner lines was the one cutting across some epic stretches between in a southerly direction from Palermo to the small hamlet of San Carlo, layered with citrus groves by the sea, all types orchards inland as well as the ancient oak wood at Ficuzza, the seat of King Ferdinand IV's namesake beloved hunting mansion, a reduced replica of the much grander palace in Caserta.*

*The line was engineered by British engineering virtuoso Robert Trewhella, director of The Sicilian Railways Company Limited of London, between 1884 and 1886, the same designer of Circle linearound Mount Etna and of the Trans-Appennine connecting Emilia to Toscana.*

*Though only 112 km long, at the start journey time end to end was up to 6 hours as a result of the single track, the many stops and the average speed of the coal-powered service (30 km/h), reaching 50 km/h only in the early 1950s when the first diesel locomotives where introduced. Indeed, so slow were the train in the stretch cutting across Ficuzza wood that those who had the privilege to take it, recall being able to hop off and on it, while gathering wild berries in between!*

*With the advent of post-war mass motorisation, the line became unsustainable at once and discontinued in 1959. That was when Ficuzza Wood Station premises started to decay.*

## SUSTAINABILITY

By the mid-1990s, nature had reconquered the premises, the roof had collapsed, the windows were all broken. The station was a ghost of its former self, and the small satellite activities in the neighbouring hamlet were suffering from the deprivation and the consequent decline. In response to the risk of it being deserted completely, a group of local railway archaeology enthusiasts pledged Italy's Railway Holding to receive a 99-year lease on the old station complex, which Trenitalia accorded. Over the course of four years, Ficuzza Wood station and the surrounding grounds was completely restored to the highest conservative standard and was then converted in a small mountain hotel and restaurant serving exclusively the filtered and purified water flushing down from the 1,633 metre (5,357 ft) tall Rocca Busambra facing the station, locally made wines,

## FICUZZA ANCIENT RAILWAY STATION, CORLEONE

beers, spirits and home-made cuisine based on the farm-to-table approach. The management takes care of the undergrowth and maintains decor within the limits of the lease, and even beyond it, thanks to a partnership with Regional Forestry Commission.

### TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Both the the first family-owned company (Camelot) that ran the business until 1998-9-2016 and the employees' co-operative that has since taken over the management are fully aware that the very appeal underlying their business location is its history and tradition. Customers come with the idea of travelling back in time, thus, though the track was dismantled across the line, sections of it survive here as do the old signals, plates, the vintage train master's and station master's outfits as well as the panels on the fascinating history of narrow gauge railways on the Island, by way of a beautiful open-air and indoor exhibition.

Being it a protected monument in a nature riserve, the management is currently looking forward to become energy efficient via innovative means other than solar panels, which are forbidden.

### VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

The Station is a member of SlowFood since its opening and has later become a member of the Italian Touring Club, the idea being to attract predominantly sustainability-aware customers. In-house operating specifications are agreed by all co-op members.

### SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Scaling up the business is a currently one of the management's thought, but details are still confidential. As for crises: "they can be resisted by avoiding to distribute all dividends, in the case of profit-making companies, and by reinvesting in goods and services, in the case of non-profit-making ones. Furthermore, anyone approaching business must consider drawing from their personal capital to keep the project alive". Indeed, a no-nonsense recipe for start-uppers!

<https://www.anticastazioneficuzza.it>



# Molinoro and Vallolmo

## INTRODUCTION

*Cooperativa Nuovo Orizzonte was established in 1988 years ago to produce seed wheat for local farmers. Then Vallolmo Ltd was set up in order to market the local wheat and later process it into pasta factory. The last business branch in the group is Molinoro (est. 2020) which Tommaso Miceli CEO gave the goal to mill the wheat and, thus, complete the supply chain.*

*Tommaso believes there are three reasons why Vallolmo is more business-vibrant than the neighbouring towns:*

- *it is historically a dynamic community;*
- *the entrepreneurial fabric is stimulated by the distance from the major centres;*
- *the population is not obsessed by public employment prospects as elsewhere.*

*What happened 32 years ago when Tommaso's father and uncle started the cooperative is repeating itself although marketing and the fiscal and financial situation have changed dramatically*

## SUSTAINABILITY

Social sustainability is fostered by encouraging an expanded family atmosphere, by way of inclusive best practices, encouraging independence for the company is not only the management's own, but the collaborators' too.

Environmental sustainability is one of the key elements because the completing the supply chain has led to its protection keeping every process within the same area, enhancing yield quality and zeroing carbon emissions as transport is reduced to a the very minimum.

Economically, the group champions locality which values local external farmers as both key resources and co-beneficiaries.

## TRADITION AND INNOVATION

*"Our group is traditional in the sense of the process features coming from the past: bronze pasta spinning and slow drying while stone milling which preserves the organoleptic properties of the wheat. On the other hand, technologically innovation is present in the form of industry 4.0 devices in all plants (PLC systems, digital panels and remote control systems)" Tommaso claims.*

## VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

The prime value of the group is the pursuit of social, economic and environmental development of the landed assets and the resources they bear. No regulatory body or certification exists for cereals. The company practices organic agriculture and has joined the Sicily Guaranteed and Quality protocol initiated by the regional department for food.

## SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

"We hope to reply if someone wishes to support the development of our local area in a way that is beneficial to those that live here. Scalability depends on market response, but we aim to have quality economic development."

On resilience: "one needs to be deeply rooted in your own land, otherwise the first and last option is to flee emigration. This rootedness is the pre-condition for one to stop thinking about manufacturing something metaphorically on it. The last thing necessary, even if it may seem strange, is to have a pinch of unconsciousness. If you have these three things, then you can start a business in fear of crisis or resist a crisis, if the company was started earlier.

<https://www.molinoro.it/>

<http://pastavallolmo.it/>





# Decora A&C Italy

## INTRODUCTION

*In 1989 in my last year in high school, I didn't want to study any longer or go to work.  
So I took the latter choice.*

*I took courses in Rome and Northern Italy and I ended up training other employees.*

*Shopping mall job in Hong Kong, I went out for the big bucks (Italian businessman Algalite)  
The Hong Kong contractor there offered me another opportunity*

*I had 2 skills: English and I was a trainer.*

*So I went from a 2 month contract to a 1 year contract. That was 2004.  
Then I was given a 4-year contract till the crisis ended. Got an apartment there.*

*A good friend of my mine in Singapore was developing a Marina.*

*Then I invented my own line with my own products selling in South East Asia , Australia, USA.  
Not Europe yet, even tough I have a Showroom in Palermo.*

*My dad was a farmer emigrant to St Louis, and so was my mum.  
I came back aged 15, having gone through kinder-garten, junior high and the first year of  
high school.*

*I got married in 1996 and didn't have money to pay rent.  
My daughter is a designer student, my son is in high school.*

*Asia is the land of opportunity, they the money and also the knowledge and skills.  
Service culture is Asia's religion, and that's what missing.*

*Macau, Philippines, Cyprus = 60 employees*

## SUSTAINIBILITY

People want sustainability. We're concentrating on lime for that reason because bacteria killer.

Socially sustainability it's all about family, trust, relationships. People who work for me know that there is no hierarchy (unlike Asia, where the boss is the boss). In my first company, my 15 employees had lunch with me and it was their first time.

Economic sustainability: it took 6-7 months for the big job to arrive (2008), I was sorry I had to force pay-cuts. They all went with it, and then I gave the money back when the job came in. Initially, my employees wouldn't accept my belated refund, but I insisted till they did on the grounds that they had proven to me that I could count on them. So a sense of co-ownership is key.



# Sweet Temptation

## INTRODUCTION

*Giuseppe Sparacello's Dolce Tentazione is based in Castronovo di Sicilia, an ancient Byzantine town origin, perched on a rock above 700 metre above sea level, halfway between Palermo and Agrigento.*

*Giuseppe started practicing confectionery when he was in high school. In the days when his classmates skipped school and wandered around town, he would go back to his father's biscuit factory. He was 16 then and already falling in love with the art thanks to master confectioner who came all the way from Palermo to support his father's lab. Standing side by side to him made Giuseppe's vision about his professional future ever clearer.*

*Once he finished school, Giuseppe served in the National service for a year. Even in that case, he did not lose the desire to return to Castronovo and experiment in his lab. By the time he was 18 and had left the army he asked his father to track down that old master who'd instructed him on the basics and proposed himself as an apprentice. Thus, every week from Monday to Thursday for a year, Giuseppe trained in Palermo, flooding his mentor with questions for 10 hours straight, absorbing his teachings like a sponge and trying to apply them on his return to town.*

*Through him, Giuseppe was able to become familiar with the associations that animated the sector at the metropolitan and regional level. Thus, after completing his apprenticeship, he took on further courses and masters to refine his skills in the art of chocolate and ice cream with the biggest names nationally and internationally over the next 5-6 years, including a period of training in Turin.*

*"What I do is almost spontaneous, the inspiration comes naturally because I feel it from within. I happen to create by looking at the sky" he admits over the phone.*

*A concrete case of applied inspiration is his Torta del Pellegrino, the Pilgrim's Cake. Reflecting on the first tasters, the hikers of the Via Francigena, he asked himself "what they would have seen along the way: almonds, ricotta, lemons, oranges, honey". That is what he assembled into the cake. So when, a pilgrim asks him what ingredients he uses, Giuseppe replies: "just close your eyes and try to remember what you saw during your journey".*

## SUSTAINABILITY

Counterintuitively, Giuseppe declares: "I was lucky enough to do my job in Sicily. I was lucky because nature gave us wonderful cheeses, ricotta, citrus fruits, pistachios. The desserts may as well be excellent, but Nature is the senior partner in Sicily. I am thankful for having been born and living in Castronovo with such a variety of high quality

materials: walnuts, hazelnuts, cherries, almonds, pistachios, oranges, lemons are all on my doorstep. "If you put together unbeatable products, 90% of the work is done that - for the same surface area - he has not yet come across a region with such a marked biodiversity, which translates into an unparalleled variety of confectionery products: each community has its own local sweets and its own interpretation of the regional ones, such as the ever-present cassata (a ricotta cheese-filled cake)"

In terms of social sustainability, Giuseppe briefly explains how to guarantee it: "love your neighbour as yourself" while economic sustainability, is a by-product of a savings culture for saving is the best gain. He argues that a lot you can be done with a little and that waste is so if one has purchased the wrong goods.

### TRADITION AND INNOVATION

I promote tradition in innovation with the contribution of new products and creations without forgetting the history of confectionery. Of all those who invaded us, the Arabs were the most generous (from sorbets to cassata). As a technological and process innovation, the blast chilling and storage production line has a competitive advantage. In Sicilian it is said "I fierri fannu u mastru". If you have them, it takes less time.

### VALUES AND DISCIPLINARIES

The corporate values are loyalty, honesty and ethical competition. Dolce Tentazione is a member of the SlowFood and - in addition - adopts a self-discipline based on transparency implying that there ought to be an exact correspondence between the raw materials proposed and those actually sold. Giuseppe is also a member of the ATRAPOS Confectioners association for: "Being part of a network - he says - serves to confront and grow because from others you learn culturally from realities and professionals from other contexts."

### SCALABILITY AND RESILIENCE

The company has a second shop in Mussomeli, a town 25 km away away from the first location.

The next ones he plans to replicate his business model are in Milan and some European capital. As for the ability to resist crises, he jokingly says: "when have we ever been in crisis in Sicily? We overcame them with a lot of nonchalance because we got used to it" Giuseppe Sparacello argues that a crisis can be overcome with love, which pushes people beyond their limits and unveils opportunity to those who wish to see them inventive from constraints. During crises, "one can resist if he/she masters his/her trade and if keeps his/her eyes open in case an opportunity comes by"

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CASE STUDIES

ITALY



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