

# CROWDS CELEBRATE ITALIAN CULTURE AT ANNUAL ITALIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL IN VALHALLA, NY



## LIVIN' LA DOLCE VITA!

The sights, sounds and flavors of Italy came to Valhalla, NY as the **Italian Heritage Festival**, sponsored by **Antonio Meucci Lodge N° 213, Inc** returned to Kensico Dam Plaza this past Sunday, July 20, 2025.

Whether you're Italian by heritage or just at heart, this vibrant cultural celebration always has something for everyone.

The festival drew hundreds of Westchester County residents who were all eager to enjoy the music and take part in the fun of "La Dolce Vita."

The Festa featured mouthwatering Italian cuisine, engaging children's games, captivating cultural exhibits, handmade arts and crafts, and upbeat music from Carozza Entertainment on The Main Stage & DJs Nando & Marcello in the food court.

As we do each year, The Antonio Meucci Lodge honored another exemplary Italian-American, Nick Prisco—Owner of Prisco Appliance in White Plains, NY.

Of course, the festivities bring out a who's who of the county including County Executives, Social Media Influencers and previous honoree Lisa LaRocca of News 12 Westchester.

Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins said, "Cultural festivals have long been a cornerstone of community life, acting as a vibrant tapestry that weaves together the diverse threads of society. In an increasingly globalized world, they are a reminder of our shared humanity and the rich diversity that defines us."

Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation Kathy O'Connor said: "Kensico Dam Plaza provides a unique setting for a wide variety of activities. It's a spot where nature, community and fun all come together."

To participate in next year's festa as a volunteer, contact Sis Caroline Baviello. For Vendor spots or sponsorship opportunities, contact Sis Cathy Grisanti.



Lodge Chaplain Joe Tanzi (Ctr) with Color Guard



Sister Lucy Tocci at AML213 Membership Booth



Lisa LaRocca of News 12 Westchester, Pres. Camille Tarone, 2025 Honoree Nick Prisco, 2nd Vice Pres. Cathy Grisanti



White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach, Pres Camille Tarone, and Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins



# ITALY's CELEBRATED HOLIDAYS, EVENTS and RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

## September

In September Italy is known for a variety of festivals and holidays, including religious celebrations, historical reenactments, and harvest festivals. Key events include Regata Storica in Venice, the Festa della Rificolona in Florence, and the Feast of San Genaro in Naples. Additionally, September marks the start of the vendemmia, or grape harvest particularly in Tuscany with numerous wine-related festivals. September 7th: Festa della Rificolona

**September 8th:** Feast of the Madonna

**September 14th:** Volto Santo Festival

**September 15th:** Feast of Our Lady of Sorrow

**September 19th:** Feast of San Gennaro

**September 29th:** Feast of San Michele (Saint Michael)

## October

In October Italy celebrates harvest season, food, film, and gaming with events like the Alba White Truffle Festival and the Lucca Comics & Games Festival, along with traditional Chestnut Festivals throughout Tuscany. Other events include the Rome Film Fest, the EuroChocolate Festival in Perugia, and a Medieval Procession in Florence. Autumn is also a popular time for wine harvest celebrations and food festivals across different regions, including those focused on pistachios, salami, and mortadella.

**October 4th:** Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

**October 12th:** Columbus Day

**October 31st:** All Hallows' Eve

## November

In November, Italy celebrates the national public holiday of All Saints' Day, followed by All Souls' Day, and hosts a variety of food and music festivals, including the Alba White Truffle Fair in Piedmont, the Eurochocolate Festival in Perugia, the Festa della Salute in Venice, and the Roma Jazz Festival in Rome. Other notable events include Festa di San Martino and local chestnut festivals across the country.

**November 1st:** All Saints Day

**November 2nd:** All Souls' Day

**November 21st:** Feast of Madonna della Salute (Venice)

## December

Italy celebrates various events in December, centered on the Christmas season, including the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the start of the Christmas season, followed by Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, known as Natale. The month concludes with New Year's Eve (Capodanno). Other events include the Feast of Santa Lucia, held in cities like Syracuse and Verona. December is also known for La Befana where Italians celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany in the beginning of January, and as the legend goes La Befana brings gifts to good children and coal to naughty ones.

**December 7th:** Feast of Saint Ambrose- Milan

**December 8th:** Feast of the Immaculate Conception

**December 13th:** Feast of Saint Lucia

**December 24th-25th:** Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

**December 26th:** Feast of Saint Stephen

**December 31st:** New Year's Eve, and Feast of Sylvester

**January 5th & 6th:** La Befana celebrated which marks the Feast of the Epiphany

# AML 213 ANNUAL PICNIC

Sun, Trees, Great Food and Amazing Company! That's how AML213 celebrated the end of summer at Ridge Field Park in Harstedale, NY.

It was a day filled with laughter, games and a tremendous menu that would make anyone's mouth water. Brother Charlie Tota and VP Anthony Miceli headed this event with support from IPP Mario Cermele and his amazing staff at Cermele's Caterers. Guests were treated to Brother Nick Vaccarelli's famous Spaghetti Aglio e Olio!

The Tug of War rivalry is getting much more spirited each year; and the Egg Toss took the game day highlights. Card games like Scopa, Tre Sette & Briscola were played at the tables and DJ Marcello kept the people moving with his music selections. A Special thank you to all the dignitaries and sister lodges that attended to make this day just that much brighter.

We'll see you next year!

To volunteer for next year's picnic, touch base with VP Anthony Miceli.

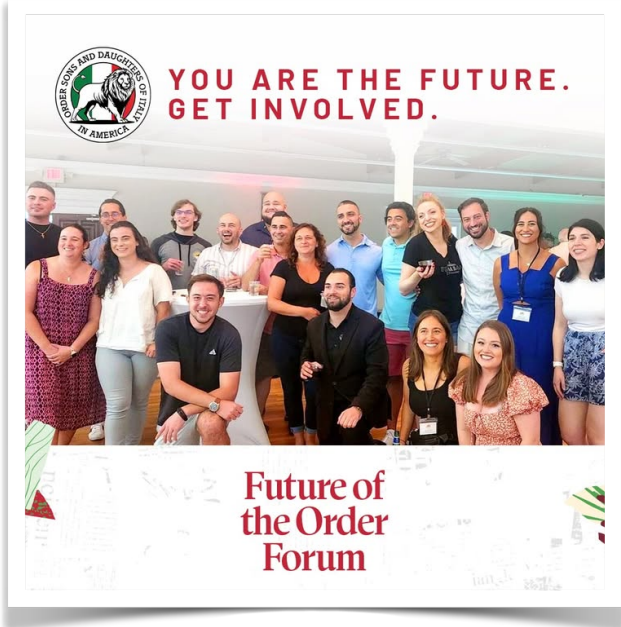


# Bro Adam Pacecca at FOTO

In any organization, it is important to make sure that younger generations become involved and bring their knowledge and expertise to the leaders for continued success in the organization. As the oldest and largest Italian-American organization in the country, OSDIA is no exception. This is why the Future of the Order (FOTO) forum was created. This forum brings together young adults from the Order to share issues and ideas from all over the country, coming from local and state lodges, and helps to create new ideas and innovations to keep OSDIA strong for generations to come.

A group of 15 young people with five forum leaders was invited to the 59th Biennial OSDIA national convention in Orlando, FL to meet our national leaders and delegates as well as work on a topic that was assigned to us. We learned about the history of OSDIA as well as all the great work that is being done on every level to promote and preserve our Italian heritage as well as help our neighbors in need. We also were able to witness national officer elections and were able to meet and speak with national officers, delegates and other dignitaries from all over the country.

The Forum discussed topics pertaining to membership, especially recruiting and retaining members and being able to spread the word about the Order to younger generations. We then put together a presentation for the national leaders to show them the idea we came up with, which is a Lodge Cookbook. The Lodge Cookbook will be a database where lodges can contribute what they are doing well and can find ideas if they are in need of help with anything in their lodge. This would include topics such as fundraising, planning feasts and events, creating social media pages and podcasts, ideas for increasing



membership, and creating junior lodges, to name a few. It is a great way for lodges to help each other out and we can all become stronger as we move forward. After the work was done for each day, we enjoyed dinner dances, Grand Lodge hospitality suites, as well as games of bocce and Scopa!

The ability to participate in the FOTO forum cannot be understated. Not only does it show there is a contingent of young people willing to get more involved with the Order, but it also helps us to understand the rich history and great work of our organization. We also realize what we can still do to keep writing our story. There are so many opportunities for growth and attending this conference really was inspiring and makes me and my brothers and sisters in FOTO want to be more involved and bring OSDIA into the future and beyond.

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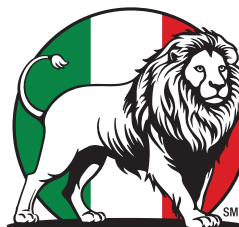
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Lodge 213**

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