

**WE'RE TURNING 6! SAVE €6 ON YOUR  
PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTION**

# ABRUZZISSIMO MAGAZINE



**Loving Vasto, One  
Tile at a Time**

*page 5*

**More Than a Name:  
The soprannomi of  
Rendinara**

*page 8*

**A Digital Nomad  
in Roccamorice**

*page 20*

# CONTENTS



- 02. EDITOR'S NOTE
- 03. NEWS AND EVENTS
- 05. LOVING VASTO, ONE TILE AT A TIME
- 08. MORE THAN A NAME: THE SOPRANNOMI OF RENDINARA
- 13. A WALK THROUGH L'AQUILA'S MONUMENTAL CEMETERY
- 16. THE CHITARRA MAKER OF PRETORO
- 20. A DIGITAL NOMAD IN ROCCAMORICE
- 23. SPEAKING ABRUZZESE: QUANNA VIDE L'ACQUA ALLA VIA Û SORA TULL' LA ZAPPA E UA' A LAVORA
- 24. QUICK STOP, EASY TRAILS
- 25. BEST EATS: THE ART OF PASTA ALLA CHITARRA
- 26. TRADITIONAL RECIPES: frascarelli Abruzzesi, Prezza-style breaded artichokes



---

## ON THE COVER:

Rendinara. Photo by Anna Lebedeva. Read the story on page 8.

## LEFT:

Rendinara. Photos by Anna Lebedeva. Read the story on page 8.

# ABRUZZISSIMO MAGAZINE

www.abruzzissimo.com  
editor@abruzzissimo.com

## EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Anna Lebedeva  
editor@abruzzissimo.com

## COPY EDITOR

Linda Dini Jenkins

## CONTRIBUTORS

Giuseppe Buono  
Linda Dini Jenkins  
Lea Bianchini  
Anna Swann  
Margareth Pacelli

*Periodico diffuso in via telematica non  
soggetto a registrazione ai sensi degli  
artt. 3 e 3 bis della legge n. 103 del 16  
luglio 2012.*

Copyright © 2026 ABRUZZISSIMO Magazine. All content copyright ABRUZZISSIMO Magazine, all rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law. While we make every effort that the factual content of ABRUZZISSIMO Magazine is correct we cannot take any responsibility nor be held accountable for any factual errors printed. The publisher recognises all copyrights within this issue.

## Editor's Note

ABRUZZISSIMO turns six this month! What began as a lockdown project during the COVID pandemic has grown into a small but mighty community of people from across the globe, united by a love of Abruzzo. In six years, over 5,000 people have subscribed to the magazine, and hundreds continue to support us by purchasing and renewing their premium subscription every year. We must be doing something right – nearly 80% of our premium subscribers have been with us from the very beginning.

Recently, I have been rethinking how we connect with you. I have been stepping back from Facebook, realising it no longer serves the ABRUZZISSIMO community the way I'd like – and that many of you are not on it at all. In its place, I am focusing on more meaningful ways to reach you – free webinars, regular updates by email, and more posts on our website, [Abruzzissimo.com](https://www.abruzzissimo.com).

Now, to this issue.

In the spirit of ABRUZZISSIMO's founding philosophy – shining a light on the lesser-known corners of Abruzzo and its culture – we explore the soprannomi in **Rendinara (AQ)**. These are family nicknames, passed down through generations, each one carrying the memory of an ancestor, a habit, a story half-remembered and half-invented. We had a webinar about soprannomi two weeks ago and the recording is available for our premium subscribers.

We also visit Vasto, where an extraordinary contemporary ceramics project brings thousands of local children together to create public art – and, tile by tile, a deeper sense of civic belonging. And we take a walk through the monumental cemetery of **L'Aquila**, where some of the city's most remarkable figures are buried. Plus the story about Abruzzo's beloved pasta, spaghetti alla chitarra, recipes, a walk to the magical Fairies Hill above **Roccacasale (AQ)**, and a visit to a beautiful botanical garden in **Loreto Aprutino (PE)**.

Six years in, and we have barely scratched the surface. There are always more stories to tell, more people to meet, more villages to explore – and I can't wait to share them with you.

**To celebrate six years together, ABRUZZISSIMO is offering €6 off all premium subscriptions for the next two weeks – a small thank-you for being part of this journey. You can upgrade or renew your subscription [here](#).**

**Anna Lebedeva**  
**Founder & Editor**

# DIGEST OF RECENT REGIONAL NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS FROM ABRUZZO NEWSPAPERS



## ABRUZZOS WOLF POISONING CRISIS

21 wolves – a protected species – have been found dead across several locations within the **Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park** and buffer zones over the past three weeks, in what authorities are calling a major wildlife emergency. Laboratory analysis has confirmed the animals were killed by poisoned bait laced with agricultural pesticides. Prosecutors in Sulmona have opened an investigation, with an agricultural pesticide identified as the poison used. Other wildlife – including small mammals and raptors – have also fallen victim to the indiscriminate baiting, highlighting the broader threat to the entire ecosystem.

The killings come amid a charged political climate. The EU recently downgraded the wolf's protection status from "strictly protected" to "protected," a move backed by Italy's government, which effectively green-lit population management measures. Environmental groups warn this has emboldened those hostile to predators. Even Coldiretti Abruzzo, the farmers' association, condemned the killings as "ignoble," while calling for serious dialogue about the growing impact of wolves on agricultural businesses. The Abruzzo regional government has said it is prepared to join the criminal proceedings as a civil party.

For updates about the emergency keep an eye on the park's [website](#).

## RISING INCOMES – BUT NOT THERE YET

Household incomes in Abruzzo grew by 3.43% in the last two years, outpacing the national average, according to a Unioncamere–Centro Studi Guglielmo Tagliacarne analysis. The standout performer is Teramo, which recorded nearly 5% growth – the fifth highest increase of any Italian province – a surge likely linked to the economic activity generated by post-earthquake reconstruction. Chieti remains the wealthiest province by annual disposable household income (i.e., what's left after outgoings), at €7,547, while Pescara leads on income per head at just under €22,000 – 60th in the Italian rankings. However, incomes across the region still remain around €18,000 below the national average.



## GREAT TIME TO RENT, PRICIER TO BUY

Buying a home in Abruzzo is getting pricier, with the average now at €1,385 per square metre and **Pescara** – the region's most expensive city – pushing past €2,100/sqm, according to Immobiliare.it Insights. **Chieti** remains the most accessible option for buyers at €1,080/sqm. The rental picture tells a different story: supply has jumped by over 20% while demand has actually dropped, meaning renters have more choice and potentially more bargaining power than they've had in a while. **Pescara** tops the rental market too, at €9.8/sqm, with **Teramo** the most affordable at €6.4/sqm.



## WINE EVENTS SEASON KICKS OFF

This May, Abruzzo hosts two of its most anticipated wine events of the year. Viva la Vite returns to **Pescara** in Porto Turistico on May 10–11, bringing together natural and artisan winemakers for two days of tastings, food stalls, and low- and no-alcohol options. The festival celebrates authentic, sustainable winemaking – natural, organic and biodynamic – with producers who work directly from vine to bottle.

Another big event, Vinorum – the Abruzzo Wine Festival – returns to **L'Aquila's Piazza Duomo** on May 15-17 with wine tastings, masterclasses, producer meetups, and street food. More details on the event's page.

## AI WEIWEI BRINGS "AFTERSHOCK" TO L'AQUILA

MAXXI L'Aquila hosts *Aftershock*, a major exhibition by Chinese artist, designer, activist, architect, and filmmaker Ai Weiwei, running until September 6. The show explores the lasting impact of natural disasters, human conflict, corruption and tragedy, while reflecting on resilience and creative resistance. The exhibition creates a poignant dialogue between one of the world's most influential contemporary artists and Palazzo Ardinghelli – a baroque building itself rebuilt after L'Aquila's devastating 2009 earthquake.

Born in Beijing in 1957, Ai Weiwei is one of the world's most influential contemporary artists, known for large-scale installations, architecture and film, as well as for his outspoken activism against the Chinese government, which led to his arrest and detention in 2011.

## DID YOU KNOW?



## THE GENIUS FROM POPOLI TERME

Every time you see a Vespa scooter – that timeless Italian icon – you're looking at the genius of a man from Abruzzo. Corradino D'Ascanio was born in Popoli (PE) in 1891, and it was from these hills that he went on to design groundbreaking helicopter prototypes and the most recognisable scooter ever built.

At 15, he built a rudimentary hang glider, testing it from the hills around Popoli after studying the wing proportions of birds. By 1925, he had patented a helicopter with two coaxial rotors, decades ahead of his time, though poor government support meant the technology was never fully developed at home.

Then came the Vespa. In 1945, approached by industrialist Enrico Piaggio, D'Ascanio designed a simple, affordable scooter for a war-weary Italy. The Vespa became the symbol of postwar reconstruction – by 1956, one million had already been built.

His restless mind ranged far beyond aviation and scooters. From his Popoli engineering studio in the 1920s, he registered dozens of patents – a soap dispenser, an electric oven, a speed-warning device for vehicles, and an electro-pneumatic document retrieval machine using punched cards that anticipated the computing age by decades. His complete archive, held today at the State Archive in Pescara, continues to attract researchers, design historians, aviation scholars, and students.

In Popoli Terme, a plaque marks the family *palazzo* on Corso Gramsci where he was born, a Vespa club proudly bears his name, and there are talks about a motor museum in his honour.



## LOVING VASTO, ONE TILE AT A TIME

By Giuseppe Buono

**Ask a child in Vasto which neighbourhood they live in, and there is a reasonable chance they can point to a ceramic installation they helped make – a staircase riser, a glazed parapet, a street sign in the borgo – a few kilometres away.**

Vasto is a city with a long memory: Roman mosaics, a magnificent castle, medieval centre that rises sharply above the Adriatic, and the trabocchi – those extraordinary wooden fishing machines that crouch over the water on stilted legs, like giant insects poised to drink from the sea.

It is not, at first glance, a place you would associate with a contemporary ceramics movement. And yet, since 2001, our small family-run workshop has been giving Vasto's schoolchildren an unusual assignment: learn the history of your neighbourhood, then make something permanent out of it. Since then, more than 2,000 students have taken part, leaving their work on staircase risers, parapets, and street signs across the city.

My wife Michela Montedodorisio and I opened Creta Rossa, our ceramics workshop, 25 years ago. Some thought it was a strange thing to do in Vasto, a city with no artisanal tradition in ceramics – nothing like the

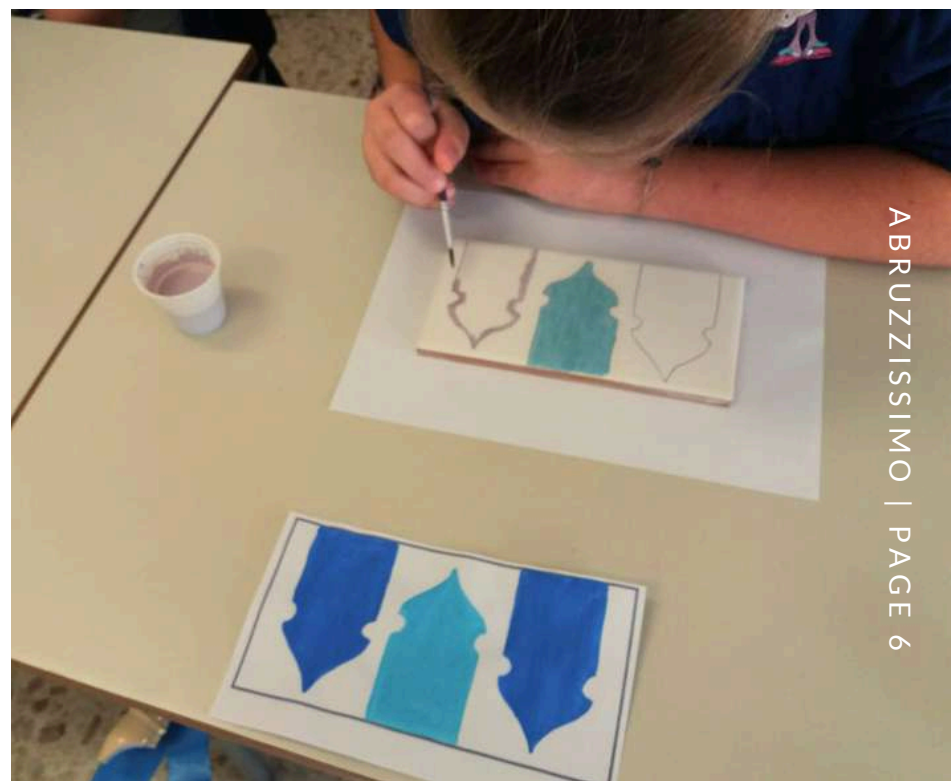
**Photo: Balustrade "Vasto città di grazia" created by schoolchildren**

centuries-old kilns of Castelli or Rapino, Abruzzo's towns where master ceramists worked. That absence, rather than discouraging us, became the point. We built it as both workshop and school – open to the street, so anyone walking past could look in and watch the wheel turn, the glaze applied, a piece take shape; and equipped for those who wanted to sit down and try.

## ARTE IN BORGO

Together with the Lions Club Vasto we have started Arte in Borgo, a recurring urban regeneration initiative with city's schools. The first edition, in 2013, saw around 60 students from the city's Liceo Artistico spend five days glazing, painting, and firing approximately 500 ceramic tiles, which were then used to restyle the staircase adjacent to the birthplace of the poet Gabriele Rossetti – decorative motifs drawn from local traditions, with several steps dedicated to verses Rossetti wrote about his city. In another edition of Arte in Borgo, primary school pupils decorated the maiolica parapet running alongside the same staircase. Each child painted an individual tile in blue and white, colours drawn from the coastal landscape, which was then fired in our kiln at around 950°C for ten hours.

### Schoolchildren painting tiles at the studio



Over time, we connected with schools, institutions, and local associations. The projects we developed together have by now involved thousands of students across every level of education, and the results are permanently embedded in the streets of Vasto: over 20 ceramic installations across the city, each one made by the students who live nearby.

## CIVIC SENSE, KILN-FIRED

The process matters as much as the finished piece. Before any clay is touched, students spend time with historians and local figures, gathering testimony, learning about the memories of a street or a neighbourhood. Only then does the design begin – and when the work is finally fired and installed, the students understand, in a way that is difficult to manufacture through any other means, that what they have made becomes part of the city's architecture, and it will be there long after the school children have grown up and moved on.

This creation and participation in shaping the urban space changes something. We have seen it consistently over the years: a reduction in vandalism and neglect in the areas where installations exist, and a palpable shift in how young people relate to their neighbourhood. Beauty made by a community tends to be protected by that community.

Recently, the project has extended beyond Vasto itself. A few kilometres away, in the hilltop town of Monteodorisio, students have completed two editions of ceramic street signs – thirty plaques in total, each one hand-lettered and fired, marking the old village's lanes in a way that has become an attraction for visitors exploring the borgo. That curiosity from outsiders is not incidental. It confirms something we believe: that authentic local expression, rooted in real history and made by real hands, is more interesting than any imposed decoration.

Vasto now stands as a rare example in Abruzzo, and among the very few of its kind in Italy, of a sustained, community-driven programme of ceramic urban art. The sheer accumulation of interventions – the staircase, the parapets, the neighbourhood markers – demonstrates what becomes possible when the work is not a one-off project but a long-term commitment.

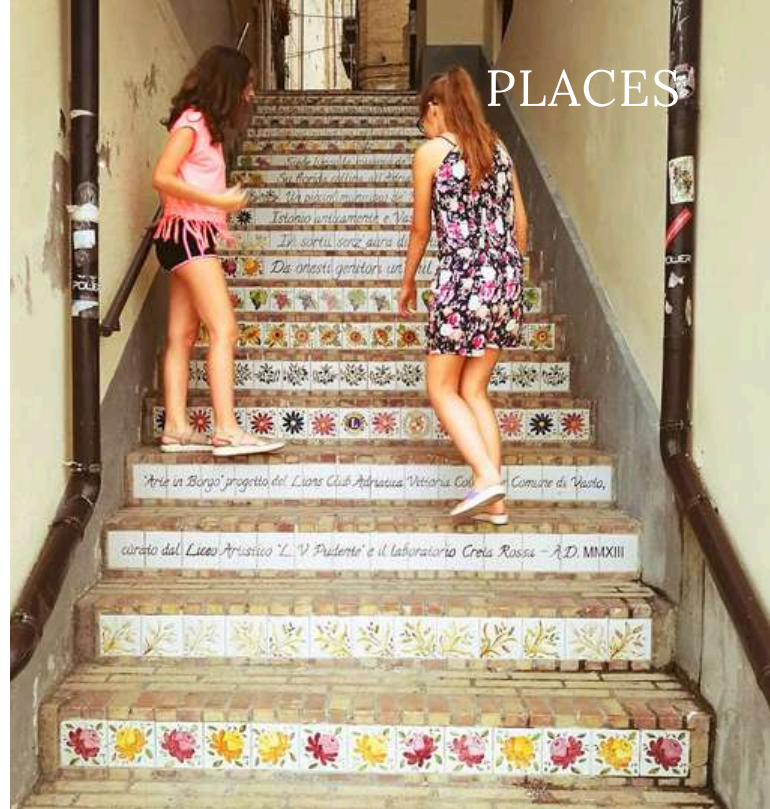
## COMING IN MAY

Two new inaugurations will mark the next chapter of this work, both supported by the Lions Club Vasto.

On 8 May, Vasto will unveil its first public artwork dedicated to its patron saint, San Michele Arcangelo. This is a project unlike anything we have attempted before: more than 100 primary school pupils have been involved in its creation over recent months, each contributing to a work that will now become a permanent part of the city's landscape.

On 17 May, the third edition of Arte in Borgo will add a new maiolica parapet with a floral motif to the Loggia Amblingh – a historic panoramic promenade in the old city centre overlooking the Adriatic gulf – created in our workshop by 36 third-year students from the city's secondary school, selected specifically for the project.

For more details about the inaugurations, see the Creta Rossa Facebook [page](#) and [website](#).



Scalinata "Rossetti" in Vasto

## WHERE TO SEE THE CERAMIC URBAN ART IN VASTO

### Scalinata "Rossetti"

Loggia Amblingh – belvedere, centro storico

### Parapetto "Vasto città di grazia"

Loggia Amblingh – belvedere, centro storico

A balustrade decorated with quotes about the city by illustrious figures, from D'Annunzio to the Rossetti family.

### Parapetto "Terra deliziosa"

Loggia Amblingh – belvedere, centro storico

Another ceramic balustrade at the same belvedere, celebrating Vasto's landscape and identity.

### Parapetti "La storia di San Michele Arcangelo"

Belvedere San Michele, centro storico

Ceramic panels narrating the story of Saint Michael the Archangel, patron of the city, at a second historic viewpoint.

### Parapetto "Il brodetto vastese" Vasto Marina

Viale Dalmazia – Vasto Marina

Down by the sea, this balustrade celebrates the city's iconic fish stew – a tribute to local culinary tradition, visible along the marina promenade.

*Photos courtesy of Creta Rossa.*



## MORE THAN A NAME: THE SOPRANNOMI OF RENDINARA

In Rendinara, in the Valle Roveto, a surname has never quite been enough to say who you are. The soprannome – the family nickname, passed down through generations – carries the memories of ancestors, their habits, their stories.

As you enter Rendinara (AQ), a small village sitting at 900 metres above the Valle Roveto at the foot of the Ernici mountains, the temptation is to look up. The surrounding peaks of the Ernici fill the sky, the valley drops away below, and the views demand attention. Which is why it is easy to

TO READ THE FULL ISSUE  
UPGRADE TO PREMIUM - ONLY €30!

or  
BUY the issue

[LEARN MORE](#)



# Plan a perfect ABRUZZO ADVENTURE

## Book a trip-planning consultation with ABRUZZISSIMO

“Planning a trip to Abruzzo can be time-consuming. Treat yourself to an easier journey. I’ll help you save hours of research and find the local gems that guidebooks often miss. Living here gives me a deep knowledge of the region, so I can share practical, insider advice on where to stay, what to see, and how to make the most of your visit.”

Anna Lebedeva

Editor of Abruzzissimo Magazine

**BOOK A PERSONALISED ABRUZZO TRIP-  
PLANNING CONSULTATION**

**NEXT ISSUE**  
**JUNE (SUMMER ISSUE)**

# ABRUZZISSIMO

## MAGAZINE

### **LA PASSATELLA**

Abruzzo's drinking game that made a pope lose his temper

### **ABRUZZO IN FILM**

Ridley Scott's new movie and other films shot in the region

### **VILLA BADESSA**

The hamlet that speaks an Albanian dialect and follows the Byzantine rite

### **SUMMER 2026**

### **SAGRE AND FESTIVALS**

Our special  
mega-supplement!

**NEXT ISSUE IN YOUR INBOX ON JUNE 5**

**[Subscribe to ABRUZZISSIMO here](#)**

**[DONATE TO SUPPORT ABRUZZISSIMO](#)**