

An Italian American view point! Be a traveler NOT a tourist!

## Meet Italian Artists on your next trip to Italy

### *Italian Stories arranges Meetings with Local Artisans in Italy*



Spending several months a year **Home to Italy** is only one of the employee 'benefits' of editing a blog. Since I no longer vacation in Italy, the plan is to explore beyond the tourist sites and find people and places not written about in a tourist book.

Early this year my Venetian contact, Monica Cesarato \* (<http://www.cookinvenice.com/>) mentioned a new group of Italians creating a way to experience Italy: **Italian Stories** [www.italianstories.it](http://www.italianstories.it).

**Italian Stories** has created a method for travelers to find “authentic experiences with Italian artisans”. “You don’t visit a land, you go live it”, such a refreshing approach to travel..... something I try to accomplish on every extended stay in Italy.

They offer opportunities to visit artisans in their laboratories (workshops) or spend a day learning the ‘secrets’ of a skill. Artisans are available throughout Italy, in villages as well as cities. New locations and artisans are added every week.

If your only contact with artists in Italy is in a museum or a store, a workshop visit will allow you to experience ‘art’ in a different way.

You may have a hobby or an interest that you can explore from the Italian view point. The list of artistic fields is extensive: goldsmiths, glass bead artisans, wool and felting, handmade taro cards, pottery, baking, woodworking.....the list goes on.

The interactive map on the web site allows you to search geographically, selecting visits that correspond with your travel itinerary. Be sure to plan ahead so you can coordinate visits on the days available.

**My experience on an Italian Stories visit:**

After contacting *Italian Stories* members, Eleanora and Enrico, I offered to share their new idea with my readers. Italian Stories suggested a meeting with one of their artisans: *the Goldsmith in Firenze*.



I return to Florence every year and scheduling an appointment was simple. The studio was located within sight of the Ponte Vecchio and the master goldsmith has been working in this shop since he was a teenager.

The original tools, equipment and work benches are still the heart of the studio but you also feel a wonderful 'vibe' when you are there. To me it was an underlying joy for the work they do. This is a family business that has been located here for decades. The art produced may have an historic origin and technique but the resulting pieces are modern.

The process to create one of the stunning pieces on display starts with a sketch/design, is hand crafted, polished and finished.

A specialty of this studio is the fine engraving work and their historic technique to 'hammering gold' into stunning link necklaces and bracelets.

I shall be booking another visit on my upcoming trip [Home to Italy](#) learn about the ancient technique of 'hammering gold'.



This was my favorite piece, just stunning.



Hammered gold is a specialty of this studio