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# Why You Should Visit An Artisan Workshop On Your Next Trip To Italy



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Travel

*I share stories about travel, culture, food & wine.*



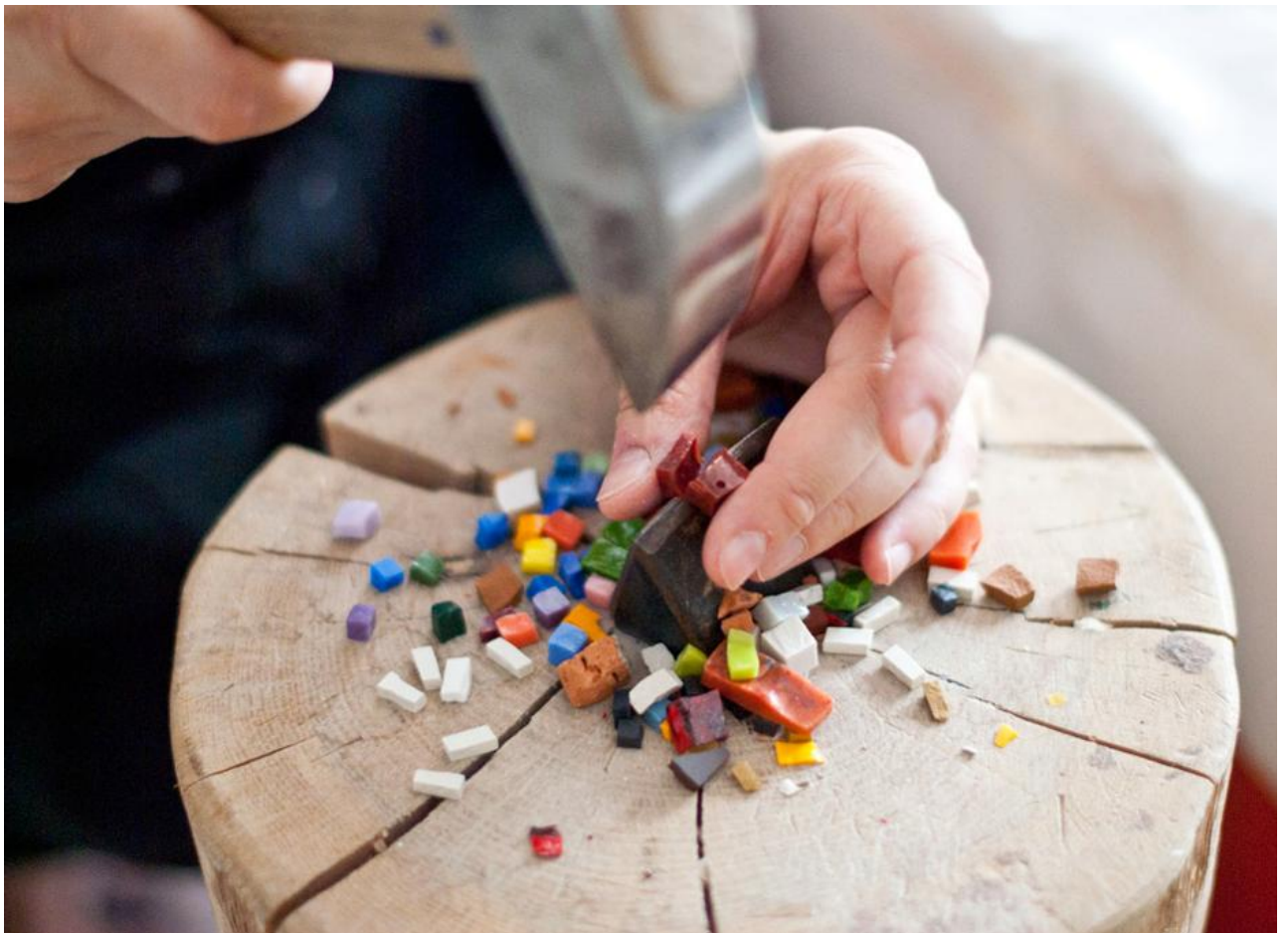
Join Patrizia and Vittorio Ramacci in their stucco workshop in Gubbio, Umbria where you'll transform ...

[+] ANNALISA LEVER

Italy has long been revered for its art and beauty - the country is steeped in cultural heritage and boasts some of the world's most skilled artisans that have honed their craft for centuries. Ceramists, sculptors, goldsmiths and art restore can be found throughout Italy, dutifully carrying forward ancient traditions in their workshops, though they're usually hidden away from public view.

With [Italian Stories](#), that has all changed. The innovative platform allows curious travelers to go behind-the-scenes of Italy's leading artisanal studios and learn secrets of the trade from the masters themselves. You can design a [bridal veil](#) with a lacemaker in Florence, build your own [wooden longboard](#) with a carpent in Bologna or [create your own hat](#) with a milliner in La Spezia. Italian Stories features hundreds of craftsmen throughout the country that work materials of every type: you can search for experiences by [location](#) or [material](#) and choose between demonstrations, hands-on workshops or immersive tailor-made tours.

Not only does Italian Stories promise one-of-a-kind experiences but paying a visit to an artisan studio is one of the best ways to support sustainable, slow tourism in the country. At a time when technology and globalization is forcing small businesses to close, your presence and participation in Italy's historic workshops helps keeps their doors open, literally. I spoke with Eleonora Odorizzi, one of the founders of Italian Stories, about the importance of supporting local artisans, immersive tourism, and the future of the platform - read her thoughts below.



## What inspired you to start a platform like Italian Stories?

There are fascinating stories, people and ancient techniques behind every manmade object you see and I wanted to share this secret world with curious travelers. Artisanry is a distinctive feature of Italy and every Italian has had an artisan in the family. Many Italian last names pay homage to the family's historical trade, like Ferrari (blacksmiths), Vasari (pottery makers) and Tessitori (weavers). Even streets and districts of major cities are named for artisans which underscores their important role in Italy's identity, both past and present.



Learn how to make and repair cellos, violins and guitars at Eugenio Ligato's luthier workshop in ... [+] GUID  
GUGLIELMELLI

I created Italian Stories with Andrea Miserochi, my partner in life and work, to give artisans the chance to share their skills and passion with the public. We're both deeply curious people with a passion for discovering Italy through the lens of its craftsmen: we love learning new things and discovering traditions even locals don't know about. Andrea and I are both designers who love innovation s

we wanted to design a platform to connect travelers with Italian artisans through personalized experiences. Italian Stories gives the unique opportunity to learn about Italy's artistic traditions first-hand and to meet Italian craftsmen face-to-face.



Eleonora Odorizzi with her partner and husband, Andrea Miserocchi. COURTESY OF ELEONORA ODORIZZI

## **How does the platform help promote the artisans?**

Italian Stories unites artisans all over Italy and showcases the breadth of artistic traditions in this country, but it's more than just an archive of craftsmanship and expertise. We also conceived it as a tool to help preserve history, transmit knowledge and inspire a new generation of artisans to find pride in their craft. The website features craftsmen (and craftswomen) of all ages and it's important that young people take up historic traditions that are at risk of dying out. Their career path needs to be financially viable so we hope that selling workshops and demonstrations can become a viable revenue stream for the artisans.



Discover Burano's longstanding lace tradition through a workshop with Martina Vidal. The ... [+] EVELYN LEVE

## **How can Italy benefit from experiential tourism?**

We're living in the "era of experience" but many Italian artisans don't realize how exciting and unique it is for visitors to see them in the process of creation. They underestimate the appeal of their knowledge and think travelers are only focused on the final product - but we want to meet them, learn about their stories and see their talent in person. With Italian Stories, we want to create value for visitors and craftsmen alike and show that there's a sustainable way of using tourism to protect and promote Italy's artisanal traditions.



Santi Del Sere is a wood craftsman who is skilled in carving, marquetry and furniture restoration. ...

[+] ITALIAN STORIES

## What are some of the most unique experiences travelers can find on your website?

There are so many different experiences that we offer on the platform, many of them are even part of UNESCO's Intangible World Heritage list. You can learn how to [make your paper](#) by working the raw materials in the countryside of Puglia. You can make your own [custom wedding bands](#) with a goldsmith on the Riva di Garda or a [zodiac sign out of mosaics](#) in Verona. Italian Stories also offers food experiences, like a [fresh cheese and butter workshop](#) with a farmer in Trentino or a [pasta class](#) near Viterbo in northern Lazio. Of course there are many decorative art experiences with glass, lace and ceramics in cities like Florence and Venice, too.



Mastro Cencio creates ceramic reproductions of Etruscan, Greek and medieval motifs in Civita ... [+] ANDRE MISEROCCHI

## **How did your background in design and communication help you create Italian Stories?**

From the beginning we realized that the biggest hurdle was the lack of a structural narrative to communicate Italy's artisanal tradition. Artisans have always been better at doing their job and creating art than sharing or talking about it with the public, of course. One of the first things we did was enlist the help of "Storyfinders" and Storytellers to create a photographic archive of the artisans and their workshops so that we could share their talent and communicate their trade in a visual way. Our team also provides hospitality training and assistance with content creation so local businesses and organizations can better market their artisans at a touristic and commercial level.



Become a glass bead artist for a day with Simona Iacovazzi and Evelina Pescarolo in their workshop ...  
[+] ANNALISA LEVER

## **What is in store for Italian Stories in the future?**

Since we first launched in 2015, Italian Stories has become an ambassador for Italian craftsmanship and we work with many local organizations that want to help preserve Italy's immense, and too often neglected, national heritage. Our journey has taken us beyond major cities and into the countryside where there are so many incredible treasures and traditions to promote and protect. We've recently designed a series of experiences in Tuscia, for instance, to increase tourism in this region that is halfway between Rome and Florence. It's rich in natural beauty, art and architecture and culinary traditions - and of course there are many interesting artisans to discover here. We want to continue sharing the beauty of Italy and promote sustainable and conscious tourism throughout the country.

We've also received some interest in developing collaborations abroad, proving that craftsmanship is an important resource beyond Italy's borders and part of our shared global heritage. With a shift towards slow, authentic travel, there's a



