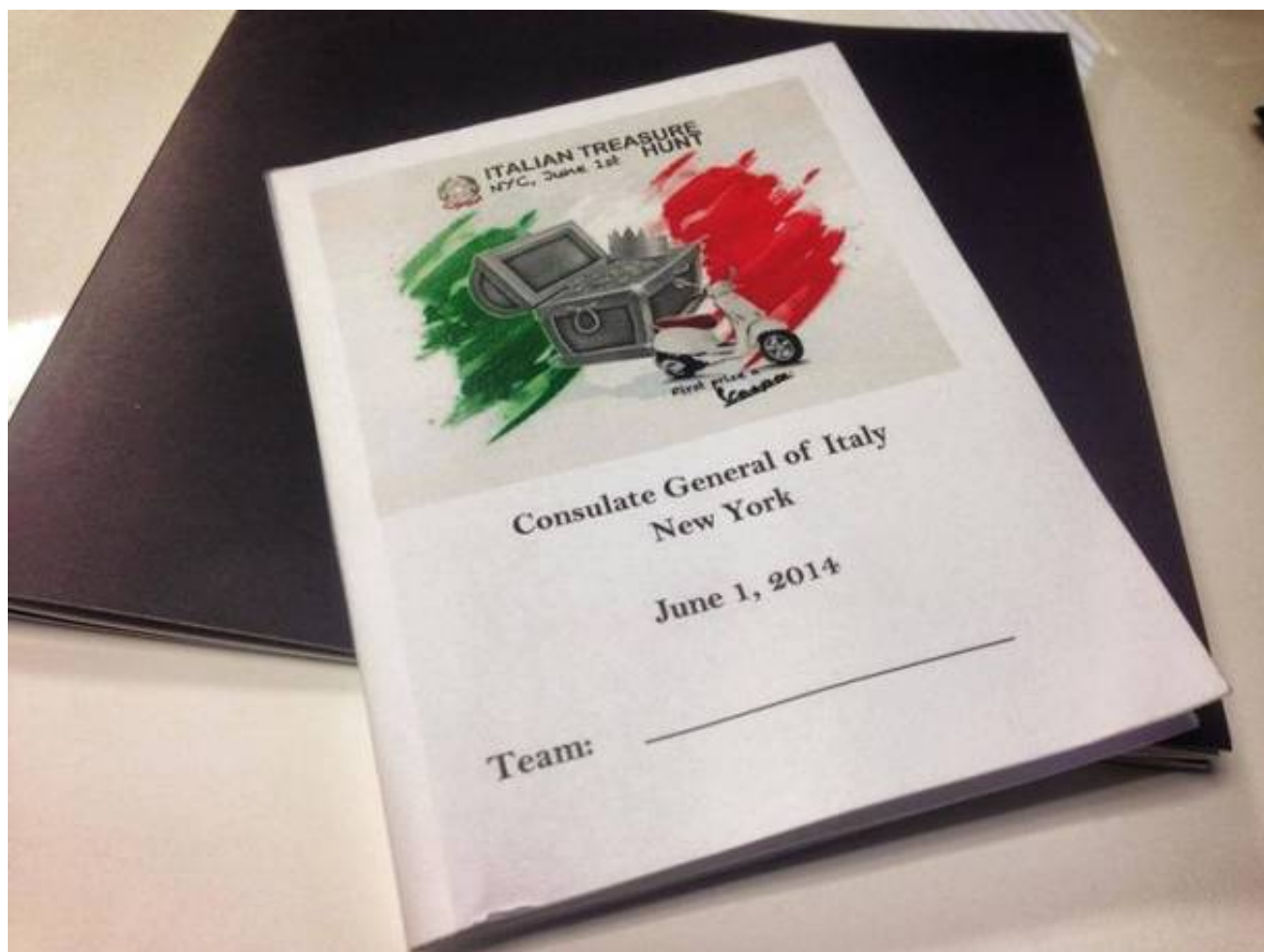




In Search of Italian Treasures all Over the Island of Manhattan

M. T. (June 06, 2014)



An exciting day for the city of New York: The Consulate General of Italy has organized – as a prelude to the annual Festa della Repubblica on June 2nd – a treasure hunt around the city. Uncovering precious Italian treasures all over the island of Manhattan. Great turn out and enthusiasm.

As a new and educational way of celebrating the Italian National Day in the Big Apple, this year, the Consulate General of Italy organized a day-long Treasure Hunt to honor the birth of the Republic of Italy.

The project was achieved through complex and meticulous planning, resulting in a huge success in terms of involvement and enthusiasm.



The first prize? An authentic Piaggio Vespa. The most famed and elegant scooter, the one desired by all since the day they turn of age, the one that the entire world associates to the famous film Roman Holiday, with the gorgeous Audrey Hepburn and the charming Gregory Peck.

Leaping forward to New York, with a modern, bright red version of the Vespa 150, perfect for city traffic.

But Piaggio was not the only sponsor present at the event, the other prizes were also offered by well-known brands, all Made in Italy like Bulgari, Valentino, Brooks Brothers, D & G, Max Mara, Maserati, Illy, Davines, Alitalia and others...

There were numerous inscriptions, thanks in part to an ad made by I-Italy that has been playfully diffused through social media. About forty groups signed up, composed of Italians, Italian-Americans, and also of people from all over the world.

"I have been at the Consulate all day, from when we greeted the participants in the morning up to when we started to see the first groups make their way back. I have to say that it was a great success and there was much enthusiasm and adrenaline." Vice Consul Pasqualini relates. "It has been both very entertaining and fulfilling.

Parked in front of the Consulate are the three shimmering Piaggio Vespas: a green one, a white one and a red one. Coming together for two days to honor a product that is the pride of Made in Italy and to tickle the imagination of many passers-by.

The hunt for the Italian treasures of New York was only a taste of what is to come the following day: which will feature events ranging from the presentation of the 2015 Expo to wine tastings.

In fact, like each year, a series of cultural events are held on June second in the most important Italian institutions, with the participation of the Italian Cultural Institute, the Italian Trade Commission, ENI, The Scuola d'Italia Guglielmo Marconi, and the Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimó'.

Volunteers stand at each post of the treasure hunt, armed with stamps and envelopes containing riddles to be solved in order to reveal the next location.

The groups, on the other hand, were each given a fake passport featuring the Vespa on its cover, an envelope with instructions, the first clue, and ready, set, go... the hunt begins!

The Consul General, Natalia Quintavalle, followed the race up close, stopping by the main steps of the treasure hunt herself.

The riddles had the groups really thinking. They led them to mouth-watering locations like the food store Di Palo's in Little Italy, or the restaurant Salumeria Rosi in the Upper West Side, the historical Tiro a Segno venue, and to well-known, historical sites like the New York Times Building, designed by Renzo Piano.

Other locations were the statue of Mazzini and the Victorians Amusement in Central Park, the MoMA and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Arnaldo Pomodoro's sculpture in front of the UN.

Adrenaline levels are high as the contestants dream, not only of riding around on the Vespa, but also of showing off a new designer Tods or Bulgari handbag.

"I would settle for one of those prizes", jokes a journalist partaking in the race when we meet her at one of the posts.

There was some confusion in getting near Central Park because of the ongoing Jewish Parade but everything went for the better.

The winners were a group composed of a couple and their daughter, the Rossi Hawkins family: William Hawkins, Angelica and Maria Luisa Rossi Hawkins.



“The daughter was determined to win the Piaggio Vespa. They made it back to the Consulate extremely early, after having successfully completed the entire course in record time. It was only 2:30 pm, way before our most optimistic predictions. Some of the steps were objectively difficult and required time to be thought through. The locations were also distant from one another and the New York traffic was pretty heavy” explains Lucia Pasqualini.

“It was hard to find the volunteer at the Metropolitan Museum because of the crowd in front of the museum, but we didn’t give up” reports another group.

“Solving the riddle that brought us to Arnaldo Pomodoro’s sculpture “Sphere within a Sphere” at the United Nations was incredibly difficult. A real brain teaser, but also gratifying to solve” concludes another group of friends who enter the Consulate, proudly holding their passport filled with the stamps from every location.

One thing is for sure: In the end it certainly turned out to be a beautiful day, spent in a city that can always be discovered, to uncover its “italianità”. This creative and instructive initiative from the Consulate stimulated the enthusiasm of all, thanks to an idea, for grown-ups and kids alike, by Natalia Quintavalle and Lucia Pasqualini.

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