



## **NIAF Announces 2019 Region of Honor: Molise**



Each year, The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) collaborates with a region in Italy by promoting its culture, business and tourism in the United States, while also traveling to the region to promote cultural exchange. This year the Region of Honor will be Molise

[The National Italian American Foundation \(NIAF\)](#) [2] announced its [2019 Region of Honor: Molise](#) [3]. Each year, NIAF collaborates with a region in Italy by promoting its culture, business and tourism in the United States, while also traveling to the region to promote cultural exchange. The region will also be prominently honored at the [NIAF 44th Anniversary Gala Weekend, November 1-3, 2019, in Washington, D.C](#) [4].

Co-Chairs Gabriel A. Battista and Patricia de Stacy Harrison, and members of the Foundation's executive committee and Board of Directors, will travel to Molise June 24-26, following two days of meetings in Rome with the NIAF Board and Italian political figures. This annual "Mission to Italy" brings together NIAF's leaders and business and government leaders to discuss key issues



influencing cultural, economic and diplomatic relations between our two nations, in Molise. While visiting the 2019 Region of Honor, NIAF leadership will explore the region's notable historic sites and meet with the President of the Region of Molise, the Hon. Donato Toma, as well as with Giovanni Colavita representing NIAF's corporate sponsor, [Colavita S.p.A.](#) [5]

"Molise offers an authentic Italian experience with its wonderful food, great regional wine, miles of Adriatic coastline and rugged mountainous scenery," said NIAF Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison. "But most of all, it offers us an opportunity to connect to a centuries-old culture and welcoming people."

"I am looking forward to exploring Molise, because it is a region that many Italian Americans trace their Italian ancestry from, including myself. My father emigrated to the United States from Molise." said Co-Chair Gabriel A. Battista.

During the NIAF mission, the delegation will meet the participants of the 2019 Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery Program who will also be visiting the region of Molise. Twenty university students of Italian heritage are participating in this year's program, now in its 20th year, which is dedicated to strengthening their understanding of their rich cultural heritage, introducing them to their ancestral homeland, and recognizing the many contributions Italy is making to the world. For the seventh consecutive year, participants are giving back to the local community with a service project in the town of Fornelli, in addition to exploring Molise's numerous historic and cultural highlights.

Italy's youngest and second-smallest region, Molise was originally part of the Abruzzo-Molise region but separated in 1963. Although it boasts a history that dates to the Stone Age, Molise is rather unknown and relatively untouched by widespread tourism.

The southern region's charm begins with its natural beauty. The Apennine mountain range encompasses caves, canyons and waterfalls and covers 55 percent of the region. The mountain range is part of the natural preserve Riserva Regionale Guardiaregia Campochiario, protected by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Molise also claims an impressive 22 miles of Adriatic coastline.

An agricultural region, Molise is home to some of the world's finest cheeses, including caciocavallo and stracciata, both produced in the area around Agnone. The region is a proud producer of durum wheat, which is commonly used to make pasta. Its high-quality olive oil is also widely distributed, thanks to the internationally recognized brand, Colavita.

The region offers enriching museums and sites as well as ancient ruins that tourists can visit. The National Italian American Foundation looks forward to sharing Molise's rich culture and beauty over the course of this year as our 2019 Region of Honor.

To attend the NIAF Gala where Molise will be honored, visit [www.niaf.org/gala/](http://www.niaf.org/gala/) [6].

To learn more about Molise, visit [www.niaf.org/molise/](http://www.niaf.org/molise/) [7].

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[5] <https://www.colavita.com/>

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