

■ BY MOTHER MARTHA

I always write about food, but today I would like to write about how food is written about. The conventional wisdom about journalism in 2026 runs roughly as follows: newsrooms are shrinking; foreign desks are an indulgence; and nobody will send a reporter to a small town in the Cilento, Abruzzi, Tuscany or Friuli Venezia-Giulia to cover their local food.

*Italy Now*, a digital news service available in eight languages by clicking on the language flag, was launched on June 10 before a full house of journalists, diplomats and business leaders at the *Associazione della Stampa* Estera, located in the capital city of Rome. It is Italy's Foreign Press Association.

The co-founders and co-editors-in-chief of *Italy Now*, **Alina Trabattoni** and **Sabina Castelfranco**, have decades of reporting for international outlets between them. Their pitch is deliberately contrarian: a publication devoted *not* to breaking news, but to the destinations, culture, wine, art, sports, lifestyle, businesses — and of course, food — that constitute what Italians actually talk about, with particular attention to the economy, innovation and digital transformation. “Since no mainstream outlet can afford to send a reporter to a small town to investigate its stories of excellence,” Castelfranco told the room, “this is the gap *Italy Now* wants to fill.”

Her formulation of the editorial thesis was blunter still: “For us, authenticity is the new luxury.”

The launch drew an audience that suggested institutional Italy is paying attention.

**Alessandra Priante**, President of ENIT, the national tourism agency, delivered the keynote and made an argument that will resonate with anyone tracking the politics of over-tourism. “Italy is the most beautiful story in the world,” she said. “It’s not a figure of speech. It’s something we deeply believe in. In the age of artificial intelligence,” she argued, “storytelling counts for more than numbers. If we don’t change what we measure, we won’t change what we do. Visitors don’t come to Italy only to see Florence or the Colosseum,” she added. “They come because they want to feel Italian.”

## FOOD IS JUST ONE ASPECT AMONG MANY OF “ITALY NOW”



Two veteran correspondents, Sabina Castelfranco (left) and Alina Trabattoni (right), give voice to the real Belpaese — the “Beautiful Country” of Italy

The speakers that followed read as a map of the Italy the platform intends to cover. **Paola Ansuini** of the Bank of Italy described the central bank’s push to deliver free financial education across the country in capillary form. The Venetian cultural phil-

anthropist **Countess Chiara Modica Donà dalle Rose**, president of the Fondazione Donà dalle Rose, spoke on patronage; **Camilla Lunelli**, vice-president of Ferrari Trento, on Italian products abroad; **Count Gelasio Gaetani d’Aragona Lovatelli** outlined wine tourism’s contribution to the economy; while **Daniele Kihlgren** and **Mafalda Inglese**, pioneers of village regeneration, traced their work in Abruzzo’s Santo Stefano di Sessanio in Abruzzo and in the Cilento, the rural coastal stretch of Campania.

**Ilaria D’Uva**, chief executive of the cultural storytelling company *D’Uva SRL*, closed the discussion.

“*Italy Now* was born to celebrate Italy and everything it represents, with journalism that informs and gives value to its readers,” said Trabattoni.

“We want to give voice to the Italy that works, creates and innovates far from the spotlight. The stories the big media overlook are often the truest.”

French correspondent **Bernard Bédarida**, Secretary of the Foreign Press Association’s governing council, welcomed the initiative and wished the founders *bon vent* — “good wind,” as the French saying goes.

*Italy Now* is online at [www.italynow.co.uk](http://www.italynow.co.uk) (pictured).

The wager, for Alina and Sabina, is that careful, verified storytelling about Italy can still find a global audience in any language, and tell the story of Italy’s food in a way that will attract healthy food-lovers everywhere. ○

