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News

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Italy Now, the News Service Giving a Voice to the Real Bel Paese

A new platform founded by two veteran correspondents bets that the stories big media can no longer afford to tell are the ones readers actually want

Italian Hours
Lucy Gordan



Sabina Castelfranco, left, and Alina Trabattoni at Italy Now's launch (Image courtesy of Italy Now)

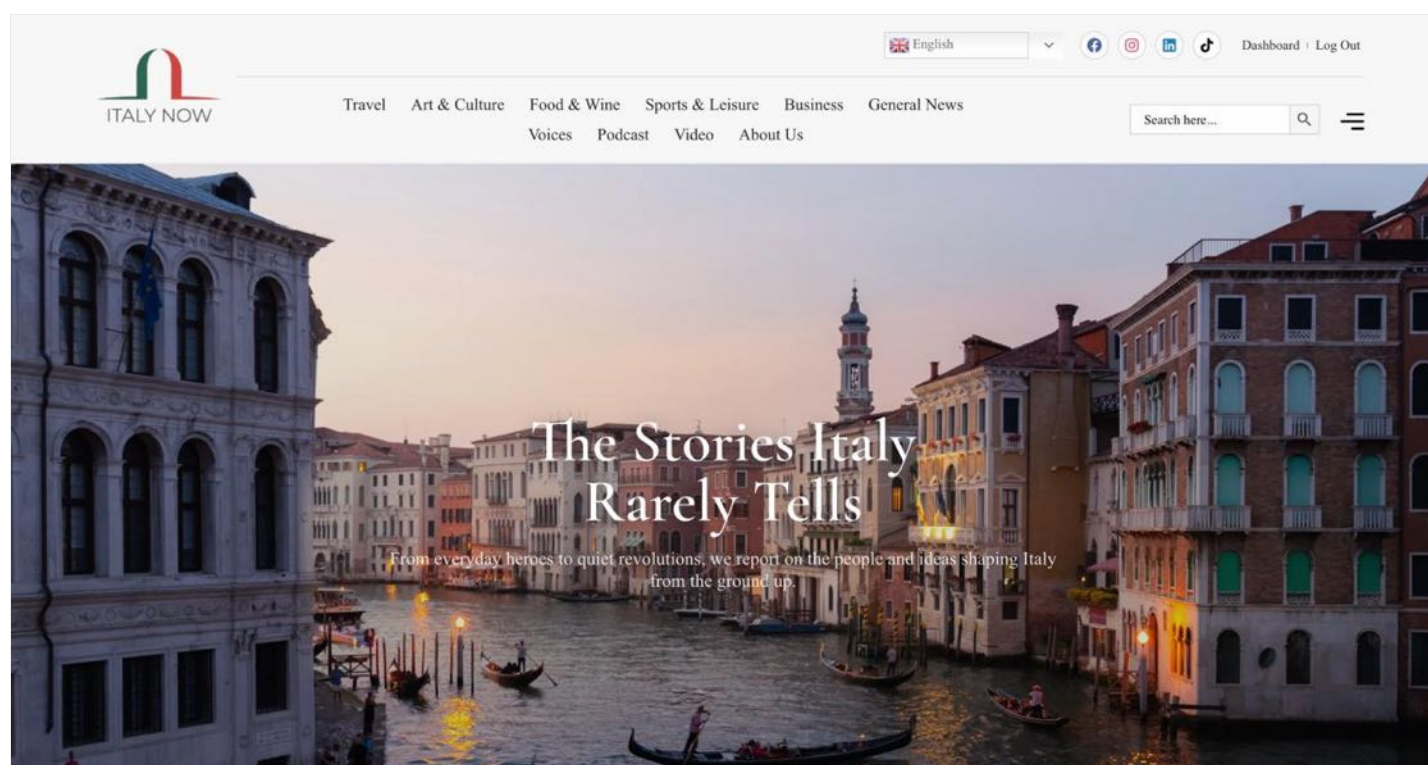
The conventional wisdom about journalism in 2026 runs roughly as follows: newsrooms are shrinking; foreign desks are an indulgence; and nobody is sending a reporter to a small town in the Cilento. On Wednesday evening, in the frescoed rooms of Palazzo Grazioli, two journalists set out to prove the conventional wisdom wrong.

Italy Now, a digital news service in eight languages, launched on June 10 before a full house of journalists, diplomats and business leaders at the Associazione della Stampa Estera, Italy's Foreign Press Association. Its co-founders and co-editors-in-chief, 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 culture, food and wine, art, lifestyle and businesses that constitute what Italians actually talk about, with particular attention to the economy, innovation and digital transformation.

"No mainstream outlet can now send a reporter to, say, a small town in southern Italy to investigate its stories of excellence," Castelfranco told the room. "That 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 overtourism. "Italy is the most beautiful story in the world," she said. "It is not a figure of speech. It is something we deeply believe in. In the age of artificial intelligence, storytelling counts for more than numbers: If we do not change what we measure, we will not change what we do. Visitors do not come to Italy only to see Florence or the Colosseum," she added. "They come because they want to feel Italian."

The economic case was made by Mauro Battocchi, director general for export growth and promotion at the Foreign Ministry, who located the strength of Italian exports in manufacturing excellence and in the stories, skills and territories behind it. "In essence, it's in its ecosystems," he said, pointing to a national export plan targeting €700bn in sales abroad by 2027, delivered with partners including the trade agency Agenzia ICE and the export finance bodies SIMEST and SACE.



The Italy Now dashboard (screenshot from website: www.italynow.co.uk)

The panel 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 cultural philanthropist 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 from Santo Stefano di Sessanio in Abruzzo to 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."

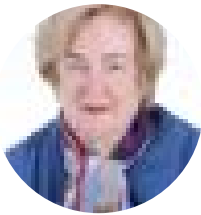
The platform is resident at the London School of Economics startup gender incubator and has been invited to join Cambridge University's Spark 2.0 startup "incubato." French correspondent Bernard Bédarida, secretary of the Foreign Press Association's governing council, welcomed the initiative and wished the founders "bon vent" – good wind, as the French saying goes.

Italy Now is online at www.italynow.co.uk. The wager, for two correspondents who have spent their careers inside the mainstream media they now propose to outflank, is that careful, verified storytelling about Italy can still find a global audience, in any language.

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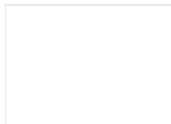


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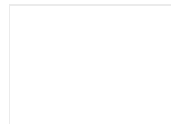
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