

Italy national day

Italy's best to be showcased in Japan

Vincenzo Petrone
AMBASSADOR OF ITALY TO JAPAN

Today I am particularly delighted to have the opportunity to celebrate our National Day in Japan. On this occasion, the gates of the embassy will be open for many friends who accepted our invitation and will join us here, in this magnificent and historical garden that in the Edo Period belonged to the Matsudaira, lords of Iyo Matsuyama, and later became the residence of Masayoshi Matsukata, the great statesman of the Meiji Era. It is a place particularly close to the heart of the Japanese people due to its association with "Chushingura," the well-known story of the 47 loyal samurai who vindicated their lord after he was forced to commit seppuku for assaulting a senior official of the shogunate at the beginning of the 18th century. Ten of the 47 ronin (masterless samurai), including Chikara Oishi, the son of the group leader, were kept under house arrest in the very place where our embassy is located.

Having the privilege of working and living in this historical place, I am constantly reminded of how deep and strong our bilateral relations are, supported today by a growing and healthy exchange of people, ideas and products.

The strong bonds between our two nations and people

were again confirmed recently after the earthquake of April 6, which struck the region of Abruzzo and caused widespread damage and a lot of human suffering. I was deeply impressed by the warm support and the sheer sympathy shown by many Japanese friends on this occasion, and I would like here to express to the Japanese people my sincere gratitude and appreciation for their friendship and generosity.

Our strong bilateral ties will be further reinforced in 2009 by the official working visit, scheduled for mid-September, of the president of the Republic of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano, who will come to Tokyo to inaugurate "Italia in Giappone 2009 (Italy in Japan 2009)," a program of more than 150 cultural, scientific and business-related events that will take place in the last quarter of this year.

Italia in Giappone 2009 is coordinated by the Embassy of Italy, and carried out with the cooperation of many Italian companies and public institutions in Japan: the Italian Trade Commission, the Italian Institute of Culture, the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan. However, the most important partners and organizers of the major projects are the Japanese companies and agencies that have planned, financed and promoted the key cultural events. Without their firm commitment and their exceptional managerial capabilities, an initiative of this

kind and of this magnitude would not be conceivable.

During his visit, President Napolitano will inaugurate Sept. 18 "The Heritage of the Roman Empire" exhibition at the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo, which will feature the "Minerva d'Arezzo," an impressive third-century B.C. bronze statue recently restored and displayed for the first time abroad.

Japan will also host the La Scala Milan with performances of "Aida" and "Don Carlo" at the NHK Hall and Tokyo Bunka Kaikan.

The exhibition "Ancient Egypt in Torino," the second-largest collection in the world after the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo, will take place at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum.

The "Masterpieces of Galleria Borghese in Rome" will first visit Kyoto and then Tokyo.

The exhibition of the "Macchiaioli" — a school of Italian painters considered the forerunners of the French Impressionists — will be in Fukuyama and then Tokyo.

Besides these major undertakings, we will offer the Japanese several more exhibitions of contemporary art, concerts, theater, ballet, cinema, and workshops on architecture and design.

Italia in Giappone 2009 will also include many events concerning fashion and textiles, gastronomy and many other sectors related to the Italian lifestyle.

Special mention among these events must be made of

"Wine Project," a joint initiative of the Italian Embassy, ICE (the Italian Trade Commission) and ENIT (the Italian State Tourism Board), which will delight the many Japanese wine-lovers through 2010. The project is structured in a series of events that will present to the Japanese public the many different tastes and characteristics of high-quality Italian wines through a journey among the best wine-producing regions, their traditions and the peculiarity of their individual cultural heritage.

High-quality, world-class Italian production is not limited to fashion, food and wine. Italia in Giappone 2009 will also present Italian strengths and achievements in science and industry, providing an excellent opportunity for the promotion of investment and the development of industrial cooperation between the two countries. The seventh-biggest economy and the sixth-largest exporter in the world, Italy is a key player in many industrial sectors, from the machine-tool industry, ranking in this sector among the four leading global producers, to the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. It is also a country with a strong manufacturing base in aerospace, in the energy sector and in many other areas, where innovation and creativity play a crucial role.

We are glad to see the streets of the most fashionable areas in Tokyo, Osaka and other Japanese cities lined with buildings designed by famous

architects housing the flagship stores and offices of Italian brands.

But Italian companies are main players also in the semiconductor industries, the engineering sectors and the steel business as shown by the important and expanding activities in Japan of several companies like Finmeccanica, STMicroelectronics, Daniele and Tenaris. Not to mention the important and competitive group of small and medium enterprises, the real backbone of our industrial structure. Italy like Japan is vocationally a manufacturing economy dominated by small enterprises. These realities will be presented during Italia in Giappone 2009.

Tourism will be accorded particular attention by promoting small, historical towns and rural areas, offering Japanese visitors the opportunity to experience the traditional lifestyle of our "borghi," our small towns.

This promotional activity will be carried out by ENIT, which will coordinate the Italian participation at JATA, the World Tourism Congress and Travel Fair in Tokyo in autumn.

In the field of science and technology, this year we will focus on the newly established industrial clusters in the fields of renewable energy, biotechnology and robotics, with the aim to develop further the cooperation with Japanese partners. Moreover, a specific project on the "Automotive & Aerospace Industry" will present Italian

Eight cornerstones of 'Italia in Giappone 2009'

Exhibition "Heritage of the Roman Empire"

Inauguration: Sept. 18, 2009
Tokyo — National Museum of Western Art — Sept. 19 — Dec. 13, 2009

Nagoya — Aichi Prefecture Art Museum — Jan. 6 — March 22, 2010

Aomori — Aomori Art Museum — April 10 — June 13, 2010

Sapporo — Hokkaido Modern Art Museum — July 3 — Aug. 22, 2010

Opera by La Scala Milan

"Aida": Tokyo, NHK Hall — Sept. 4, 6, 9, 11, 2009

"Don Carlo": Tokyo — Bunka Kaikan — Sept. 8, 12, 13, 15, 17, 2009

"Requiem" by Giuseppe Verdi: Tokyo — NHK Hall — Sept. 10, 2009

Concert by the orchestra: Tokyo — NHK Hall — Sept. 16, 2009

XXI General Assembly of the Italy-Japan Business Group (IJBG)



Tokyo — Sept. 16, 17, 2009

Exhibition-event "Automotive & Aerospace Industry"

Tokyo — Sept. 24 — Oct. 17, 2009

Exhibition "Ancient Egypt in Turin"

Tokyo — Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum — Aug. 1 — Oct. 4, 2009

Sendai — Art Museum of Miyagi Prefecture — Oct. 17 — Dec. 20, 2009

Fukuoka — Municipal Art Museum — Jan. 5 — March 7, 2010

Kobe — Municipal Museum — March 20 — May 30, 2010

Shizuoka — Prefectural Art Museum — June 12 — Aug. 22, 2010

Exhibition "Masterpieces of the Borghese Gallery in Rome"

Kyoto — Oct. 31 — Dec. 27, 2009

Tokyo — Jan. 16 — April 4, 2010

Promotion of Italian products in department stores

September — December 2009

Exhibition "I Macchiaioli: I Maestri del Realismo Italiano"

Fukuyama — Fukuyama Museum of Art — Oct. 3 — Nov. 29, 2009

Tokyo — Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum — Jan. 16 — March 14, 2010

excellence in a sector particularly suited for cooperation between Italian and Japanese firms. Through all these initiatives, the Italian historical legacy and its current achievements will be presented to the Japanese public in Tokyo and in many other cities around the country. It will provide an opportunity to know each other more deeply but also to explore new modes of cooperation between two countries that boast a great cultural heritage while striving to contribute to find solutions to current global issues. Italia in Giappone 2009 intends to send a firm message

of optimism in the current economic crisis, convinced as we are that building on the solidity of traditions and passion for

innovation is the best way to prepare for a new period of economic growth in our countries.



Local harvest: A busy open-air market in Altamura, southern Italy. FOTOTECA ENIT



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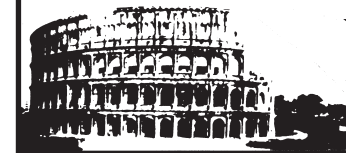


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