



EXCELLENCE

# VIVA ITALIA!

Italian beauty, passion and creativity have played a huge part in forming the world we know today. CK Hutchison has also been a beneficiary of the Italian story. Viva Italia!



**Italy, as a country, has only technically existed since 1861 when the Piedmontese Albertine Statute of 1848 was extended to**

**the whole Kingdom of Italy. But when people think of Italy today, they think of the grand sweep of history from the Roman Empire to the Renaissance, and through to the modern nation that adds allure to the world through its beauty, its inventiveness and its many different flavours.**

The nation has left an imprint on the world – and on CK Hutchison. Italy's delectable food products and exquisite wines can be found in the stores of A S Watson, and 3 Group's successful telecommunications exist through the good graces of Italian invention.

There is much in modern and historic Italy to inspire 21st-century citizens. That is why so many around the world, Italians and their foreign admirers, proclaim, "Viva Italia!"

### THE CORNERSTONE OF WESTERN CIVILISATION

Modern Italy, as we know it is actually quite young, but the deep-lying roots of its culture and identity can be traced back to the great empire that became the bedrock of Western civilisation.

The Roman Empire covered a huge swathe of the world and created a common culture for the West that encompasses law, administration, language and philosophy. From Hadrian's Wall on the civilised English and wild Scottish border (here there be Celts!) to the Caspian Sea and the Red Sea, the Roman Empire incorporated much of the best of the preceding Greek civilisation, the nations the Romans conquered, and admirable new practices and codes of conduct of its own.

The decline of the Empire and the appropriately named 'Dark Ages' meant that Italy would have to wait for its Renaissance before its next wave of brilliance could be unleashed.

### RENAISSANCE

In the 14th century, a cultural movement that would spark a renewal of innovative spirit and achievements in arts, literature, science and philosophy throughout Europe began in Florence, Tuscany. St Peter's Basilica, built to replace its crumbling predecessor in the 1500s, engaged many of the artists that are still famous today, including Michelangelo (1475-1564) and Raphael (1483-1520). It took the financial strength of the Church to undertake these major projects as the empires of yore had been replaced by micro-states – principalities, duchies and the like – that lacked the heft of large central

governments needed to execute major infrastructure projects.

However, the inventiveness of the Italians was not to be denied. Dreamers like Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) not only excelled in the arts, but also in engineering. Hydraulic pumps, reversible crank mechanisms and even plans to divert the Arno River were all part of his practically creative spirit. Thus, genius preceded the creativeness that would characterise modern Italy.

### IL BEL PAESE

Today, Italy as we know it continues to astonish with its long tradition of innovation and sense of aesthetic appreciation. But more than any man-made marvel, today's Italians and the citizens of our global village have been blessed to inherit the beautiful landscapes that define the boot-shaped land *il bel paese* (beautiful country).

### CANALS OF VENICE

Venice, the capital of the Veneto region, is the pinnacle of romanticism. The city where canals and gondolas have yet to be replaced by roads and cars is listed as a World Heritage Site. A view from the Ponte di Rialto (Rialto Bridge) will give you the perfect image of the canal beneath with gondolas gliding through as the gondoliers serenade their passengers. In the evening, you can enjoy a fragrant cup of Italian



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## Sicily: Crystal clear waters of the Mediterranean meet the southern extremities of the Apennine Mountains.



espresso along the edges of Piazza San Marco (St Mark's Square) as the skies turn a brilliant Italian azure.

### ISLAND OF SICILY

Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, is an autonomous region of Italy which also includes several smaller isles. With a typical Mediterranean climate, the beauty of the islands has inspired art, music, cuisine and architecture. Sicily is where the crystal clear waters of the Mediterranean meet the southern extremities of the Apennine Mountains, contributing to a beautiful terrain that will leave you spellbound. Mount Etna, the tallest active volcano in Europe at 3,350 metres and one of the most active volcanoes in the world, provides a dramatic backdrop for the city of Catania, contrasting with the sparkling sea on its shores.

The far west of Sicily is also a perfect location for wine-tasting treks through the islands. Its volcanic soil and 300 days of fine Mediterranean weather has allowed wineries and vineyards to flourish. In 2014, Sicily was the fourth-largest wine producer in Italy. Marsala, where Giuseppe Garibaldi landed to begin the unification of Italy in 1860, produces one of the most pristine Sicilian wines. Surely, sipping a glass of the best Marsala wine in a villa on the hillside,

overlooking vineyards as far as the sea, with the Egadi Islands beyond, is an experience and enjoyment that even Dionysus (the god of wine) would be jealous of.

### THE LAND OF WINES

Italy's romance with wine predates even the Roman Empire, dating back to when much of southern Italy was colonised by the Greeks, who named the country Enotria – the Land of Wines.

The one constant across the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and subsequent independence, has been Italy's commitment to developing a vast array of grape varieties and cultivating acres of land dedicated to the vine. The peninsula is worthy of its historic name today.

In Italy, wines are produced all over the country, from the Alto Adige in the foothills of the Alps to the tip of Sicily in the warm Mediterranean Sea. According to the International Organisation of Vine and Wine, Italy has the fourth-largest area of vineyards at 1,704,000 acres, beaten only by Spain, China and France.

Italy is also possibly the most diverse wine-producing country in the world with over 2,000 indigenous varieties and, more recently, the emergence of international

varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. There are many classic wines that are revered internationally, but probably the most famous are Barolo and Barbaresco from Piedmont in the north and Chianti Classico from Tuscany in central Italy.

That's something you don't need to explain to Watson's Wine. The A S Watson Group's wine retailer currently carries around 125 wines from 35 Italian producers. Some of their most popular wines include Tommasi Amarone Classico, Fonterutoli Chianti Classico, Sette Ponti Oreno and Ceretto Barolo Brunate, all top-class Italian wines bound to indulge every single taste receptor.

Jeremy Stockman, General Manager for Watson's Wine, explains what makes Italian wines some of the finest in the world: "No other country has reproduced those indigenous varieties to the same degree of complexity. These wines often have an earthy character with savoury notes and an 'Italianess' about them." According to Mr Stockman, Italian wines have increased in popularity in Asia in recent years, reflecting the growing awareness elsewhere. He reports that this is especially true of "the light and fruity sparkling Prosecco. We are seeing more Italian wines on shelves in Asia (including supermarkets) and more people talking about the wines."



Different wines can be found throughout Italy, and each region has local styles of wine and great producers that specialise in the area, but most important is the tradition of hundreds of year of viticulture (grape cultivation), winemaking and gastronomy. Together with its local foods, each region has established its own flavours and combinations, offering a different, but just as heavenly, experience for every palate. "More than any other country, the wine and food produced are interlinked and the wines come alive with the local food," says Mr Stockman, "whether it be the cheeses of the north with higher acidity reds, or the rich tomato-based slow-cooked dishes further south with Sangiovese grapes."

**BUON APPETITO!**

Italian wine has evolved alongside regional cuisines, and Italian food is considered some of the finest in the world. Its most popular dishes, such as spaghetti bolognese, pizza, lasagna and ravioli have dazzled the taste buds of masses all over the world. However, Italian gourmet food culture extends much wider and deeper.

*De re coquinaria* (On Cookery), also known as the *Apicius*, dates from the first century BC and is one of the very first cookbooks known to man. The book is a collection of recipes from Roman times providing directions for experienced chefs, revealing how pheasants, peacock, cured meats, pork

sausage and seafood were all part of many diets during the Roman Empire. Crops of vegetables such as asparagus, mushrooms, broccoli, carrots, lettuce and other greens were also grown while apricot and cherry trees were cultivated for their fruit. After the fall of the Roman Empire, each region began to develop its own style of cuisine which included meats, bread, pasta, cheese and fruits.

AS Watson's Western-themed, upmarket international food hall, GREAT, in Admiralty, Hong Kong, has consistently been curating an exquisite selection of Italian gourmet foods. One can confidently walk into the food hall and come out with carnaroli rice, dried porcini, shallots, white wine, chicken stock, extra virgin olive oil, butter and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese - ingredients to make an authentic wild mushroom risotto.

As Timothy Broderick, Executive Chef of GREAT Food Hall, explains, every ounce of truffles from the Piedmont and Alba regions, every drop of balsamic vinegar from Modena, and every bottle of hand-harvested olive oil, are the unique results of centuries of culinary tradition. Each flavour tells a unique story about the history behind its making and its region of origin.

Pizza Pala, an Italian pizza takeaway counter found within GREAT Food Hall, serves truly

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**“The emphasis in Italian food has always been placed on quality ingredients.”**

Timothy Broderick,  
Executive Chef for International  
Fine Foods at GREAT Food Hall

authentic Pizza Romana – Roman-style pizza. Unlike Pizza Napoletana (Neapolitan pizza), where the pizza bases are soft and pliable, a thin and crispy base is preferred in Rome.

Besides artisanal pizza, pasta and Prosciutto di Parma, Parmigiano-Reggiano and freshly imported Italian fruits and vegetables are all popular bestsellers from the supermarket.

Colatura di Alici, also known as garum, is an ancient Roman fish sauce that has been surprisingly popular at GREAT. “Colatura di Alici adds depth and flavour to many Italian dishes. Despite being relatively unknown to most, this centuries-old condiment has fast become a favourite since its introduction in GREAT Food Hall,” explains Chef Broderick. During ancient Roman times, the sauce and other similar fish-based sauces had the equivalent status to ketchup in the modern world. In the beautiful Amalfi coast region, pasta is mixed with garlic, chilli-infused olive oil and a little Colatura di Alici for a deliciously rich flavour.

When asked why Italian cuisine has retained its worldwide popularity and remains influential to this day, Chef Broderick says he believes it is because it has remained consistent and well-defined. “Through the test of time, the emphasis has always

been placed on quality ingredients and the sheer practicality of the food,” says Chef Broderick. “Many comparable Western cuisines seem to be reinvented every decade or so to keep them on trend.”

While our taste buds continue to enjoy the (quite literal) fruits of Italian gourmet culture today, the devices in our pockets (which could very likely also be named after a fruit) also owe their existence to Italian inventiveness.

### ITALY CALLING

The ingenuity and innovation that was born out of the Renaissance in Florence has carried into modern times thanks to Italian inventors whose impact is still felt today.

While Alexander Graham Bell’s famous phrase “Mr Watson – come here – I want to see you” has long been recognised as the birth of telephony, his work was not without precedent and in 2002 the US Congress finally acknowledged that another inventor – an Italian – beat him to something recognisable as a telephone.

Technology leaders often dispute ‘who came first’ through lengthy patent court battles, but Antonio Meucci (1808-1889), a Florentine inventor, is now recognised as the creator of the first version of the telephone – which he called the *teletrofono*.

Following in the footsteps of fellow Italians Volta and Galvani, Meucci’s successful globetrotting career in Italian opera production afforded him the funds and time to indulge his passion for invention. A student of electrology, while living in Havana he accidentally captured and transmitted a sound from the mouth of an employee he was trying to cure using electricity, through a copper device. He coined the term ‘speaking telegraph’ (*‘telegrafo parlante’*) to describe the phenomena and his subsequent research in this area. This 1849 happenstance led to investigations into transmitting sound.

Meucci was later hired, and his patent rights acquired, by the Globe Telephone Company who designated him Electrician of the Company and promoted his telephone supremacy in long-standing battles with Bell’s companies, even after Meucci’s death in 1889. In 2002, the US Congress recognised his contribution by formally approving a statement recognising him as the true inventor of the telephone.



## Today's era of mobile telephony owes a huge debt to the inventive spirit of both Marconi and Meucci.



### RADIO MARCONI!

The claim by Guglielmo Giovanni Maria Marconi (1874-1937) to be the inventor of the radio has been much less controversial. Indeed, the most famous case of when radio was not being used, that is, during the *Titanic* disaster, led to laws demanding that his device be used 24/7 to monitor distress channels used by ships at sea.

Born to mixed Italian-British parentage, he was an average performer in school but a genius of invention. Working with his family butler as his lab assistant, he invented a lightning detector for storm prediction and shortly afterwards devised a means for making a bell ring across the room - without the use of wires.

He was just 20 at the time. With his shocked parents' support and after further developing his invention, he went to Britain in 1896 to continue his research. He established the "Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company" in 1897, later to be renamed the Marconi Company.

He conducted a series of experiments in Britain and Italy, furthering the reach of his device. He proved naysayers wrong and demonstrated that transatlantic transmission was possible. While some



### 3 ITALIA: CK HUTCHISON'S COMMITMENT TO ITALY

With the technology descended from the great Italian inventors, CK Hutchison has been providing Italians with cellular phones services, wireless Internet services and mobile television through 3 Italia since the turn of the millennium.

With 10.1 million activated SIM cards, 3 Italia is ranked the fourth largest telecoms provider in Italy. Recent research has shown that 3 Italia's customers use smartphones and the Internet twice as much as the Italian average. These numbers will likely grow much bigger very soon.

### THE PROPOSED MERGER

On 6 August 2015, CK Hutchison announced it will form a joint venture with VimpelCom of their telecoms businesses in Italy\* - 3 Italia and WIND - in one of the largest merger and acquisition deals to be done in that country since 2007.

Canning Fok, Co-Group Managing Director of CK Hutchison, believes this deal represents a major milestone for CK Hutchison's Italian business, saying "This transaction underlines CK Hutchison's continuing confidence

in the Italian economy, and its commitment to the development of nationwide digital infrastructure and services in Italy."

With over 31 million mobile customers and 2.8 million fixed line customers (of which 2.2 million are fixed-broadband customers) combined, the two will join hands to become a leading operator in Europe's fourth largest telecoms market.

### 1+1>2

Today, 3 Italia's 4G LTE network reaches 54 per cent of the Italian population in more than 1,000 towns and cities. The company's fast mobile Internet 3G network reaches 97 per cent of Italians.

The combination of the two networks, together with significant additional investment, will enable Italian mobile users to enjoy even broader LTE network coverage, higher download speeds, higher network reliability and more advanced services. Non vedo l'ora! (I can't wait!)

\* Completion is subject to obtaining regulatory approvals including EU competition approval.



detractors refused to believe him, his 1902 transmission between Glace Bay, Nova Scotia and Poldhu in Cornwall was irrefutable, and Italian science established another first in the realm of telecommunications.

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**MADE IN ITALY**

Today, Italian inventiveness and creativity are expressed in the innovative nature of its world-famous products. From fashion and handbags, to luxury cars and yachts, 'Italian craftsmanship' is a synonym for quality and pristine execution of form and design.

Bottega Veneta, Dolce & Gabbana, Ermenegildo Zegna, Fendi, Ferragamo, Giorgio Armani, Gucci, Prada, Valentino and Versace - the world's clothes, accessories and jewellery are all designed by Italians whose names dominate fashion and the high streets of glamorous cities from New York to Shanghai.

While German car manufacturing is also renowned, it is at the very highest

level of car manufacturing that Italians are peerless. The rarest cars affording the most prestige are Italian - think Lamborghini, Ferrari, Alfa Romeo, Pagani and Maserati. There is a marriage of craftsmanship and performance and, the least imitable factor, artistry, which others have been unable to match. The most expensive hybrid car on the market today and the most expensive sold at auction are both Ferraris - the modern Ferrari LaFerrari Base (USD1.5 million) and the 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO. The latter sold for over USD34 million at auction last year. Its streamlined beauty will have your heart racing - even before your feet touch the pedals!

Where Romans once ruled the seas, Italians now rule the exclusive harbours of luxury yacht owners. Benetti, Azimut, Ferretti and Perini Navi are just some of the Italian shipbuilders that exemplify modern Italian-inspired industriousness. Like the car manufacturers, many have pedigrees stretching back to the origins of the medium. In this case, it is the modern, post-wood shipbuilding era when modern composite materials became the new standard. Benetti was founded in 1873, but made the transition to the new world

of high-tech yacht building, inspiring like-minded craftsmen.

**VIVA ITALIA!**

All in all, there is something special in the national character of Italy that seems to enable it to create and deliver the most desired goods in the world, drawing from its own heritage and culture. Where once Italians conquered the world by force of arms and advanced governance, they now appeal to people's hearts, driving them to willingly surrender to the lure of the nation's legacy, whether it be in the kitchen, at the dinner table, or through our pockets.

Their inventive spirit, dedication and discipline mean that when Italians dream, their dreams become a reality which has universal appeal. For centuries to come, the people of the world will continue to celebrate this nation and proclaim, "Viva Italia!" ◻