



DISCOVERING UMBRIA

TRAVEL BLOG - TRAVELLING, TASTING, EXPERIENCING THE GREEN HEART OF ITALY

9/24/2013

Barbanera - My Day of Happiness in Spello, Umbria



One of the most difficult facts of running a blog is probably writing quite short posts, concentrating impressions and emotions in few lines, so that any reader, between a coffee break and a meeting, an invoice and an email to send, can take some minutes of his/her precious time to read it, hopefully.

CATEGORIES

- ▶ MY LIFE IN UMBRIA
- ▶ FOOD and WINE
- ▶ EVENTS
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GUEST BLOGGER FOR

Umbria

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Well, this is the situation I'm living right now: I should tell you about my recent full day at Fondazione Barbanera, in Spello, Umbria: a full day, begun as a press-blog tour, that immediately turned in an involving visionary, hypnotic experience.

Like telling a wonderful dream to our best friend, my visit at Barbanera has induced so many reflections, perceptions, sensations, colours, aromas and perfumes, memories from a remote past so well connected to modern times, that I really find my writing skills - and in this foreign language - very limited for this occasion.

The orto at Fondazione Barbanera

Barbanera is the evocative name of a legendary astronomer and philosopher who lived in this part of Umbria in the half of 1700. Everybody ignores who he really was, where and when he exactly lived or if Blackbeard was just a mythological name like Homer is for the Odyssey. The

fact we know for sure is that in 1762 the very first stamped Italian almanac was printed by Pompeo Campana in Foligno, town very famous for the skills of local engravers.

"An almanac is an annual publication that includes information such as weather forecasts, farmers' planting dates, tide tables, and tabular information often arranged according to the calendar. Astronomical data and various statistics are found in almanacs, such as the times of the rising and setting of the sun and moon, eclipses, hours of full tide, stated festivals of churches, and so on". (Wikipedia). A very important working tool for a region whose economy was based only on agriculture at that time.

The myth of Barbanera

Barbanera's charm, I was talking before, is exactly this one: this ancient and archaic knowledge, a simple world based only on something that in the last 60 years we have literally deleted from our lives: the infinite cycles of Nature.

Like in a sort of trance, these are the feelings, sensations, thoughts that pop up on your mind entering the fairy gates of Fondazione Barbanera 1762: walking in the beautiful organic and bio-dynamic orto (house garden) with more than 15 different grapes and 40 tomatoes varieties, together with thousands of plants and flowers, rare fruit trees almost disappeared. Talking to the charismatic people who work in this very special place, (re)discovering step by step, along an initiatic path, the only veritas, that we - modern-high-tech-always-online-weird-mammals - are so frivolous to forget: we only belong to Nature.

- Almanacco Barbanera - One Year of Happiness, is an annual publication.
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- The event at Primi d'Italia next week
- Circulation: 2.5 million copies.
- Barbanera is printed by Editoriale Campi (third generation), Spello, Umbria.
- The building where Barbanera's editorial staff is located was a former bachificio, a factory where silkworms were hosted and raw silk produced.
- The rich archive is full of ancient, modern and recent editions of Almanacchi from Italy and all over the world, an endless mine for anthropologists and sociologists.
- Gabriele D'Annunzio, one of the most famous Italian poet of the last century was a fanatic of Barbanera, writing even a letter (preserved at Fondazione) where he declared that he always had a copy of the Almanac on his pillow.
- The house garden is open to visitors on request (min. 20 people). The best periods to enjoy its beauty are Spring and early Autumn.
- **SAVE THE DATE:** If you are in Umbria on September 26-29 during I Primi d'Italia

food and pasta festival, Barbanera is organizing an exhibition at Palazzo Brunetti-Candiotti in Foligno, where you can learn more on this amazing and charming world.

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A special thank to my great hosts: Monique Hemsì, Pia Fanciulli, Luca Baldini, Chef Luisa Scolastra for the unforgettable dinner at Villa Roncalli, Foligno, and to my old and new friends and travel mates Francesca Barbieri, Rebecca Winke, Andrea Riscassi.