

# LUISS



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**Can Italian Local Food Festivals, “Sagre”,  
Be Used to Promote Italian Artisanship and Culture to Develop  
an Economic Cycle? Innovative Marketing Strategies That  
Should Be Employed.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the Italian local gastronomic festivals, known as Sagre, focusing on their marketing potential to serve as effective promotional channels of Italian craftsmanship and to generate a sustainable economic cycle. Despite Sagre already being a crucial vehicle for presenting local craftsmanship and traditional specialties, their full potential for strategic marketing and economic growth remains largely unexplored. Deeply connected to Italian gastronomic and cultural traditions, Sagre are not simply gastronomic events but vibrant displays of a Region's local culture, craftsmanship, and values. Therefore, in a further evolving tourism landscape, shaped by changing consumer behaviors, intensified tourism competition, and rising global demand for niche artisanal products of exceptional quality and authenticity, Sagre offers a unique opportunity to revitalize traditional craftsmanship, sustain local economies, and reinforce regional identity.

Today, such festivals are already prominent platforms for showcasing local craftsmanship, but neither their economic nor their cultural potential is yet fully achieved. By further enhancing marketing and presentation for artisan products within the context of festivals, Sagre can evolve into powerful platforms that attract both domestic and international audiences. Such strategic reinforcement would not only raise the cultural impact of events but also reinforce a virtuous economic cycle, supporting artisans, stimulating local production, and contributing to the broader development of regional economies.

Methodologically, the thesis employs a mixed-methods research approach. An in-depth literature review will form the theoretical framework. At the same time, case studies of specific Sagre will provide practical information on the organization and how artisanal products are promoted and received.

Questionnaires and surveys distributed to festival attendees will capture consumer expectations, behaviors, and purchasing habits. Additionally, interviews with organizers will offer detailed information on how Sagre are managed, both legally and operationally.

Finally, this research aims to contribute to the discourse on cultural tourism, sustainable development, and heritage marketing by illustrating how Sagre can promote economic regeneration and cultural conservation. The findings show how to develop and implement potentially effective strategies to align tradition and innovation to sustain both Sagre and Italian craftsmanship in the long term.

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# INTRODUCTION

This research aims to explore how Sagre can be strategically utilized to boost the visibility, value, and market access of artisanal products, ultimately supporting local economic revitalization and the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The first chapter is based on an extensive literature review that analyzes the broad socio-economic and cultural forces that drive the demand for niche products in Italy, like the increasing consumer preference for authenticity, sustainability, ethical production, and experiential consumption. These forces are especially relevant to Sagre events, which provide immersive multisensory experiences that directly involve consumers with producers in a festive and culturally meaningful way.

Chapter 2 further develops the theoretical foundation by introducing two case studies—the Ladispoli Artichoke Sagra and Anguillara Sabazia Fish Sagra—through qualitative research that involved, as in the second case, interviews with organizers, local artisans, municipal administrators, analysis of official reports, and promotional materials.

Chapter 3 complements the practical analysis based on a survey conducted among Sagra attendees, aimed at capturing contemporary consumer behaviors, motivations, and expectations regarding artisanal products and festival experiences. The findings of this survey are crucial for understanding how consumers perceive the authenticity, quality, and cultural significance of artisanal products, and how these determinants influence their purchase decisions. Guided by both theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, the final chapter offers a set of innovative marketing strategies tailored to the context of Sagre,

emphasizing the importance of experiential place branding, regional identity, and collaborative governance among artisans, local authorities, and tourism operators.

# CHAPTER 1 – Exploring the Driving Forces Behind Niche Product Demand in Italy

## 1.1 Understanding Niche Products in the Italian Context

In recent years, the demand for niche products—local, culturally unique, often handicraft products—has risen enormously, particularly in countries with strong artisan cultures like Italy. This trend reflects a broader shift in consumer behavior, where individuals increasingly seek authenticity, sustainability, and meaningful experiences over mass-produced uniformity<sup>1</sup>.

Italy's craftsmanship has been a part of its economic and cultural heritage. According to the Italian Observatory of Artistic Crafts (Osservatorio dei Mestieri d'Arte), Italy is home to over 80,000 artisanal enterprises, many of which are family-run and rooted in local traditions<sup>2</sup>. These artisanal businesses do more than just protect intangible heritage; they often contribute to local economies, particularly in rural and semi-rural communities. Industrialization and globalization, however, have placed many of these crafts at risk, making the resurgence of interest in niche products both timely and a necessity<sup>3</sup>.

The rise in popularity of specialty products has also been attributed to the rise of the "experience economy" where consumers value the story, process, and human connection behind a product as much as the product itself<sup>4</sup>. This is even

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<sup>1</sup> Pine, B. Joseph, and James H. Gilmore. 1999. *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

<sup>2</sup> Osservatorio dei Mestieri d'Arte (OMA). 2020. *Rapporto Annuale sull'Artigianato Artistico in Italia*. Florence: Fondazione CR Firenze. <https://fondazionecrfirenze.it/>

<sup>3</sup> Santagata, Walter. 2002. "Cultural Districts, Property Rights and Sustainable Economic Growth." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26(1): 9–23. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/4752921\\_Cultural\\_Districts\\_Property\\_Rights\\_and\\_Sustainable\\_Economic\\_Growth](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/4752921_Cultural_Districts_Property_Rights_and_Sustainable_Economic_Growth)

<sup>4</sup> Pine and James, *The Experience Economy*, at 9.

evident with Italy's Sagre—local festivals commemorating regional or local culture and traditional dishes. These festivals are already an opportunity for artisans to showcase their products in a real community-based experience. As noted by Bessièrè in the journal “Sociologia Ruralis”, food festivals play a crucial role in reinforcing local identity and promoting regional products, making them ideal platforms for the promotion of artisanal goods<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, the demand for niche products by consumers is increasingly guided by ethical and green attitudes. Consumers are more aware of the social and ecological impact of their purchases and are turning to products that are locally sourced, sustainably made, and ethically produced<sup>6</sup>.

## **1.2 Key Drivers Behind the Rise in Niche Product Demand in Italy**

### *1.2.1 Cultural Heritage and Regional Identity*

One of Italy's most distinctive features is its regional diversity. Every region has its own distinct artisanal and cultural substance, ranging from Sicily's Mediterranean patterns to Trentino-Alto Adige's alpine roots. Regional diversity isn't merely maintained, however, but celebrated with niche products reflecting local traditions, materialities, and design sensibilities. Local and foreign consumers equally find them increasingly appealing as materializations of region and heritage<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Bessièrè, Jacinthe. “*Local Development and Heritage: Traditional Food and Cuisine as Tourist Attractions in Rural Areas.*” *Sociologia Ruralis* 38, no. 1 (1998): 21–34.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9523.00061>

<sup>6</sup> Cervellon, Marie-Cécile, and Ann Wernerfelt. “*Knowledge Sharing among Green Fashion Communities Online: Lessons for the Sustainable Supply Chain.*” *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* no. 2 (2012): 176–192.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235312297\\_Knowledge\\_sharing\\_among\\_green\\_fashion\\_communities\\_online\\_Lessons\\_for\\_the\\_sustainable\\_supply\\_chain](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235312297_Knowledge_sharing_among_green_fashion_communities_online_Lessons_for_the_sustainable_supply_chain)

<sup>7</sup> Ray, Christopher. “*Culture, Intellectual Property and Territorial Rural Development.*” *Sociologia Ruralis* 38, no. 1 (1998): 3–20. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9523.00060>

Artisanal and specialty goods such as Lazio artichokes, Tuscan leather, and Sardinian textiles are not merely commodities—they are cultural artifacts. Their appeal lies in their ability to tell stories, evoke memories, and connect consumers to a specific locale. As Santagata argues in her article “*Cultural Districts, Property Rights and Sustainable Economic Growth*”, cultural districts in Italy thrive when local production is tied to a strong sense of identity and community<sup>8</sup>.

### *1.2.2 Experiential and Emotional Consumption*

The shift from material consumption to experiential consumption has reclassified the manner in which value is considered in the marketplace. Consumers are no longer buying products; they are buying emotions, stories, and experiences. This is particularly true for Sagre, where the purchase of an artisanal niche product is part of a multisensory cultural event that involves music, cuisine, heritage, and community participation<sup>9</sup>.

As customers have the chance to encounter the craftsman, witness the manufacturing, or take part in the traditional event, the product becomes more than an object—it becomes a memory.

### *1.2.3 Sustainability and Ethical Consumption Trends*

Sustainability has become a central theme in consumer decision-making, particularly in Europe. Ethical consumption, climate consciousness, and the circular economy have turned the production, sourcing, and distribution of products into the center of their rising concern. Niche products, especially those

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<sup>8</sup> Santagata, “*Cultural Districts*,” at 9.

<sup>9</sup> Pine and James, “*The Experience Economy*”, at 9.

rooted in artisanal traditions, are often aligned with these values, owing to their limited production scale, their local-product-based character, and their low environmental impact<sup>10</sup>.

Italian craftsmanship fits easily into this framework. Numerous artisans employ the tried-and-true methods of reducing waste, not utilizing synthetic products, and favoring long-lasting products. Additionally, the openness about the production process—which can be observed at Sagre or even limited production centers—creates confidence and underscores ethical appeal. Research has shown that, alongside sensory properties, moral attributes, and process quality notably influence consumer liking and willingness to pay (WTP), as shown in Table 1<sup>11</sup>, the data reveal that a substantial portion of consumers show a preference for a traditional yogurt, mainly when it’s produced under high welfare standards with good eating qualities. Consumers are thus more willing to pay a premium price for conventional products that are valued as authentic, particularly when they are embedded in a meaningful cultural or ethical context<sup>12</sup>.

Consumer characteristics	Product credence and sensory properties				
	HW+GEQ	HW+LEQ	LW+GEQ	LW+LEQ	Unwilling
Frequency of consumption and family income	39	0	0	0	0
Sensitivity to animal welfare	52	52	0	0	0
None	0	0	0	0	13

HW, high welfare standards; GEQ, good eating quality; LW, low welfare standards; LEQ, low eating quality.

**Table 1: Number of consumers (total=104) either willing or unwilling to increase their liking and willingness to pay for yogurt in relation to product credence (animal welfare) and sensory properties (eating quality) (modified from Carlucci et al., 2009).**

<sup>10</sup> Cervellon and Wernerfelt, “*Knowledge Sharing*,” at 10.

<sup>11</sup> Napolitano, Fabio, Antonella Braghieri, Serena Piasentier, and Antonio Girolami. “*Consumer Liking and Willingness to Pay for Traditional Foods: The Case of Italian Cheese*.” *Food Quality and Preference* 21, no. 7 (2010): 720–729.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

#### *1.2.4 Authenticity and Uniqueness*

With the world increasingly globalized and homogenized with mass production and standardized branding, authenticity has emerged as a key distinguishing factor. Consumers are looking for products that are unique, handmade, and culturally relevant. Italian niche products, with their handcrafted and heritage-based nature, meet their need for authenticity<sup>13</sup>.

Authenticity, further, is not merely about origin but also process and narrative. A handmade ceramic dish from Umbria or a Puglia handwoven scarf has the signature of the craftsman's skill, the regional heritage, and the continuance of the tradition. These elements create an atmosphere of uniqueness, an atmosphere not reproducible by industrial production.

#### *1.2.5 Impact of Tourism and International Trends*

Tourism contributes largely to the realization of demand for niche products. As the world's most popular tourist destination, Italy's artisanal traditions are revealed to millions of people every year. Tourists seek souvenirs that are not just beautiful, but meaningful—things that embody the culture and character of the places they visit<sup>14</sup>.

A gastronomic event is an ideal location for just such a cultural exchange. Visitors have the opportunity to sample local products, observe artisans at work, and purchase handmade products directly from the producers. This direct

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<sup>13</sup> Gilmore, James H., and B. Joseph Pine II. 2007. *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

<sup>14</sup> Seaman, Bruce. "Greg Richards (ed): Cultural Tourism: Global and Local Perspectives. *Journal of Cultural Economics*." *Journal of Cultural Economics* 32, no 3 (2008): 231-236. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5149772\\_Greg\\_Richards\\_ed\\_Cultural\\_Tourism\\_Global\\_and\\_Local\\_Perspectives](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5149772_Greg_Richards_ed_Cultural_Tourism_Global_and_Local_Perspectives)

relationship makes the perceived authenticity of the product greater while also enhancing the emotional connection between the producer and the final end-consumer. Additionally, global movements such as “slow living”, “buy local,” and “craft revival” have further elevated the status of niche products, positioning them as symbols of quality, sustainability, and cultural depth<sup>15</sup>.

### *1.2.6 Digital Media and Storytelling*

The digital revolution seeks to transform the consumption and sales of niche products. Social media, online shops, and online storytelling platforms enable producers to reach a broad audience and effectively communicate the unique value of their products. Storytelling could be an efficient medium for an advertising campaign, allowing producers to communicate the history, process, and personal story behind each piece<sup>16</sup>.

Online platforms offer small-scale artisans scale and visibility digitally, without compromising authenticity. Consumers, especially younger generations, are very responsive to story-based, image-abundant, and transparent brands. Artisans can utilize digital technologies to enhance community-building, generate loyalty, and compete globally while preserving their local identity.

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<sup>15</sup> Petrini, Carlo. *Slow Food Nation: Why Our Food Should Be Good, Clean, and Fair*. New York: Rizzoli Ex Libris, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Chen, Yubo & Fay, Scott & Wang, Qi. “The Role of Marketing in Social Media: How Online Consumer Reviews Evolve”. *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 25, no. 2 (2011).

## 1.3 The Role of Sagre in Meeting Niche Demand

### 1.3.1 Sagre as Decentralized Distribution Channels and Economic Ecosystems

Unlike mainstream online marketplaces or offline shops, Sagre is a temporary site-based marketplace that connects producers directly with consumers, without any intermediaries. This model enables artisans to maintain better margins and receive real-time, immediate feedback—an invaluable resource that small-scale producers without access to commercial market research tools can benefit from<sup>17</sup>. The informal but disciplined nature of Sagre presents a minimum-barrier entry point for small-scale artisans and micro-enterprises who could not afford to scale through mainstream channels.

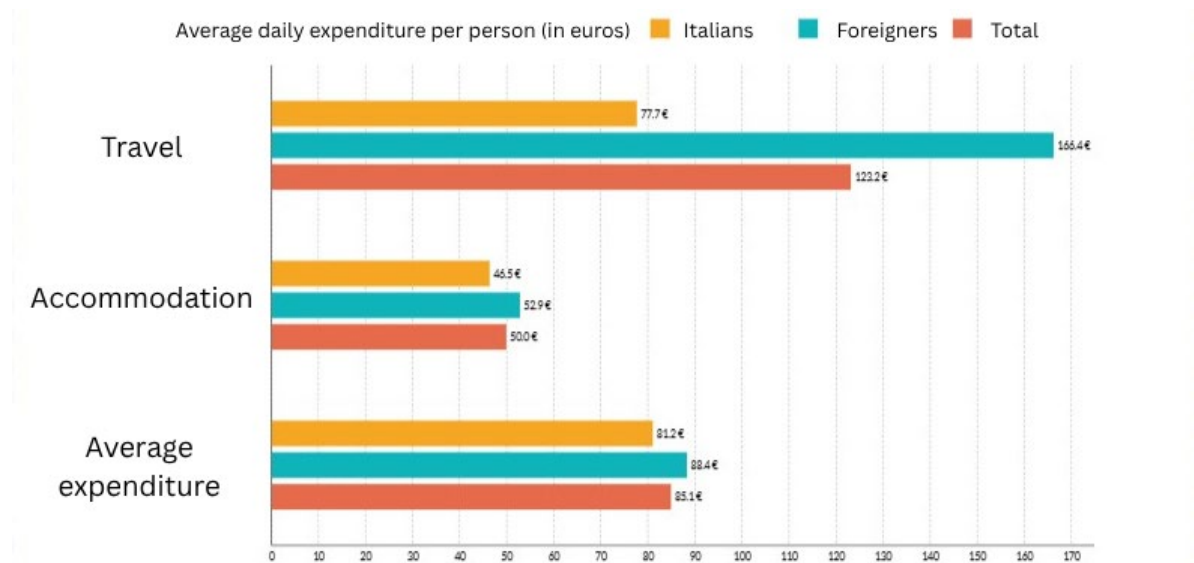
Within these festive and culturally rich environments, artisans can test new product lines, packaging, or pricing strategies in a low-risk setting while also building visibility and generating income. Well beyond just distribution points, Sagre is also a grassroots innovation site for local manufacturing. According to the Istituto Nazionale di Ricerche Turistiche (ISNART), as shown in Graph 1<sup>18</sup>, Regional local food festivals contribute significantly to regional tourism and rural economies, as gourmet tourists spend notably more on travel and accommodation. The research further shows that, in addition to food tastings, these tourists often engage in a wide range of activities during their stay in Italy. A significant share (63.3%) participates in excursions, particularly to small villages (18.1%). Gastronomic events are highly valued by these tourists, with participation in specialized festivals (12.4%), as well as cultural and folklore

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<sup>17</sup> Tregear, Angela, Julie Arfini, Mara Belletti, and Alessandro Marescotti. “*Regional Foods and Rural Development: The Role of Product Qualification*.” *Journal of Rural Studies* 23, no. 1 (2007): 12–22. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222667263\\_Regional\\_foods\\_and\\_rural\\_development\\_The\\_role\\_of\\_product\\_qualification](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222667263_Regional_foods_and_rural_development_The_role_of_product_qualification)

<sup>18</sup> ISNART (Istituto Nazionale Ricerche Turistiche). “*Rapporto sul Turismo Enogastronomico Italiano*.” 2022. <https://www.isnart.it/it/report-sui-turismi/turismo-enogastronomico-report-2022/>

events (10.2%) and musical performances (9.3%), particularly if such events promote authenticity and local production<sup>19</sup>.



Font: Observatory on the Tourism Economy of the Chambers of Commerce

**Graph 1: Spending on Travel and Accommodation by “enogastronomic” (wine and gastronomy) Tourists – Year 2022.**

This decentralized model also contributes to the resilience of local economies and encourages a new economic climate. According to Brunori and Rossi in the journal *“Sociologia Ruralis”*, local markets and short food supply chains enhance economic sustainability through networking at a territorial level and reducing dependence on globalized markets<sup>20</sup>. Sagre demonstrate this idea by creating recurrent, affordable opportunities for artisans to sell to both local and guest consumers, while concurrently developing the hosting areas' social capital.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Gianluca Brunori, and Adanella Rossi. *“Synergy and Coherence through Collective Action: Some Insights from Wine Routes in Tuscany.”* *Sociologia Ruralis* 40, no. 4 (2002): 409–423.

### 1.3.2 Accessibility, Inclusion, and Cultural Legitimacy

Sagre democratizes access to artisanal products by embedding them in widely attended public events. Unlike high-end boutiques or curated artisan fairs, Sagre are public and often free events for the entire demographic, which means families, foreigners visiting the area, as well as the locals. In doing so, the potential clientele for niche products increases, and the cultural traditions are presented to audiences who might not otherwise seek them out<sup>21</sup>.

The colloquial and festive setting of Sagre also reduces the perceived snobbery generally associated with the consumption of craftsmanship. As Grasseni emphasizes in her book *“Beyond Alternative Food Networks: Italy’s Solidarity Purchase Groups”*, the valorization of local crafts and cuisine traditions is best achieved when embedded within everyday social practices<sup>22</sup>. In incorporating the consumption of artisanal goods into public rituals—such as religious festivals, harvest celebrations, or seasonal festivals—Sagres familiarizes people with the consumption and affirms their cultural acceptability.

Apart from the foregoing, Sagre encourages a sense of shared ownership over local heritage. The participation of territorial associations, volunteers, and civic groups in producing these events instills the spirit of collectivity. It keeps the marketing of the productions away from a commercial exploitation model<sup>23</sup>. It contributes to the genuineness of the whole thing and encourages long-term dedication to the local traditions.

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<sup>21</sup> Fonte, Maria. “*Knowledge, Food and Place: A Way of Producing, a Way of Knowing.*” *Sociologia Ruralis* 48, no. 3 (2008): 200–222.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227703980\\_Knowledge\\_Food\\_and\\_Place\\_A\\_Way\\_of\\_Producing\\_a\\_Way\\_of\\_Knowing](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227703980_Knowledge_Food_and_Place_A_Way_of_Producing_a_Way_of_Knowing)

<sup>22</sup> Grasseni, Cristina. *“Beyond Alternative Food Networks: Italy’s Solidarity Purchase Groups.”* London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Ascione, Elisa & Fink, Christopher. (2021). “*Italian sagre : preserving and re-inventing cultural heritage and community through food festivals in Umbria, Italy.*” *Food, Culture & Society*. 24(3). 1-18.

### *1.3.3 Seasonal, Regional, and Experiential Adaptability*

Another characteristic of Sagre is the alignment of festivals to seasonal and territorial environments. Most festivals are synchronized with some specific product, seasonal crop, or religious celebration, which allows seasonal and geographically unique niche products to be marketed. The alignment complements the events' authenticity and the preservation of seasonal production cycles<sup>24</sup>.

For instance, a Sagra del Carciofo (artichoke festival) in the Lazio region or a Sagra della Castagna (chestnut festival) in the Tuscany region not only commemorate a local alimentary product but also provide a space for related crafts such as basketry, woodworking, or ceramics. It preserves the interdependency of local traditions and economies while offering visitors a multisensorial cultural experience.

Additionally, the experiential nature of Sagre raises the perceived value of crafts. Tourists are not customers—they are visitors to a cultural celebration. Through live demonstrations, tastings, and storytelling, consumers are connected to the product's history and creation, deepening their appreciation of the craftsmanship involved and shifting the focus from price to experience. This participatory dimension enables a lasting impression, where value is derived from cultural enrichment rather than just the product itself<sup>25</sup>.

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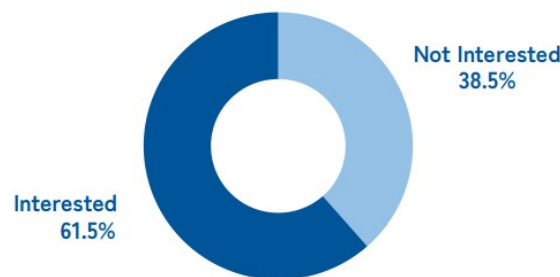
<sup>24</sup> Miele, Mara, and Jonathan Murdoch. "The Practical Aesthetics of Traditional Cuisines: Slow Food in Tuscany." *Sociologia Ruralis* 42, no. 4 (2002): 312–328.

<sup>25</sup> Addis, Michela, and Morris B. Holbrook. "On the Conceptual Link between Mass Customisation and Experiential Consumption: An Explosion of Subjectivity." *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 1, no. 1 (2001): 50–66. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cb.53>

### 1.3.4 Education, Intergenerational Transmission, and Innovation

Sagre also serves an important educational role. Through workshops, artisan showcases, and interactive exhibits, as well as by presenting artistic practices in an experience-based and transparent way, the Sagre help to preserve intangible cultural patrimony and stimulate future generations of producers and consumers, facilitating the transmission of artisanal knowledge across generations. This is particularly crucial in the context of declining enthusiasm among younger generations for traditional crafts<sup>26</sup>. A recent survey in 2024 on the site Digital WPI (shown in Graph 2<sup>27</sup>) found that:

*“Among all the younger generation participants, only 22% of respondents who’ve done Traditional crafts in the past found that the experience was meaningful. 39 % of respondents have never participated in traditional crafts before, and 63% of them don’t want to in the future.”*



**Graph 2: Percentage of participants who have an interest in traditional crafts (Data collected between ages 18 - 40, on December 2nd, 2024)**

<sup>26</sup> Hu, Yan-li, Hanisa Hassan, and Norhasliyana Hazlin Zainal Amri. "Research On the Influencing Factors of The Lack of Young Successors in Traditional Handicraft Based on The Rooted Theory." Asian Journal of Research in Education and Social Sciences, vol. 6, no. 4, (2024): 321-329.  
<https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ajress/article/download/28529/16040/>

<sup>27</sup> "Infographic on the decline of Indigo and Traditional Crafts in younger generations", 2024,  
<https://digital.wpi.edu/downloads/qr46r513c?locale=en>

In addition, the participation of the territorial institutions, the youth associations, and the schools in the Sagre fosters a strong culture of learning and civic engagement. These events become spaces where tradition is not only preserved but actively reinterpreted and revitalized. Social innovation is even practiced in some cases in the Sagre by incorporating themes such as territorial sustainability, circular economy, and digital storytelling in their program<sup>28</sup>.

With the blending of education, innovation, and community interaction, Sagre obtains an inclusive and future-oriented paradigm of cultural and economic development—a paradigm that values tradition and versatility. As agents in the creation of consumer awareness, visibility of the craftsman, and territorial consciousness, they are valuable resources in the sustainable marketing of niche markets.

#### **1.4 Potential Implications for Marketing Strategy**

The dynamic role of Sagre in promoting Italian crafts and satisfying product demand for niches affords great potential for the creation of novel and context-aware marketing approaches. Such approaches must be congruent with the cultural, experiential, and ethical dimensions of values that compel consumer demand for artisanal products, while also taking advantage of the distinguishing features of Sagre as community-centric, location-based events.

In their book “*Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want*”, James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II argues that to outcompete rivals, companies must

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<sup>28</sup> Bertacchini, Enrico, Stefania Camoletto, Giorgia Garabello, and Giovanna Segre. "Models of Cultural Tourism Development in Peripheral Territories: Insights from the In Luce Funding Program." *Il Capitale Culturale: Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, no. 30 (2024): 69-92. [https://scholar.google.it/citations?view\\_op=view\\_citation&hl=it&user=XSMjbI8AAAAJ&cstart=20&pagesize=80&citation\\_for\\_view=XSMjbI8AAAAJ:\\_B80troHkn4C](https://scholar.google.it/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=it&user=XSMjbI8AAAAJ&cstart=20&pagesize=80&citation_for_view=XSMjbI8AAAAJ:_B80troHkn4C)

understand, manage, and excel at delivering authenticity<sup>29</sup>. Authenticity is again the linchpin in the marketing of niche products, especially in the case of cultural festivals like the Sagre, where consumers increasingly demand products that carry place associations, tradition, and craftsmanship. Marketing approaches should thus focus on storytelling to reveal the origin, process, and personnel behind products in a way that uses tools such as on-site signage, artisan interviews, printed materials, and digital content to tell the cultural embeddedness of the goods being offered. According to Beverland in the "*Journal of Management Studies*," Authenticity in branding has less to do with heritage than consistency, sincerity, and openness<sup>30</sup>. Artisans and festival organizers must therefore cooperate to ensure marketing communications reflect the actual values and practices of the community, to enhance trust among consumers, and to differentiate Sagre-based products along the lines of value from mass-market substitutes.

While the Sagre are essentially physical and location-based events, digital means can greatly augment reach and leverage. Social networking facilities, events-based websites, and web-based e-commerce integration enable craftspeople to remain in the public eye in the periods between events. Digital storytelling in the form of video, weblogs, and live feeds can reach broader audiences and create expectations before the event<sup>31</sup>. Hybrid models that combine in-person and web-based elements, such as remote one-on-one meetings at craft booths, web-based workshops, or online product catalogs, can enhance accessibility and inclusivity. This is in line with the opinion of Kotler, Kartajaya,

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<sup>29</sup> Gilmore and Pine II, "*Authenticity*," at 13.

<sup>30</sup> Michael B. Beverland, "*Crafting Brand Authenticity: The Case of Luxury Wines*," *Journal of Management Studies* 42, no. 5 (2005): 1003–1029. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00530.x>

<sup>31</sup> Greg Richards and Robert Palmer, 2010, "Eventful Cities: Cultural Management and Urban Revitalisation." *Journal of Financial Stability*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254786282\\_Eventful\\_Cities\\_Cultural\\_Management\\_and\\_Urban\\_Revitalisation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254786282_Eventful_Cities_Cultural_Management_and_Urban_Revitalisation)

and Setiawan in their book “*Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital*”, that in the digital age, experiential marketing must integrate sensory engagement along with convenience and interactivity, and Digital marketing should co-exist alongside traditional marketing, swapping roles along the new customer path<sup>32</sup> (shown on Table 2<sup>33</sup> and Graph 3<sup>34</sup>). As digital marketing is held more responsible than classic marketing, it aims to deliver results and drive actions, while classic marketing aims to spark customer interaction<sup>35</sup>. Additionally, the integration of digital platforms supports the development of long-term customer relationships and artisan communities, which are essential for sustaining niche markets.

	1A	2A	3A	4A	5A
5A	AWARE	APPEAL	ASK	ACT	ADVOCATE
Customer Behaviour	Due to prior interactions, marketing materials, and/or recommendations from others, consumers are passively exposed to a large number of products/brands.	Consumers only become drawn to a small number of products/brands after processing the messages they are exposed to, either short-term or long-term.	Customers actively seek out further information from friends, family, the media, and/or the products/brands themselves out of interest.	Customers choose to acquire a specific product/brand and engage more deeply via the purchasing, consumption, and/or service procedures after being reassured by further information.	Customers might become very devoted to the product/brand over time, as evidenced by their retention, further purchases, and eventually their advocacy for the business.
Impression	I know	I like	I'm convinced	I'm buying	I recommend

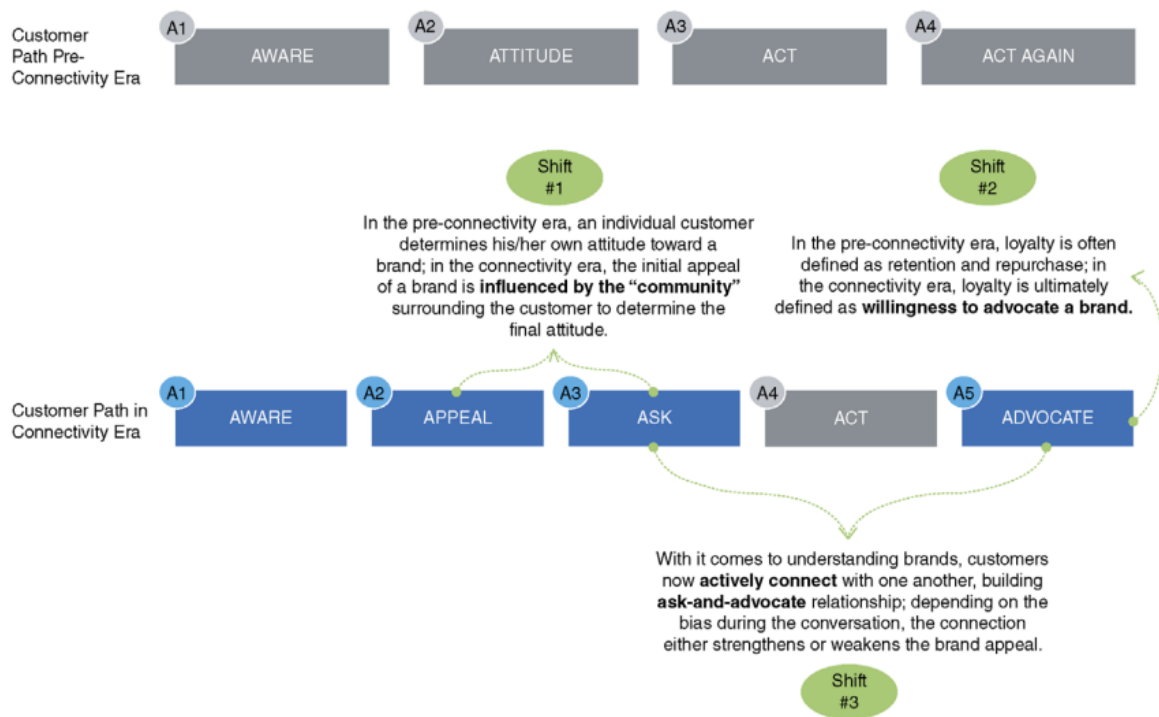
<sup>32</sup> Philip Kotler, Hermawan Kartajaya, and Iwan Setiawan, “*Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital*”, Wiley (2016).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

**Table 2: Mapping the Customer Path throughout the Five A's (modified from Kotler et al, 2017)**







**Graph 3: The Shifting Customer Path in a Connected World**

Cooperation opportunities, tying the product to the identity of the region or the Sagra itself, should also be pursued. It can involve the use of geographic indications (shown in Graph 4<sup>36</sup>), territorial logos, or Sagra-branded packaging, reinforcing the bond between product and place<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Camera dei deputati, Ufficio Rapporti con l'Unione europea, 2022. "La revisione del sistema delle indicazioni geografiche dell'UE di vini, bevande spiritose e prodotti agricoli.". <https://documenti.camera.it/leg18/dossier/testi/U20132.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> Giovanni Belletti and Alessandro Marescotti, "Origin Products, Geographical Indications and Rural Development," in Labels of Origin for Food: Local Development, Global Recognition, ed. Elizabeth Barham and Bertil Sylvander (2011), 75–91.

	<p>Product names registered as <b>DOP (Denominazione di Origine Protetta - Protected Designation of Origin)</b> are those that have <b>the strongest ties to the place they originate</b>. Every part of the production, transformation, and preparation process must take place in the specific region. For wines, this means that the grapes must come exclusively from the geographic area where the wine is produced.</p>
	<p>The <b>IGP (Indicazione Geografica Protetta - Protected Geographical Indication)</b> emphasizes the relationship between the specific geographic region and the product's name when a particular quality, reputation, or other characteristic is essentially attributable to the geographic origin. For most products, at least one stage of production, processing, or preparation must occur within the region. For wines, this means that at least 85% of the grapes used must come exclusively from the geographic area where the wine is produced.</p>
	<p>The <b>IG (Indicazione Geografica - Geographical Indication)</b> protects the name of a <b>spirit or flavored wine</b> originating from a country, region, or locality where a particular quality, reputation, or other characteristics of the product are essentially attributable to its geographic origin. For most products, at least one stage of distillation or preparation must occur within the region. However, the raw materials do not need to come from the region.</p>
	<p>The <b>STG (Specialità Tradizionale Garantita - Traditional Speciality Guaranteed)</b> highlights traditional aspects such as the method by which the product is obtained or its composition, without being linked to a specific geographic area. A product registered as an STG protects its name from counterfeiting and misuse.</p>

**Graph 4: European and Italian regulation on quality regimes for agricultural and food products**

Such approaches are also reinforced by perceived value added alongside contributions to regional branding initiatives that support tourism and territorial development. Collaborations between artisans, local food producers, and cultural institutions can be presented in the form of curated product bundles or themed experiences that appeal to niche markets. For example, a “Taste of Tuscany” bundle comprising local wine, food, housed in handmade or painted ceramics, and access to an online cooking course, could be presented by event organizers under the banner of the specific Sagra being used to promote the bundle. Both locally and internationally, the product bundles could be promoted in line with the strong demand for authentic, experience-rich, genuine products. Effective marketing of Sagres-based artisanship requires coordinated efforts of various parties, including the artisans themselves, event organizers, the territorial municipality, regional institutes, tourist boards, and private sponsors. Public-

private partnerships could secure the funds, infrastructure to support the activity, and advertising to reach the public, while also ensuring that marketing strategies align with broader cultural and economic goals<sup>38</sup>. Training programs in marketing, digital skills, and customer relationship techniques could enable artisans to take a more active role in promoting their work.

Additionally, the creation of shared platforms—such as regional artisan directories or cooperative e-commerce sites—can enhance visibility and market access for small producers<sup>39</sup>. As highlighted in recent research, the integration of artisans into broader territorial marketing strategies not only supports economic sustainability but also reinforces cultural identity and social cohesion<sup>40</sup>. Furthermore, the evolving definition of “artisan” in contemporary food systems—balancing tradition with innovation—suggests that marketing strategies must remain flexible and responsive to changing consumer expectations<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Partarakis, Nikolaos & Zabulis, Xenophon & Meghini, Carlo & Dubois, Arnaud & Moreno, Ines & Ringas, Chistodoulos & Ziova, Aikaterini & Kaplanidi, Danae & Arnaud, David & Crescenzo, Noël & Hee, Patricia & Ortega Gras, Juan José & Garrido, Josefina & Benvenuti, Marie-Adelaide & Krivokapic, Jelena, 2025. “*A Review, Analysis, and Roadmap to Support the Short-Term and Long-Term Sustainability of the European Crafts Sector.*” *Heritage*. 8(2): 70.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388977699\\_A\\_Review\\_Analysis\\_and\\_Roadmap\\_to\\_Support\\_the\\_Short-Term\\_and\\_Long-Term\\_Sustainability\\_of\\_the\\_European\\_Crafts\\_Sector](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388977699_A_Review_Analysis_and_Roadmap_to_Support_the_Short-Term_and_Long-Term_Sustainability_of_the_European_Crafts_Sector)

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Luca Fois and Roberto M. Cuccu, “*Artisan as a Maker or Artisan as a not Recognized Co-designer?*” in *Advances in Design for Inclusion*, ed. Giuseppe Di Bucchianico (Springer, 2020), 41–50.

<sup>41</sup> Sophia Lingham, Inge Hill, and Louise Manning, “*Artisan Food Production: What Makes Food ‘Artisan’?*” in *Artisan and Handicraft Entrepreneurs*, ed. Vanessa Ratten, Springer, (2022), 101–117.

## CHAPTER 2 – Case Studies

### 2.1 How a project is born: “Sagra del Carciofo Romanesco” of Ladispoli and the first documents

The organization of the 71st edition of the Ladispoli Roman Artichoke Festival (Sagra del Carciofo Romanesco) represents a significant model of planning and collaboration between public bodies and local associations. The official documents of the Municipality of Ladispoli outline the formal, administrative, and operational framework through which the event is realized, providing a concrete example of how a popular and identity-building event is planned with the integrated contribution of local institutions and associations, the Pro Loco Association of Ladispoli.

The first document is an agreement between the Municipality of Ladispoli and the Pro Loco, which defines mutual obligations and responsibilities. The accord highlights the Pro Loco as the main implementing body of the event, responsible for organizing all operational phases of the "Waiting for the Sagra" and the "71st Roman Artichoke Sagra" events, in collaboration with the municipal administration. The latter, for its part, is supporting the initiative with a financial contribution of €130,000 (see Table 3<sup>42</sup>), disbursed in two installments, and by

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<sup>42</sup> Municipality of of Ladispoli, Albo Pretorio, 2024. *“CONCESSIONE CONTRIBUTO ECONOMICO ALL’ASSOCIAZIONE PRO LOCO DI LADISPOLI PER LA REALIZZAZIONE, IN COLLABORAZIONE CON L’AMMINISTRAZIONE COMUNALE, DELLA 71^ SAGRA DEL CARCIOFO ROMANESCO – ASSUNZIONE IMPEGNO E LIQUIDAZIONE ANTICIPAZIONE. Albo Pretorio.”*  
[https://ladispoli.trasparenza-valutazione-merito.it/web/trasparenza/dettaglio-trasparenza?p\\_p\\_id=jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn\\_WAR\\_jcitygovalbiportlet&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=0&p\\_p\\_state=normal&p\\_p\\_mode=view&p\\_p\\_col\\_id=column-2&p\\_p\\_col\\_count=1&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn\\_WAR\\_jcitygovalbiportlet\\_current-page-parent=8143&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn\\_WAR\\_jcitygovalbiportlet\\_current-page=8145&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn\\_WAR\\_jcitygovalbiportlet\\_id\\_dettaglio\\_publicazione=148070](https://ladispoli.trasparenza-valutazione-merito.it/web/trasparenza/dettaglio-trasparenza?p_p_id=jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn_WAR_jcitygovalbiportlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-2&p_p_col_count=1&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn_WAR_jcitygovalbiportlet_current-page-parent=8143&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn_WAR_jcitygovalbiportlet_current-page=8145&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn_WAR_jcitygovalbiportlet_id_dettaglio_publicazione=148070)

assuming logistical tasks, such as traffic management and the development of safety and emergency plans<sup>43</sup>.

Section	Details
Fiscal Year	2024
Chapter / Article	2326/11
Mission / Programming	07 01
SIOPE*	1583
Creditor	Pro Loco Ladispoli, registered office in Ladispoli, via Ancona 128, Tax Code: 06077060587, VAT number: 01488601004
Description	Ordinary contribution from Pro Loco for the organization of the Artichoke Festival.
Reason	Commitment to expenditure, for financial contribution, to cover expenses incurred for the organization of the 71st Roman Artichoke Festival
Amount	€ 130,000.00

(\*) Information System on Public Entities' Operations

**Table 3: Municipality of Ladispoli - Financial Details for 71st Roman Artichoke Festival, 2024**

The agreement also highlights the importance of promoting the local specialty—the Roman artichoke—through food stands, markets selling local products, musical performances, entertainment, and collateral events that showcase the region and its culture. The event will take place at several iconic

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

locations in the city, including Piazza Rossellini, Piazza dei Caduti, and Via Duca degli Abruzzi, with direct involvement from the city's residents.

Supporting the agreement, the second paper—the Director's Resolution no. 405 of 4 March 2024—regulates the financial involvement of the municipal administration. This document establishes the formal allocation of the monetary contribution to the Pro Loco. It addresses accounting, regulatory, and procedural aspects, emphasizing the public body's commitment to ensuring transparency, administrative regularity, and spending control.

The resolution reaffirms the Pro Loco's obligations of transparency, traceability of financial flows, and compliance with current regulations, in line with the provisions of Law no. 136/2010 (concerning the traceability of financial flows in activities of public interest) of the Civil Code<sup>44</sup>. These provisions are geared toward administrative accuracy and integrity in the management of public and private assets operated in planning the event. Moreover, the Pro Loco's exemption from the payment of the Single Property Tax (CUP) and other taxes related to the occupation of public land and advertising is highlighted, strengthening the Municipality's support for the event<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Altalex. Codice Civile (Regio Decreto 16 marzo 1942, n. 262). Updated July 7, 2025. Accessed July 9, 2025. <https://www.altalex.com/documents/codici-altalex/2015/01/02/codice-civile>

<sup>45</sup> Municipality of Ladispoli, Albo Pretorio, 2024. "*CONCESSIONE DI UN CONTRIBUTO ECONOMICO IN FAVORE DELLA PRO LOCO APS DI LADISPOLI PER LA REALIZZAZIONE, IN COLLABORAZIONE CON L'AMMINISTRAZIONE COMUNALE, DELL'EVENTO DENOMINATO "71ª SAGRA DEL CARCIOFO ROMANESCO" ED AUTORIZZAZIONE AL SINDACO ALLA PRESENTAZIONE DI UNA DOMANDA DI CONTRIBUTO A LAZIOCREA SPA.*" [https://ladispoli.trasparenza-valutazione-merito.it/web/trasparenza/dettaglio-trasparenza?p\\_p\\_id=jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn\\_WAR\\_jcitygovalbiportlet&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=0&p\\_p\\_state=normal&p\\_p\\_mode=view&p\\_p\\_col\\_id=column-2&p\\_p\\_col\\_count=1&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn\\_WAR\\_jcitygovalbiportlet\\_current-page-parent=8143&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn\\_WAR\\_jcitygovalbiportlet\\_current-page=8144&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn\\_WAR\\_jcitygovalbiportlet\\_id\\_dettaglio\\_publicazione=14777](https://ladispoli.trasparenza-valutazione-merito.it/web/trasparenza/dettaglio-trasparenza?p_p_id=jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn_WAR_jcitygovalbiportlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-2&p_p_col_count=1&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn_WAR_jcitygovalbiportlet_current-page-parent=8143&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn_WAR_jcitygovalbiportlet_current-page=8144&jcitygovmenutrasversaleleftcolumn_WAR_jcitygovalbiportlet_id_dettaglio_publicazione=14777)

Both documents demonstrate an example of shared planning, based on collaboration between the public and private sectors, with the ultimate goal of promoting the cultural and agri-food identity of the area. In this sense, the Festival confirms itself not only as a festive event but as an integrated local development project, capable of generating positive economic, tourism, and social benefits.

The organization of a Sagra develops over time, with planning spanning several weeks: from the start of the setup scheduled for April 2, 2024, through the introductory event "Waiting for the Festival" on April 5, 6, and 7, up to the main celebration on April 12, 13, and 14, 2024. This timeframe reflects a professional planning approach, including authorizations, security, logistics, coordination, and communication with the various stakeholders.

The case of the Ladispoli Festival suits perfectly into the broader context outlined by the UNPLI (National Union of Pro Loco of Italy), discussed in the next section (2.2), which provides the regulatory, organizational, and value framework within which the Pro Loco operates.

## **2.2 “UNPLI”, Reference Association of Pro Loco**

The National Union of Pro Loco of Italy (UNPLI) serves as the national coordinating body for Pro Loco associations across Italy. As described in Wikipedia<sup>46</sup>:

*“The Pro Loco is a volunteer, grassroots organization and must not be confused with publicly financed organizations such as the Italian Tourism Promotion Agency (APT) or the Tourist Information and Reception Office (IAT),*

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<sup>46</sup> Wikipedia contributors. “Pro Loco.” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Last modified June 2025. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pro\\_Loco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pro_Loco).

*which aim to promote tourism. Still, Pro Loco could have a legal identity as a non-profit organization if part of the UNPLI, Unione Nazionale Pro Loco d'Italia, the National Pro Loco Union.”*

UNPLI provides legal, fiscal, and organizational support to affiliated Pro Loco associations, helping them navigate regulatory frameworks and access benefits such as reduced fees for public performances and cultural events<sup>47</sup>. To become a member of UNPLI, a Pro Loco will need to adopt a constitution in line with union procedures, which assures uniformity in administration and purpose. Such constitutions will typically emphasize the spread of local traditions, the organisation of festivals and Sagre, and the preservation of a town's patrimony<sup>48</sup>. UNPLI also plays a role in lobbying for the recognition and protection of authentic local events, distinguishing them from commercial or improvised initiatives that lack cultural depth or community involvement<sup>49</sup>.

In most Italian towns, the central role of a Pro Loco is to organize, finance, promote, and operate local events such as Sagre, fairs, or *palio* (Historical reenactments). Their primary service is to benefit residents rather than tourists directly. However, some Pro Loco associations broaden their scope to promote local products or tourism. Particularly active and socially conscious organizations may also sponsor publications, scholarly research, or efforts to restore local monuments and landmarks<sup>50</sup>. UNPLI's function, therefore, becomes critical in maintaining the integrity and continuance of Italy's Pro Loco network. By providing a unifying framework and advocating the cultural importance of local festivals, UNPLI helps to ensure that Sagre and other local festivals continue to

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<sup>47</sup> UNPLI. Unione Nazionale Pro Loco d'Italia. Accessed July 9, 2025. <https://www.unpli.info>.

<sup>48</sup> UNPLI. 2019. *Statuto Nazionale e Regolamento Assembleare*. <https://www.unpli.info/statuto-nazionale-e-regolamento-assembleare-unpli/>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> “*Pro Loco.*”, at 29.

serve as valuable platforms for showcasing craftsmanship, heritage, and economic development.

### **2.3 The “Sagra del Pesce” in Anguillara Sabazia**

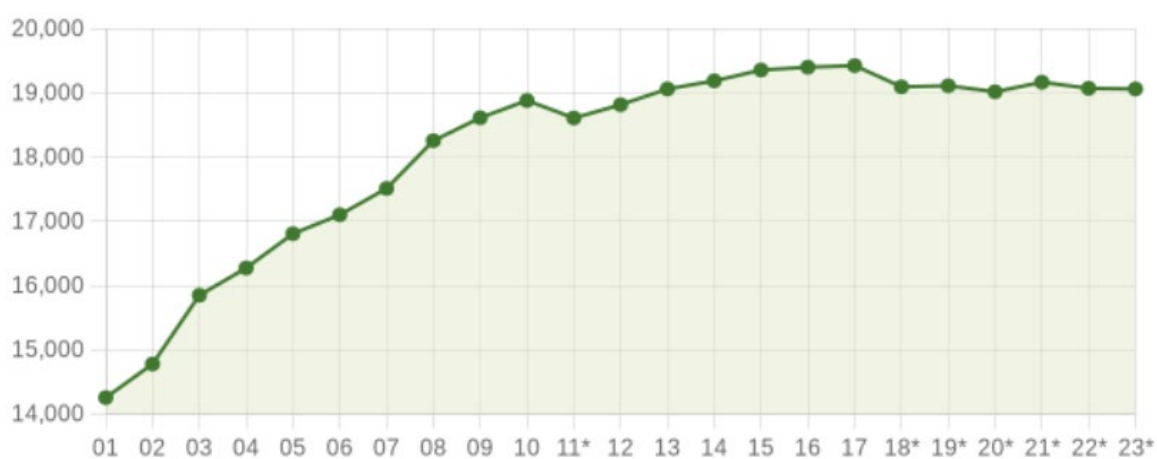
This case study is based on qualitative research. It follows a more in-depth demonstration compared to the Ladispoli case described in part 2.1, including two in-depth interviews conducted with institutional representatives of the Pro Loco of the town of Anguillara Sabazia: Secretary, Mrs. Daniela Giannini, and President, Mr. Moreno Delle Fratte<sup>51</sup>. These figures are legally recognized within the municipal framework and operate under the statutes of the Pro Loco Anguillara Sabazia.

The Pro Loco Anguillara Sabazia is formally recognized as a Social Promotion Association (APS), with its statute approved by municipal resolution no. 25 on May 5, 2008, and published in the Official Bulletin of the Lazio Region (BUR) on August 14, 2008. According to the interviews, the Sagra del Pesce— Fish Sagra — was first held on May 15, 1960, and continues to be celebrated annually between May and July. Initially conceived by the local Pro Loco and a group of fishermen, the festival was designed to honor the town’s fishing heritage. Early editions featured rustic huts made from lake reeds and branches, where freshly caught typical lake fish such as Latterini and eels were cooked and served. These products, deeply embedded in local culinary tradition, are currently under consideration for DOP or IGP certification, which would further elevate their cultural and economic value.

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<sup>51</sup> See Appendix III.

The festival has grown significantly in scale and impact. Based on research conducted by *Tuttitalia.it*, which sources demographic data from ISTAT (the Italian National Institute of Statistics), an analysis of the population trends of Anguillara Sabazia from 2001 to 2023 was carried out. The study presents a comprehensive overview of the population changes over this period, illustrated through census data compiled in various tables (see Graph 5<sup>52</sup> and Table 4<sup>53</sup>).



(\*) Post-census<sup>54</sup>

Font: MUNICIPALITY OF ANGUILLARA SABAZIA (RM) - ISTAT data as of December 31 - Elaborated by TUTTITALIA.IT

**Graph 5: Trend of the resident population in Anguillara Sabazia (2001-2023)**

Year	Data Collection Date	Resident Population	Absolute Variation	Percentage Variation	Number of Families	Average Components per Family
2001	December 31	14,253	-	-	-	-
2002	December 31	14,777	+524	+3.68%	-	-
2003	December 31	15,848	+1,071	+7.25%	5,938	2.67
2004	December 31	16,273	+425	+2.68%	6,133	2.65
2005	December 31	16,807	+534	+3.28%	6,352	2.65

<sup>52</sup> Tuttitalia.it. “Popolazione Anguillara Sabazia 2001–2023.” Accessed July 9, 2025.

<https://www.tuttitalia.it/lazio/83-anguillara-sabazia/statistiche/popolazione-andamento-demografico>.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Since 2018, the data have taken into account the results of the permanent population census, collected annually and no longer every ten years. Unlike the traditional census, which carried out a survey of all individuals and families on a set date, the new census method is based on the combination of sample surveys and data from administrative sources.

Year	Data Collection Date	Resident Population	Absolute Variation	Percentage Variation	Number of Families	Average Components per Family
2006	December 31	17,102	+295	+1.76%	6,505	2.63
2007	December 31	17,512	+410	+2.40%	6,768	2.59
2008	December 31	18,256	+744	+4.25%	7,082	2.58
2009	December 31	18,613	+357	+1.96%	7,243	2.57
2010	December 31	18,882	+269	+1.45%	7,363	2.56
2011 (1)	October 8	19,055	+173	+0.92%	7,460	2.55
2011 (2)	October 9	18,575	-480	-2.52%	-	-
2011 (3)	December 31	18,609	-273	-1.45%	7,486	2.49
2012	December 31	18,816	+207	+1.11%	7,565	2.49
2013	December 31	19,062	+246	+1.31%	7,462	2.55
2014	December 31	19,188	+126	+0.66%	7,576	2.53
2015	December 31	19,357	+169	+0.88%	7,677	2.52
2016	December 31	19,401	+44	+0.23%	7,715	2.51
2017	December 31	19,426	+25	+0.13%	7,798	2.49
2018*	December 31	19,095	-331	-1.70%	-	-
2019*	December 31	19,112	+17	+0.09%	7,775	2.46
2020*	December 31	19,018	-94	-0.49%	-	-
2021*	December 31	19,167	+149	+0.78%	8,111	2.36
2022*	December 31	19,072	-95	-0.50%	8,143	2.34
2023*	December 31	19,062	-10	-0.05%	8,185	2.33

(<sup>1</sup>) Registered population as of 8 October 2011, the day before the 2011 census

(<sup>2</sup>) Population censused on 9 October 2011, the reference date for the 2011 census

(<sup>3</sup>) The absolute and percentage variation refers to the comparison with the data of 31/12/2010

(\*) Post-census population<sup>55</sup>

**Table 4: Demographic Data Table of Anguillara Sabazia (2001–2023)**

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

Specifically, the report highlights the population count as of December 31, 2023, indicating that Anguillara Sabazia had a total of 19,062 residents at that time<sup>56</sup>. According to President Delle Fratte, attendance ranges from 5,000 to over 10,000 visitors per event, a remarkable figure considering the town's population. This disproportionate influx of visitors underscores that the Sagre are not only cultural celebrations but also a driver of local economic activity and tourism.

The interviews also revealed that the v is no longer perceived as mere folklore. Instead, it is viewed as a meaningful expression of local identity, combining gastronomy, artisanship, history, and community engagement. This aligns with broader trends in tourism, as highlighted in a 2021 workshop organized by Intesa Sanpaolo and Federalberghi Lazio, which found that 84% of regional tourist demand is concentrated in the province of Rome, with 75.4% of that demand coming from foreign visitors<sup>57</sup>.

### 2.3.1 Organizational Aspect

The organization of a Sagra, such as Anguillara Sabazia's Sagra del Pesce, requires careful planning and compliance with a structured framework of legal and logistical requirements. It is usually organized under the patronage of the Anguillara Sabazia municipality. It must adhere to a series of administrative procedures and authorizations to ensure public security, legality, and practical efficiency. These requirements are outlined in national and regional guidelines for public events and temporary food service activities from the Italian Ministry of the Interior<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> "Popolazione Anguillara Sabazia.", at 26.

<sup>57</sup> Giua, Cristiana. 2021, "*Federalberghi Turismo Gastronomico*". Intesa Sanpaolo. <https://group.intesasanpaolo.com/it/newsroom/comunicati-stampa/2011/01/CNT-04-000000008DFB3>

<sup>58</sup> Ministry of the Interior of Italy, 2018. "*Vademecum Manifestazioni Pubblico Spettacolo: A Uso di Organizzatori Pubblici e Privati*". Accessed July 9, 2025. <https://prefettura.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/75/2025-01/vademecum-operativo.pdf>

Regulatively, the organizing body—often the local Pro Loco—must obtain the following permits and approvals:

1. Municipal patronage
2. Temporary Occupation of Public Land
3. Habitability Permits
4. Licenses and rights from the Italian Society of Authors and Publishers (SIAE)
5. Local authorities Notifications

1. Municipal Patronage

Municipal Patronage is a formal acknowledgment by the Municipality of Anguillara Sabazia of initiatives that are deemed worthy of support. It may be granted by the mayor, after consulting the appropriate councilor's opinion if necessary. This recognition can be requested for a variety of activities, including conferences, social events, theatrical and musical performances, art exhibitions, sporting events, and Sagre.

Requests for Patronage can be made by entities, associations, committees, or private individuals who have their headquarters within the Municipality or whose initiatives are carried out within the municipal territory. Such requests are to be made through the completion of the prescribed forms provided by the relevant authorities, including the Mayor's Patronage Office from the Mayor's Council, before the event<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> Municipality of Anguillara Sabazia. "Modulo di richiesta di patrocinio." Accessed July 9, 2025. [https://www.comune.anguillara-sabazia.roma.it/documento\\_pubblico/modulo-di-richiesta-patrocinio/](https://www.comune.anguillara-sabazia.roma.it/documento_pubblico/modulo-di-richiesta-patrocinio/).

*Important notes*<sup>60</sup>:

- Patronage does not automatically confer additional benefits, except for the potential to receive a tax reduction on charges related to posters and billboard displays, in accordance with sector-specific legislation.
- Suppose the Patronage is granted and the initiative involves the use of the city's logo. In that case, it is mandatory to include the phrase "under the patronage of the Municipality of Anguillara" on all communication materials, along with the official logo. The logo can be requested from the Patronage Office located in the mayor's meeting room.
- When the initiative also involves collaboration with a municipal department, the wording should be expanded to: "with the patronage of the Municipality of Anguillara and the collaboration of the [name of the department]" to acknowledge the department's involvement.

## 2. Permit for Temporary Occupation of Public Land

This municipal document permits the limited use of public property for events that involve the installation of fixed structures, such as stages, platforms, and gazebos. It covers events that concern the placement of permanent or semi-permanent structures upon public property<sup>61</sup>.

For events involving administrative activities or sales, the application, along with proof of stamp duty payments, must be submitted to the Mayor before

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Municipality of Rome. "Regolamento per la concessione del suolo pubblico e per lo svolgimento di eventi temporanei." Accessed July 9, 2025. [https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/DAC\\_Delib\\_91\\_05\\_12\\_2019\\_Regolamento\\_OSP\\_2019.pdf](https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/DAC_Delib_91_05_12_2019_Regolamento_OSP_2019.pdf)

the event starts. All costs are payable to the Public Land Occupation Office (COSAP).

### 3. Habitability Permits

A habitability permit is an essential authorization issued by the local authorities to ensure that public venues and spaces meet safety, health, and structural standards necessary for hosting events and crowds. It ensures that the space is suitable and prepared to accommodate the estimated number of visitors, providing a safe environment for both participants and organizers. It involves a thorough review of the venue's fire protection, access routes, emergency plans, and overall capacity to manage crowd safety effectively<sup>62</sup>.

### 4. Licenses and rights from the Italian Society of Authors and Publishers (SIAE)

In situations involving events that will feature musical, theatrical, or cinematographic performances, the organizers should also obtain authorization for reproducing copyrighted works, such as songs, stage plays, and musical compositions. Such approval ought to be pursued by copyright owners or their agents. Licenses are granted by SIAE (Italian Society of Authors and Publishers) to legally reproduce and perform copyrighted work, once relevant royalties are paid<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> “*Vademecum Manifestazioni Pubblico Spettacolo*”, at 34.

<sup>63</sup> SIAE, “*ATTIVITA' DI SPETTACOLO E DI INTRATTENIMENTO*”, Accessed July 9, 2025. [https://www.anesv.it/pdf/prontuario\\_siae.pdf](https://www.anesv.it/pdf/prontuario_siae.pdf)

## 5. Local authorities Notifications

Planning an event often requires coordination with local authorities to ensure safety and compliance with regulations. This involves timely submissions of notifications and requests for necessary permits, such as noise waivers and access authorizations, to prevent disruptions or legal issues.

### - *Noise Exemption Permits*

If an outdoor event is held on public or private land where sound levels or amplification might exceed municipal noise limits, the organizer must apply for a noise waiver license. This permit is issued through the local “Environment and Territory Sector” website and authorizes the temporary exceeding of standard noise parameters in the designated area. Obtaining this license ensures the event complies with environmental regulations, allowing for sound management and preventing legal issues or fines<sup>64</sup>.

### - *Temporary Access to Limited Traffic Zone (ZTL)*

To facilitate access to the city’s Limited Traffic Zone (ZTL), the organizer must request a temporary permit via official communication forms submitted to the local police headquarters. This permit grants transit rights and parking authorization within the ZTL for logistical vehicles during the setup and breakdown of the event, according to the specific conditions outlined on the permit<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security. “*Inquinamento acustico*”. Accessed July 9, 2025. <https://www.mase.gov.it/portale/inquinamento-acustico>

<sup>65</sup> “*Regolamento per la concessione del suolo pubblico*”, at 36.

Requests should be made to the Local authorities before the event and are free of charge for institutional or “ONLUS” (non-profit social utility) events. Proper planning and early application are necessary to ensure smooth access, avoid traffic disruptions, and maintain compliance with local mobility and environmental regulations.

Besides these legal regulations, several practical and operational issues should be addressed by the organizers:

1. Rental of Equipment.
2. Utility Supply
3. Sale and Temporary Administration of Food and Beverages: Compliance with health and safety regulations for the temporary sale and distribution of food and drinks.
4. Street Art and Cultural Programming
5. Promotions and communications

1. Rental of Equipment

Organizers can rent various equipment such as chairs, stages, platforms, tables, barriers, wooden structures, and other items, subject to availability and upon payment. To secure the use of this equipment, an application must be made to the Mayor’s Office, detailing the planned activity, date, location, and specific needs. Along with the rental fee, a security deposit is required, which will be held by the Municipality until the equipment is returned in good condition. The responsibility for the collection, transportation, assembly, disassembly, and return of the rented items rests with the applicant<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

## 2. Utility Supply and Waste Management

For events and exhibitions, organizers are responsible for covering the costs associated with energy and water supply, including the connection to the municipal electrical and water systems. Organizers also have to arrange for the disposal and collection of all waste during the event, and should leave the space spotlessly clean<sup>67</sup>.

Prices are influenced by energy consumed and waste generated. It is best to plan these expenses and arrange logistics to avoid issues on event day. Appropriate planning for utilities and waste management leads to a hassle-free and eco-friendly event.

## 3. Sale and Temporary Administration of Food and Beverages

Organizers planning to sell or serve food and beverages during a public or private event must obtain specific authorizations to comply with health, hygiene, and noise regulations and submit a certified notification of commencement of Activity (SCIA) form to the relevant municipal office for the temporary food sale or service. This is mandatory when commercial activity is involved<sup>68</sup>.

If food and beverages are provided free of charge, the SCIA is not required; however, compliance with health and hygiene regulations remains mandatory under the Food Hygiene and Nutrition Service (SIAN) standards. For temporary retail sales of food products, sellers must submit a SCIA to the Single Desk for Productive Activities (SUAP) before the event. The form is only valid for

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<sup>67</sup> “*Vademecum Manifestazioni Pubblico Spettacolo*”, at 34.

<sup>68</sup> Municipality of Rome, “*Somministrazione al pubblico di alimenti e bevande*”. Accessed July 9, 2025. <https://www.comune.roma.it/web/it/scheda-servizi.page?contentId=INF44858&pagina=3>

individual proprietors or companies, and must be submitted by the event organizer if the seller is different<sup>69</sup>.

#### 4. Street Art and Cultural Programming

The municipality encourages the integration of local entertainers, artisans, and artists to enrich the cultural landscape and foster community engagement. Street art, defined as performances by artists in public spaces, open to the public, aims to enliven squares, sidewalks, and pedestrian areas, to improve the atmosphere of cultural creativity in the town. The performances of different artists in the municipal area do not require authorization and are allowed at any time before the closure time of the event. However, this exemption does not apply when the municipality commissions or funds a guest artist or performance, in which case specific permissions and arrangements are required<sup>70</sup>.

#### 5. Promotions and Communications

There are several channels to promote an event: playbills, posters, flyers, online communication through the online portals of the Municipality, and press releases. These are the consolidated formats for promoting initiatives in specific locations or during certain periods of the year.

Non-profit associations registered in the Municipal Register can promote their initiatives online via the Municipality of Anguillara's Non-profit website. To gain access, organizations must first obtain approval from the Associations Office. Once registered, they can independently upload information about their

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Municipality of Rome, "*REGOLAMENTO PER L'ARTE DI STRADA*". Accessed July 9, 2025. <https://www.comune.roma.it>

events. Events organized in collaboration with or sponsored by the Municipality of Anguillara can be promoted through the official website, the Municipality's social media channels, and thematic newsletters.

Where event organizers wish to display advertising materials, such as posters on public bulletin boards or within public or private premises, they must do so in designated municipal advertising spaces or areas of interest and always seek prior permission from the Municipality. Press promotion, in this case, lies with organizers who need to contact the media directly to broadcast their event details<sup>71</sup>.

### *2.3.2 Economic and Financial Aspects*

Regarding maintenance and budgeting, it is essential to recognize that a good starting point is any experience with previous events. Such knowledge permits a precise assessment of expenses related to the venue, equipment, materials, and other costs. The next step involves requesting quotes from potential suppliers for equipment, materials, and possible collaborations for shows, music, and performances. President Moreno Delle Fratte mentions in the interview that funding has been obtained from public institutions (such as the municipality and regional authorities) and partially from private entities (sponsors, advertising companies, restaurateurs).

To recruit entertainers, artists, and artisans to support the festival, a non-repayable liquidity fund is utilized, which significantly helps enhance the event's attractiveness. Additionally, it is necessary to budget for permits, insurance, and any other unforeseen costs that might impact the overall budget, including

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<sup>71</sup> Municipality of Anguillara Sabazia. "Regolamento per la promozione delle attività associative e culturali". Accessed July 9, 2025. <https://www.comune.anguillara-sabazia.rm.it>

expenses that are often overlooked, such as SIAE rights for music broadcasting. Furthermore, efforts should be made to increase participation by seeking new sponsors or partners or by collecting contributions from potential stakeholders. Once the various cost items are identified, the budget for each expense category can be more accurate and precise. The initial budget serves to evaluate different options, and every expense must be documented with receipts for tax reporting purposes.

It's crucial to remember that sponsorships and collaborations in event organization are mutual exchange agreements that should be beneficial for both parties; therefore, clarifying mutual objectives and understanding what each side can reasonably offer and receive is essential. The technical sponsors, for example, provide equipment in exchange for visibility and promotion linked to the event. The media can also be considered technical sponsors, and going into agreements with one or more media establishments—e.g., print, radio, television, or websites—can gain wider publicity for the event and attract more interest.

Through the Sagre, products that have "left the market," whose production is limited by seasonality or supply constraints, can be promoted. With increased demand and organized local supply chains, these products can be "reborn" through local offerings, thereby strengthening the area's identity and recognition, and boosting its attractiveness and brand<sup>72</sup>.

From this viewpoint, the Sagra is not just an isolated event but part of a broader network of other ongoing, occasional, and recurring initiatives, such as the "route" of a wine or a product, the gastronomic "reviews" and "walks," open

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<sup>72</sup> Paula Reynolds, 2023. "The Italian Sagre: Can Food Help Save Italy's Dying Villages?" L'Italo-Americano. <https://italoamericano.org/italian-sagre/>

cellars, mountain pastures, and dairies. This approach fosters a shared heritage that specific businesses or sectors cannot solely claim.

The Sagre laid the groundwork for fostering awareness that this heritage can be sustained and promoted through horizontal collaboration and solidarity among operators within the same category—farmers, agri-food artisans, restaurateurs, and others<sup>73</sup>. The effective promotion of a product—and its lasting economic benefits for local operators—comes from a collective, participatory, and shared approach. The festival takes place within a limited period, aligned with production and consumption cycles, and lasts no longer than two or three days. It must take place in the area of origin of the product, recipe, or traditional process, in venues and environments well-suited for service, seamlessly integrated into the landscape, and designed to enhance traditional structures and environments.

### *2.3.3 Final Judgement*

In conclusion, it would be wise to establish local chains of supply not only in the worlds of agri-food and artisan but also in culture and tourism. Such an initiative would presuppose mutual trust between several stakeholders, both non-economic and economic. Grasping the diversity of these players would prepare the ground for collaboration, create innovative ideas, and form alliances to reunite the splits in the community engendered during the industrial era.

Products with a clearly defined origin can serve as local ambassadors representing the region's personality. The region's attractiveness, however, is ultimately expressed in these products themselves. Community and economic

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<sup>73</sup> Michele Corti, 2008. "Riflessioni sulle sagre: distinguere quelle autentiche dalle iniziative senza contenuto gastronomico e culturale." [https://www.ruralpini.it/Commenti\\_Sagre.htm](https://www.ruralpini.it/Commenti_Sagre.htm)

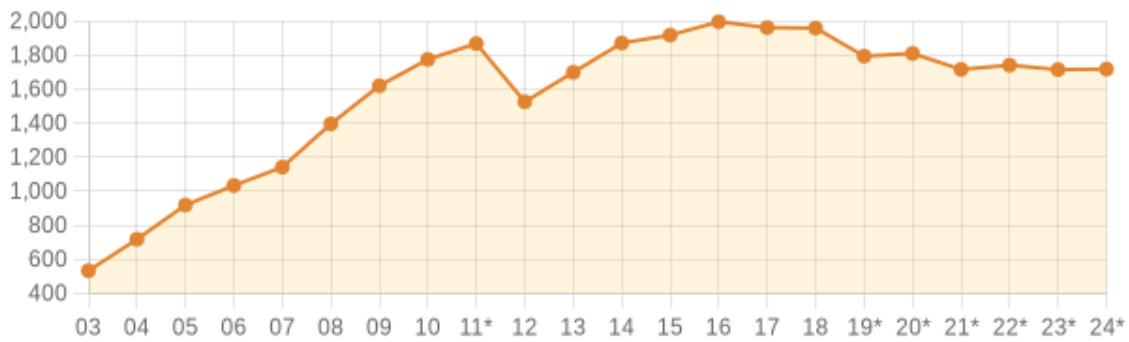
dynamics reinforce each other: a renewed sense of community and identity fosters trust and the community's willingness to cooperate for shared goals. This interdependent relationship underscores the fact that Sagre cannot just be seen solely as an entertainment function—they carry economic, social, and cultural value. They serve as platforms for dialogue between the community and external audiences—neighboring communities, visitors, and consumers—highlighting their role as showcases that self-represent the community, its entrepreneurs, and social groups.

Referring once again to statistical data collected by ISTAT and processed by *Tuttitalia.it*, we observe a broader cosmopolitan movement of travelers, visitors, and residents in various cities. Even small towns like Anguillara Sabazia are increasingly chosen by people drawn by their unique cultural traditions and gastronomic specialties, leading some to settle permanently. Data from *Tuttitalia.it* indicates that in 2024, Anguillara Sabazia had 1,718 foreign residents, accounting for 9.0% of the total resident population (see Graph 6<sup>74</sup> and Graph 7<sup>75</sup>). This supports the idea that additional promotional initiatives or 'showcases' can effectively strengthen external relationships, even for small communities like Anguillara Sabazia.

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<sup>74</sup> Tuttitalia.it. “Cittadini stranieri Anguillara Sabazia 2003–2024.” Accessed July 10, 2025. <https://www.tuttitalia.it/lazio/21-anguillara-sabazia/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri-2024/>

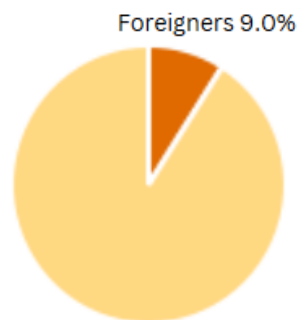
<sup>75</sup> Ibid.



(\*) Post-census<sup>76</sup>

Font: MUNICIPALITY OF ANGULLARA SABAZIA (RM) - ISTAT data as of January 1 - Elaborated by TUTTITALIA.IT

**Graph 6: Trend of the resident population in Anguillara Sabazia with foreign citizenship (2001-2024)**



Font: MUNICIPALITY OF ANGULLARA SABAZIA (RM) - ISTAT data as of January 1 - Elaborated by TUTTITALIA.IT

**Graph 7: Percentage of resident population in Anguillara Sabazia with foreign citizenship (Jan 1, 2024)**

So, in this context, up-to-date marketing practices increasingly involve the web as a formidable resource. A community’s website can feature dedicated sections for Sagre, send newsletters via email, display captivating images, and broadcast promotional messages. The site can be used to receive registrations by completing web forms, or, more creatively, to encourage active participation from guests. Social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram, can also be used to interact with those interested in the Sagra's theme. For large-scale events, creating dedicated websites and social media pages can enhance visibility and

<sup>76</sup> Since 2018, the data have taken into account the results of the permanent population census, collected annually and no longer every ten years. Unlike the traditional census, which carried out a survey of all individuals and families on a set date, the new census method is based on the combination of sample surveys and data from administrative sources.

consolidate the event's profile. These virtual pages enable “events within events” and carry the event's message beyond its physical borders. These virtual pages enable “events within events” and carry the event's message beyond its physical boundaries. Finally, a press office remains essential, as media outlets are primarily interested in news rather than advertising. Drafting targeted press releases, conferences, and interviews is invaluable for efficient communication.

It is essential to tailor media content to what appeals to the media audiences. Media outreach can be used to either invite journalists or other influencers to the event as guests, as well as to promote coverage of pertinent subjects and activities. These communications must be made using diligently prepared press releases, live streams, interviews, and other stream or journalism-friendly formats, all to deliver news-worthy promotional material. Investing in advertising—via print, radio, online, or TV—can further amplify visibility, though it often requires significant resources. Many publications offer discounted or free space for non-profit initiatives. Traditional tools such as posters displayed in public spaces and flyers distributed in neighborhoods, on streets, or in transit stations also remain effective strategies. If the Sagra revolves around a specific theme, involving community groups dedicated to that topic can enhance outreach.

An often-underestimated marketing strategy is the “bring a friend” approach. Spurring participants—visitors, residents, volunteers, or community workers—to bring along others greatly expands the event's reach. During the event, individual staff members must be focused on the area for which they are responsible. At its close, the use of questionnaires or surveys to collect feedback for future improvements is invaluable. Post-event involvement is just as critical; materials can be shared via the community website, social media, or email to maintain ongoing relationships. Participants might be encouraged to download

the resource, post photos, receive the newsletter, or connect in some manner conducive to ongoing relationships.

These conditions for success are the basis for events such as the Sagre, in this case, the Sagra del Pesce of Anguillara and the Roman Artichoke Sagra of Ladispoli. The goal extends beyond the event itself to make it a permanent community-building and cultural space. Through intensive, continuous engagement, development of neighborhood networking, and building of genuine relationships between locals, tourists, and stakeholders, the Sagre can energize the long-term social life and local prosperity of each small town and community.

## CHAPTER 3 – Survey Findings

### 3.1 How the Survey Was Conducted<sup>77</sup>

The goal of this survey was to collect participants' perceptions and opinions regarding Sagre's role in valorizing local handicrafts and in devising innovative marketing strategies. In particular, the questionnaire was intended to stimulate explanations on how traditional events such as Sagre can impact economic development as well as valorize artisanal work and intangible cultural heritage. A questionnaire with 21 questions was prepared and distributed online among individuals living in Italy who had already attended Sagre or shown interest in it.

The survey was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data, including demographic information, motivations for attending Sagre, perceptions of artisanal products, and recommendations for improving the organization and overall experience of Sagre. It was distributed online through various channels, including social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram...), students' WhatsApp groups, and collected a total of **100** valid responses. In due course, 77 Italian nationals and 23 Chinese residents in Italy participated in this survey.

The survey consisted of multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions. The empirical data thus acquired is the foundation upon which the following analysis is based, providing a snapshot of contemporary consumer behavior. It is therefore an effective medium for extracting positive feedback aimed at enhancing the planning and execution of future Sagre, particularly regarding organizational, communication, marketing, and traditional integration challenges.

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<sup>77</sup> See Appendix I.

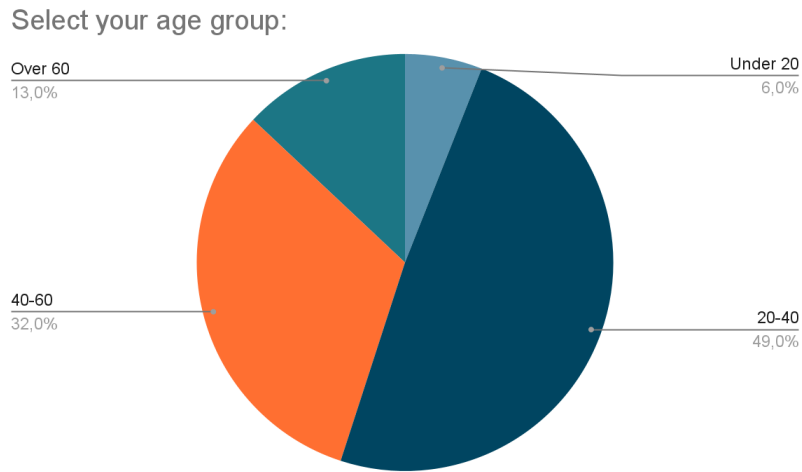
### 3.2 Results and Key Findings from the Survey<sup>78</sup>

The demographic profile of the 100 survey respondents provides valuable context for interpreting the results. As shown in the pie chart (see Graph 8), the majority of participants (49%) are in the 20–40 age group, followed by 32% in the 40–60 age group. A smaller proportion of those interviewed were over 60 (13%) or under 20 (6%). This breakout indicates that the survey covered an extensive age range of adult views, with a good selection of young people over 20, as well as middle-aged adults under 40. This range of population is most likely involved in Sagre as well as in cultural events. By gender, the majority of respondents were female, making up 65% of the sample, while male participants accounted for 35%. There were no non-binary participants or non-disclosure of gender (see Graph 9). Additionally, the survey revealed a high level of engagement with Sagre: 89% of respondents indicated that they had previously attended a Sagra, while only 11% had not.

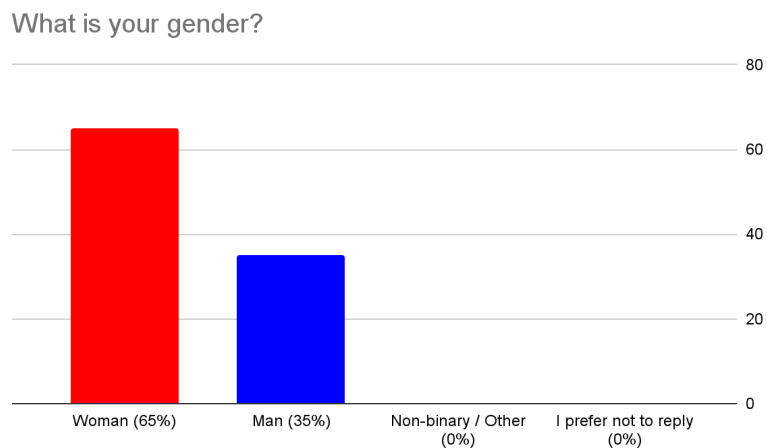
These demographics help contextualize consumer behavior and attitudes toward Sagre and traditional artisanal heritage. Additionally, the strong participation rate reinforces the cultural relevance of these festivals and supports the validity of the insights gathered in the subsequent analysis.

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<sup>78</sup> See Appendix II.



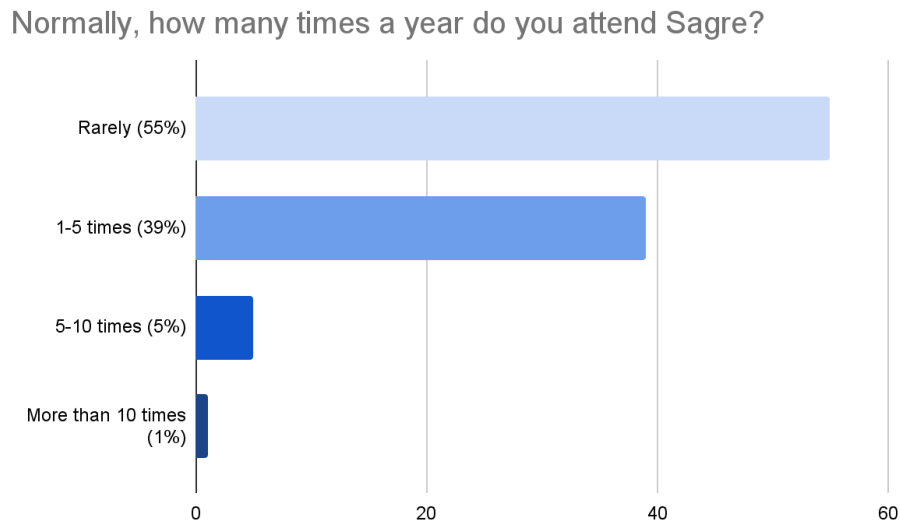
**Graph 8: Respondents' Distribution by Age Group**



**Graph 9: Respondents' Distribution by Gender**

In terms of frequency, most of those interviewed indicated they attend Sagre occasionally. In particular, 55% indicated they attend Sagre rarely, while 39% said they attend between one and five times per year. A smaller percentage attend more frequently, with 5% participating between five and ten times annually, and just 1% attending more than ten times (see Graph 10). These statistics imply that while Sagre are widely appreciated, they are still generally treated as occasional cultural or leisure experiences rather than regular activities. When asked how they typically learn about upcoming Sagre, respondents cited a

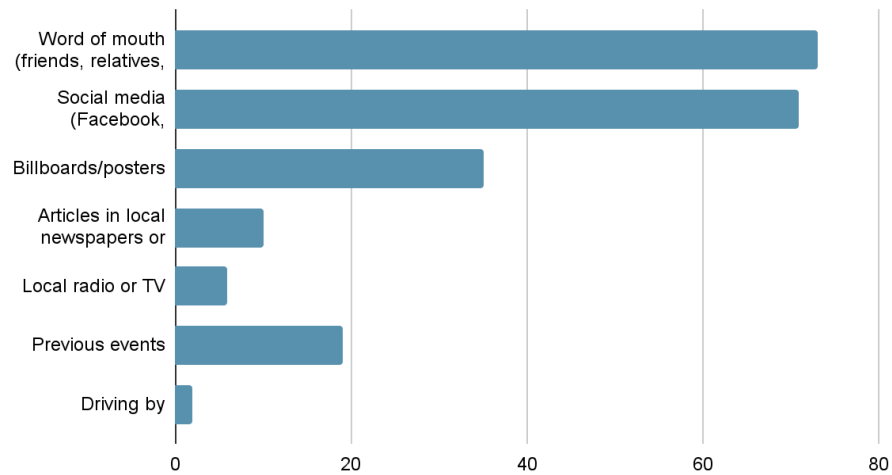
diverse range of sources. The most common sources of information were word of mouth (73 mentions) and social network sites such as Facebook and Instagram (71), followed by posters and billboard displays (35). Less frequently cited were past Sagre attendance experiences (19), local newspaper or magazine articles (10), local radio or TV channels (6), and simply driving by an event venue (2).



**Graph 10: Respondents' Distribution by Sagre Attendance Frequency**

This allocation, shown in Graph 11, illustrates how both traditional and digital media played vital roles in Sagre's promotion. This suggests that future marketing strategies should adopt a multi-channel approach, combining social networks and physical advertising to reach and connect with diverse audience groups.

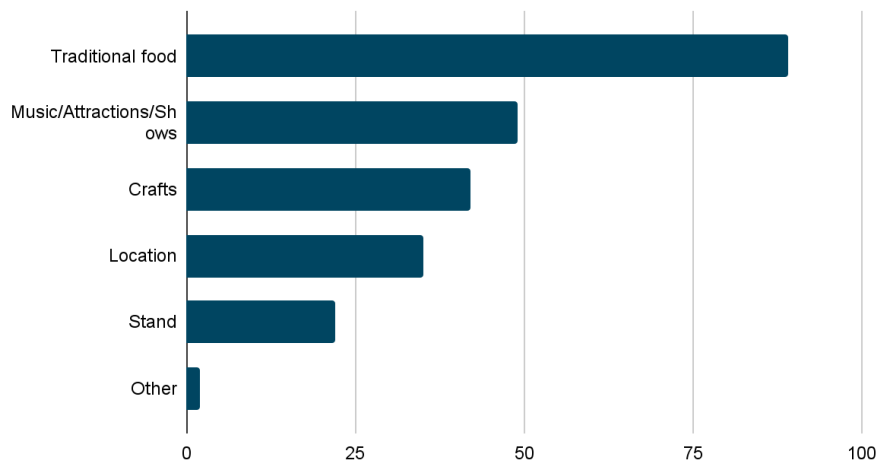
### What tools did you use to gain knowledge about the event?



**Graph 11: Tools Used to Gain Knowledge About the Event**

The survey also explored what elements most attracted participants to the Sagre they attended (see Graph 12). Traditional food emerged as the dominant draw, cited by 89 respondents, underscoring gastronomy as a primary focus in these events. Other notable attractions included music, shows, and performances (49), crafts (42), and the location itself (35). Less frequently mentioned were the design or appeal of individual stands (22) and other factors (2). These results confirm that Sagre are primarily perceived as culinary experiences, but also appreciated for their cultural and artisanal dimensions.

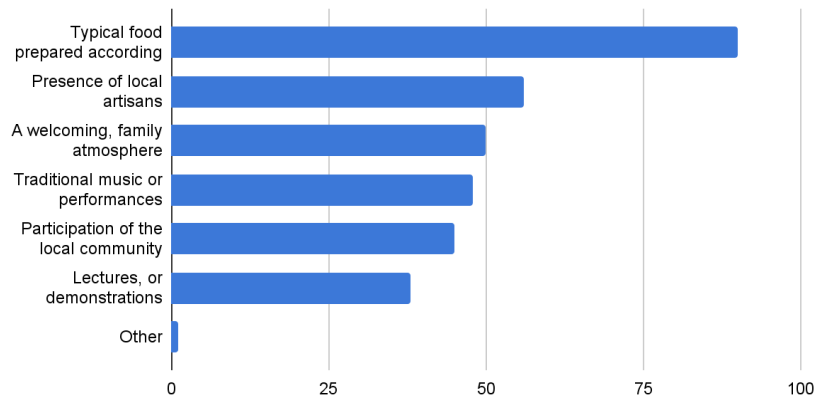
What attracted you most about the Sagre you attended?



**Graph 12: What Elements Attract People the Most During a Sagra**

To further understand the perceived authenticity of Sagre, respondents were asked what characteristics make a Sagra feel genuinely connected to the local area that can be considered authentic (see Graph 13). The most highly valued aspect was once again typical food prepared according to tradition (90 mentions), followed by the presence of local artisans (56) and an inviting atmosphere of family warmth (50). Traditional performance or music (48), active involvement of local community (45), and educational elements such as lectures or demonstrations (38) were among other significant factors. These results suggest that authenticity is not merely grounded in culinary matters, but also in the interconnectedness of local culture, people, and customs, hinting at the successful Sagre when they best combine the senses with depth of culture.

In your opinion, what makes a Sagra truly authentic and connected to the local area?

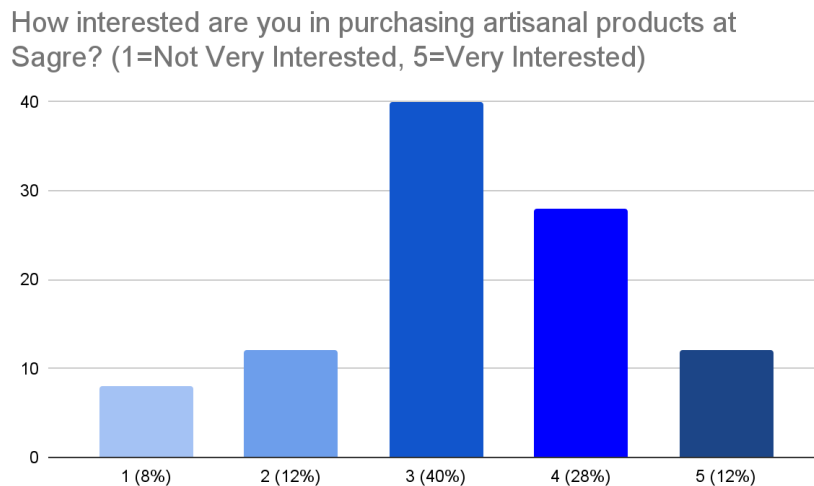


**Graph 13: What Elements Make a Sagra Truly Authentic**

Beyond identifying what attracts visitors and is authentic, the survey also explored participants' aspirations regarding Sagra's duration and structure, as well as their engagement with local production during the festival. With many responders (68%) expressing a desire for Sagra to extend across multiple days with varied daily events, this suggests openness among Sagra attendees towards longer, multi-formatted festival events, with increased cultural immersion and increased economic benefits for local producers. Just 6% disagreed with this opinion, with 26% being indecisive—a potential opportunity for experimenting with longer, phased-running structures.

Regarding interaction with local craftsmanship, 83% of the respondents reported visiting other local craft stalls or stands at the festival. When asked whether they had an interest in buying artisanal products at Sagra, most of the respondents reported moderate to high interest. In particular, in terms of level of interest, 40% reported at level 3, 28% at level 4, and 12% at level 5 (very interested), with only a small percentage reporting low interest in buying artisanal products at Sagra (8% at level 1 and 12% at level 2, see Graph 14). Such a high rate of engagement is indicative of high consumer receptivity to buying artisanal

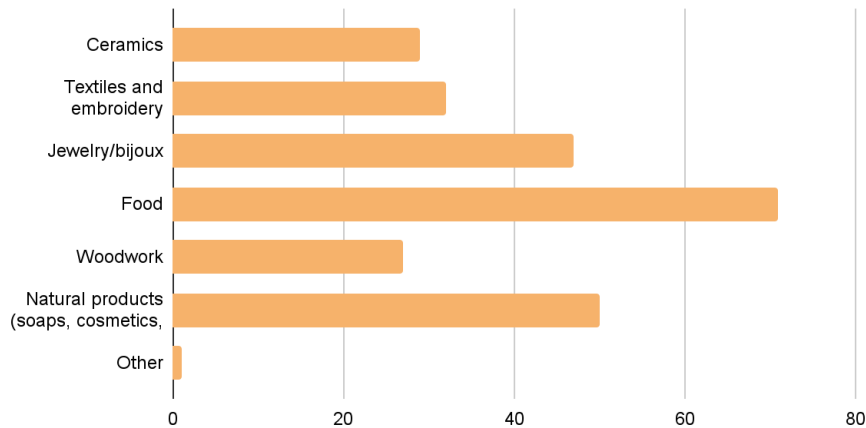
products, especially when these products are effectively integrated into the Sagra experience.



**Graph 14: Respondents' Level of Interest in Purchasing Artisanal Products**

Further supporting this, respondents identified a wide range of artisanal products they found appealing beyond the typical Sagra offerings (see Graph. 15). Food-related items were the most popular (71 mentions), followed by natural products such as soaps and cosmetics (50), jewelry or bijoux (47), textiles and embroidery (32), ceramics (29), and woodwork (27). This diversity of interest highlights the opportunity for Sagra to expand its artisanal offerings and cater to various consumer preferences. This further reinforces the view that Sagra visitors are not only attracted by the food but also have a potential interest in sampling the wider cultural and creative offerings of the region. These insights lend credence to the opinion that Sagra can be a holistic historical/cultural event wherein food, craft, and community meet together to produce relevant and memorable occasions.

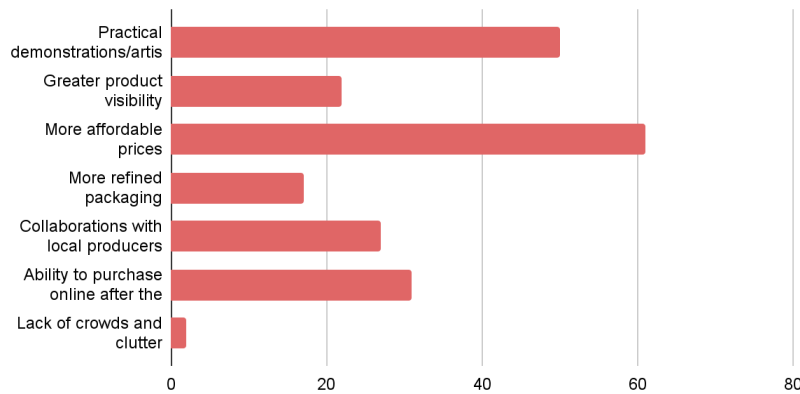
Besides the Sagra's typical products, what other types of artisanal products did you find most interesting?



**Graph 15: Other Artisanal Products that Responders Found Appealing**

To achieve a better understanding of a means of increasing consumer participation in buying artisanal items at Sagra and what influence their purchase decision, a question was asked of respondents regarding which of the following would best tempt them to buy (see Graph 16): The most cited incentive was more affordable prices, mentioned by 61 of the respondents, followed by practical demonstrations or artisans at work (50), the ability to purchase on the internet later (31), and co-promotion with local producers (27). Others cited greater exposure of items (22), more refined packaging (17), but a small minority (2) mentioned a less crowded environment. These responses suggest that a combination of economic approachability, mixed with experiential engagement, is a significant trigger for selling artisan items.

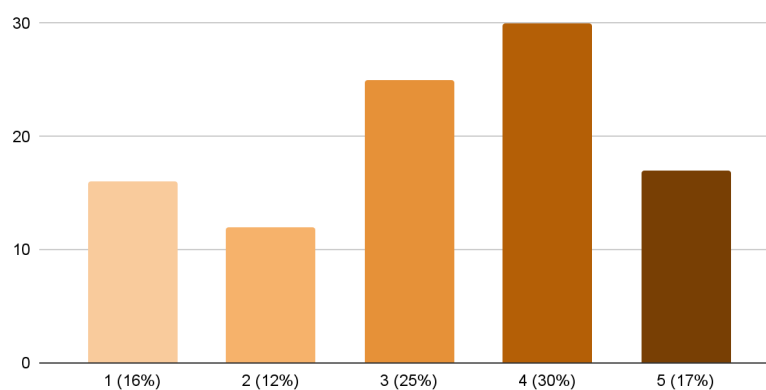
What would encourage you to buy more artisanal products during Sagre?



**Graph 16: Key Factors that Influence Respondents' Purchase Decision**

Accordingly, the survey also explored the digital tools' ability to generate continuity for Sagre after the event. Asking whether they would be willing to have an app or internet platform to discover and purchase items from artisans whom they met at the Sagre (See Graph 17). Although 16% were not particularly interested (rating 1), a collective 47% exhibited a rating of level 4 or 5, which revealed a definite interest in digital continuity. This suggests that integrating e-commerce or digital storytelling platforms could significantly enhance the market reach and exposure of artisans, while ensuring long-term relationships with buyers.

Would you be interested in an app or online platform where you can discover and purchase products from artisans you met at Sagre?



**Graph 17: Key Factors that Influence Respondents' Purchase Decision**

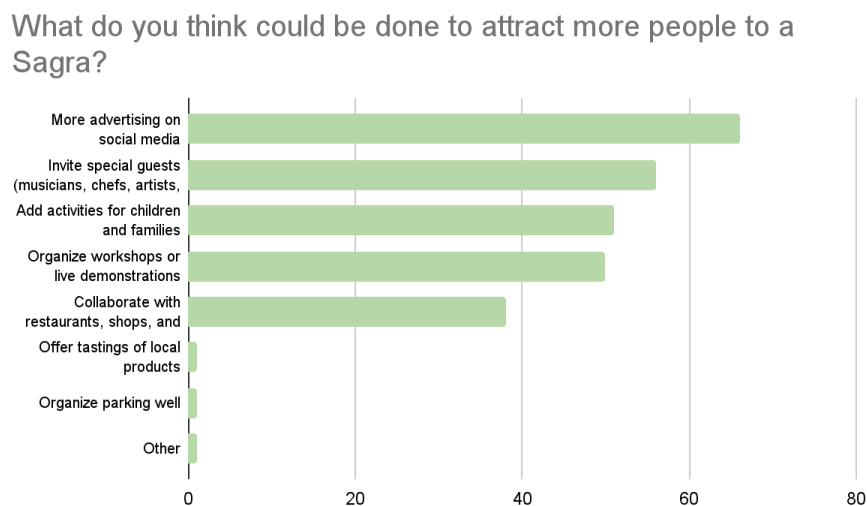
The survey's further feedback strongly validates Sagre's twin cultural and food tourism value. An Overwhelming 97% of respondents valued that these festivals offer more than just culinary enjoyment, acknowledging that they sustain and preserve local culture and traditions. This is reinforced through the open-ended responses, where respondents frequently mentioned the discovery of local traditions, knowledge of artisanal and gastronomic products, and cultural climate as value-added features of the event. Many emphasized the educational value of learning about local history, traditional recipes, and artisanal techniques. In contrast, others valued the sentimental aspect of re-living childhood moments or enjoying peaceful moments amidst celebrations.

The social, communal nature of Sagre was also a significant strength. An overwhelming majority (77%) would recommend the event to others, and 85% expressed a desire to return in the future. Such figures confirm that Sagre not only develops cultural appreciation but also forges practical word-of-mouth recommendations and visitor loyalty. Feedback from the open questions supported this, with many participants describing the sense of community, opportunities to meet people, and convivial atmosphere as central to a positive experience.

Responses about future engagement with local activities expressed a definite interest in remaining involved. Most respondents expressed a desire to continue following events in the area, citing tools such as social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp), local websites, posters, and word of mouth as preferred mediums. Some stated they would even sign up for courses or join specific internet forums to stay informed. Some respondents expressed a desire to deepen their understanding of local culture and traditions, a fact which indicates that Sagre can motivate long-term cultural interest. While some were uncertain or conditional in their responses, suggesting future participation might

depend on circumstances, and only a minority stated that they would not continue to follow area activities.

To conclude the survey, participants were asked to suggest ideas for potential enhancements that might increase Sagra's reach and popularity (see Graph 18). The most frequently mentioned approach, cited by 66 respondents, was increasing advertising on social media, followed by inviting special guests such as musicians, chefs, or artists (56), and adding activities for children and families (51). Also well represented were organizing workshops or live demonstrations (50) and collaborating with local businesses or producers (38). These are all signs of an apparent demand for more spirited, more inclusive, better-promoted events that are a mix of entertainment, learning, and community engagement.



**Graph 18: Factors that Influence a Sagra's Reach and Popularity**

Open-ended responses further enriched this perspective. Many participants expressed interest in more interactive shows, live music, traditional dance, and craft workshops. Others emphasized the importance of genuine regional cuisine, young artisans, and cultural initiatives that promote regional identity.

Improvement suggestions on the organizational level, such as better planning, e.g., thematic arrangement of stands, children's area, adequate signage for visitor orientation, were mentioned. In the marketing area, respondents recommended stronger social media campaigns, collaborations with influencers, and more emphasis on the cultural value of the event.

Overall, the survey report provides a portrait of a Sagra that is already appreciated but possesses immense potential for development. Through a mix of diverse activities, improved communication, and joint infrastructure, Sagre can be converted into even more productive forums for the celebration of culture, creation of economic gain, and the unifying of communities.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to explore a crucial question: Can Italian local food festivals, known as Sagre, be strategically utilized to promote Italian artisanship and develop a sustainable economic cycle? The motivation behind this research lies in the urgent need to preserve and revitalize traditional crafts in Italy, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas where artisans are disappearing and local economies are deteriorating. This question has been significantly deepened by the interviews with Sagra organizers, as described in Chapter 2. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there is a growing demand for niche, authentic, and sustainable products being driven by cultural heritage, experiential consumption, as well as ethical and sustainable values, and this trend is a unique opportunity to redefine Sagre not only as culinary events but as dynamic platforms of cultural transmission, economic regeneration, and community engagement.

To explore such potential, a mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating theoretical analysis, case studies, and empirical data collection. The theoretical foundation outlined in Chapter 1 examined the socio-economic and cultural forces behind the increasing demand for niche products in Italy. This was followed by the presentation of two detailed case studies combined with two interviews, the Sagra del Carciofo Romanesco of Ladispoli and the Sagra del Pesce of Anguillara Sabazia, as outlined in Chapter 2. These case studies gave an analysis of the organizational, legal, and financial structures of Sagre, along with their cultural and economic influences. Chapter 3 supplemented the above with a survey designed to capture consumer perceptions, motivations, and expectations of Sagre and artisan products. By combining these tools, they allow for a comprehensive understanding of both the opportunities and limitations of Sagre as engines of local development.

These festivals also promote authentic cultural experiences, transporting visitors into the region's traditions, tastes, and aesthetics. They serve as informal educational spaces where traditional knowledge, artisanal techniques, and local stories are passed down to younger generations, helping to preserve intangible cultural heritage. Visitors are drawn not only by the culinary offerings but also by the presence of crafts, live music, folk performances, and the overall spirit of community and conviviality that defines these events. Sagre thereby serves as cultural places where food, creativity, and identity intersect.

Despite these strengths, however, several limitations became apparent that curtail the entire potential of Sagre. A significant number of Sagre still lack adequate digital infrastructure, which severely restricts their ability to engage with visitors once the event concludes. With the absence of dedicated online platforms, e-commerce capabilities, or digital storytelling tools, artisans are unable to continue promoting or selling their products, and the relationship between the festival and its attendees is cut off abruptly. This lack of post-event continuity is not only limited to the artisans' market outreach but also diminishes even the long-term cultural significance of the Sagra itself. Visitors inspired by the experience have no accessible way to reconnect with artisans or the community, resulting in lost opportunities for cultural and economic exchange. In addition to this digital gap, organizational challenges persist, including inconsistent planning, logistical inefficiencies, and limited coordination among various institutions. Artisanship, while present, is often underrepresented compared to food, which dominates the programming and promotional materials. This imbalance reduces the visibility of artisans and diminishes the broader cultural narrative that Sagre could convey. Further, marketing strategies tend to be fragmented and outdated, relying heavily on word-of-mouth, local posters, and sporadic social media use, with little integration of targeted digital outreach or

strategic branding. Lastly, the short duration of most Sagre—often limited to a weekend or a few days— limits their ability to generate sustained economic effects or develop long-lasting cultural immersion. These limitations suggest that while Sagre holds immense promise, strategic improvements are necessary to unlock its full potential as engines of cultural preservation and economic revitalization.

To overcome the impediments encountered during this study, a broad array of strategic marketing and operational responses is suggested. These responses anticipate the potential of Sagre as a means of community mobilization to enhance cultural heritage and economic development. Among the suggestions is the use of multi-channel marketing strategies that blend traditional and digital media. While posters, flyers, and local radio can reach an older audience, digital tools such as social media campaigns, influencer collaborations, and geo-targeted advertising can significantly expand Sagre's reach to younger and more diverse demographics. Those digital actions should be supported by enhanced experiential engagement, including live demonstrations, storytelling booths, and interactive workshops that allow visitors to participate in the creative process. Such experiences will not only foster higher emotional engagement but also increase the perceived value of artisanal products. Additionally, extending the Sagra from a few days to a week or longer will allow for more varied programming for local businesses and artisans. It also enables staggered appearances, such as planning guided excursions, museum visits, advanced workshops, interactive courses, and more in the days leading up to the Sagra.

Enhancing spatial organization for Sagre is also necessary. Thematic zoning, separating areas for food, crafts, performances, and educational activities, can improve visitors' orientation, increase visibility for artisans, and develop a more coherent and immersive experience. To better support artisans responding

to contemporary consumer demands, training programs must also be made available for branding, online sales, customer relations, and storytelling. These programs could be organized in collaboration with local chambers of commerce, universities, or cultural institutions, enabling artisans to take an even more active responsibility for promoting their work and supporting their businesses outside of the festival environment.

Beyond these general recommendations, this thesis strongly advocates for a collaborative model involving both public and private stakeholders.

As outlined in Chapter 2, municipalities play a crucial role in organizing Sagre by investing in infrastructure, logistics, and a regulatory framework that ensures the smooth and safe execution of the events. At the same time, private sponsors, local businesses, and cultural institutions can contribute investment, technical abilities, and promotional resources. Such collaboration between private and public can raise the standards and permanence of Sagre, transforming them into well-supported, professionally organized events with long-lasting value. Even more importantly, such collaboration can set the stage for an intra-local economic cycle, where investment in cultural festivals is cycled back into artisans, hospitality providers, and territorial producers, generating income that is reinvested into the community.

To further develop the cultural aspect of Sagre, culinary programming can be combined with cultural and educational activities. For instance, offering free or reduced admission to museums, organizing guided tours, or hosting outdoor exhibitions and performances can create a more integrated and substantial visitor experience. Themed festivals that link cuisine to local folklore, music, or crafts shows can affirm regional character and appeal to culturally or gourmet-driven tourism. These programs diversify Sagre's appeal as well as fortify its purpose as a venue for the transmission of culture. By expanding the scope of Sagre to

include cultural and educational content, the festivals can attract a broader range of participants, boost visitor expenditure, and generate demand for locally produced products and services, further affirming the economic cycle between culture, tourism, and production.

Furthermore, the development of digital continuity platforms such as mobile apps or dedicated websites preserves the relationships developed during the Sagra even after the event has concluded. These platforms would allow individuals to reconnect with artisans, place orders online, access educational content, and receive updates about future events to stay informed. This would expand the economic and cultural impact of Sagra far longer than their physical duration and generate an impression of sustained community engagement. Enabling artisans to have year-round visibility and sales, online platforms transform Sagra from seasonal events into year-round economic engines, sustaining small businesses and repeat participations. In this way, Sagra is not only a cultural presentation but also a strategic asset for economic revitalization; it has the potential for generating revenue for the place or locality in an infinite loop of production, promotion, and participation. Likewise, youth involvement programs should be formulated in collaboration with schools, universities, and youth organizations, particularly toward involving Gen Z.

In addition to the economic benefits, these solutions help safeguard cultural traditions and attract diverse audiences, contributing to the creation of a self-sustaining economy, particularly for areas with declining traditional industries. They also serve as instruments for education by enhancing cultural literacy and intergenerational knowledge transfer, while enhancing the organizational capacity of Sagra to be more resilient and influential. These initiatives also promote social cohesion by creating opportunities for various communities to come together and share experiences, while enhancing regional branding and

tourism through the presentation of distinctive local assets. Finally, they interconnect economic growth with cultural preservation and the well-being of the community, making Sagre more than seasonal festivities—they are the strategic tools for cultural preservation, economic revitalization, and the empowerment of the people.

In conclusion, this thesis has demonstrated that Sagre can be far more than mere festive gatherings—they represent strategic assets for cultural preservation, economic revitalization, and community cohesion. On the theoretical framework articulated in Chapter 1, the practical insights from the case studies in Chapter 2, and the empirical research carried out using the survey in Chapter 3, it is clear that Sagre possesses the potential to evolve into holistic platforms that not only celebrate Italy's rich artisanal heritage but also secure its continuity. With thoughtful planning, participatory governance, and creative marketing campaigns, these festivals can become powerful instruments for rural revitalization, for the empowerment of local artisans, and for the enhancement and longer-lasting appreciation of regional culture. There exists a way forward that depends upon collaboration and innovation across the private and public sectors. But the rewards for doing so are significant and far-reaching—vitalized villages, strong and competitive artisanal economies, and more culturally rich landscapes. With the integration of genuine local content that facilitates emotional connection and intelligent coordination, Sagre can influence the future direction of Italy's cultural and economic identity, ensuring that the past and future progress together toward a more sustainable, inclusive, and culturally rich future.

## APPENDIX I: Survey Administration Details

### Italian Gastronomic Festivals and Handicrafts: Opinions and Promotion Strategies

This questionnaire seeks to gather the opinions and perceptions of participants who have stayed in or traveled to Italy regarding the role of local gastronomic festivals (Sagre). Specifically, it aims to explore how these festivals contribute to the promotion of local handicrafts and the development of innovative marketing strategies. The overarching goal is to identify opportunities for economic growth and to support the preservation and enhancement of Italy's artisanal and cultural heritage.

---

\* Indicates required question

---

Select your age group: \*

- Under 20
- 20–40
- 40–60
- Over 60

---

Have you ever attended a sagra (Italian local food festival)? \*

- Yes
- No

---

On average, how many festivals do you attend in a year? \*

- Rarely
- 1–5 times
- 5–10 times
- More than 10 times

---

How did you learn about the event? \*

*(You can select more than one answer)*

- Word of mouth (friends, family)
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Billboards / posters
- Articles in local newspapers or magazines
- Local radio or TV
- Previous events
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

What attracted you most to the festival you attended? \*

*(You can select more than one answer)*

- Traditional food
  - Music / Entertainment / Shows
  - Handicrafts
  - Location
  - Market Stands
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

In your opinion, what makes a sagra truly authentic and connected to the local area? \*

*(You can select more than one answer)*

- Traditional food prepared in the traditional way
  - Presence of local artisans
  - Family-friendly and welcoming atmosphere
  - Traditional music or performances
  - Participation of the local community
  - Stories, storytelling, or demonstrations tied to local culture
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Would you like the sagra to last more days and offer different activities each day? \*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

---

During the event, did you visit other stands or stalls featuring local handicrafts? \*

Yes

No

---

How interested are you in purchasing artisanal products at the festival? \*

Not Interested      1      2      3      4      5      Very Interested

---

Besides typical products promoted by the sagra, what types of handicrafts did you find most interesting? \*

*(You can select more than one answer)*

Ceramics

Fabrics and embroidery

Jewelry / Bijoux

Food products

Woodwork

Natural products (soaps, cosmetics, etc.)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

What would encourage you to buy more artisanal products at *sagre*? \*

*(You can select more than one answer)*

- Live demonstrations / seeing artisans at work
- Better product visibility
- More affordable prices
- Better packaging
- Collaborations with local producers
- Possibility to buy online after the event
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Would you be interested in an app or online platform to discover and buy products \*  
from artisans you met at *sagre*?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Interested	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Interested

---

In your opinion, what could be done to attract more people to *sagre*? \*

*(You can select more than one answer)*

- More promotion on social media
- Invite special guests (musicians, chefs, artists, etc.)
- Add activities for children and families
- Organize live workshops or demos
- Collaborate with restaurants, shops, and local producers
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Do you plan to tell others about the sagra and recommend it to someone? \*

- Yes
- No
- Not yet, maybe

---

Do you believe a local festival also holds cultural value in addition to its gastronomic value? \*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

---

Would you attend the sagra again in Italy? \*

- Yes
- No

---

What would you like to see in a future edition of the sagra?

Your answer

---

---

Do you have any other suggestions or ideas to improve the event?

Your answer

---

---

Please indicate where you are from: \*

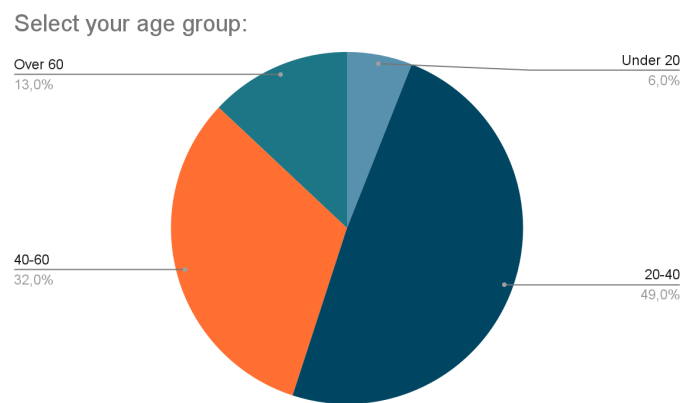
Your answer

---

# APPENDIX II: Graphical Representations of Survey Results

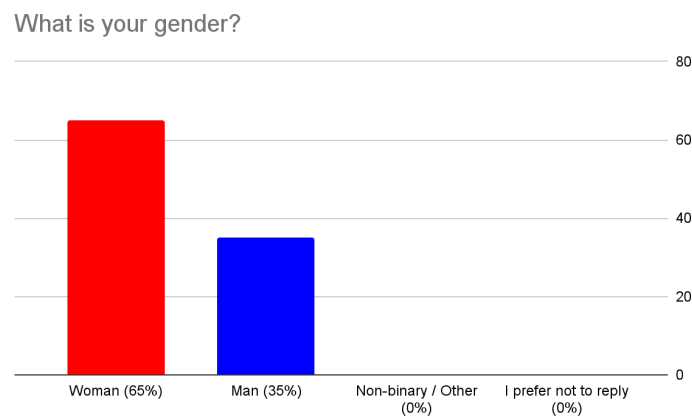
## Demographic Analysis – Age

Under 20	6
20-40	49
40-60	32
Over 60	13



## Demographic Analysis – Gender

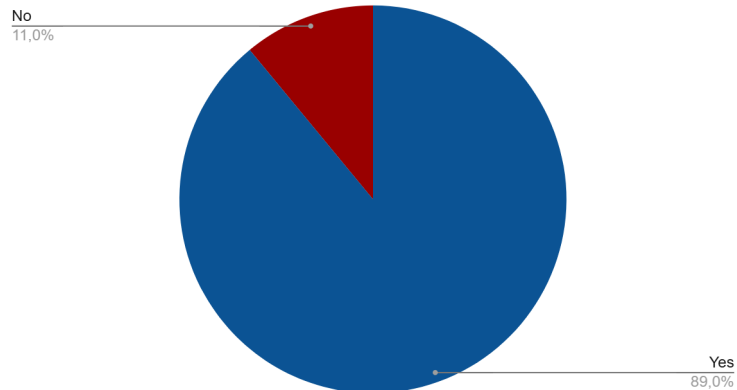
Woman	65
Man	35
Non-binary / Other	0
I prefer not to reply	0



## Number of responders who have attended a Sagra

Yes	89
No	11

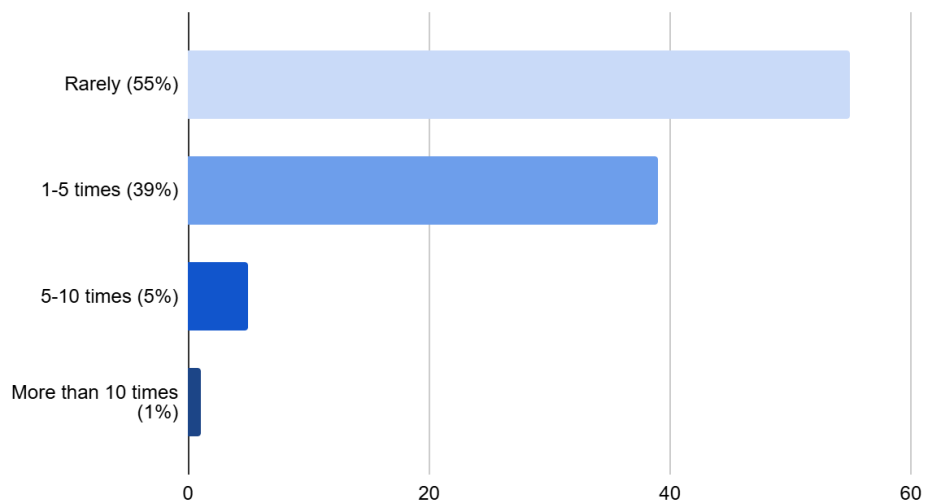
Have you ever attended a Sagra?



## Frequency of attendance per year

Rarely	55
1-5 times	39
5-10 times	5
More than 10 times	1

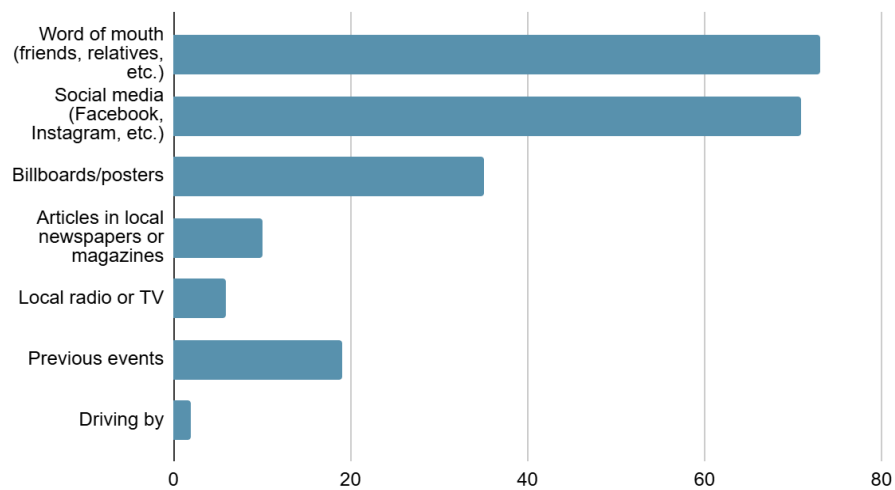
Normally, how many times a year do you attend Sagra?



## Tools used to gain knowledge

Word of mouth (friends, relatives, etc.)	73
Social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	71
Billboards/posters	35
Articles in local newspapers or magazines	10
Local radio or TV	6
Previous events	19
Driving by	2

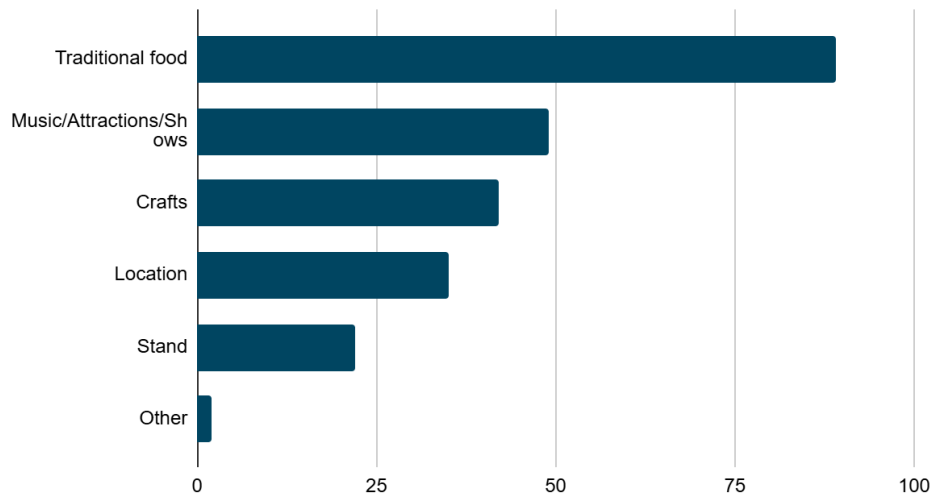
What tools did you use to gain knowledge about the event?



## Main attraction

Traditional food	89
Music/Attractions/Shows	49
Crafts	42
Location	35
Stand	22
Other	2

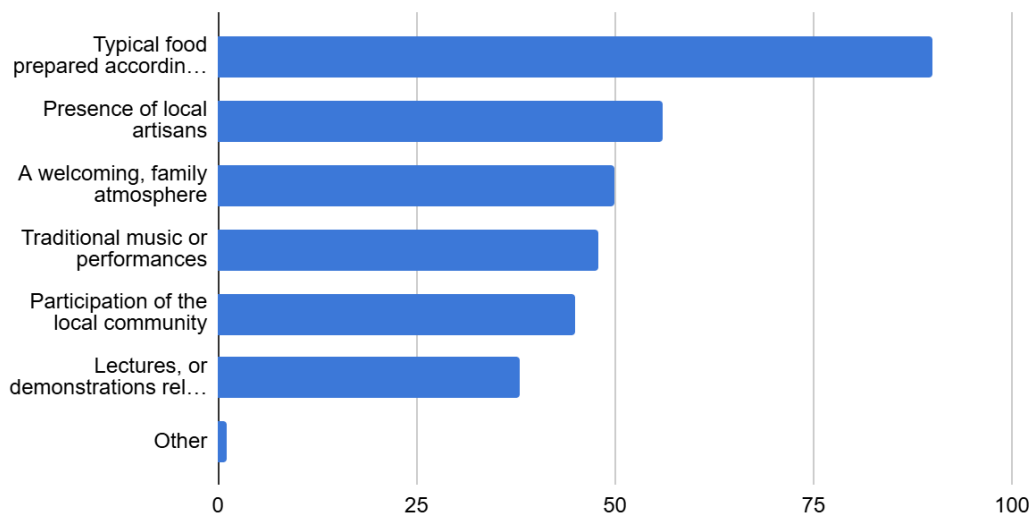
What attracted you most about the Sagra you attended?



### Factors contributing to authenticity and local connection

Typical food prepared according to tradition	90
Presence of local artisans	56
A welcoming, family atmosphere	50
Traditional music or performances	48
Participation of the local community	45
Lectures or demonstrations related to local culture	38
Other	1

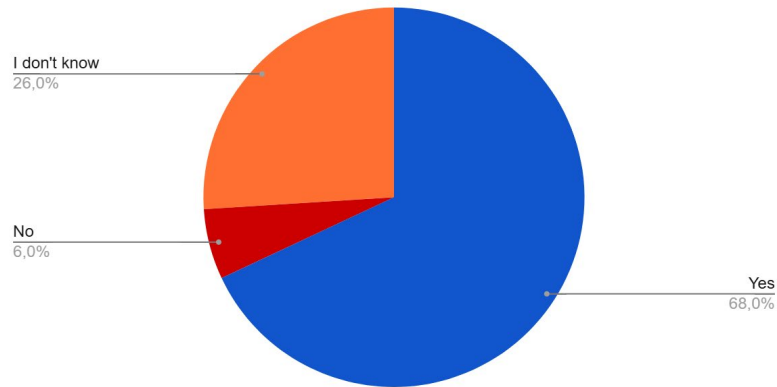
In your opinion, what makes a Sagra truly authentic and connected to the local area?



## Preference for multi-day Sagra

Yes	68
No	6
I don't know	26

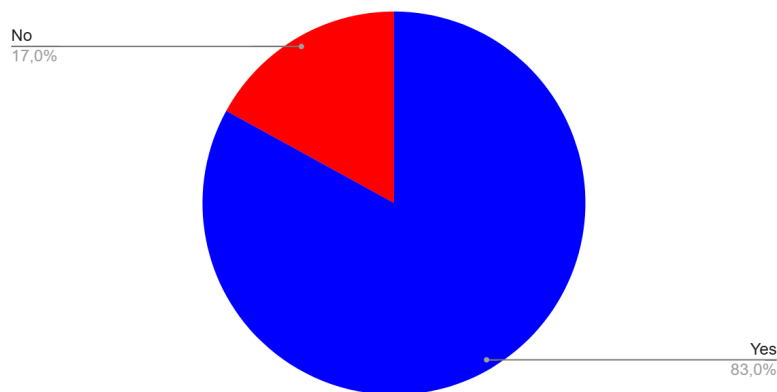
Would you like the Sagra to last several days and offer different activities each day?



## Number of responders who have visited local craft stands/stalls during a Sagra

Yes	83
No	17

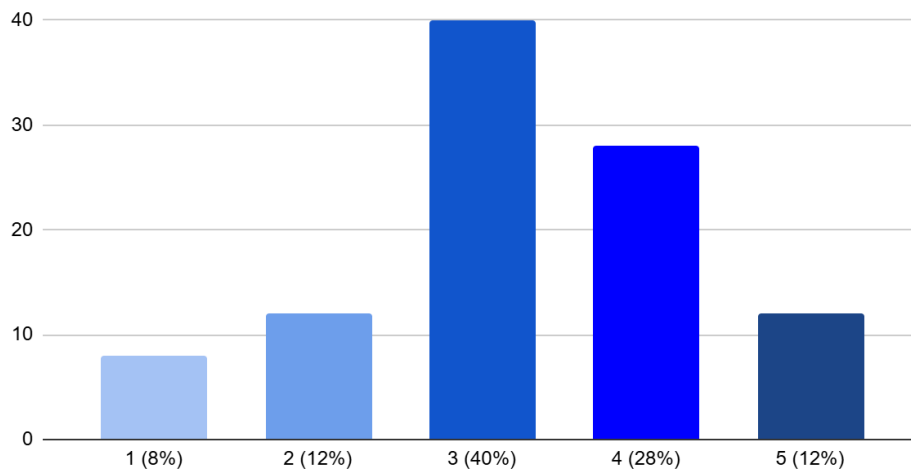
During the event, did you visit any other local craft stands or stalls?



## Interest in buying artisanal products

1 (Not very interested)	8
2	12
3	40
4	28
5 (Very interested)	12

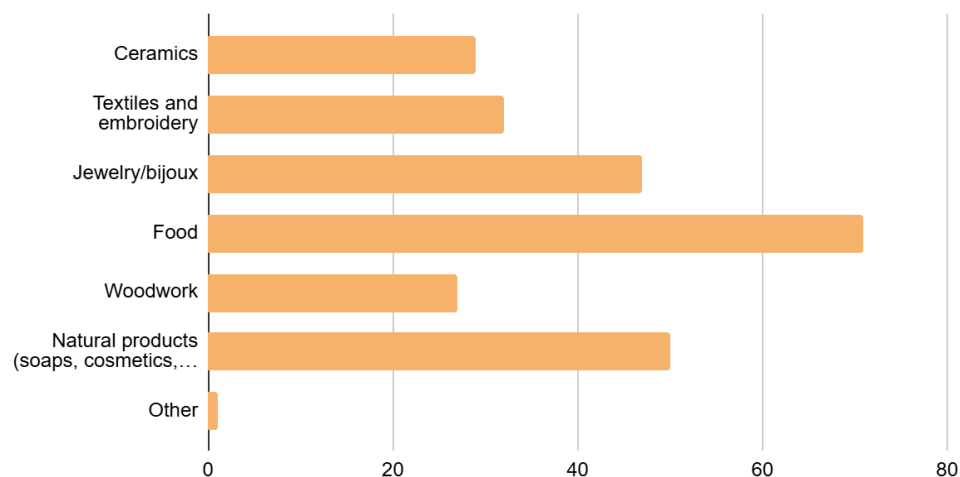
How interested are you in purchasing artisanal products at Sagre? (1=Not Very Interested, 5=Very Interested)



## Most interesting additional artisanal products

Ceramics	29
Textiles and embroidery	32
Jewelry/bijoux	47
Food	71
Woodwork	27
Natural products (soaps, cosmetics, etc.)	50
Other	1

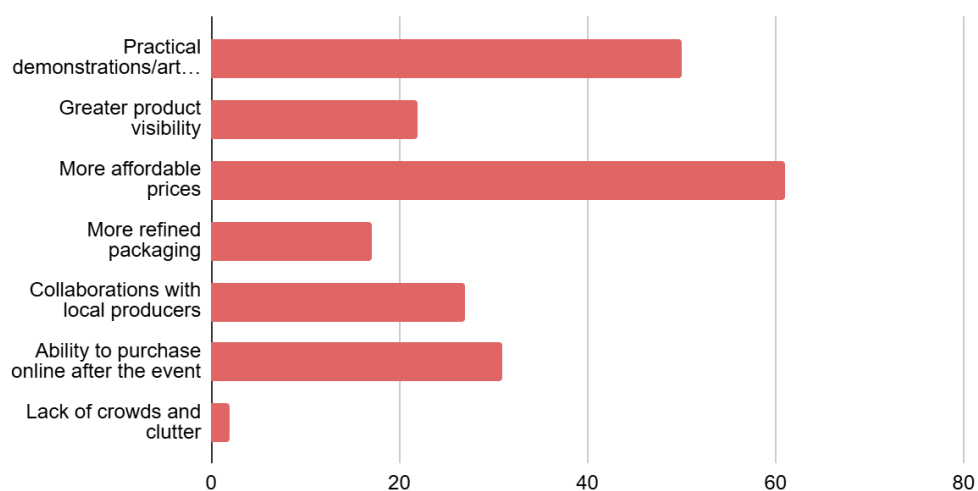
Besides the Sagra's typical products, what other types of artisanal products did you find most interesting?



### Factors that would increase artisanal purchases

Practical demonstrations/artisans at work	50
Greater product visibility	22
More affordable prices	61
More refined packaging	17
Collaborations with local producers	27
Ability to purchase online after the event	31
Lack of crowds and clutter	2

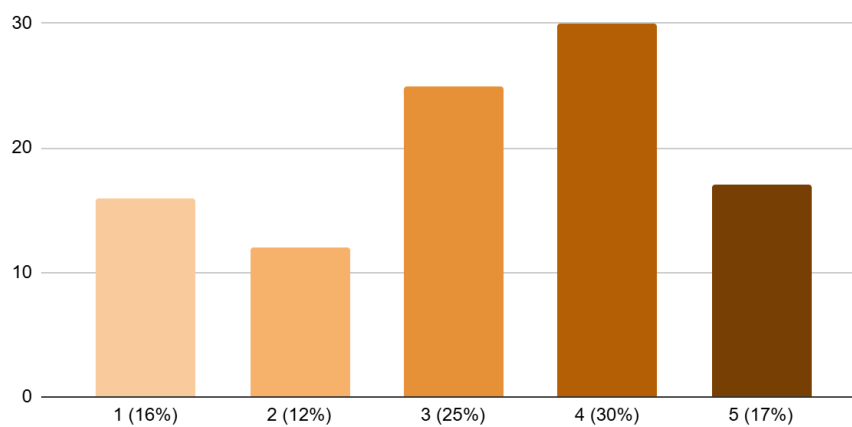
What would encourage you to buy more artisanal products during Sagra?



## Interest in a digital platform for artisans

1 (Not very Interested)	16
2	12
3	25
4	30
5 (Very Interested)	17

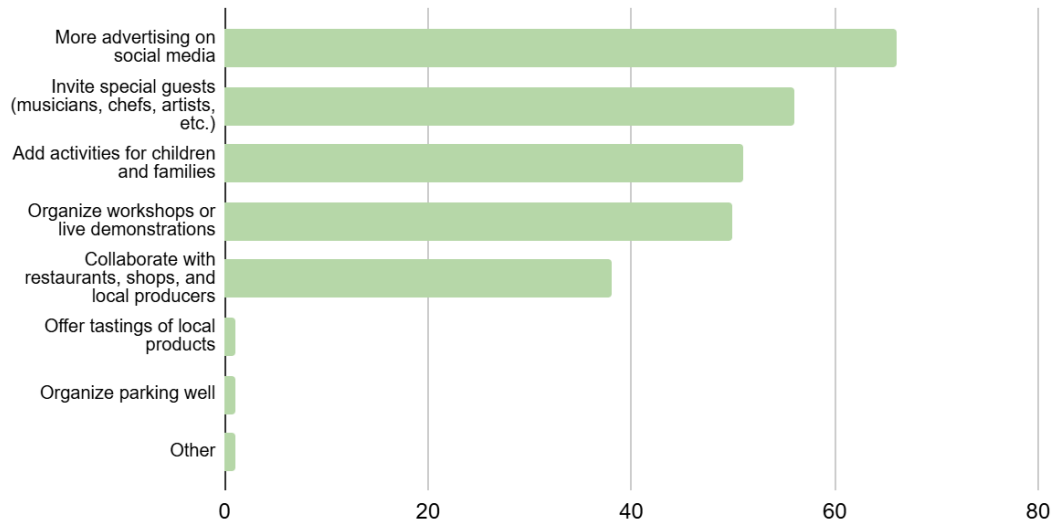
Would you be interested in an app or online platform where you can discover and purchase products from artisans you met at Sagre?  
(1 = Not Very Interested, 5 = Very Interested)



## Suggestions to increase attendance at Sagra

More advertising on social media	66
Invite special guests (musicians, chefs, artists, etc.)	56
Add activities for children and families	51
Organize workshops or live demonstrations	50
Collaborate with restaurants, shops, and local producers	38
Offer tastings of local products	1
Organize parking well	1
Other	1

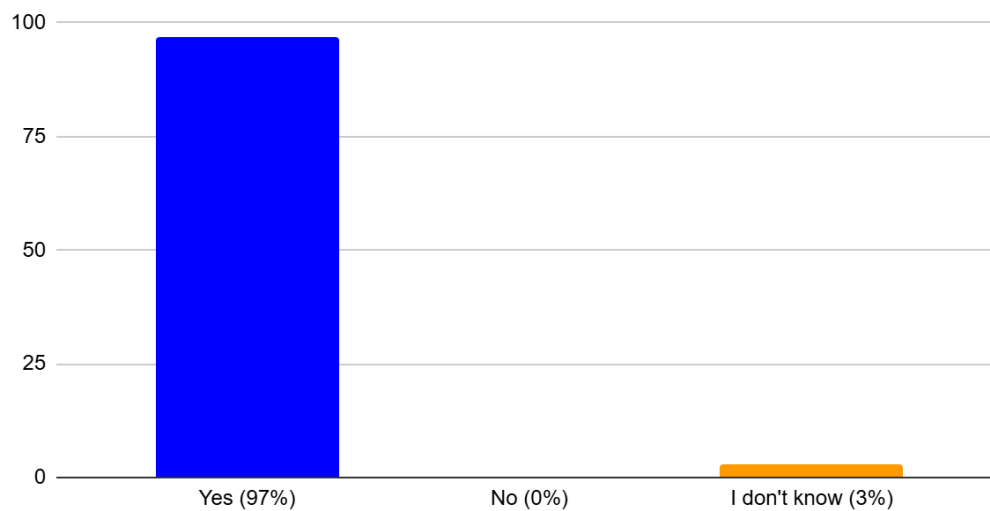
## What do you think could be done to attract more people to a Sagra?



## Perceived values of Sagra

Yes (97%)	97
No (0%)	0
I don't know (3%)	3

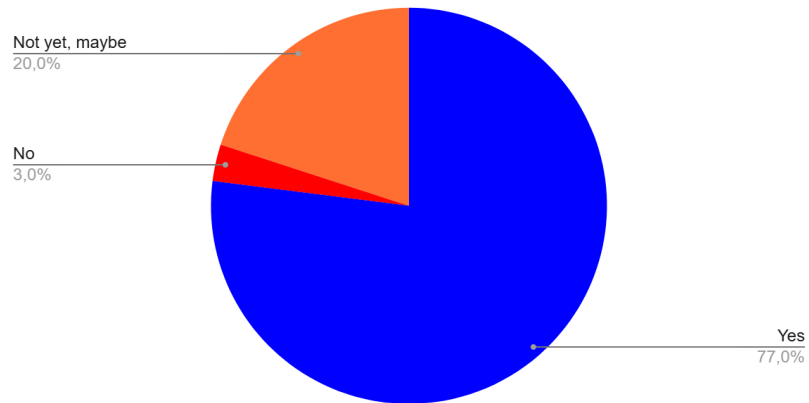
## Do you think a Sagra has cultural as well as gastronomic value?



## Likelihood of recommending the Sagra

Yes	77
No	3
Not yet, maybe	20

Are you planning to tell other people about the Sagra and are you thinking of recommending it to anyone?



## APPENDIX III: Transcripts of Two Interviews

*The interviews were initially conducted in Italian and have been translated into English.*

### Interview 1

An interview was released by Mrs. Daniela Giannini, secretary and organiser of the Pro Loco Anguillara Sabazia, at the former Consortium of Anguillara Sabazia, at the end of their daily institutional activity for the elections to integrate the Association's Board.

Available in video format:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFFe8Dfmypl>

**Sunyifei Wang:** Good morning, my name is Sunyifei Wang, and I am a student from Rome. For a project about Traditional Festivals and Sagre, our school asked us to interview the organizers of these events. I'd like to ask you a few questions.

**Daniela Giannini:** Good morning, yes, of course.

**S.W.:** What role do you have in the organization?

**D.G.:** Well, I am D.G. Giannini, and I am the secretary of the Pro Loco of Anguillara Sabazia.

**S.W.:** Can I write your first and last name, or just your first name?

**D.G.:** Either is fine.

**S.W.:** What is the name of this organization?

**D.G.:** So, this association, the Pro Loco of Anguillara Sabazia, is a Social Promotion Entity of the Territory, registered with the UNPLI National; the National Union of Pro Loco of Italy, and it is part of the APS circuit; Associations of Social Promotion, so the goal of this organization is to promote the territory through channels of social, tourism, cultural, and traditional activities.

**S.W.:** What kind of Sagra or event do you organize in Anguillara?

**D.G.:** In Anguillara, various events are proposed under normal conditions, not during Covid emergencies, some of which are organized directly by the Pro Loco of Anguillara Sabazia. Among these, organized directly by the Pro Loco, we have the Fish Sagra, usually held between June and September, which coincides with the feast of the Madonna, celebrated every September 8th, and is the religious celebration of the Madonna of Anguillara Sabazia.

**S.W.:** Can you give us a brief description of the Sagra? (where, when, what is being celebrated, how it is organized)

**D.G.:** So, the Fish Sagra, as I mentioned, is organized in June, during the summer when most of the lake fish are more abundant. It's a festival that aims to celebrate the lake fish and its products, presented in a culinary manner as typical dishes of our territory. Different preparation methods are used for Eel, Coregone, Perch, and Lattarino. It is organized with contributions from the districts and various associations of the territory. These products are offered to visitors. For those who attend our Sagra, besides the culinary aspect, there is also an artistic offering by our theatrical and musical associations, among others. So, it is an expression of the local associations of Anguillara Sabazia. This is the Fish Festival.

**S.W.:** How many people does the Sagra attract each year?

**D.G.:** Usually, five to ten thousand visitors.

**S.W.:** Does the Sagra have a religious or traditional representation?

**D.G.:** The Fish Sagra is a celebration of fishing and therefore of the town, while the September festival represents the religious ceremony with a Mass. A Mass is organized, and on all the streets of the town, the Madonna and Patron Saint San Biagio, Protector of our city, are honored.

**S.W.:** Can you explain how and how many people contribute to organizing the event, what motivates their participation, and what roles and relationships they have with the event?

**D.G.:** Well, these two festivals I described are official festivals, and they are also organized in collaboration with the Municipality. They are the official festivals of the town. They are organized in cooperation, as I said, with both the Districts and associations of the territory, and they involve a good level of social

participation. The goal is to promote cultural, social, tourist, and traditional activities of our town. Therefore, active participation of the community is increasingly sought to make the population as involved as possible in these official celebrations.

**S.W.:** Are the participants mainly locals, or do people come from outside?

**D.G.:** They are mainly locals.

**S.W.:** Is the festival seen as an economic opportunity for the community?

**D.G.:** Absolutely yes, because it is an excellent opportunity to showcase our traditions, our places, and especially during the Fish Festival, our typical culinary dishes to tourists and outsiders.

**S.W.:** What economic opportunities are realized, and where do the earnings go?

**D.G.:** The earnings are reinvested in other activities within the territory, also because the Pro Loco is a non-profit organization, and everything we manage to save from these Sagre and events is reinvested locally. Our dream is to enhance these occasions, Sagre, and other tourist activities to help develop the territory, perhaps even through the construction of new services and facilities. Our goal is to make the Pro Loco a support tool for the municipal administrative activities, to give back to the territory what we receive in terms of participation. So, active citizen involvement is transformed into something that benefits the town and helps preserve traditions.

**S.W.:** What intangible benefits has the festival brought to the people (friendships, passion)?

**D.G.:** Certainly, it is a significant tool for social aggregation, a means of confrontation, and a chance for personal growth. By collaborating on the same project, there is personal development in integrating and working together, which fosters growth from this perspective.

**S.W.:** One last question. Since during Covid, the Sagre were all halted, but now, with the new DPCM, we see that the government is deciding when these festivals will restart; what are your thoughts on the future? How are you organizing for the upcoming festivals?

**D.G.:** Well, we have to follow what the UNPLI chooses as their line of action, so on a national level, we need to observe it and wait for their official communication. Regarding this, what we can say at the local level is that we just had elections for the new board, and our goal during this period of stagnation is to reorganize ourselves within the board and start working on near-future objectives. Once national laws and UNPLI guidelines permit, we will be ready to organize festivals, fairs, and events again. Of course, we will seize every opportunity while respecting all safety regulations to avoid COVID-19 from disrupting us.

**S.W.:** Thank you very much. The interview ends here.

**D.G.:** Perfect, it was a pleasure, see you soon.

Anguillara Sabazia, 07/03/2021

## **Interview 2**

An interview was released by Mr. Moreno Delle Fratte, president of Pro Loco Anguillara Sabazia, at the former Consortium of Anguillara Sabazia, at the end of his daily duty.

**Sunyifei Wang:** What permits are required to organize a Sagra?

**Moreno Delle Fratte:** Well, they ask us for patronage from the municipality, through a pre-printed form in which we request authorization to hold this festival, such as the Fish Sagra or the September Festival, or any other municipal celebration. The form asks a series of questions, and you must respond by indicating whether you want it to be free of charge or if you are charging for anything. Based on the answers you provide on the form, you receive the permits. You must now submit both the safety plan and the anti-COVID plan, as they have recently become necessary. The safety plan includes the escape routes and the assembly points in case of an emergency. These are communicated via signs. If a food festival is held, you must also request the SCIA from the local health authority (ASL) for health considerations. They issue a document for which you pay 50 euros, and they will come to inspect if the kitchen and everything are up

to standard. After completing all the paperwork, you set up the booths and then send the festival program to the municipality, detailing where and how it will take place. After completing all that, you need to request the SUAP (Sportelli Unici delle Attività Produttive), where they verify if you have adequately prepared the safety plan and include the program. I believe all municipalities and public institutions request the SUAP before issuing an authorization because they check if all the documentation, we provide is correct. Then they send it to the Carabinieri station and the Rome Prefecture, which oversees that the festival will happen with the documentation in place. After that, the municipality grants the permit, and we organize the event based on the program we submitted, for example, the three-day Fish Sagra.

On Friday, we do most of the preparations, like setting up the booths and the stage. According to the schedule, musicians or performers arrive, and at noon, the food stalls open, offering local traditional dishes. After that, additional shows are added. The shows are paid for by the local association, which seeks regional funding through calls for proposals, always accompanied by the program and all the documentation. We apply for grants from the Region because there are regional funds for official festivals, such as the 70th Fish Sagra, which we couldn't hold in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID. The Region, based on our requests and available resources, provides funding that we repay afterward; however, you must pay for everything first, and then the funds are allocated. The funds come from a combination of our publicity efforts, sponsorships, and the municipality. With this money, we hold the festival, usually budgeting enough for the event, though sometimes we even break or generate income, which is documented in our financial reports. For example, after a festival, we prepare an expense report and send copies to both the Region and the municipality, showing how much we spent and earned. Everything is managed with a fiscal register, as if it were a business, since our activities are limited in time. These events have a long tradition—they date back many years. For example, the Fish Festival has been held for 60 years, dating back to my childhood, to promote lake fish. In the past, festivals were organized with less bureaucracy. I remember that in the past, fishermen's huts called “fraschette” would be set up, with each fisherman competing to make the best one. Back then, meals were cooked with household gas carried down without specific gas permits. Now, everything must be compliant with regulations, including proper gas or induction cooktops.

**S.W.:** So, from your experience, have the purposes of these festivals changed, or are they more or less the same despite the different methods?

**M.D.F.:** The purposes are always the same: to promote lake fish, which have become less popular and have always been somewhat overshadowed by sea fish. We are doing everything to revive this. Our event was featured in the *Corriere della Sera* and other newspapers in Lazio, with articles about the festival and the promotion of both the fish and local broccoli. Everything is organized to bring attention to these products and introduce local places to outsiders.

**S.W.:** Do you see tangible results from these festivals in terms of promotion?

**M.D.F.:** Yes, because when we hold the Fish Sagra at the right time of year, we attract around 30,000 visitors, and there's also a follow-up effect. People come to see the beautiful area and everything around it. Now, as the president of the local association, I am coordinating with those from Bracciano and Trevignano, because we always hold festivals, and sometimes they overlap. We need to focus primarily on typical products, so when there's a festival in Bracciano, we have to make sure ours is different. This year, I already coordinated with the Lago's consortium administrator and the Trevignano officials—though the Trevignano association isn't officially the local association—aiming to synchronize our event calendars to avoid clashes and to work together to promote the area effectively.

**S.W.:** What support does the municipality provide?

**M.D.F.:** The municipality gives us prestige; if a good event is organized, the posters will feature the municipality's logo, the Pro Loco's, and the participating companies' logos. So, the municipality is foremost because we operate under its guidance. If the municipality does not authorize certain activities, nothing can be done. Secondly, the Pro Loco is a volunteer organization dedicated to promoting the territory locally, so no one gets paid. We may get some reimbursement for expenses. For example, when we set up a stage, bring chairs, or have volunteers working, we can ask for expense reimbursement for specific items like setup, teardown, chairs, or electricity. We have a meter that we must turn on and off for festivals, which incurs a cost. We include these expenses in the financial report and request reimbursement from the Pro Loco. Every

purchase, like chairs, is tracked, and we prepare a comprehensive report of the entire event.

**S.W.:** Of course, none of these entities requests the return of the funds. If this money is not all spent, where do you invest it?

**M.D.F.:** Because at the end of the year, we still have to present an annual report of all expenses made and earnings. If these funds remain, they are invested for the following year, unless we need equipment. For example, in 2019, we bought a stage that we had previously rented for 600 euros a day. Then we bought audio equipment, including two 500-watt speakers and microphones, for cultural events like book presentations or for making the mayor speak. These cost us some money, so if there are leftover funds, we tell the municipality, for example, we have 1,000 euros left, and we need cables for extension cords. We bought extension cords and wires for Christmas lights.

**S.W.:** Sometimes it has happened that you use these funds for public purposes. For example, renovating the church...

**M.D.F.:** No, unfortunately, that has never happened, not because we didn't want to, but because there are simply no funds for such projects. We always thought of investing in tomorrow's festivities because they are public events. We haven't done this here. During the earthquake in L'Aquila, we organized the September Festival dedicated to reconstruction and raised about 10,000 euros through collections and funds, all of which were used for reconstruction. The associations that participated didn't take any money because, for example, during a typical fair, if an artist or singer performs for three hours, they are paid. So, there are expenses; a fish festival costs about 60,000 euros, but we never have that much. It's made up of contributions from us, the region, and the municipality, and we're good at fundraising because you rarely reach that amount. Another good thing we can do is talk to suppliers. For example, fireworks: if the municipality has to bid, it needs to prepare a technical sheet and purchase certain items. Instead, I, as part of the Pro Loco, can come to you and say, "How much for fireworks, this type of firework? Send me 10,000 euros." No, it's too much; I can't do that. I've tried to contact the municipality, but they're unable to because of anti-corruption rules. We try to do it this way, so it mainly functions as a form of promotion without reward, to enhance the event's true purpose: the fish or broccoli Sagra. Also, shopkeepers participate because they see a benefit. Suppose I go to the fishmonger and ask for a contribution for the Fish Festival. In that case,

they'll gladly give it because on that day, about 30,000 people come—people who don't just taste the fish but want to eat cooked fish sitting down, because at the stalls, you hold the fish in your hands, which isn't as comfortable as sitting in a restaurant. The goal is to promote good fishing, cooking it well, as tradition does. Afterwards, if you want to eat other types of fish prepared well, you can go to a restaurant that specializes in cooking them in a particular way. And it works. So, when we do it this way, there's always an increase in visitors because afterward, there are cultural activities like guided tours connected with local activities to promote the area. Now, I repeat, we are talking with the director of the lake consortium about finding packages to send abroad. That is, foreigners come here, and there's a small airport offering boat trips on the lake with small planes. There's the boat in Bracciano for lake tours, and in Trevignano, there are beautiful hiking and biking trails—I've done them on foot and by bike, passing through Rocca Romana and its trails. We are trying to create a package that attracts foreigners to our country, which is then distributed abroad.

**S.W.:** Are these packages for sale?

**M.D.F.:** They are for sale because they offer the structure. For example, if you want to visit Anguillara for three days or stay in Bracciano for sightseeing. It's a service recognized by the consortium, only for them, and we don't take any money. It's a way to promote the area outside, with hotels, tourists, or entertainment structures participating. We know of associations with horses; if you come to Anguillara, you can book horseback riding around Lake Martignano. If you go to Bracciano, there's the boat, but there are many other activities, and you can combine them to create a package that suits you. We are still organizing this package, and we will also try to work with all the municipalities, including Canale Monterano, which has other beautiful things, and Marziana, with different attractions, so we always try to evaluate nearby areas within Lazio, near our lake.

**S.W.:** In your opinion, what factors hinder the development of festivals?

**M.D.F.:** For example, in the past, there was a competition in Oriolo Romano where all the kids organized an event. But some brought a singer, others organized differently because not everyone does things the same way, and everyone has their own vision. They have this structure that supports their way of thinking. They organize the porcini mushroom festival, and the whole town works on it. It's a satisfaction to wear the Oriolo shirt, the one for the porcini mushroom, because it's like our fish festival—we felt proud when we had the shirts because

we were representing an entire community. Now, young people don't care anymore; no one wants to work without being paid. So, we need to recover this spirit, this sense of community. But it's challenging today with the internet and social media to get young people involved. That's why we, the adults, are always the ones organizing.

**S.W.:** But there are visitors.

**M.D.F.:** Yes, there are visitors, all ages. Some young people say to each other, "What should we do on Sunday in Rome?" and someone replies, "Let's take a walk in Anguillara." But young people no longer participate in organizing events. I remember when I was young, we used to do the "pole of the cuckoo's nest," competing for prizes. Now, they don't care; they have everything and don't want to work. That's the main issue. We will soon launch an associative campaign; I have already ordered membership cards. The Pro Loco cards recognized by UNPLI—the national association—offer many discounts. For example, you can get discounts at museums, on cruises, and when buying books. Presenting a Pro Loco card recognized by UNPLI, the national organization that gathers all public associations recognized by the state, allows you to access benefits nationwide, from Val d'Aosta to Sicily. Each local Pro Loco can use the overall card.

**S.W.:** Thank you very much, Mr. Moreno. That's where the interview ends.

Anguillara Sabazia, 07/01/2022

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