



Search

Write



Member-only story

Savouring Genoa superbly



CFlisi

3 min read · Just now



The first time I saw Genova was when the city was preparing for the Columbus Exposition of 1992, commemorating 500 years since the discovery of America by native son Christopher Columbus. This was an international event with participation by 54 countries and it was supposed to relaunch the city for international tourism because few people actually *visited* Genova as tourists.

I was one of them. I was living nearby and drove past the city almost weekly, but had never stopped. Big city. Major port. Industrial. What could possibly be of interest? As it turned out, quite a bit.

Genoa has been called *La Superba* (the superb) for a long time. Italian poet Petrarch first called it that in 1358, and suddenly I could see why, starting from Via Garibaldi, which became part of a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2006. Here and in the adjoining streets are a series of grand palaces built by the Genovese aristocracy in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The Palazzi dei Rolli (called such because they were listed on the rolls of public lodgings in the city) are handsome Renaissance and Baroque-style buildings, impressive enough on the outside and stunning on the inside. Three of them — Palazzo Rosso, Palazzo Bianco, and Palazzo Doria Tursi — together constitute the Strada Nuova Museums, notable for their architecture (open staircases, interior frescoes, and gardens) and also their collection of paintings by Veronese, Caravaggio, Canova, and other Old Masters.

Back then, some city officials boasted that Genova had the largest medieval

city center in Europe. That is factually incorrect, but the claim does underscore La Superba's extensive network of *caruggi* (narrow alleyways). Wandering these is like going to a museum. Better, actually, because they are authentic and unadorned. The little shops, cafès, and trattorie come and go, but the genuine atmosphere remains.

So do two items on the menu of almost any eaterie in the city — pesto and focaccia. I love pesto and have eaten it all over Italy, but it never tastes as good as it does in Genova. You can get the basic ingredients for pesto almost anywhere (fresh basil, Ligurian EVOO, Parmigiano Reggiano, Pecorino Sardo, pine nuts, garlic) but basil elsewhere won't have the same pungent green leaves grown in Liguria. Another authenticity issue: pesto made with a food processor darkens the basil and gives it a slightly bitter taste. Pesto alla Genovese is traditionally made with a pestle and mortar, which I bought immediately after my first encounter with the Real Thing.

Focaccia Genovese is the local variation of a bread dating back to Roman times. It's an oven-baked flat bread and sports small holes on the surface in the Genovese version, called *fugassa*. Typically, it's brushed with olive oil (local, of course!) and may have rosemary herbs sprinkled on top. What looks like a simple dish can take eight hours or more, because you have to allow time for the dough to rest and rise. I don't have the patience for that, but, happily, focaccherie have sprung up all over Italy in recent years, inadvertent marketing for the pleasures of Genoa.

The one part of the city that IS known to tourists is the port, specifically the Aquarium, the largest in Italy and second-largest in Europe. It was completed in 1992 to coincide with the Columbus Exposition, and was

designed by local architect Renzo Piano. I had the opportunity to meet this luminary at his work headquarters just outside the city, and his passion for Genoa and all it represents was palpable. Piano also redeveloped the Old Harbor of Genova and the city's subway stations. Today the former run-down industrial port boasts places to eat, drink, and *passaggiare* (walk around), plus the attractions of not only the Aquarium but the Museum of the Sea, the Bigo (a panoramic lift built like an old cargo loading crane), and the Bolla (a glass biosphere filled with tropical flora and fauna inaugurated in 2001).

Today the moniker “la Superba” is again well-deserved.

Italy

Genova

Travel

Tourism

Liguria



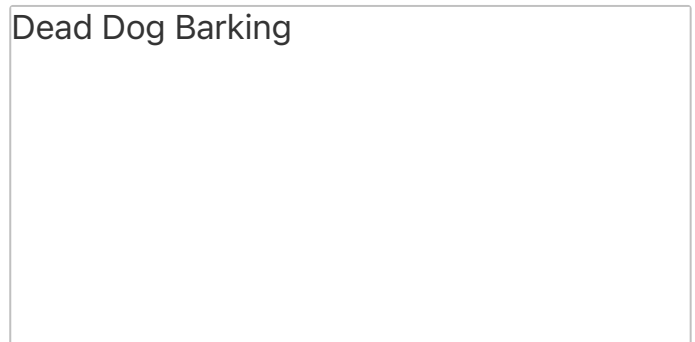
Written by CFlisi

Edit profile

253 Followers

writer, PR professional, mother, dog-lover, traveler. See more at www.paroleanima.com

More from CFlisi



CFlisi

CFlisi in Tenderly

A MOVING EXPERIENCE: HOW THE MYTH STOLE CHRISTMAS

Some Grinchy, grouchy, Scroogy types say that only small children can experience the...

★ · 4 min read · Dec 17, 2023

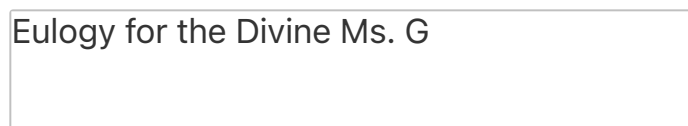
13

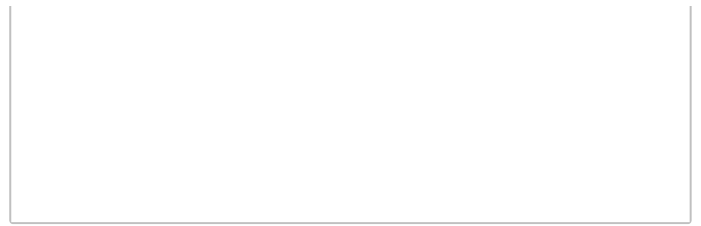
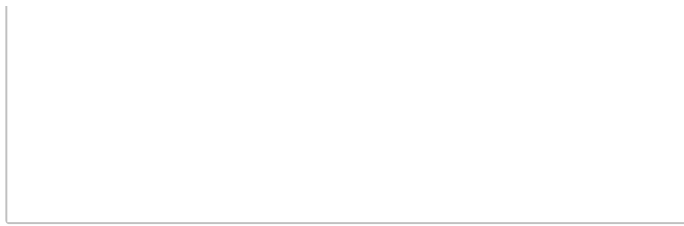
Dead Dog Barking

A second chance story, from my dog's point of view

★ · 14 min read · Jan 31, 2020

122





 CFlisi in ILLUMINATION


 CFlisi

Eulogy for the Divine Ms. G

Dogs howl at times of great emotion.
Humans sing. One of the great emotional...


 · 10 min read · May 3, 2022

 33  1

Falling in love with—and in—Firenze

My most indelible memory of Florence isn't a
visual image of a particular piazza or buildi...

 · 3 min read · Dec 5, 2023

 10 

See all from CFlisi

Recommended from Medium

2024 Predictions

 Scott Galloway 

2024 Predictions

Each year, we review/make predictions re the past/coming year. Most years, we hit more...

11 min read · 2 days ago

 2K  30

Ukraine Is Steadily Driving This War

 Barry Gander

Ukraine Is Steadily Driving This War

In the last three months, the Russians have lost more ground than they have acquired.

 · 14 min read · 4 days ago

 3K  28

Lists



Company Offsite Reading List

8 stories · 75 saves



Visual Storytellers Playlist

55 stories · 173 saves



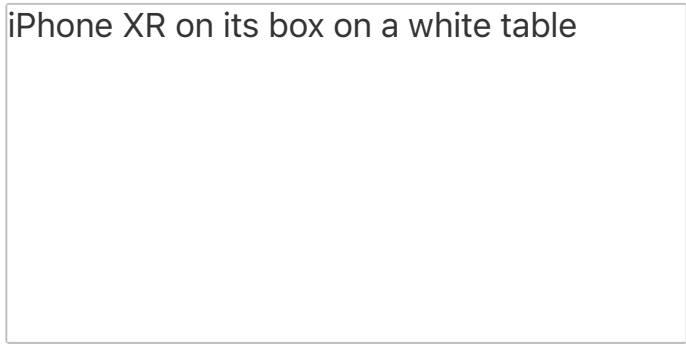
Stories to Help You Live Better


19 stories · 1009 saves



Some of My Favorite Personal Essays

18 stories · 588 saves



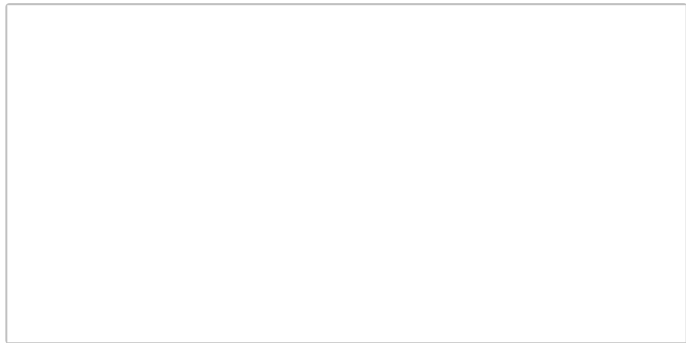
 Nikhil Vemu in Mac O'Clock

I Bet You Didn't Know Your iPhone Could Do These 10 Things

The iPhone isn't as plain as it looks.

 · 12 min read · Dec 30, 2023

 1.2K  12  




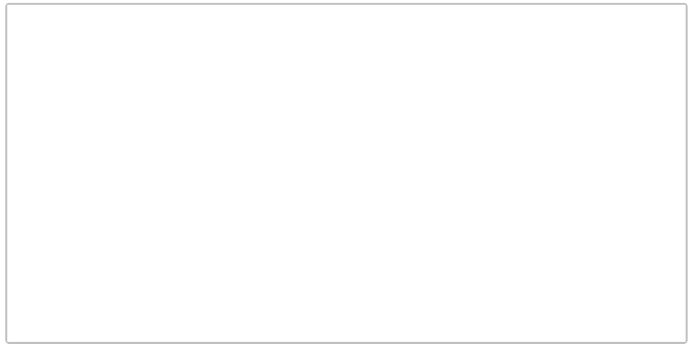
 David Asch  in MuddyUm


The World's Best Donald Trump Joke

What's new is old

 · 3 min read · Dec 19, 2023

 3.7K  51  



 Allison Wi... in Writers and Editors of Color Maga...

When White People Try to Hide Their Racism, They Use These...

To avoid the scarlet letter "R," they're adopting this strategy

 · 8 min read · Dec 27, 2023

 12.6K  229  



 Dylan Combellick

Ukraine Update 04 January

Best Western Hosts Genocide, 230 Hostages Returned, US DOS Denies Denials

 · 6 min read · 4 days ago

 2.1K  13  

[See more recommendations](#)

[Help](#) [Status](#) [About](#) [Careers](#) [Blog](#) [Privacy](#) [Terms](#) [Text to speech](#) [Teams](#)