

A SUSTAINABLE FAIR

"The organization of the San Giovanni Fair implements an ISO 20121 sustainable management system, which will be verified by a certification body".

Starting now and for the years to come the Municipality of Spilamberto intends to adopt a system for managing its events in accordance with the international standard UNI ISO 20121 (the international standard implemented in 2013 by the Italian national standardization institution that specifies the management requirements for the sustainable organization of events). A path that is beginning with the annual San Giovanni Battista Fair.

It is a major operation that focuses on the environment and social relationships and that keeps organization and visitors busy. An event is sustainable when it is designed, planned and implemented in such a way as to minimize the negative impact on the environment and leave a positive legacy to the community that hosts it. ISO 20121 supports organizations in: continuously improving sustainability performance; reducing costs with a rational use of energy and products; reducing the environmental footprint of the event; reducing the risks associated with management of events; accrediting its commitment at the international level; involving, respecting and fulfilling the expectations of the participants; increasing the appeal to potential sponsors; and improving the institution's image.

Talking about sustainability means acting on three levels: **economic, social and environmental responsibility**.

In particular, the objectives of the **San Giovanni Battista Fair** are:

- **Environmental** assessment of the environmental loads of the event; progressive reduction of paper; separate collection and reduction of waste; reduction of CO2 emissions; raising awareness on sustainable mobility with rickshaws, popular bicycle workshop and bike parking; environmentally friendly equipment.
- **Ethical-Social** attention to animal welfare; involvement of voluntary groups in the organization; active participation of stakeholders; promotion of emerging artists and craftsmen through the "artingegno" area; raising awareness of sustainable lifestyles; setting up workshops with voluntary associations and involvement of children with a dedicated events program.
- **Economic** careful and transparent management of the event's budget; increase in the years of the sponsorship share; enhancing and promoting excellences and traditional local organic food products to which the exhibition area will be dedicated.

The sustainability policy of the San Giovanni Fair will be constantly monitored and updated in order to ensure, over time, the actual long-lasting reduction of environmental impacts and the enhancement of economic, ethical and social benefits.

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To carry out all the steps necessary to obtain the sustainability certificate of the event management system, the Municipality of Spilamberto will employ POINT 3 and the Bureau Veritas Italy institution for testing for certification purposes.

Along the certification path, the Municipality of Spilamberto singled out the **Hera Group** as an important partner for the achievement of environmental objectives. Through this collaboration, the San Giovanni Fair will be designed and operated in a sustainable way, in accordance with the guidelines of the international standard ISO 20121. Starting from the 2016 edition, special attention will be paid to the importance of separate collection of rubbish as well as the raising visitors' awareness on the topic. Of all the actions taken, those to be particularly mentioned are the placement of temporary equipped islands with specific collection service, the presence - for the entire duration of the fair - of an urban source, information sessions dedicated to the citizens, and free cleaning and sweeping services.

Point 3 Srl has been working in the green economy for eleven years, supporting public institutions and firms in many fields in the design and implementation of projects for sustainable development. It has been dealing with sustainable events since 2008 and has dedicated a specific business sector to this area. In recent years it has supported the reduction of environmental impacts related to the events of many important companies and institutions, including Finmeccanica, Coop Adriatica, the Region of Emilia Romagna, Unilever, etc.

Founded in 1828, **Bureau Veritas** is a world leader in inspection services, **compliance audits and certification**. We support our Customer in achieving the goal of improving performance through innovative services and solutions aimed at certifying that their products, facilities and processes meet standards and regulations in **Quality, Health and Safety, Environment and Social Responsibility (QHSE)**. Bureau Veritas turns its technical expertise into a wide range of services that go beyond the simple **prescriptive and regulatory compliance audit** to allow the **risk reduction, improvement of performance and promotion of Sustainable Development** objectives to be achieved. The Bureau Veritas Group bases its established and never disproved reputation of professionalism and technical competence on values such as integrity and ethics, fairness, customer orientation and occupational safety. This entity is recognized and accredited by the most important national and international organizations.

HOW TO REACH SPILAMBERTO

FROM A1 MOTORWAY

Take the Modena Sud exit, which flows into the main road SS Passo Brasa linking Modena with Spilamberto, Vignola and other important towns of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines. Spilamberto is just 4 km away, the first town on Strada dei Castelli (the road of castles).

THE HISTORY OF THE SAINT

The Christian Saint's Day

The Dies Natalis of saints, as listed in the calendar, actually correspond to the day of their death: by dying, they were born in Christ. Saint John the Baptist is the only saint whose birthday, celebrated on June 24th, is not the day he died, which is celebrated instead on August 29th. This is a privilege he shares with the Virgin Mary because like her, according to tradition, St. John too was freed from original sin in the womb. Both birth and death dates are, obviously, purely hypothetical.

How was the date of "birth" defined?

In the fourth century, when the day of Jesus' birth was established, to counteract the pagan festivals the Christians chose December 25, which until then had been the Natalis Solis Invicti, the Roman winter solstice festival. According to the Gospels, immediately after the Annunciation, when the Virgin Mary was told that she would become the mother of the son of God, she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant with the future John the Baptist: consequently June 24th – six months before the birth of Christ – was established as the date of birth of Christ's precursor.

THE HISTORY OF THE SAINT

Descendant of the priestly caste, he was born to elderly parents. The Archangel Gabriel had appeared to Zechariah, the saint's father, informing him that his wife Elizabeth would bear a son who would have the strength of Elijah and lead the Children of Israel back to their God. The poor man pointed out that he and his wife were elderly... and for not having immediately believed the words of the angel, he was sentenced to aphasia until the birth of his son. And so, as soon as he saw the new-born child, he regained his voice and intoned the Benedictus. As a young man, John the Baptist spent many years in the desert, feeding on locusts and wild honey. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, in 29 A.D., he reappeared on the River Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. To the priests who asked him whether he was the Messiah or Elijah returned to life, he answered that he was the voice crying in the desert to prepare the way of the Lord, who would come carrying on his shoulders the sins of the world. The Baptist denounced King Herod and Queen Herodias as sinners, since she was not only his wife but had previously been his sister in law, even if legally divorced. Technically, the Torah condemned such a marriage because her previous one had been lawful and fruitful, having led to the birth of Salomé. While challenging the king was convenient to the priests on one hand, on the other this ritual baptism was a novelty that aroused their suspicion: this new practice threatened to reduce the value of the Temple and the sacrificial practices that were performed there. In short, making enemies of both the King and the High Priest, John the Baptist opened the road to his tragic end. The Gospel of Mark tells us that Herod,

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fearing him, had him arrested so that he could watch over him but also protect him. Herodias persuaded her daughter Salomé to dance for her stepfather and as a reward to ask him for the head of the prisoner. The plan was carried out, and the saint was beheaded. John the Baptist's disciples, having been informed of these events, took his body and buried it at Sebaste in Samaria.

The cult of Saint John the Baptist

It seems that the saint's body was buried at Sebaste in Samaria. Many miracles took place at his tomb, especially the healing of the possessed. In 361-362 the Emperor Julian the Apostate desecrated the grave, burned the relics and scattered them to the wind.

The head remained in the hands of Herodias, who had it buried in a secret place in the royal palace, fearing that it might otherwise rejoin the body and bring the prophet back to life. Miraculously rediscovered later, it was reported as buried in Constantinople, Emesa, Jerusalem and Damascus. But some say that his head was buried with the body and burned together with it. However, in the twelfth century a head of John the Baptist arrived in Rome, and in the thirteenth another one turned up in Amiens. Today, it is said that the head without jaws in the Church of San Silvestro in Capite in Rome is that of the Baptist, while the jawbone is conserved in the church of San Lorenzo, in Viterbo... but actually, scattered around the world, no less than sixty of the saint's heads are venerated. One legend even claimed that the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome contained three skulls of the saint: one as a child, one as an adult, and one as an old man! Also venerated are relics of the saint's shoes, the tray on which his head was laid, the mat on which he sat in prison, the sword that cut off his head, the rock against which he was beheaded.

Even though the ashes had been "scattered to the wind", they are somehow now located in the Basilica of St. John in Lateran in Rome, but also in Genoa in the church of San Lorenzo, in the Dauphiné Viennois district in the south of France and in countless other places. Not to mention the eleven index fingers of the right hand and fifty-eight assorted teeth, shoulders and bones venerated across the Christian world.

In sacred depictions, John the Baptist is represented as thin, ascetic and dressed in rough clothes, with a lamb in his arms or next to him and a high staff that often ends with a cross. Sometimes, he is shown carrying his decapitated head in his hands.

Saint John the Baptist is invoked against migraine, he is the protector of many cities, springs and charitable associations, and also protects hoteliers, canteen operators, highways, singers, carders, knife makers, tanners, musicians and makers of musical instruments, leather workers and traders, prisoners and those sentenced to death.

The saint and his family are also honoured in the Qur'an and his tomb was venerated by Moslems until its conquest by the Crusaders. It was reconquered by Saladin's nephew, Hussam-el-Din who built a mosque at the site.

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Pagan celebrations

There are several legends and customs related to the San Giovanni's feast which date back to the dawn of time, stratified one over each other to the point that it is difficult to disentangle them.

San Giovanni is celebrated in the period of the summer solstice. When the Sun reaches its maximum positive variation compared to the celestial equator, it appears to stop a few days and it seems to stand in the same spot, to resume the opposite way... at this point the summer begins. This day has varied depending on calendars from June 19th to 25th; the phenomenon of the "Sun stop" or "the Sun that makes jumps", has always been observed and the celebrations in this period date back to the Babylonians. As every day of change: beginning of the year etc. it was considered critical and rites were necessary to exorcise fear.

The summer solstice, for the Babylonians, was the marriage of the sun with the moon. The moon, goddess of water, and ruler of the sign of Cancer that begins with the solstice, is fertilized by the sun. San Giovanni is the patron of the sources, in San Giovanni's Day is customary to eat snails, animal put under the Moon. According to tradition, the horns of snails bring discord, eating them and burying them in the stomach, the discord is averted. Other belief: for every horn ingested snail, a misfortune is avoided. That's the reason of binges.

In the religion of ancient Greece, the summer solstice was considered the "men's door", while the winter solstice was the "gods' door". Giovanni Battista, celebrated on June 24th, is called "Giovanni crying" because of his destiny and because the sun seems to begin a backwards journey. Giovanni the Evangelist, instead, celebrated on December 27th, the winter solstice, is called "Giovanni laughing" because the sun begins to move ahead and because, as an apostle, he helped to spread the divine word in the world. The solstices, in ancient Greece were, therefore, a boundary between the world of human space-time and the timelessness of the gods. But it is a common concept to many populations, it can be found in the Vedic texts, certainly prior to Pythagoreanism. In the Roman tradition, the guardian of the gates, including solstices' too, was Giano, Lord of Eternity, whose feasts were celebrated at the two solstices. And to these are added the two Christians Giovanni feasts. The two Giovanni, according to some scholars, symbolize Christ the Creator at the summer solstice, while at the winter solstice symbolize the Christ who opens the heaven's door, reconnect us with both the Greek and Roman religion.

Always in the ancient Rome, June 24th was celebrated Fors Fortuna, the goddess of chance. It was forbidden to honor her during the year, but on that day the prohibitions fell, such as Plinio il Vecchio said, and the Romans could celebrate the goddess.

According to the Nordic traditions, June 24th is Midsummer's Day. The natural and the supernatural world are intertwined and "strange things" happen. The day is also mentioned by Shakespeare in "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

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TRADITIONS OF SAN GIOVANNI

Traditions of the World

The night of San Giovanni, has always been considered "magical". The layering of beliefs, customs of the various peoples made it something special that the church has fought.

And the witches have become part of the rites.

On Christmas Eve, the Romans gathered in the church lawns of Ss. Giovanni in Laterano, (dedicated to both Giovanni), and in S. Croce in Gerusalemme. They lit fires and waited for witches. These were led by Erodiade- Salomè, because the two characters in the legends were confused. It is said that, regrets of what she had done, this dual character covered the Battista's face with kisses and tears, but from the mouth came out a strong wind that pushed her into the air where she was left to wander for eternity. Among the witches we also remember the ancient goddess Diana. Then the church tried to supplant the existing religions. Let's see some of the most common beliefs at all latitudes: The fire of bonfires lighted for the eve, common from the Nordic region to the northern regions of Africa, was considered cleansing, as the dew, symbol of the tears of Erodiade-Salomè, had a fertilizing purpose as well as the dew of the night 's eve: the wives who wanted to have many children, sat without underwear on the wet grass dew. In Normandy, it was habit to roll naked on the wet grass dew to rejuvenate the skin and protect it from disease. It was also used to grow hair.

In Abruzzo, the evening of the eve girls put three broad beans under the pillow. The first was devoid of the outer skin, the second had only half and the third had it intact. In the morning they took at random one bean: if it was without skin they would marry a poor man, if the bean had half skin they would marry a man neither rich nor poor, if the skin was the one with the peel intact he would be rich. Other customs were typical of the New Year, for example how to dissolve lead to know what trade would make the husband or put in a glass of water two thistles scorched to see if she would marry a foreigner or a villager.

To predict the future, under the pillow they also put the so-called "herbs of S. Giovanni", tied in bunch of nine but composed of various quality different from country to country. "Iperico" was essential

The best known and most researched herbs of San Giovanni's night are the iperico also called "Scacciadiavoli", considered an anti-evil eye, "artemisia" also called wormwood vulgaris, consecrated to Diana-Artemis, verbena symbol of peace and prosperity, and currant whose red fruits protect against evil spells such as red berries of the holly at New Year.

Do not forget: on San Giovanni's day you have to buy garlic if you want a prosperous year. If you want a lot of money, at midnight you should grasp a branch of fern and keep it at home.

In the pianura Padana, on S. Giovanni's night women took off the green drupe nuts to prepare the nocino, typical local liqueur, without using metal tools. It is a Celtic tradition. The Celts considered the walnut a holy tree.

Another common tradition in different cultures is the "comparatico" of San Giovanni. If you symbolically bound, even among people of different sexes, on June 24th, one is spiritually bound for life: godfathers and godmothers.

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Proverbs

Many proverbs are also linked to San Giovanni, here are some:

- San Giovanni don't want deceits, to remember the "comparatico" here above and the function of Giovanni Battista as the patron of friendship, because it is said that he was inflexible with those who betrayed a friend.
- San Giovanni with its fire burns witches, the moro and the wolf, as to say he cures sickness of the world.
- On S. Giovanni's eve it rains every year, as to say it will be fine, but ...
- If it rains on San Giovanni's day, all the fountains dry, or if it rains on San Giovanni's day a lot of sorghum and so little bread.
- Who does not buy garlic on San Giovanni's day is poor throughout the year.
- On San Giovanni's day It fills the grain, indicating that good wine is formed that day if the weather will be the right one.
- San Giovanni harvester, San Pietro bookbinder
- Who was born the night of San Giovanni doesn't see witches and ghosts, he doesn't dream, to indicate that he had special powers.
- When Lavender feels San Giovanni arrival it wants to bloom.
- If you want your clothes not damaged by moths, let them take the water of S. Giovanni
- On San Giovanni the hive spreads.

THE SAN GIOVANNI PALIO

Organized every year by the Spilamberto A.B.T. Coterie, the Palio is the competition reserved for "traditional" and extra-aged D.O.P. balsamic vinegars produced in the area of the ancient domains of the Este family, which has now been taking place for fifty years. During the Palio "Balsamic" samples are examined and those ranking in the top 12 places receive a prestigious award.

Samples remain anonymous until the award ceremony. Judgments of the tasting committee take account of the appearance, aroma and taste of the product. After an initial screening the committee continues with tasting sessions in order to identify 72 semifinalists, followed by the top 12. At this point the 12 finalists receive a visit from two inspectors (the only individuals to know the names of the manufacturers) who, in pairs, monitor compliance of the sample with the battery from which it was extracted.

The official secret ranking of the 12 finalists is established by six tasters on the first day of the San Giovanni Fair.

The event is usually held on the Sunday of the San Giovanni Fair, in the picturesque setting of the Rocca Rangoni Park.

This year, the Palio - now in its 50th year - will take place on Sunday, June 26th at 8 p.m. in the Rocca Rangoni Park.

TYPICAL PRODUCTS

Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Spilamberto

The Spilamberto Coterie, at the conclusion of the study days on "balsamic" held at the Chamber of Commerce of Modena in 1976, drew up the definition of "traditional balsamic".

"Authentic traditional balsamic vinegar is produced in the area of the ancient domains of the Este family. It is made from cooked grape must, matured by slow acidification resulting from natural fermentation and progressive concentration by means of long-term aging in a series of barrels of different woods, without any added flavours. Dark brown in colour, full-bodied and shiny, it manifests its density in a proper, smooth syrupiness. It has a distinctive and complex pervasive smell, of evident but pleasant and harmonic acidity. Its traditional and inimitable sweet and sour taste is well balanced, generously full-bodied and sapid, with velvety nuances in agreement with its typical olfactory features".

For more information please visit "The Museum of Traditional Balsamic Vinegar and the Coterie"

Nocino (walnut liqueur) of Spilamberto

Nocino, or nüsèin in Modena's dialect, is a liqueur obtained from the walnut husk, by infusing it in alcohol. Nocino always maintained an aura of legend, traditionally linked to the presence of **witches and spells**; in fact, walnuts were gathered on the night of **San Giovanni** by the woman most experienced in its preparation, who, climbing trees barefoot, hand-picked the best walnuts without damaging their husks. They were left in the dew for the whole night and placed in an infusion the day after. Their preparation ended on All Saints' Eve, that is, the night of October 31st. Traditional collection requires avoidance of iron tools, as the metal would actually affect the properties of medicinal plants. This very ancient custom was already followed by druids harvesting mistletoe with a golden sickle.

THE ANCIENT TRADITIONAL NOCINO RECIPE ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF THE NOCINO OF MODENA

INGREDIENTS

- 1 litre 95° alcohol, good tasting
- 700-900 g sugar
- 1 kg nuts (approx. 33-35 walnuts, depending on the size but always in an odd number). The walnuts must be strictly locally sourced and completely unprocessed. As tradition dictates, they must also be collected during the San Giovanni Battista festivities. The consistency of the nut must be assessed by piercing it with a pin and / or checked visually by splitting it in half with a knife.

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Optional:

Cloves and cinnamon (a little is all that is required) can be added in minimal quantities and they must be carefully measured out so that the walnut flavour always prevails in the liqueur and the overall aroma remains balanced.

METHOD:

- Once collected, nuts must be cut into **4 pieces** and placed in a glass container (no rubber seals) with the sugar.
- After being **kept in the sun** for 2 days and stirred periodically, the walnuts can be added to the alcohol, along with any flavourings used.
- The product must be positioned in an area that is partially exposed to sunlight, occasionally opened and stirred, and filtered after **60 days** at the earliest.
- You should bottle in dark glass containers and / or refine the product in small wooden barrels.
- You can choose either **oak wood or chestnut**, provided that the barrel has been adequately treated before use.
- Walnut liqueur should be stored in a cool place and for **at least 12 months** if you want to fully appreciate all its organoleptic characteristics.

For more information visit the "The Order of the nocino of Modena"

Amaretti of Spilamberto

Typical of **Spilamberto tradition** since the seventeenth century and probably created through the development of a Jewish recipe, they are known for their exquisite flavour and **characteristic softness**.

Towards the mid-nineteenth century amaretti began to be marketed by the **Goldoni family**, owners of the famous Goldoni coffee which was situated on the corner of what is now Corso Umberto I and Via Sant'Adriano. Nowadays these delicacies are prepared by **four master bakers/pastry chefs** who are all located in the Town Centre: **Otello Bonucchi** bakery, **Valisi Giuliana & C. Snc** bakery, **Pasticceria Prima o Poi Snc** patisserie, **Lo Zuccherio Filato** patisserie bar and **Panificio Giuliana** bakery.

Many Italian places have traditional sweets with the same name, but those from Spilamberto stand out from all the rest due to their excellent quality. The basic recipe consists of **sweet and bitter almonds** mixed with **sugar** and **beaten egg whites**.

There are endless variants of this formula, so each family in Spilamberto keeps some things secret, such as their cooking time or the way to store them.

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Recipe:

- Blanch almonds, drain, peel and grind using a pestle and mortar;
- Manually combine the almonds with the sugar and add the egg whites until you obtain a soft dough;
- Place spoonfuls of the dough in a baking dish and bake for about 20 minutes.

Store in a sealed glass jar.

We must not forget that the area is included in the prestigious Consortium for the Protection of Parmigiano - Reggiano, Lambrusco, Prosciutto of Modena, the Cherry and the typical Vignola Plum.

Another excellent local product is undoubtedly the Bianca of Modena, a breed of cow typical of the Modena province (in particular the Spilamberto area), which has been carefully selected and has spread almost exclusively throughout our province and a few neighbouring areas (the Correggio area in Reggio Emilia, Oltrepò in Mantova and a few areas around the Bologna plains).

The first traces of this breed originate in the mid-nineteenth century. One hundred years ago there were about 50,000; fifty years ago the population reached the 230,000 in the province of Modena and the surrounding areas.

Then the Modena breed was quickly replaced with more productive imported breeds. Today there are only a few hundred of the Modena cattle left.

The development of Parmigiano-Reggiano production in Modena, between the nineteenth and twentieth century, took place using the milk of this breed.

The qualities of the milk produced by the Bianca of Modena make it particularly suitable for its transformation into Parmigiano-Reggiano.

But the Bianca offers more than just cheese: equally as important is the production of meat, with unquestionable goodness.

The Province of Modena - in collaboration with the Slow Food Movement, the Provincial Breeders Association and together with some Municipalities, including that of Spilamberto which is responsible for the most significant breeding - has launched a project for the promotion of this breed, to prevent it from becoming extinct and publicise its truly great qualities.