

ITALIAN DAY ON THE DRIVE

SUNDAY, JUNE 8 2025



PARTNERSHIP INVITATION
DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 28 2025



Within the Italian culture, a kiss (un bacio) or kisses (baci) represent an inherent element in the warm exchange of daily greetings. This includes written or verbal messages, as in Mille Baci, literally meaning a thousand kisses, yet figuratively embodying a limitless quality; and ultimately conveying a magnified expression of love and respect. Sentiments filling our hearts, as we prepare for our 15 Year Anniversario, a milestone celebration in the Italian Day storia, where community is famiglia, and the very reason we have come this far.

Mille baci a tutti!



JOIN US IN COMMEMORATING OUR 15 YEAR ANNIVERSARIO SUNDAY, JUNE 8 2025

Since 2010, the Italian Day Festival Society has been shaping a new chapter of Italo-Canadian history with Italian Day on The Drive, one of the city's largest and most popular street festivals, symbolically held in Vancouver's historic Little Italy.

Weaved with annual themes, the festival brings the community closer to the unique aspects of Italian culture, heritage, and the 'la dolce vita' lifestyle, with this year celebrating our 15 Year Anniversario together with the Mille Baci theme.

From our Carnevale to Made In Italy, Art, Amore, and Comunità themes, the festival has been a welcoming space, gathering people of all ages and cultures around its Italian Day family table for the past 15 years. It has shared the storia of Italo-Canadian immigrants, local contributions, and their homeland, Italy, which is rich in cultural heritage and beauty.

As our 10 year celebration did not take place due to the pandemic, we anticipate this year's 15 Year Anniversario to be extra special in significance. And what better way to express our gratitude to our partners and community than through the love and affection of this year's theme. A sweet adventure awaits as we infuse the Mille Baci theme with food, music, and art, immersing ourselves in the Italian Bacio heritage.

Don't miss the chance to be Italian for a day on Sunday, June 8th, 2025! Join us as we share in the Mille Baci exchange and celebrate our 15 Year Anniversario at the most anticipated cultural festa of the year!





OUR STORY

Held annually on the second Sunday of June, Italian Day on The Drive is a vibrant cultural street festival celebrating Italian culture, heritage and community.

A festive community embrace, the lively 14-block festa takes place on Commercial Drive (The Drive), home to Vancouver's historic Little Italy. As part of the tradition, this year, on Sunday, June 8th, 2025, The Drive will once again come alive, featuring piazza animated zones with live music and dancing, food vendors, patios, fashion shows, artisan and merchant booths, design and lifestyle attractions, family fun activities and more.

Since Italian Day's return in 2010, the event today represents one of the largest and most anticipated festivals in Vancouver, drawing hundreds of thousands of attendees of all ages and cultures throughout the day.

OUR HISTORY

Between the 1940s - 1980s, The Drive had developed into a true Italian enclave. Italo-Canadians, comprised of residents, businesses and building owners, were the district's dominant influence and played a key role in revitalizing the community and landscape. This included street celebrations and festivals with the introduction of parades in the 60s, as well as the Italian Market (Mercato) Day from 1977 to 1985, the predecessor to today's Italian Day on The Drive.

It is interesting to note that the name of the Il Mercato complex, located on the corner of 1st and Commercial, is said to come from the 70s Italian Market Day. Leading up to 2010, the interest in resurrecting the late 70s - mid-80s Italian street festival was high among many Italo-Canadians in the community. The inspiration became a reality when the Commercial Drive Business Society and Il Centro Italian Cultural Centre, as well as other active community members, collaborated and formed a volunteer team to make it happen.

Supported by a grassroots group of 10 - 15 volunteers from both societies and the general public, the festival was resurrected in the summer of 2010 with success. A monumental endeavour, the experience led to a unanimous decision to form a unique society solely dedicated to the festival, and in 2011, the Italian Day Festival Society was formed with a mission and vision of what would become Italian Day on The Drive. No one imagined that within a few years of its revival, the festival would explode as it did in terms of appeal, attendance, and positive community impact from many perspectives: social, cultural, economic, tourism and international visibility for Vancouver.

As history describes, the largest wave of Italian immigrants made their way to Vancouver after WWII where many made their home and established businesses in the Commercial Drive area.



DESIGNATIONS, LANDMARKS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In recognition of over 70 years of Italian heritage, the City of Vancouver officially designated 8 blocks of Commercial Drive as Vancouver's historic 'Little Italy'.

A memorable celebration, the Proclamation was delivered by the Mayor at the 2016 Italian Day Opening Ceremony with a ribbon cutting, and was attended by many special guests, including the Italian Ambassador to Canada.

Two years later, in 2018, Italian Day was recognized on the City of Vancouver's list of Official Observances and Celebrations under the umbrella of Italian Heritage Month, officially celebrated in the month of June. The following year, in 2019, the Commercial Drive Business Society, with funding support from Fortis BC and in partnership with the City of Vancouver, unveiled new heritage crosswalks in the colors of the Italian flag at three Little Italy intersections: 1st Avenue, Charles Street, and 4th Avenue.



Fueled by the advocacy of key Italo-Canadian community members, in the span of three years, the Italian Day Festival Society and its partners—the Commercial Drive Business Society, Il Centro Italian Cultural Centre, and the City of Vancouver—were able to achieve monumental designations and landmarks honouring Italian heritage and contributions. This would not have been possible without the return and impact of Italian Day on The Drive.





15
YEAR
ANNIVERSARIO

LITTLE ITALY ON THE DRIVE

Today, the 22-block Commercial Drive district is a multi-ethnic cultural hub of boutique shops, restaurants, and nightlife, offering a unique and distinct flavour that many attribute to the roots planted by Italian immigrants. And at its heart, there remains un cuore Italo-Canadese, which still beats in this historic neighbourhood. Italian-owned businesses with 50-80 years of heritage anchor the 8-block village where one finds Italian restaurants, pastry shops, a tailor shop, a 'made in Italy' shoe boutique, delicatessens, espresso coffee, and sports bars—not to mention the soccer aficionados, especially with any major Italy win, pouring down to the Drive. With these ingredients, it is no surprise that in 2020, Lonely Planet, a popular travel guide, designated Commercial Drive as one of the world's 'coolest' neighbourhoods among 50 cities around the globe.

The Italian Day Festival Society, as a simple grassroots organization, is humbled and proud to look back and see what has been achieved with the festival's revival, both for the community and for our Italian heritage. Italian Day has also afforded us the platform to give back to the community beyond the festival's embracing spirit, assisting at-risk youth and mental health programs through funds raised and donated in 2019 and 2020.

The event has placed Vancouver on the festival map, garnering widespread interest and accolades. For two consecutive years, the festival has been awarded a 'Best of Vancouver' award, voted by readers of Georgia Straight. Additionally, it has been honoured with two Golden Owl Award nominations, winning the 'Festival of the Year' award in November 2024.

It takes a village, and we are immensely grateful for the support of our family of partners and community.



WE INVITE YOU TO PARTNER WITH US

To date, the success and legacy of Italian Day on The Drive is largely due to the invaluable support of our family of partners, which includes the City of Vancouver and BC Provincial governments. Financial support not only provides critical assistance with production costs but also plays a key role in developing the festival's unique and vibrant landscape of cultural highlights, attractions and activities.

Join us in this extra special 15 Year Anniversario edition, a milestone celebration in the Italian Day storia, where partners and community are famiglia and the very reason we have come this far.

Mille Baci 





15
YEAR
ANNIVERSARIO



We are a family, each year growing with more members and supporters at our Italian Day community table.

Whether a historic partner or new to the family table and Italian Day storia, we welcome you to join us for our 15 Year Anniversario to share the love of Italian culture, heritage and community. It takes a village! And we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

**Mille
Baci**



PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS

As a partner, we offer a range of benefits and promotional avenues, having your place at our Italian Day family table recognized while also offering engagement with a cross-section of demographics. Depending on the level of sponsorship, benefits include:

Site Space

Ranges from 10' x 20', 10' x 30' to larger, Piazza-style attractions. Premium Partners can also sponsor designated attractions in lieu of space activation.

Boulevard Banner

Installed in May along the 22 blocks of The Drive, each banner features the logo of a distinct Partner for 2 months.

Website

Beginning in May, your brand logo & website link will be displayed on our website for a one-year period.

Social Media

We are excited to share our Partners across our social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter).

Event Signage

Designated festival highlights sponsored by Premium Partners includes optional signage design with brand logo.

Event Posters

Are widely shared in both print and digital format, and include your brand's logo, and important event details.

Main Stage Banners

Premium Partners are prominently featured with their brand logo on The Drive Main Stage banners.

Festival Promotions

Thematic Piazzas and Cultural Highlights receive attraction designation in all promotions.

Event Invitation

As a Partner, you will receive a Special Guest Invitation to our Opening Ceremony, and cocktail reception.

Opening Ceremony

All Partners individually receive an acknowledgment at the Opening Ceremony. This includes speaking opportunities for Premium Partners.



THEMATIC PIAZZA ZONES & HIGHLIGHTS:

- Food and Beverage Garden(s)
- Piazza Moda, Fashion and Music
- Live Music Stage(s)
- Bocce Court
- Children's Zone with Crafts and Activities
- DJ Dance Piazza(s)
- Human Foosball Game
- Eating Contests
- Vehicle and Lifestyle Showcases
- Sports Attractions and Activities



ADDITIONAL SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- T-Shirts for Volunteers & Staff
- Food and Beverage for Team
- Printing Services
- Raffle Prizes
- Merchandise
- Power and Water Sources
- Furniture and Décor
- Sanitation and Recycling





FRIENDS • AMICI

Investment, \$4,000

BENEFITS:

- Site Space up to 10' x 20'
- Boulevard Banner (1)
- Additional Benefits Listed

HERITAGE • EREDITÀ

Investment, \$6,500

BENEFITS:

- Site Space up to 10' x 30'
- Boulevard Banner (3)
- Additional Benefits Listed

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS INCLUDED:

Boulevard Banner

Installed in May along the 22 blocks of The Drive, each banner features the logo of a distinct Partner for 2 months.

Website

Beginning in May, your brand logo & website link will be displayed on our website for a one-year period.

Social Media

We are excited to share our Partners across our social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter).

Event Posters

Are widely shared in both print and digital format, and include your brand's logo, and important event details.

Event Invitation

As a Partner, you will receive a Special Guest Invitation to our Opening Ceremony, and cocktail reception.

Opening Ceremony

All Partners individually receive an acknowledgment at the Opening Ceremony. This includes speaking opportunities for Premium Partners.



15 YEAR ANNIVERSARIO



Mille Baci



COMMUNITY • COMUNITÀ

Investment, \$15,000

BENEFITS:

Thematic Piazza Partnership

Opportunity to sponsor a designated Piazza Attraction (see page 13), or collaborate on alternate Cultural Highlight.

Boulevard Banner (6)

Installed in May along the 22 blocks of The Drive, each banner features the logo of a distinct Partner for 2 months.

Website

Beginning in May, your brand logo & website link will be displayed on our website for a one-year period.

Social Media

We are excited to share our Partners across our social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter).

Event Signage

Designated festival highlights sponsored by Comunità Partners includes optional signage design with brand logo.

Event Posters

Are widely shared in both print and digital format, and include your brand logo, and important event details.

Main Stage Banners

Comunità Partners are featured with their brand logo on The Drive Main Stage banners.

Festival Promotions

Thematic Piazzas and Cultural Highlights receive attraction designation in all promotions.

Event Invitation

As a Partner, you will receive a Special Guest Invitation to our Opening Ceremony, and cocktail reception.

Opening Ceremony

All Partners individually receive an acknowledgment at the Opening Ceremony.



SIGNATURE PARTNER

Investment, \$30,000

BENEFITS:

Music Stage or Cultural Highlight Partner

Designated sponsor for Grandview Park Stage, or unique Cultural or Piazza Highlight.

Boulevard Banner (10)

Installed in May along the 22 blocks of The Drive, each banner features the logo of a distinct Partner for 2 months.

Website

Beginning in May, your brand logo & website link will be displayed on our website for a one-year period.

Social Media

We are excited to share our Partners across our social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter).

Event Signage

Grandview Park Stage or designated Cultural/Piazza Highlight includes signage with Signature Partner logo.

Event Posters

Are widely shared in both print and digital format, and include your brand logo, and important event details.

Main Stage Banners

Signature Partners are prominently featured with their brand logo on The Drive Main Stage banners.

Festival Promotions

Thematic Piazzas and Cultural Highlights receive attraction designation in all promotions.

Event Invitation

As a Partner, you will receive a Special Guest Invitation to our Opening Ceremony, and cocktail reception.

Opening Ceremony

As a Signature Partner, you will receive an acknowledgment at the Opening Ceremony, as well as a speaking opportunity.





2024 PARTNERS

PRESENTING



SIGNATURE

CONNEST

CULTURAL



MEDIA



GRAZIE MILLE! THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

We could not have done it without all of you!

As we move into 2025, continued funding assistance is key to the festival's viability, given its size and industry cost increases, which have almost doubled in the post-pandemic era. We have been fortunate and are thankful for the many relationships we have developed over the years, including with the government and media. Besides invaluable Partner Funding, to help us raise money, Partners have donated raffle prizes, t-shirts, merchandise, and services, covered printing costs, and provided food for hundreds of volunteers each year. We are grateful for this and all avenues of assistance, as they sustain the life, return, and exceptional community experience the festival offers to all who attend and participate. Without this tremendous support, this esteemed festival would not be possible.



Italian Day on The Drive is truly sustained by the community and equally designed for community and cultural exchange. With this in mind, we welcome your Partnership, discussions and creative possibilities for our 15 Year Anniversario - a milestone celebration. Benvenuti a tutti!

It takes a village! And we thank you for your support!

Mille Baci 🍷

15
YEAR
ANNIVERSARIO

COMUNITÀ

RE/MAX

GIUSTI
WINE

BMO

Julian tile

BOSA FOODS

MASI

HERITAGE

PORT of
vancouver
Vancouver Fraser
Port Authority

VanTeam

Cannoli king
VANCOUVER

SHOPPERS
DRUG MART

onni
grocery

MILANI
PLUMBING, HEATING
& AIR CONDITIONING

SEATTLE VANCOUVER
TREE TRUCK LTD.

MILK
CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

AMICI

KALENA'S

J&C
JACQUELINE CONOR

MALFA
FROM ITALY

BAR CORSO

komo
creative

ATELIER
GRANDI

THE LAMARCA GROUP

FONTANA

THE KERRISDALE
LUMBER
COMPANY
EST. 1921

Vancity

DIGITECH
PRINTING

HOME

PrintPrint.ca

MASTERHOUSE
MEDIA

PRODUCTION + CREATIVE

GRACE
CHOI
EVENTS

BMD
BARCELONA
MEDIA
DESIGN

**Mille
Baci**

ITALIAN DAY ON THE DRIVE

SUNDAY, JUNE 8 2025

ITALIAN DAY FESTIVAL SOCIETY

Board of Directors

Federico Fuoco, President
Melissa De Genova, Vice President
Domenico Bruzzese, Treasurer
Irena Demarco, Secretary
Carmen D'Onofrio, President at Commercial Drive Business Society
Michael Cuccione, President at Il Centro Italian Cultural Centre
John Marinelli, Principal at Conwest Group of Companies
Randy Rinaldo, Board Member
Robert D'Onofrio, Board Member
Carmelina Cupo, Board Member
Anna Cuscito, Board Member

Committee

Brunella Gaudio, Executive Director
Grace Choi, Grace Choi Events, Production Partner
Angie Casoria, Volunteer Assistant
Jeff Gentile, Community Representative

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