made by mixing together beef, sweet sausage, veal, olive oil, parsley, garlic, lemon, pepper, eggs, seasoned breadcrumbs and finely grated Parmesan. Cheese of the Apulia Region, as throughout much of Italy, is simply superb. Many of the best are “fresh cheese”, meant to be eaten soon after they are made. The one cheese that seems to stand out is Burrata, fresh mozzarella filled with buttery cream. Many of the farmers in the region, as their families have for generations, make their own fresh Scamorza, Provolone and Mozzarella. Ricotta, from sheep’s milk, is also popular. Italian Bread – In the 1st Century BC, during the reign of Emperor Julius Caesar, the famous Roman poet, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, better known as Horace, wrote that the bread of the Apulia region of the country was the best in all the world. Every region of Italy produces a number of very good quality wines. Until a few years ago most of the wines of Apulia, Italy’s heel, did not stand well on their own merit. Rather, they were used by more famous central and northern regions to add to their own varieties. Now the winemakers from Italy’s more northern climes have spread south to Apulia and have brought along not only their “old world” skills but modern production techniques as well. The results have been impressive as many of the wines of the region are now highly respected and sought after. Some of the best of Apulia, one of the largest producing regions in the world are: Primitivo, a lighter, slightly more acidic elder cousin of the American Zinfandel. Aglianico, one of the varieties of grapes that were brought to the region when the Greeks were colonizing the area. It is used to make Castel del Monte. The Negro Amaro grape is grown in the south of the Salento Peninsula. It is used to produce the full bodied and earthy Salice Salentino. As well as wine, throughout Italy there are many coffee bars, often without seating, where great Espresso and Cappuccino are served. Bottled water is recommended.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Bari is both ancient and modern. Founded around 1,500 BC Bari eventually became an important port on Italy’s Adriatic coast. The first groups to reach the area and establish a settlement are believed to have been the Illyrian who sailed across the Adriatic from the western Balkans, primarily from the regions of modern day Montenegro and Albania.

Today the city of Bari is the capital of the province by the same name in Italy’s southeast region of Apulia, or, as the Italians refer to it, Puglia. The city is still an important port and industrial center having grown over the years into a metropolitan area of over 500,000 inhabitants.

There are two main sections of Bari. The first is the Old City, built out on the peninsula and known as Bari Vecchia. Centuries old, it has narrow streets and alleys, historic forts and cathedrals and of course, the old port. It is truly a step back in time.

The new part of Bari is referred to as the Murattiano. Much of it was laid out and built in the early 20th century. This is the commercial and shopping area with wide boulevards lined with businesses and sophisticated stores. Bari is also home to many young people from countries other than Italy. One of the main reasons for so many young foreign is the University of Bari, founded in 1925. There are also a number of language schools in Bari that attract many students from the United States and the United Kingdom.

There are various regional dialects throughout Italy. Many of the older fishermen in Bari Vecchia (Old City) speak a dialect that is more heavily influenced by Greek than Italian.

The Puglia region of southern Italy has changed hands countless times over the centuries, from the early Illyrian to the Romans, Byzantines, Saracens and Lombards. Each of the periods and peoples has left their mark upon the province and city of Bari. Many of the older fishermen in Bari Vecchia (Old City) speak a dialect that is more heavily influenced by Greek than Italian. The Puglia region of southern Italy has changed hands countless times over the centuries, from the early Illyrian to the Romans, Byzantines, Saracens and Lombards. Each of the periods and peoples has left their mark upon the province and city of Bari. Bari Vecchia (Old City) speak a dialect that is more heavily influenced by Greek than Italian.
**BARI PLACES OF INTEREST**

**Bari Vecchia** is the old part of the city. It is a maze of narrow streets and alleys that wind through houses and buildings that date back centuries. There are two squares, Piazza Ferrarase and Piazza Mercantile. The promenade is called the Lungomare. This is the original port area.

**The Basilica di San Nicola** was begun in 1087 to honor and house the remains of Saint Nicola. The Saint, in 343 AD, had been originally buried in the town of Myra, Lycia, modern day Turkey. When the Islamic Saracens took control of Myra in 1087, the remains of Saint Nicola were smuggled out and brought to Bari. The crypt was finally dedicated in 1089 by Pope Urban II. As the patron saint of children, sailors and fishermen, the basilica di San Nicola is still an important site of pilgrimage for Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians. The transfer of the Saint’s remains is celebrated annually on May 9th.

**The Cathedral of Saint Sabinus** was originally founded in 1034. It is dedicated to the Saint who ran away from Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus Herculius. Sabinus was a Bishop in the early Roman Catholic Church when the Emperor ordered his execution in 304 AD. 700 years later the original church was designed and constructed in the Byzantine style. In 1156 the city of Bari was the last remaining stronghold of the Byzantines in southern Italy. The city was attacked by William I, King of Sicily. The Cathedral of Saint Sabinus together with the remainder of the city was destroyed. It was not until 1170 that the foundation of the new Cathedral was laid. It was completed in 1178 in the Romanesque style. The remains of Saint Sabinus are reputed to rest in the crypt.

**The Petruzzelli Opera House**, built in 1903 by the Messine Ne- magnia family, was one of the most beautiful in all of Italy and the cultural heart and soul of Bari. On the night of October 27, 1991 an appreciative audience watched the final act of Vincenzo Bellini’s 1831 tragic Italian bel canto opera, “Norma”. In the finale, on a spec- tacular operatic stage set, the hero Pollione joins his love Norma on a blazing pyre and together they confirm their love as they succumb to the flames. A few hours later the citizens of Bari stood aghast as they watched their beloved opera house burning in the night. In 1999 the courts convicted the arsonists, the villains of this true-life Italian tragedy and sent them to prison. The man who requested the fire be set in the first place … none other than the Managing Director of Bari’s beautiful Petruzzelli Opera House.

**Castle Svevo** was begun in 1131 by Roger II, King of Sic- ily. The great fort was first built in the Norman style. It was destroyed in 1156. The castle would be rebuilt a few years later by Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, who was continually at war with one- another. Frederick II’s imperial titles included; King of Sic- ily, King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, King of Germany and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire… an empire which was, to quote the French philosopher Voltaire, “neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire”. The Provincial Archaeological Museum in Bari is home to an interesting collection of ancient exhibits some of which date back to prehistoric times. There are coins and bronze works, earthenware and artifacts that have been discovered and reclaimed from archeological sites all over southern Italy. The museum was established in 1895.

**LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES**

Southern Italy’s Mediterranean cuisine is well known for its freshness, simplicity and taste. Combining the availability of fresh seafood and good wine, bread and cheese, it all makes for wonderful meals. The area around Bari is not known for fancy or complicated cuisine. The recipes of the area have been passed down generations as the simple food of the families of farmers, shepherds and fishermen. Here are some wonderful local favorites. Orecchiette alle Cime di Rapa is a com- bination of broccoli rabe, sweet garlic, olive oil, salt and fresh chili peppers. grilled rabbit, with the leaves stuffed with crushed red pepper flakes, extra-virgin olive oil, garlic cloves, fresh thyme, balsamic vinegar and mozzarella. Penne alla Puttanesca is pasta in a sauce of olive oil, tomatoes, parsley, olives, red pepper flakes, garlic, capers and anchovies. Gattuccio di Mare is angel hair pasta with extra-virgin olive oil, basil, parsley, crushed tomatoes, red pep- per flakes, garlic, white wine shallots, fresh clams, calamari, mussels and shrimp. Polpetto, Italian meatballs, usually eaten as a side dish,