

'Focus on Italy' at American Film Festival 2025: Italian Film Industry Under the Spotlight in Los Angeles

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EINPresswire.com/ -- A conversation between representatives of the Italian and U.S. film industries explored opportunities for collaboration in co-production, technical services, and investment attraction, highlighting Italy's role as a strategic partner for international productions. The panel "Focus on Italy: A Strategic Hub for International Productions" took place yesterday at the Fairmont Century Plaza, as part of the Italian mission to the American Film Market 2025, organized by the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) in collaboration with the Directorate General for Cinema and Audiovisual of the Ministry of Culture (DGCA-MiC) and Cinecittà.



Panel "Focus on Italy" at AFM 2025

Moderated by Roberto Stabile, Head of International Relations at Cinecittà and Special Projects Advisor for DGCA, the discussion featured Francesca Rotondo (Cinecittà), Jacopo Chessa (President, Italian Film Commissions), Gary Lucchesi (producer and former President of the Producers Guild of America), and Riccardo Neri (APE – Association of Italian Production Service Companies), with remarks by Giosafat Riganò, Director of the ITA Los Angeles Office.

At the close of the session, Consul General of Italy in Los Angeles Raffaella Valentini presented Gary Lucchesi with the honor of Knight of the Order of the Star of Italy, an award bestowed by the President of the Italian Republic upon proposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI).

The honor recognizes Lucchesi's exceptional contribution to strengthening the ties between the Italian and U.S. film industries — the result of his decades-long career and his role as a bridge between the two countries.

An internationally renowned film and television producer, Gary Lucchesi was born in San Francisco to parents of Tuscan origin and resides in Los Angeles. A graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), he began his career at the William Morris Agency as a talent agent, discovering and representing artists such as Kevin Costner, Michelle Pfeiffer, and John Malkovich.

In the 1980s, he held senior positions at Tri-Star Pictures and Paramount Pictures, where he oversaw iconic films including *The Untouchables*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Ghost*, and *The Godfather Part III*. From 1998 to 2019, he served as President of Lakeshore Entertainment, where he produced more than sixty films, including the Academy Award winner *Million Dollar Baby*, and established a long-standing collaboration with RAI Cinema and its president Giancarlo Leone.

Today, Lucchesi serves as Chair of the International Committee of the Producers Guild of America, continuing to promote cooperation between Italian and American film professionals.

In recent years, he has coordinated the Guild's participation in the Audio-Visual Summits held in Matera (2021), Trieste (2023), Reggio Calabria (2024), and Merano (2025). These initiatives—organized with Cinecittà, DGCA-MiC, APA – Associazione Produttori Audiovisivi, MAECI, and ITA—have created a permanent platform for dialogue between Hollywood and the Italian audiovisual industry on key topics such as co-productions, tax incentives, training, and emerging technologies.

The 46th edition of the American Film Market takes place in Los Angeles from November 11 to 16, 2025. The Italian participation brings together 14 organizations active in film production, distribution, and location promotion. Among distributors: Filmexport Group, LSPG Popcorn, Minerva Pictures, and PiperPlay; among producers: Animoka Studios, Augustus Color, Fargo Film, K+, Mestiere Cinema, Viola Film, and Zena Film. Completing the delegation are APE – Association of Italian Production Service Companies, IFC – Italian Film Commissions, and Cinecittà.

The American Film Market (AFM) is the only international event conceived and organized directly by independent professionals for the global film industry. It serves as a central platform for the development, acquisition, and financing of independent films and series. Each year, deals exceeding one billion dollars are concluded at AFM across all stages of the production chain, from project development to worldwide distribution. The program also features the AFM Sessions, a series of more than 30 panels and conferences with leading industry figures, offering a unique opportunity to connect with key decision-makers in the film and television sectors. The 2025 edition marks the debut of AFM in its new venue, the Fairmont Century Plaza in Century City.

Italian cinema is experiencing a period of remarkable growth, supported by national tax incentives and regional funds that make the country a highly competitive destination for global

productions. In 2024, the Italian film industry recorded a significant consolidation. According to the ANICA 2025 Report, 400 feature films were completed, marking a 59% increase compared to 2020. Of these, 263 were entirely Italian productions (151 fiction and 112 documentaries), and 103 were co-productions, up 2% from 2023. Among co-productions, 51 were majority Italian, 2 equal partnerships, and 50 minority Italian, reflecting a 15.9% increase in majority co-productions. The total production cost exceeded €800 million, an 18% increase compared to 2023.

In recent years, numerous international productions have chosen Italy as a filming destination, confirming the high quality of its workforce, infrastructure, and incentive system. Recent examples include the Netflix series *Ripley*, shot across Rome, Venice, Naples, and Palermo, and *Hotel Costiera*, a Lux Vide production for Prime Video filmed in Positano, with additional locations in Sperlonga and along the Argentario coast. Italy has also hosted major global hits such as HBO's acclaimed *The White Lotus 2*, set in Taormina, and Roland Emmerich's *Those About to Die*, an ambitious large-scale series filmed at Cinecittà Studios. Additionally, Luca Guadagnino's *Challengers*, starring Zendaya, further underscores Italy's growing appeal as a world-class production hub.

The Italian Pavilion at AFM 2025 brings together organizations active across the entire audiovisual supply chain: feature and series development and production, animation, international sales and distribution, post-production (editing, color, VFX, audio) and restoration, as well as executive production and location management services in Italy and abroad. In addition, the Italian Film Commissions provide on-site support for location scouting, permitting, and access to tax incentives and regional funds. This structure allows international partners to engage directly with Italian professionals covering every phase of the production and co-production process within a single, integrated framework.

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