

Italian Nights in NYC with Francesco Belcaro



by [Francesco Belcaro](#) insider | February 20, 2020



A man of many talents, Francesco organized epic events in New York top clubs and helped promote countless brands. Most of all he created a strong community of Italian expats and American lovers of the Italian lifestyle.

When I moved to New York in 2002, I tried the nine-to-five corporate job life, but it just wasn't for me. At night, I started working as a promoter with some of the high-profile clubs in the city, such as Bungalow 8, Cain, and the old Marquis. Coming from a small city in Italy, I was eager to explore New York, and I really enjoyed being able to be in contact with people instead of facing a screen all day. Soon enough, this passion became a full-time job, and by 2004, I created an agency with my previous partner. Our first big client was Peroni, the beloved Italian beer that was entering the US market, and with them came the idea of organizing "Made in Italy" events, that eventually became the name of our agency.

While this new career seems fun, it is a full day and night job. New York gives you many opportunities but a lot of competition as well, you have to work ten times harder to make it, it takes a lot of sacrifices. In addition to the food and beverage industry, we worked with a wide variety of clients, ranging from the fashion to the medical field, providing services including event production, public relations, celebrity liaisons to real estate consultancy, now all included under my Big Picture holding group. Some clients are already established in the US, [Armani](#) is a perfect example, we organize his annual New Year's Eve party at his flagship store and restaurant on Fifth Avenue. Other of our recent events include a Snoop Dogg concert in New York, a Superbowl party with 50 Cent in Miami, an All-Star event in Chicago last week. We also organize the [Opera Italiana is in the air](#), a free concert at beginning of summer in Central Park with conductor Alvis Casellati, now at its fourth edition.



While building our agency, we created a Made in Italy community that, thanks to small marketing and word of mouth, has reached 50 thousand individuals (30k in New York, 10k in Los Angeles and Miami). While it started with Italian expats, it became a big draw to Americans that wanted to be part of the lifestyle that we were promoting and our upscale events. One of our most famous events is the upcoming masked black-tie ball inspired by the Venetian Carnival, held at the top of the Standard Hotel on February 23rd.

I am from Padova in the Veneto region, so the carnival is part of my culture. It is no surprise that I feel completely at home at [Cipriani Downtown](#), where I think they make the best risotto in the city. I love their pasta with branzino and radicchio or mushroom risotto, but overall you can't go wrong, they have an amazing team with the best regional cuisine in the same way that [Antica Pesa](#) is the top place for Roman dishes. Another regular place for me is [Bar Italia](#), I follow Chef Denis Franceschini on Instagram and text him to see if he is in the kitchen before heading there. He makes great pasta and fantastic fish dishes, as he comes from that Italian North-Eastern background. For pizza, my go-to place is [Numero 28](#), in Carmine street and their Upper East Side locations, and for coffee, the one at the counter at [Buon'Italia](#), the Italian grocery store in the Chelsea Market, is the best in the city. All these places give you that personal attention and friendship that we as Italians look forward to. It is the same reason why I watch the Italian news every morning, unconsciously trying to feel closer to home, even if I fly back every two to three months. I love passing by Milan, a city that I didn't pay much attention to growing up, but that I became very proud of as an Italian. It is such an international hub, everything is so clean, works so well, and it has an amazing nightlife.



Since my days working closely with New York clubs, the nightlife has changed a lot in the city. First of all, a lot has moved to Brooklyn. From intimate settings with bottle service, we now have events in big locations where guests just need to purchase a ticket. There are still some pop up events still happening on small venues, you just need to have the right contacts to get into the mailing list. That said, I am really looking forward to a new Cipriani project with the legendary nightlife entrepreneur Tito Pinton, an Italian style club that will be called Musica opening in September.

For after-dinner drinks, I really like [Alley Cat](#) lounge at [The Beekman Hotel](#), and for a unique New York City experience, I recommend [Göspel](#) on Lafayette. It is a Mediterranean cuisine restaurant that mixes dinner with meditation and is followed by dancing with deep house music, my favorite, as I don't like hard techno. I don't go out as much as in my twenties, but after working in the night scene for so many years without using drugs and not drinking much, music is really what still moves me, and I think that it will be the same until I am ninety. When I feel up to it, I go out with my art director [Sasha Barbot](#) (son of Sammy) who happens to be a great deejay as well. One of my top choices is [House of Yes](#) in Brooklyn that features music with cabaret and acrobatic shows. I love to get back in the deejay booth with Sasha.

Francesco Belcaro' portrait

A native of Padova, Italy, and a New Yorker since 2002, Francesco comes from a family of developers and designers. He is known to have created some of the most high profile events in New York and other major cities in the past 16 years. A natural connector, he has been working marketing, business development, real estate fields while creating a network in the USA through his companies (Made in Italy group inc., Big

Picture Presents, llc. and Capital Realty Investors inc.). Francesco also has a large experience in the retail industry after working for several years for American and European brands, and understands the power of high-end public relations. He is fluent in English, Spanish, French and Italian.

As told to Carole Hallac



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