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Italian TV Biz Puts on Hollywood Showcase

By [ANNA TINGLEY](#) 

CREDIT: FABIO LOVINO

With the advent of streaming, European television has successfully solidified its place in Hollywood, conquering international audiences with shows such as “Gomorra,” “Medici” and “Suburra: Blood on Rome,” all Italian dramas available on Netflix, in addition to HBO’s “My Brilliant Friend” and the Italian-French-Spanish drama “The Young Pope.”

And now, the first-ever Italian Television Festival, spearheaded by Good Girls Planet and Marco Testa Los Angeles, will showcase quality Italian content to Hollywood.

Ahead of this year's Emmys, the event will take place Sept. 19 at an exclusive private club and will feature screenings of trailers and teasers, an awards ceremony, plus an informative panel focused on the future of Italian television. The industry event will wrap up with a red carpet and party at the London Hotel in West Hollywood.

"The point of this festival is that Italy is producing so much content with really, really good talent, and it's starting to be recognized internationally. It's an Italian TV renaissance," says [Valentina Martelli](#), who founded Good Girls Planet alongside Francesca Scorcucchi and Cristina Scognamillo. Netflix's slate will soon be made up of a majority of international titles, and demand television is beginning to seek out more non-domestic shows. "It's a never-ending market, so why not bring this opportunity to the states?"

Notable attendees include Emmy-nominated actor Jared Harris ("Chernobyl") and Academy Award-winner Paolo Sorrentino. Sorrentino, behind "The New Pope," the second installment of his series based on the Italian papacy, will be celebrated for his pioneering hand in this so-called "Renaissance." The acclaimed director is set to receive the inaugural [ITTV](#) award, Hand ...The Winner Is, for successfully bringing Italian stories to the forefront of the entertainment industry. Custom-made by Italian artist Fidia Falaschetti, the anthropomorphic sculpture holds a remote control in one hand to symbolize modern-day viewer's freedom to choose what they watch.

Also on the red carpet: Moran Atias ("The Village"), Emanuela Postacchini ("Who Is America"), Stefania Spampinato("Grey's Anatomy"), Logan Laurice Browning ("Dear White People"), and Francesco Bauco ("Ford vs. Ferrari"), alongside other creatives such as Oscar-nominated composer Marco Beltrami.

An hour-long panel titled Opening Boundaries will kick off the afternoon, in which writer-director-producer Peter Landesman ("Concussion"); Nils Hartmann, the director of original production at Sky; and [Martha De Laurentiis](#), president of De Laurentiis Company, will discuss what Italian television can offer to the domestic industry, with *Variety's* Elaine Low moderating.

"Italy has great locations where international production can find fertile ground, they have a great tax credit, they have all the elements and stories that are relevant internationally," Martelli says. The festival will effectively advertise Italy to Hollywood veterans as fertile ground for production.

As founding partner Marco Testa, the president of Armando Testa Group, says, "The main reason for my participation is not strictly related to my work. I am an 'emotion booster' – always fascinated with Italian talent to communicate emotions, in America and around the world. Exactly like this Festival aims to do, while promoting and supporting Made in Italy products."

[Eleonora Andreatta](#), director of Rai Fiction, said in a statement: "The Italian TV Festival in Los Angeles is an excellent opportunity to highlight Italian TV series and increase the amount of attention they receive in the land of the most powerful serial television production. The festival is beneficial for connecting with the leading players in global distribution on large-scale international co-productions, such as 'Medici,' 'My Brilliant Friend' and 'The Name of the Rose.'"

Nils Hartmann, Sky Italia's Original Production Director, says: "In ten years of original productions Sky has mapped out a path, which we are proud to be able to present at the ITTV Festival – a new and exciting platform to talk about new opportunities and challenges for Italian TV productions. With 'Gomorrah' we made a local story capable of touching the imagination of international audience. We're finally looking at the U.S. TV and streaming market as one offering equal opportunities and no longer as something distant and unreachable."

Writer-director-producer Landesman, for example, will discuss why such Italy-centric stories are so appealing to American audiences. Meanwhile, De Laurentiis will talk through her decision to shift her production company from film to television as small-screen shows have amped up their quality in recent years.

At the end of the packed day, a mix of Hollywood executives and Italian creators will make their way to a glitzy rooftop party in WeHo to network and share their ideas, which Martelli says will be "a natural way to bridge the gap between the two territories. This could be the beginning of some amazing American-Italian TV to come."



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