

WORLD

# Coronavirus revives plague ‘wine window’ tradition in Italy

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Quarantine, curfews and questionable cures have returned to the world like throwbacks to the Middle Ages.

But there’s one plague tradition that has made a welcome return to Italy.

Tiny wine windows dating back hundreds of years, which are small enough to fit a tippie through, are back in use in some tavernas to help patrons distance while they sip.

The buchette del vino, or “wine windows”, are a quaint tradition, with a macabre past, the [New Zealand Herald](#) reports.

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📷 This is one plague tradition we can get behind.  
Picture: Wine Window Association

In the 1600s the pint-sized holes were carved into the sides of wine merchants. The tradition has survived the Black Death and other historic health emergencies. Now the use of the wine window is, quite literally, seeing a renaissance, though it's not just wine being put through them.

“During this time, some enterprising Florentine Wine Window owners have turned back the clock,” the Wine Window Association website said, “using their wine windows to dispense glasses of wine, cups of coffee, drinks, sandwiches and ice cream – all germ-free, contactless!”



📷 Socially distant Aperol spritz, anyone? Picture: Wine Window Association



📷 It's not just for alcoholic beverages, but your morning cappuccino, too. Picture: Wine Window Association

Wine Window Association president Matteo Faglia spoke with *Travel Insider* magazine to explain how history was repeating itself.

“People could knock on the little wooden shutters and have their bottles filled direct from the Antinori, Frescobaldi and Ricasoli families, who still produce some of Italy’s best-known wine today,” Mr Faglia said.



📷 The windows, which date back to the 16th century, has seen Italy's wine lovers through waves of outbreaks. Picture: Wine Window Association

Though more than 150 of the windows from the Middle Ages can be found throughout Tuscany, many have been filled with concrete. Others have been vandalised and some turned into street art.

However, it is the Wine Window Association’s mission to revive knowledge of what these windows once represented.



**Buchette del Vino**  
circa 2 mesi fa



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“The wine windows gradually became defunct, and many wooden ones were permanently lost in the floods of 1966,” said Mr Faglia, whose association has mapped out these forgotten relics throughout Italy’s Chianti country.

The association has begun marking the holes with a small plaques to celebrate authentic “buchette del vino”.

“We want to put a plaque by all the wine windows, as people tend to respect them more when they understand what they are and their history,” he said.



 Tourists in Rome on June 22 as Italy eased its lockdown. Picture: Vincenzo Pinto / AFP

Italy was badly affected by the [COVID-19](#) pandemic early on and has suffered more than 35,000 deaths. However the world has been moved by the camaraderie and bravery of Italy’s citizens, who endured Europe’s longest lockdown.

Other proud Italian traditions were revisited during that tough lockdown, including opera. In Florence, tenor Maurizio Marchini and his rendition of Puccini’s music became a national symbol during quarantine, as he took to the rooftops to sing.

Recorded and seen over a million times online, it’s a moving performance. Well, worth raising a glass to.

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