

Worldwide ▸ Italy's medieval wine windows are being used again to serve contact-free drinks and gelato



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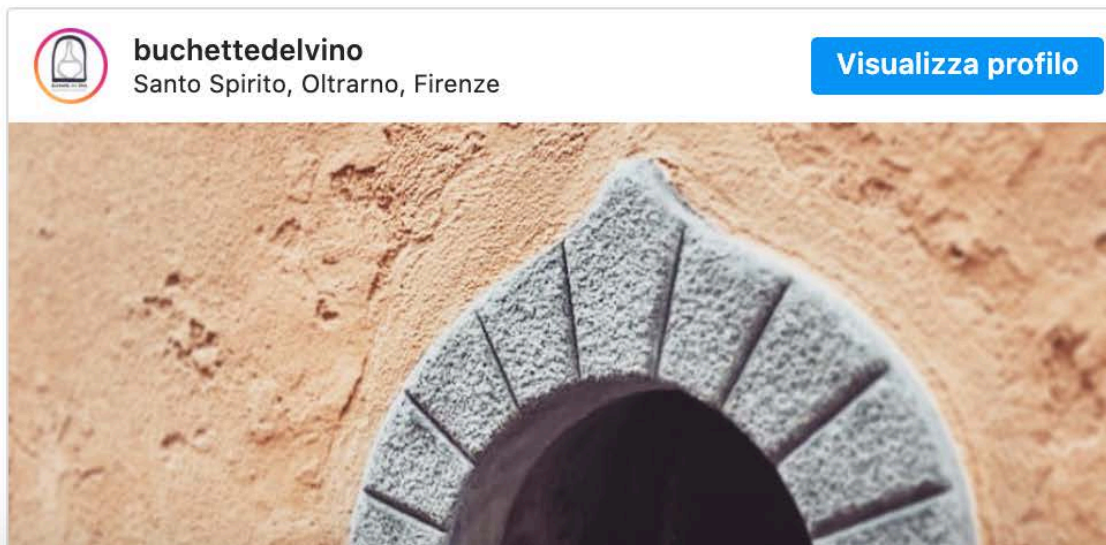
The tiny, ancient windows, which are unique to Tuscany, were originally used during the Italian plague

By [Ellie Walker-Arnott](#) Posted: Friday August 7 2020, 12:31pm



Back in the day – and by ‘the day’ we mean the 1630s, when Italy was in the grips of a plague – Italian wine merchants invented a nifty way of selling their wares without spreading disease. These *buchette del vino* or ‘wine windows’ are tiny openings in the sides of buildings where drinks could be purchased in a socially-distant, contact-free way.

‘They passed the flask of wine through the window to the client but did not receive payment directly into their hands. Instead, they passed a metal pallet to the client, who placed the coins on it, and then the seller disinfected them with vinegar before collecting them,’ says the Associazione Buchette del Vino. Clever, eh?





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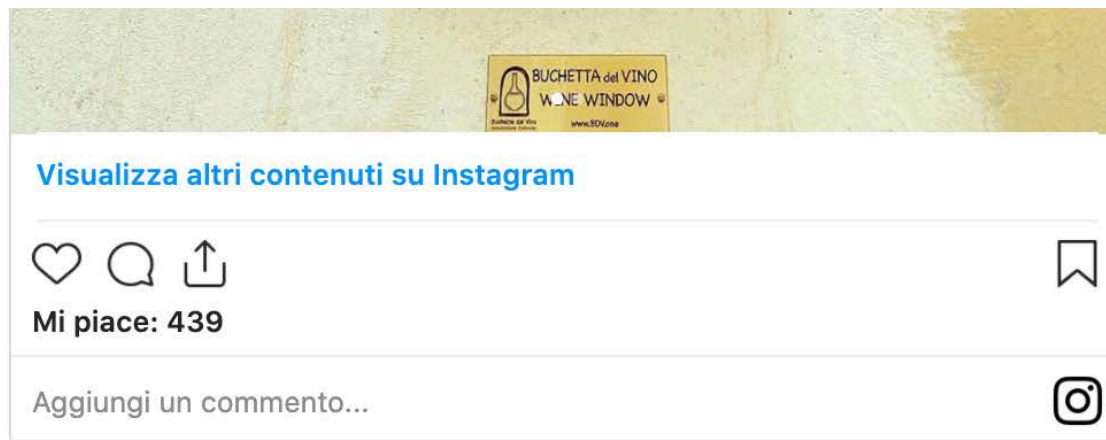
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The windows, which are unique to Tuscany (there are more than 150 of them in Florence alone), are protected because of their history. And now, they're getting an unexpected new lease of life, thanks to Covid-19.

Some businesses have reopened their ancient wine windows and started using them, for the first time in living memory, to serve gelato, coffees and even Aperol spritzes in a safe, contact-free way.





'Today, during our period of Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, the owners of the wine window in Via dell'Isola delle Stinche at the Vivoli ice cream parlour in Florence have reactivated their window for dispensing coffee and ice cream, although not wine. Two other nearby wine windows, that of the Osteria delle Brache in Piazza Peruzzi and that of Babae in Piazza Santo Spirito, have taken us back in time by being used for their original purpose – socially-distant wine selling,' says the ABV.





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It's certainly a cool way to get around our current predicament. Ours is a scoop of *gelato al pistacchio, per favore*.

You can find a full list of Italy's wine windows [here](#).

More clever ideas? [This restaurant in a Swedish forest has nailed socially-distant dining](#).

Here are [seven more ingenious ways businesses are social-distancing](#) right now.

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