



THE NEW ITALIAN JOB: Foreign Correspondent, Monday January 8

The old is new. Ditching conventional careers, a generation of hip young Italians is rediscovering the grand tradition of “Made in Italy”. Hamish Macdonald takes an exhilarating road trip to meet them.

Not even a big recession could take the fizz out of La Dolce Vita, Italy’s beloved good life. Just the opposite, it seems.

Bleak career prospects are nudging an army of educated young Italians to go back to their roots and turn a euro out of home and hearth, food and culture.

“I kind of like the fact that now I’m making real products. Before I was selling contracts and ideas and a lot of hot air,” says Guido Pallini, who threw in his career as a banker to return to his dad’s farm in Tuscany.

He still applies that business brain. His dad used to sell his buffaloes’ milk. Now Guido adds value by turning it into the finest cheeses - traditional mozzarella and ricotta plus a whole range of experimental types.

“Selling mozzarella, you see the smile on their faces when they bite,” he tells reporter Hamish Macdonald.

Guido wants to crack the US market – but to do so he must impress cashed-up American buyers at the world’s biggest craft cheese fair. To see how he goes, Macdonald goes along with him.

Guido is part of a movement that is seeing the number of young people working in agriculture starting to grow. About 50,000 young Italians are now running farm businesses.

...Like Nico Laguzzi, a law student who saw no future for himself and decided to join brother Filippo back on the family plot near Turin. With a team of volunteers, they’re doing all manner of things, from selling organic veggies to making craft beer from the hops they grown themselves.

“Our dream may be crazy - so a lot of people are crazy with us!” Filippo says. Profits still elude them. *“But,”* says Filippo, *“you can make money by selling a little bit of beauty.”*

That’s how Carolina Cuomo sees things too. The ex-psychologist got browned off with spasmodic work and turned to an artisanal passion – shoes. Not sensible black flatties. Ornate, exquisite, seriously expensive heels. She designs and hand-makes them from her base outside Naples.

“It’s lovely delivering them to the client. There are people who cry when they see them,” she says as she shows Macdonald her personal summer collection – all 110 pairs.

“When I touch these shoes I feel their spirit, their soul, as if they’re alive. I know everything about this shoe – how it was born, its history, as if it were a human being. And I assure you that this is a lovely person.”

Hamish Macdonald explores a hipster revolution led by young Italians who are finding beauty as they re-embrace tradition. *The New Italian Job* airs 8.30 pm Monday January 8 on ABC TV and ABC iview (repeated 1 pm Tuesday and 11.30 pm Wednesday on ABC TV; 8 pm Saturday and 1 am Sunday on ABC News).