

Elisa Locantore

### A Lifestyle

24 hours. 1440 minutes. 86,400 seconds. One simple day may bring us new memories, miracles and encounters. Anything can happen in a single day. It is up to the individual as to how he or she wishes to live it. Every morning, each individual wakes up with the choice of how they will spend their precious time, as well as decide upon what type of lifestyle they will live. Time could be spent lost in the corporate world, drowning in a pile of files, or it could be spent exploring the most intriguing and captivating corners of the world. The possibilities are endless. Personally, I believe in seizing the day through the deepest and oldest part of me - my family origins. I choose to spend my time embracing my culture and discovering what it truly means to be of Basilicata origin.

Being a descendant of Basilicata is not solely the answer to “What’s your background?” It is a lifestyle; a lifestyle which I am proud to follow. It is through my family relationships that I have further developed an understanding of my roots, embracing life as a true Italian. I am my father’s daughter. That is, aside from physical appearance, my father and I share similar qualities. This includes speaking at an above maximum sound level and often being told to lower my voice when in fact, I am merely whispering. Similar to my father, respect towards others is the most important virtue I hold dearly in my life. My father is truly a role model for me, in how he chooses to always lend a helping hand or offer guidance when one is in need. The apple does not fall far from the tree, since my *Nonna* is also a remarkable and respectable lady. My *Nonno* passed away when my father was a mere adolescent. Even though I never got the chance to meet him, his story will forever be passed down and cherished in every Locantore’s heart. Every year, when it is his namesake day, my *Nonna* makes a traditional *beigne* which was his, and of course is my, favourite dessert. Sitting outside and listening to *Nonna’s* stories have given me a great understanding and appreciation of all the tough times that she was forced to endure. No matter how difficult it was, she persevered and raised four wonderful children.

Within my 86,400 seconds every day, I try my best to be at *Nonna's* house, learning and absorbing all she has to offer. I adore learning about my *Nonna's* past. However, there is nothing that beats *Nonna's* mouthwatering cooking. She is a strong independent woman, with an incredible talent for cooking the best *orecchiette*. Simply driving to her house, I can already smell all the delicious dishes she has prepared. Sitting at the table with all my *zie, zii* and cousins make the Italian atmosphere come to life and fill the room with laughter. *Nonna's* house is the type of environment that I look forward to each and every moment, spending days with *Nonna*, learning her "*Montese*" recipes or enjoying some time with my younger cousins.

Being of a Basilicata origin is more than simply speaking loudly or constantly being forced by *Nonna*. It means doing activities together as a family. There are 1440 minutes in a day which allows me to spend the quality time with my family that every Italian adores. This includes having a garden in the backyard, eagerly waiting for August which marks the tomato sauce season, or dominating in a game of *scopa* against my father. It is through these experiences that I have embraced my culture to make it my own lifestyle. Showing my inner Italian does not stop with tomato jars. This is the generation of the internet and countless social media platforms to express opinions. As a strong willed individual, I am sure to advocate and demonstrate my Italian pride through tweets and instagram posts.

A few years ago my family and I ventured to the beautiful town of Montescaglioso. I can honestly say there was never a dull moment. The days were filled with visiting *I sassi di Matera* and interacting with family I have not seen in years. The nights brought a delicious gelato in the *piazza* as well as singing and dancing to songs played on the *cupa cupa* and accordion. Returning to Toronto, I shared with my peers my experiences in Italy and memories of these beloved instruments. I was proud to share my heritage and show that the region on the "arch of the boot" may be geographically small, but every one of its descendants has the largest heart. Every single second spent in Italy has been absorbed and will forever be imprinted in my mind to reminisce on. The trip to Italy gave me countless memories I will forever cherish. The greatest part of this trip can be summed up in 24 hours on one particular day, August 20 - the feast day of our patron saint, *San Rocco*. Simply being side by side with all my family, watching the beautiful horses trot effortlessly along *la strada del carro* pulling the *San Rocco* statue is a

sight that makes me proud to be from Basilicata. As I reminisce on the *festa di San Rocco*, I remember watching in awe how the cavalcade of horses pulled the *San Rocco* wagon carefully through the tightest and narrowest turn in the town, known as *a curv*, and applauding as they succeeded.

Starting in September 2017, I will commence my post-secondary studies at the Schulich School of Business, for a Bachelor of Business Administration. This will further my education in the world of business and prepare me for when I enter corporate endeavours, as well as for later in my life, as an ambitious entrepreneur. If I were to be chosen as the 2017 recipient of this scholarship, I would use these funds to help finance my education. However, I would also put some of the funds aside to return to Montescaglioso with *Nonna* on the feast day of *San Rocco*. It would be a trip of a lifetime. Her stories would come to life as we travel through the town where she grew up, as she passes down words of wisdom. 86,400 seconds can fly by in the blink of an eye. I am sincerely proud to be surrounded by those who have honoured these Basilicata traditions which have helped me appreciate and respect my upbringing.