

COMUNE DI CASALE SUL SILE
BANDO DI CONCORSO PUBBLICO PER ESAMI PER L'ASSUNZIONE DI N.2
ISTRUTTORI AMMINISTRATIVI - CATEGORIA CI
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PROVA INGLESE

1° candidato

A villa in the Italian capital Rome housing the only mural by Caravaggio has failed to sell at auction.

Villa Aurora is at the centre of a legal battle between its current occupier, Texas-born Princess Rita Boncompagni Ludovisi, and her stepsons.

The villa, which had a starting price of €471m (£394m), was expected to become the most expensive property ever sold but attracted no bids.

Another attempt to sell it is expected in April, with the price cut by 20%.

The highlight of the six-storey villa's many treasures is the wall painting by the 16th and 17th Century artist Michelangelo Merisi, better known as Caravaggio.

2° candidato

The oil painting, which contains nudity, depicts the gods Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto, with the world at its centre and marked by signs of the zodiac. The artist is said to have painted the gods to look like himself.

It is the world's only surviving Caravaggio mural, itself estimated to have a value of €310m (£259m). It was painted in 1597 after the villa's first owner commissioned it for his alchemy room.

Remarkably, the painting was only discovered in the late 1960s, before which it had been covered up.

3° candidato

However, Villa Aurora got its name from another of the property's artworks, a fresco painted by the Italian Baroque artist Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, known as Guercino. The painting depicts the goddess Aurora, or Dawn, on her chariot.

Art-lovers are demanding that the Italian government steps in to buy the villa so that its many treasures can be made available for public viewing. More than 38,000 people have signed a petition calling for the state to intervene.

4° candidato

Italian law does give the state the option to buy the property, but only after the auction has taken place, and for the same price. However, despite the reduced price, the government may still not have the funds to buy it.

Whoever the eventual buyer is, they will take ownership of a dizzying array of historical items, including letters written by Marie Antoinette and a Michelangelo statue in the garden.

But there is a catch. The listing for the auction makes it clear that the buyer will be responsible for about €11m (£9.2m) of repairs.

5° candidato

The legal battle over the villa's ownership began after the death in 2018 of Prince Nicolo Ludovisi Boncompagni, who was head of the family which has owned Villa Aurora for generations.

The dispute is between his third wife, Rita Boncompagni Ludovisi, and his three sons from his first marriage.

Princess Rita says that her late husband's will gives her the right to live in Villa Aurora for the rest of her life, and that if sold, the proceeds would be split between her and her stepsons.

6° candidato

However, an agreement could not be reached between the parties and a court ruled that an auction should be held. The princess says she would like the villa to be returned to the state.

Princess Rita, born in Texas as Rita Carpenter, has led an interesting life of her own. She worked as an actor and a journalist in the US, before moving into the property business. She was involved in the sale of the General Motors building in New York to Donald Trump in 1998.

But after marrying Prince Nicolo and moving to Italy, she dedicated her life to the restoration of Villa Aurora, which was in a state of disrepair when she first saw it in 2003, she says.

7° candidato

Long known as one of the world's holiest cities, India's spiritual capital is now luring culinary pilgrims as it transforms into a vegetarian paradise.

Inhabited since at least 1800 BC, Varanasi is well known for being among the oldest living cities on Earth, and one of the holiest for the world's estimated 1.2 billion Hindus. Every day, as the sound of ringing temple bells echo overhead, tens of thousands of devotees descend the city's 88 stone *ghat* steps and dip themselves into the Ganges river to wash away their sins.

8° candidato

Bereaved relatives flock to Varanasi's two cremation grounds where funeral pyres burn around the clock, believing that Shiva himself whispers the *Tarak mantra* (chant of liberation) into the ears of all those cremated here, granting them instant *moksha* or salvation.

However, my reasons for travelling to Varanasi were quite different. I didn't come to confront death or cleanse my soul; I came to experience the city's unique vegetarian food.

9° candidato

Driving through the city's busy streets, Rakesh Giri, chauffeur and raconteur par excellence, told me how Shiva, the destroyer of the universe, had founded Varanasi in the days of yore, according to Hindu belief. Like most Varanasi residents, Giri is a fervent Shaivite (Shiva worshipper). And since followers of Shiva believe he is a vegetarian God, he and most other Varanasi residents follow a strict *sattvic* ("pure vegetarian") diet.

"My family and I have been pure vegetarians for generations. We refuse to even drink water in a home where eggs are consumed," Giri said as he dropped me off.

10° candidato

Varanasi may be India's spiritual capital, but it isn't exactly known for luring culinary pilgrims. Most food travellers will likely flock to the country's famous epicurean hubs of Delhi, Kolkata or Chennai before making their way to Varanasi. Yet, chefs from around the world are starting to draw inspiration from its culinary heritage, recreating its flavours in their restaurants.

Chef Vikas Khanna, who received a Michelin star each year from 2011 to 2016 when he ran Junoon in Manhattan, said he was bowled over by the *vrat ke kuttu* buckwheat-flour pancakes served in a single Varanasi temple.

11° candidato

"I've tried my best to recreate it in my kitchen at Manhattan. It tastes heavenly," Khanna told Lonely Planet in 2020.

Two-time Michelin-starred chef Atul Kochhar named his modern Indian restaurant in London Benares (the name of Varanasi during British rule). In his eponymous cookbook, the chef showcases vegetarian fusion recipes, such as chickpea pancakes and heritage tomato salad, that highlight the sweet-and-tart flavour combinations commonly found in the city. Even Indian celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor has written about his fondness for Varanasi food, highlighting its excellent vegetarian offerings.

12° candidato

Of course, in a country that is 80% Hindu and 20% vegetarian, meatless options are ubiquitous in India. But what makes Varanasi's vegetarian cuisine so interesting is how its *sattvic* and vegetarian specialties are directly influenced by its strong sense of spirituality. A *sattvic* menu is based on Ayurvedic principles and adheres to the strictest standards of vegetarianism prescribed by the *Sanatana dharma*, an absolute form of Hinduism. As such, it forbids the use of onion and garlic in cooking, which are believed to increase anger, aggression and anxiety, among other things.

13° candidato

Almost every Hindu household in Varanasi has an altar dedicated to Shiva in the house. Eating meat at home is unthinkable," explained Abhishek Shukla, a *shastri* (priest) at Varanasi's famous Kashi Vishwanath temple. "Staying *sattvic* is a priority for those who wish to attain salvation because we believe that our souls would suffer like those we killed

for food otherwise. Meat, onions and garlic exacerbate *tamasic* (the opposite of sattvic) tendencies, making it difficult for people to concentrate and exercise good judgement."

14° candidato

Traditionally, many Varanasi restaurants have served meat to cater to Western tourists and non-vegetarian Hindu pilgrims, and local sattvic cuisine was primarily eaten at home. But in 2019, the Hindu-nationalist BJP government banned the sale and consumption of meat within a 250m radius of all Varanasi temples and heritage sites. This encouraged restaurants to start featuring local vegetarian and sattvic recipes that have been passed down for generations within Varanasi homes but were previously unavailable to visitors.

Inside the luxury hotel BrijRama Palace, an imposing sandstone structure on the Ganges at Munshi Ghat, executive chef Manoj Verma applies his encyclopaedic knowledge of traditional textbook vegetarian Varanasi cooking.