



Festa Siciliana



16th annual/ May 17 2009
FESTA SICILIANA salutes the culture, heritage of San Diego immigrants

SICILY COMES TO THE STREETS OF SAN DIEGO'S LITTLE ITALY

The music, dance, culture and cuisine of Sicily come to the streets once again to San Diego's Little Italy on Sunday, May 17, 2009, 10 am-6 pm, as part of the 16th Annual FESTA SICILIANA (www.sicilian-festa.com) celebration on India Street.

The highly popular FREE family event features authentic Sicilian food and entertainment, surrounded by the colorful ambiance of the Little Italy neighborhood of San Diego's downtown.

Four stages will feature a wide variety of Sicilian and Italian entertainment. At noon, a parade of dozens of costumed dancers, musicians, and representatives of the Italian organizations in San Diego will waltz through the streets carrying flags from the different regions of Sicily and Italy.

The Sicilian Festa is proud to announce this year's headliner, the world-famous accordionist virtuoso, **Dick Contino**. Billed as the "world's greatest accordion player," Contino appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* a record 46 times! Contino continues to perform regularly throughout the United States. His repertoire is eclectic, ranging from Italian melodies such as *Come Back to Sorrento* and *Arriverderci Roma*, to his famed renditions of *Lady of Spain* and *Swinging on a Star*.

New this year will be a children's cultural area where youngsters of all ages and backgrounds can connect with the Sicilian heritage. The area will feature a display of authentic Sicilian puppets....some 3 feet tall...as well as a puppet theatre, song and dance demonstrations by children for children, and a variety of other activities.

Food booths will line the streets to satisfy the hungry crowds by serving up Sicilian specialties of all varieties. Festa visitors will also be able to relax at a wine and beer garden, or shop among the many booths offering Italian-themed artifacts and services.

People will be literally dancing in the streets, and no wonder. The event features the nationally acclaimed **Roman Holiday Ensemble** (www.romanholidaymusic.com) whose repertoire includes a huge repertoire of Italian and Sicilian music as well as swinging Sinatra and Louie Prima shows. A wide variety of vocalists, many directly from Sicily, will entertain the crowds with everything from Sicilian Swing to Sicilian Jazz, as well as with Sicilian and Italian traditional and folkloristic melodies.

The festival is proud to welcome the nationally-acclaimed Alessandra Belloni (www.alessandrabelloni.com), who is the only woman in the United States and in Italy specializing in the Southern Italian tambourine style together with the singing and the dancing that is so much a part of the heritage of this region. "RHYTHM IS THE CURE" is her one woman show featuring voice and percussion. Her fiery "percussive journey" through the South of Italy will highlight the dance and rhythm, magic rituals, tarantellas used as music therapy and exorcism, healing chants in honor of the Black Madonna, lullabies, love ballads, and work chants from Sicily, Calabria and Naples.

A Sicilian cultural tent will feature photo displays and cultural displays by local authors and artisans, reflecting the Sicilian American heritage in San Diego. The area will also feature displays of such well-

worn traditions as wine-making, fishnet repair, embroidery, produce and fish markets, and more, organized by the ConVivio Society of San Diego (www.convivosociety.org).

The Little Italy neighborhood of downtown San Diego (www.littleitaly-sd.com) has become one of the most desirable urban communities in the nation. With a perfect mix of Old World charm and an avant-garde chic, it appeals to people of all ages.

FREE PARKING AND SHUTTLE are available. Park in the NORTH lot of the County Administration Building and look for the double-decker bus that will take you to the Festa.

For more information, log onto the Sicilian Festival website at www.sicilianfesta.com.

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