

GRAPE FESTIVAL IN GUSSAGO

Grape Festival is a traditional festival in Gussago. Gussago is in a famous grape growing area: Franciacorta. Here people produce some good wines, like Berlucchi, Rosso Franciacorta.

Grape was and is an important product for our economy.

Grape festival is the celebration of this fruit.

Every year, more of 1000 of Bresciani come to Gussago to see the float parade. It's in autumn, on the last Sunday of september. This day represents the end of Gussago's autumn festival. The purpose of this festival is to preserve the local traditions, language and to remember the countrymen's life. The festival is also the opportunity to meet people and to live up our village.

The festival is two weeks long and every day people can listen to concerts, can dance, can watch folk dramas and they can meet friends.

This festival is also a competition among Gussago's hamlets. In Gussago there are nine hamlets: Civine, Navezze, Piazza, Ronco, Piè del Dosso, Casaglio, Sale, Croce, Mandolossa.

The hamlets are involved in competition such as tug of war, sack race, running race and bicycle race; but also quiz and competition in Knitting, dancing and other funny thinks.

Each hamlet built a float about folkloristic topic. On Sunday, the last day of festival, the hamlet's floats go along the streets full of stalls, like clothes stalls; foods stalls; sweets stalls.

At the end, the Gussago pro-loco, gives the prize to the winner hamlet. The prize is the "palio" , an statue that represents a tower with grape: the symbol of Gussago.

This festival was born in the thirties years when Mussolini found the National Grape Festival, that growing the consumer an this italian product. After the second world war some people decided to istitute it.

At the beginning the topic was only the grape and the wine, so the hamlets built floats about Bacco, ancient Rome, and "vendemmia" (in English: to pick the grapes).

Every hamlet was enthusiastic about this idea and they took part in it for many years.

Now Gussago is bigger: many people came here from other country, the new people don't know the old traditions and they haven't got time to dedicate to the hamlet. So, some hamlets don't take part in competition.

Navezze is my hamlet. Last year the topic of festival was " sota i campanii de Gusacc" (in English: under Gussago's church). That that it mens that we had to tell facts , events, particulars characters of each hamlet.

Navezze chose to make a float with a enormous spit (4m for 3m for 1,5m) Spit is a traditional meal of Brescia. And Spit is a big machine that roasts meat. The cooker puts some meat (pork, rabbit, chicken and little birds) in spit that turns around in the machine. Meat must be cooked very slowly with embers' warmth for about five hours. Some times the cooker pours some butter on the meat. It's delicious!

In Navezze there are many restaurants famous in Brescia that cook spit.

Because of this, we called our float " a Naese a mangià el spet" (in English : in Navezze to eat spit)

For two months, children, parents, old and young people worked every evening, all Saturdays and all Sundays to plan and to build it with wood, paper and iron. But the most important thing was joy, fun, enthusiasm, that we felt working together. We made an enormous spit, a bottle of wine, a gigantic copper pot with "polenta" (made with flour of mais).

Around the float we built a big and a very long table set for fifty people.

The day of the float parade we went into Gussago square with our fifty chairs. We wore clothes of 70s years.

When music started we set down around the table and we began to dance and sing " Aggiungi un posto a tavola"(in english: add a seat at your table, a famous italian musical in 70s. After that we started to eat spit and to give meal to the spectators.

It was fantastic to see the people to dance and sing with us. Everybody were enthusiastic about our show!

At the end of float parade the jury proclaimed the hamlet winner. The winner was...Navezze! In that moment all Navezze's people shouted and began to dance and sing around their float while some other hamlets were sad and angry with us.

Then, like every year, we came back to Navezze on our beautiful and winner float with our palio.

On the float we shouted and sang some hymns.

The Navezze's people went out from their houses and clapped at our passing.

We were proud of our work, satisfied with our result, happy because people liked our job.