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BUONAPESCE

Boston Whaler sponsors the famous
Memorial Keystones Stefanelli
tournament in beautiful Fano, Italy



We dip triangles of flatbread into freshly made olive oil, and the flavor hits as if biting into the country of Italy itself.

I quickly glance around the table to see if my dinner companions are enjoying the same rouse of their senses.

Much of the crew gathered for the meal at La Perla restaurant is part of team *Sunrise V*. Eager to compete in the first Boston Whaler Tuna Cup, the men fuel up and talk tactics. Fano, a commune of Pesaro and Urbino, will play host to the esteemed event—originally the Memorial Keystones Stefanelli fishing tournament in drifting.

Dino Stefanelli, the owner of La Perla, and also the owner of Nautica Stefanelli, the local Boston Whaler dealership, orders *antipasti de pesce* for the table and shares the history behind the competition. “We wanted to memorialize and remind everybody of my father,” Dino says of Costanzo Stefanelli. “He was a pioneer in the boating industry and a great lover of fishing.”

The restaurant itself is a memorial to Costanzo with pictures of trophies pulled from the abyss. We drop steamed mussels down our throats and tickle our palates with prosecco toasts. The excitement at dinner is as overt as the scent of rosemary in the flatbread. Dino credits Luca Brancaleon, Boston Whaler’s overseas director of sales and marketing, for helping to resurrect the tournament that has waned in sponsors and participants over the years.

(Previous page) Roberto Ciaroni hooks up with the team’s first tuna. (Here) Dino Stefanelli poses at the “helm” of his Boston Whaler dealership. (Opposite, left to right) Giuseppe’s Parish; it takes two; tuna time.



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“The idea was born last winter,” says Luca, describing a meal much like the one we savor now. “The enthusiasm Dino expressed when talking about past events, together with the excitement of the other associates of the Fishermen Club of Fano, immediately caught me, and the same evening we made the decision of organizing the event again in order to carry on with the tradition.”

Whaler’s involvement with the Tuna Cup marks the first time the Unsinkable Legend has sponsored an overseas tournament, and the American brand chose an important competition to bolster. The winner of the Tuna Cup qualifies as a selection for the Italian Championship Specialty in 2011 and also receives a Boston Whaler 150 Montauk with 60-hp Mercury® outboard. Additional sponsors include Raymarine and Roberto Ciaroni, owner of Fisherman’s Paradise Fishing Equipment, an importer of Key West Rods. Roberto joins the crew in time to indulge in a platter of fragrant Adriatic gems.

“This is the man to watch,” says Luca, introducing us to Roberto. A server uncorks a bottle of vino to complement our lobster and tuna steaks, and the crew passes around cell phone photos of recent catches.

“It’s a dream becoming real,” Dino says of the tournament and its new sponsors. Luca stands to make a toast to new friends.

Before long we are ready for cappuccinos and an endless round of digestifs. Almond biscotti dipped in dessert wine is followed by Bananino liquor, and our collective sweet tooth rejoices. Then caffè sorbet proves the perfect cap to the evening—that is, until plates of bread pudding arrive. We feign exhaustion, smiling at Dino and thanking him for his generosity. With our bellies bursting and our hearts taken up with the space of new friends, we roll out onto the streets of Fano.

Italy is exactly how a foreigner might picture it: Of course, the food and drink is amazing! And then there are the crumbling fortress walls that hold small villages that in turn hold ornate churches and fountains; piazzas with markets full of artisan olive oils and breads; and labyrinths of narrow cobblestone streets crowded with cycling locals, mimes, jugglers, street musicians and marching bands. Wait, what? Mimes and marching bands?

The costumes are part of *La Notte Bianca*, the White Night festival. White Night events, or all-night art festivals, have become increasingly

(Here) Sunrise on the Adriatic hints at a lucky day on the water; the Piazza XX Settembre hosts the town markets and festivals. (Opposite) The 16th-century Fontana della Fortuna in front of the Madonna di Piazza; flying the flags of victory back to port; the 14th-century Teatro della Fortuna.



popular around Europe. Attendees celebrate with music, dancing, performance, food, fireworks and, most important, they wear white and stay up until dawn. This year's event intersects with the start of the two-week period where many Europeans take holiday. Fano courses with merrymakers looking to cool themselves in the Adriatic and catch hot stone-massaging siestas on the smooth rocks of its shores.

La Notte Bianca also happens to be on the eve of the Tuna Cup, so revelers are just winding down as the competitive anglers arrive at their boats for the tournament. Boston Whalers take off from Marina de Cesari, scattering in all directions. Twin 300-hp Mercury FourStroke Verado® outboards power team *Sunrise V's* 320 Outrage

A Boston Whaler is known here for its incredible construction and, therefore, it is a boat of prestige, Luca explains.



offshore. I'm struck by Boston Whaler's presence overseas and ask Luca why the brand has become so popular. "People recognize Whaler for its unsinkability," he says. A Boston Whaler is known here for its incredible construction and, therefore, it is a boat of prestige, he explains.

The smooth ride on the open water certainly backs Luca up, and everyone onboard settles in to enjoy the cruise to the first fishing spot. Lit with the first rays of dawn, the village of Fano, with its antique façades and archways, shrinks in the distance. The terra cotta rooftops become tiny stairways climbing up the morainic hills from the coast.

Riccardo Tamburini, host of "Caccia E Pesca," an Italian hunting and fishing TV program, explains to me the unique fishing technique

of drifting. "That is no unimportant task," he says, referring to a young man tossing fish over the 320's transom, creating what I call a chum line. In Italy, this method of continuous baiting is called *brumeggio*, and to catch tuna the crew uses sardines, whole and in pieces.

Fishermen check the direction of the current by launching a few sardines. Then they maneuver the boat slowly against the current while creating a steady strip of chum for about a mile before cutting the engines and drifting. They set out their lines baited with more sardines and marked with balloons distinguishing different depths, Riccardo explains. *Sunrise V* plies the waters about 25 miles offshore at varying depths in 50 feet of water. Shouts suddenly interrupt our fishing lesson.

Luca raises his hands as if to say, "I told you so," when I learn Roberto is the fisherman with a tuna on the line. The battle ensues for nearly 20 minutes as the fish dives. His crewmates stand by ready to assist, bellowing words of encouragement. But Roberto leans into the struggle with a sense of calm, as if he were an unyielding master walking an overeager dog.

Methodically, he regains lost line, getting the beast closer to the boat. With the help of Luca and the others, Roberto hoists the fish over the gunnel for a photo op before releasing it back into the watery depths of the Adriatic. Sweating and tired, the men congratulate Roberto and celebrate over espresso made with painstaking care onboard while Riccardo films a quick segment for his show.

Sipping my own delicate cup, I am again caught by the intense flavor, not to mention the absurdity of enjoying such a dainty drink in the middle of the ocean. Is it just me, mesmerized by a new place and caught up in the thrill of the moment? The crew has paused to watch the sun light up the Adriatic, and in doing so they answer my question. Take this for granted? Impossible. **W**