

The Smithy

Carlo Galgani's fire has been burning for over 200 years. In fact the blacksmith (*fabbro*) and his predecessors have been working here since the 1500s, but Carlo may be the last to tend this flame. *Young people today prefer cell phones*, he tells me, though he still has a demand for the tools that he makes entirely by hand, including the handles that he makes using wood from his fruit trees.

The old stone building is a fully fitted, water powered shop a few kilometers from Pescaglia, where Carlo lives. On a mild autumn afternoon, the sun pleasantly dapples the walls and peers into the mysterious shadowy rooms. The windows are always open so that air and light can penetrate the interior, where the walls are blackened by centuries of soot from the open fires. Carlo's serene demeanor is a tribute to this way of life, and he pleasantly greets visitors, happy to share his knowledge.

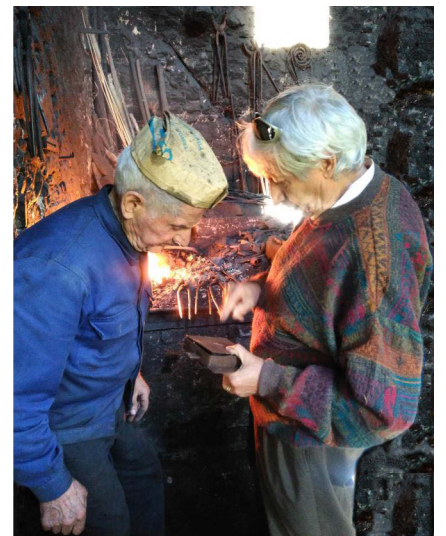


This is not a museum, though it could be. The chestnut museum down the road offers exhibits on rural living and traditional skills, so with a bit of imagination this could become an extension. Maybe there is a younger person who would like to learn from Sig. Galgani? Not in Italy, a local Italian man tells me. Yet there are people in the hills who appreciate tradition; for example the shepherd is still a viable occupation. Or perhaps someone from abroad would want to learn these skills? I imagine it might require a special kind of person, with patience and a poetic soul.

— by Norma Jean Bishop
See article The Blacksmith in Pescaglia, published in March 2007 **Grapevine**.



1. hammer & anvil
2. blacksmith shop
3. Carlo Galgani, *fabbro*
4. still life in light & dark
5. forging a hoe
6. a history lesson for the author
7. Carlo advises Silvano on an old lock



— photos by Maria Tsaousidou