

Boston University Italian Alumni of the  
Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine  
(BUIA) held their 9th Annual Closed Meeting  
at Dental Tray System International in the  
picturesque town of Predappio in June 2008.





# THE Italian Alumni Association



*Impressions* met with the Board of Directors for BUIA during the meeting: outgoing President Paolo Vigolo PROS 90; incoming President Emanuele Risciotti PROS 92; and Tommaso Cantoni PROS 93, MScD PROS 95; Luca Landi PERIO 97; Rosario Prisco PROS 95; Diego Capri PERIO 01; and Ugo Macca PROS 92.

*Impressions* spoke with these BUIA leaders as well as some of the other twenty or so alumni attending the annual meeting. Many alums noted that GSDM alumni who went on to become top specialists in Italy personally inspired them to choose GSDM for their postdoctoral training. The School has a reputation throughout Europe for excellence and superior clinical training.

Alums discussed the initial struggles of being in a foreign country and adjusting to using a second language full time, especially in the context of dental school; most quickly followed with tales of how warm and caring the faculty, staff, and their fellow students had been. Board member Rosario Prisco recounts, "The caring, family-like environment at the School was directly linked to my success, both as a student and now as a practitioner." Many also spoke of the tolerance for different cultures and points of view they developed while students within the very diverse student population at GSDM.

Faculty members were specifically mentioned as having had tremendous impact on the studies and careers of the alums, among them Drs. Sinibaldi, Cassis, Morgano, Riis, Van Dyke, Setayesh, Kalpidis—the list was impressively long!

Luca Landi paid tribute to Dr. Hyman Smukler, Professor Emeritus in charge of the Periodontology Department at the time, "who I considered my second father while I was in Boston. He was the strongest clinician I have ever seen and the toughest teacher I have ever met. I owe him a lot

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as a periodontist." Luca echoes the alumni who noted the family atmosphere they experienced at

GSDM: "I remember he used to have seminars with the residents on Saturday morning in his house. His wife Doreen used to feed us cakes and beverages and at the end of the seminar there was the football game to watch on TV! I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to have him as a teacher and to evermore hold a great friendship with him."

Along with Luca Landi, outgoing BUJA President Paolo Vigolo was among the founding members of BUJA; he spoke about its origins. "When we founded the BUJA in 1999 we wanted to create a nonprofit cultural organization gathering all dentists around Italy who had completed an education program at the Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine. This association had the main goal of developing and reinforcing social, cultural, and scientific ties between alumni and the Bostonian Alma Mater."

In the beginning, twelve to fifteen people would meet in their homes and offices; it was more like a group of friends that expanded and invited others to join and present cases. It became more formalized and in 1999 bylaws were created and BUJA officially began, based on friendship and a desire to connect with other BU alumni in Italy. Dr. Vigolo was able to reach out to the alumni from the 1980s and says that Dr. Luca Landi was instrumental in involving the alumni from the 90s. Vigolo reports that in addition to the official meetings, some members also meet two or three times a year informally to share cases and reconnect.

Almost every alumnus who spoke to *Impressions* reported remembering "grand rounds" on Friday mornings as being an extremely valuable experience and a passionate exchange of ideas. BUJA uses this model at their meetings, which can, at times, lead to heated exchange and debate. Most presenters know to expect this and value their colleagues' input but it was reported that, in the past, some guest visitors have been taken aback by the occasional brutal honesty evident at BUJA meetings.

## Board of Directors for BUJA

EMANUELE RISCIOTTI



PAOLO VIGOLO



TOMMASO CANTONI





Many attendees feel that these meetings offered camaraderie and an opportunity to continue studying with their peers at the level they did at GSDM.

In Italy, orthodontics and oral surgery are the only formal postdoctoral specialty training programs offered; additional training is done in private courses and through apprenticeships. While this was a common reason many cited for coming to GSDM in the first place, it was also noted as partly why BUIA came into being. Board member Ugo Macca noted that "All BU grads are committed to high-quality dentistry and this may not always be the case for Italian practitioners. We wanted to ensure that we could continue to benefit from superior clinical exchange and discussion and, to do so, we knew we would have to organize our own scientific meetings." BUIA meeting presentations are

intense and substantive, whereas other meetings tend to emphasize the production value of the presentations rather than the subject matter itself. "At our meetings, we are very demanding of one another," laughs fellow board member Tommaso Cantoni. Many attendees feel that these meetings offered camaraderie and an opportunity to continue studying with their peers at the level they did at GSDM.

Initially, BUIA meetings were closed to all but alumni, but they've recently begun to allow each alumnus to invite one or two colleagues to participate—reportedly, these invitations have become highly coveted around Italy! Each year, the cultural secretary decides on speakers, half

UCA LANDI



UGO MACCA



ROSARIO PRISCO



DIEGO CAPRI



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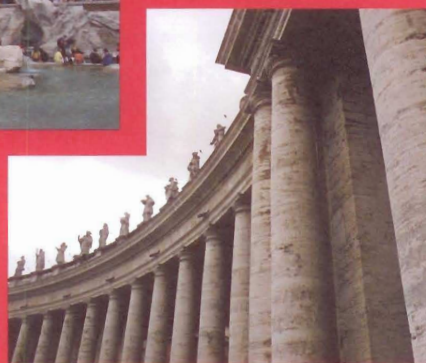
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Trevi Fountain, Rome v



v Vatican, Rome



of whom are usually GSDM alumni. This year, Dr. Dan Nathanson was invited to lecture at the meeting and was met with genuine enthusiasm and appreciation. "BUA is always looking to link with GSDM in any way possible and we were delighted that Dr. Nathanson accepted our invitation and hope to continue to include GSDM faculty in our meetings," said incoming Board President Emanuele Risciotti. Other connections were discussed as many alumni also expressed interest in returning to Boston to lecture at the School and others were interested in helping to actively recruit Italians to attend GSDM. Through their relationships and the GSDM Alumni Relations Office, members strive to maintain ties with current Italian students and encourage them to join BUA upon completing their studies in Boston.

Universally, the BUA members in attendance spoke about how much they value the superior clinical training they received at GSDM and feel it is a great advantage to their practices and, importantly, to their patients today. They spoke of the holistic and clinical approach to patient care that can be rare in their country and of their belief that patients are aware of the unique training and approach of BU-trained dentists. This leads to both higher quality care for the patient and more successful dental





Dr. Dan Nathanson  
and the assembled  
BUIA members  
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practices for BU alumni in Italy, which is reportedly a very competitive market.

BU and GSDM are held in very high regard in Italy. Vigolo estimates that there are only 175 other United States-trained, postdoctoral graduates in that country, and 42 of them are from GSDM. He and others reflect that this is a clear indication of BU's superlative reputation in Italy, Europe, and the world. BUIA members are also getting more involved in Italian societies in leadership roles, further spreading the word about the quality of a BU education and the value of that investment.

Over the past nine years, BUIA members have worked hard to bring people together to create a friendly yet highly professional environment. They now have six active members of the main Italian scientific society and a total of six BUIA members are American Board Certified; outgoing President Dr. Paolo Vigolo has been elected to the Board of the Italian Academy

of Prosthetic Dentistry. Most members are involved in teaching either in private or at the University level; many of them lecture regularly in national and international meetings and are respected internationally in their fields. BUIA members have also published more than 40 original articles in peer-reviewed journals, yet another testament to the scientific vitality present in this group.

Of the 42 Italian GSDM alumni, 25 are active members of BUIA and regularly attend meetings and events. Many have returned to Boston for a variety of reasons since graduating and always enjoy visiting campus, lecturing, and seeing fellow alumni when possible. Their enthusiasm and dedication to their Alma Mater and one another are truly inspiring. Please visit the BUIA website at [www.buia.org](http://www.buia.org) and remember, each and every speaker at the meeting extolled the value of extended connections with fellow GSDM alumni, so be sure to check in on them the next time you find yourself in Italy! ●