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# italy

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## We visit a barber's in deepest Campania which is frozen in time



EVERYONE KNOWS PAESTUM but not everyone knows that the famous archaeological site forms part of an even older *comune*: Capaccio. The most ancient part of the town is to be found perched on a hill 800 metres high, seven kilometres from Paestum. Here, well off the normal tourist beat, there are fascinating features which make the town an interesting place as, even today, it preserves its heritage of buildings and crafts.

One of its secrets is the 'Salone Rizzo', the oldest barber's shop in Campania which started out at the beginning of the 19th century. Today the building is owned by the D'Alessio, a local noble family. The D'Alessio rented the property to Antonio Rizzo, who was born in Capaccio 1878 and was nicknamed 'Nduccio' (a diminutive

of Antonio). Nduccio was a small man, short and slim and with grand moustaches typical of the age. He was rather retiring but at the same time ambitious.

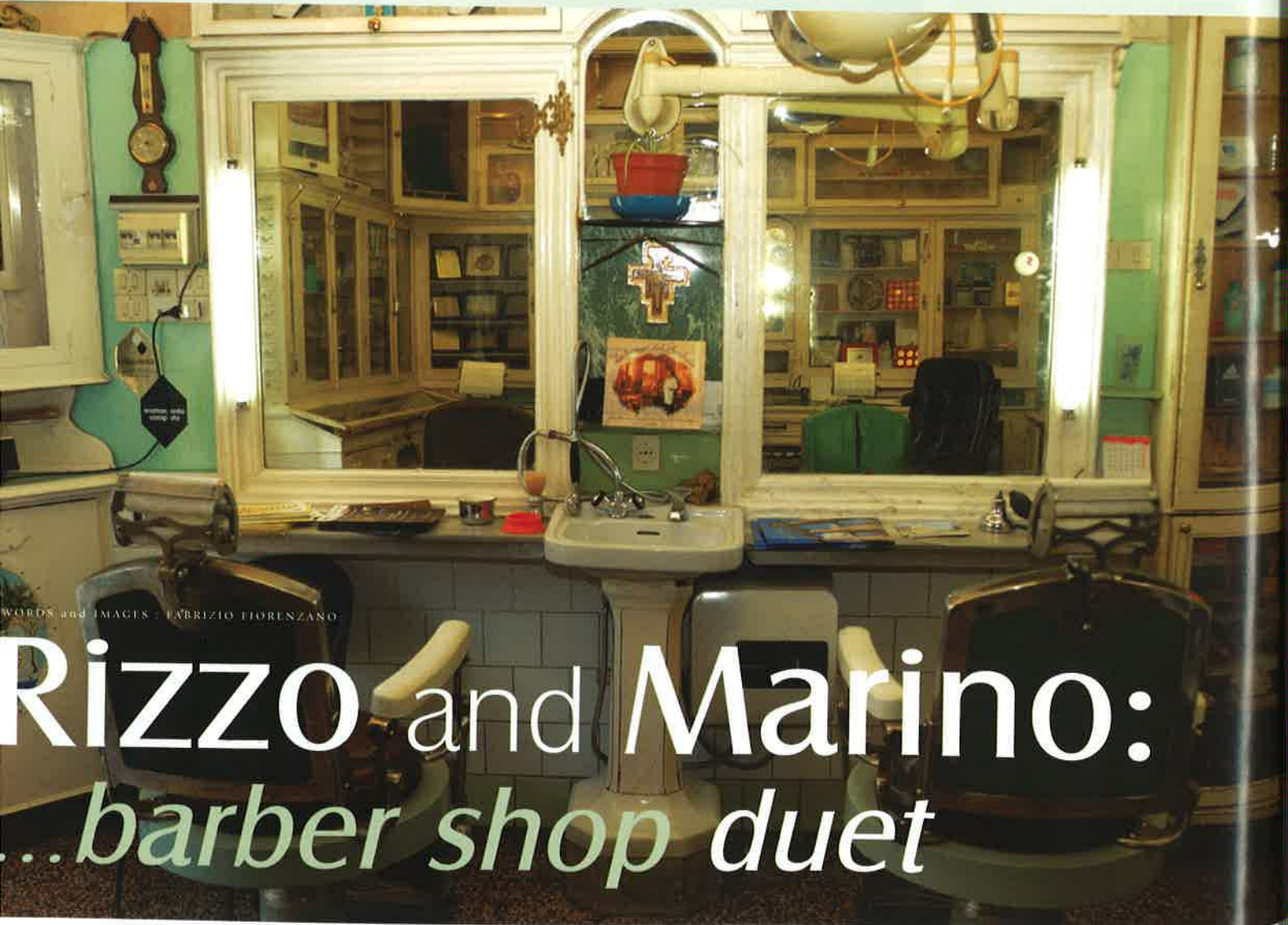
### HANDING ON A HERITAGE

He married twice but had no children and since his greatest desire was to see his work continued after his death, he decided to leave the business to Giuseppe Marino, who had helped him in the last days of his life. Antonio Rizzo died in 1951 and his wife, in response to her husband's wishes, left everything to Marino, who from that time took over the reins of the business.

He is the one to talk to if you want to learn the secrets behind the barber's shop. He has devoted his life to the business which is now

a local institution. He exudes pride and enthusiasm as he tells the story of the shop, showing off objects which have remained unchanged over decades. It is like visiting a small museum where everything is as it was 100 years ago.

He tells how Antonio Rizzo, with his taste for the aesthetic, took many years to fit out the shop, with the help of local craftsmen. Even today, Giuseppe says, it is not clear how some of the objects managed to remain intact over the years, for example the stylish



WORDS and IMAGES: FABRIZIO FIORENZANO

# RIZZO and Marino: ...barber shop duet




*...elegant and functional cupboards, showcases and shelves are filled with examples of the barber's trade*



example of his egocentricity, he hung a photograph of himself in a corner and begged Antonio Marino never to take it down, even after his death. There is also an interesting visitor's book, in which customers are invited to leave a personal message after visiting this tiny museum.

The Rizzo salon is so well loved that in 1996, when Giuseppe Marino retired after 45 years, the question arose as to who should take over the business. But it was Marino himself who carried on, setting up a cultural association of which he is chairman and which is supported by some friends and by the Capaccio town council. The association covers the cost of the rent in exchange for the business being preserved as a barber's shop and also as a tourist attraction.

Giuseppe Marino has spent more than 60 years in the shop and is the icon of a culture which belongs to the best traditions of the professions of southern Italy, enriching the social history of Capaccio.

There are people who, through sentiment and doggedness, can pass on to future generations the concept of the need for continuity, so that traditions are not lost. In this way the most important elements of the heritage of this little hilltop town are preserved, with all the features of its 19th-century past. We profoundly hope that Giuseppe Marino will one day take his place in this hierarchy. 

fitments in white-painted wood which surround the whole shop, with elegant and functional cupboards, showcases and shelves filled with examples of the barber's trade.

Rizzo was so small that the door leading into his august emporium, made to measure, is only 160 cm high and a little more than 40 cm wide. Nowadays, no entrance door and no premises would be so small. It makes one realise how, over the years, man's physical characteristics have changed.

#### A PROBLEM SOLVED

Antonio Rizzo also revealed himself as an master at making impromptu decisions. In the shop there is a mirror which, in the early years of the 20th century, was involved in an accident which resulted in it being cracked from top to bottom. Instead of replacing it, Nduccio took a paintbrush and drew a long-stemmed flower with large petals the full length of the crack, thus proving himself to be a man with a fine creative streak. Under Marino's management, the mirror suffered another crack but this time was left as it was.

The shop also contains a dozen numbered drawers which hold the personal implements belonging to wealthier customers: brushes, razors, scissors, etc. Period implements are contained in a showcase and are all in excellent condition.

In 1907, to complement the beauty of the establishment, Baron Ferdinando Bellelli

presented Nduccio with an imposing statue of Venus bathing which was transferred from the baronial palace in via Verdi to the barber's shop, where it remains to this day.

#### DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

One day Rizzo, in a fit of egotism, had a family crest drawn up. In reality, his family had no coat of arms but he decided to invent one and, under his guidance, a craftsman created one. It consisted of a crown, a laurel leaf, an oak leaf, a shield, a hedge hog (*riccio*) to recall the name Rizzo, and an eagle. As a further

