



PRESS RELEASE

Cynara Festival, the civilization of the artichoke between present and future

Record attendance for April 25th

It was the most attended edition in Cerda's history. The Artichoke was celebrated with a feast of taste never so numerous. Mayor Salvatore Geraci: "This territory deserves to grow and become a genuine little capital of Taste. The message launched has achieved its goals: great popular participation and raising the quality of Cerda's identity contents, starting from the producers' supply chain. This is our commitment." Giusina Battaglia: "I am in Cerda because roots are everything. Proud to represent the desire for the future."

Cerda, April 25, 2024 - A packed square applauded **Giusi Battaglia**, godmother of the **Cynara Festival**, emphasizing the television personality's connection to the town of **Cerda**, where she spent her childhood. On stage, crowded with people, she, **Mayor Salvatore Geraci**, **artistic director Francesco Cappadonia**, and **Salvo La Rosa** kicked off the **42nd Artichoke Festival**, never so crowded with people. And it was to the people that the mayor addressed with a heartfelt welcome speech.

*"Since '82 the citizens of Cerda have opened their city to guests with warmth and genuine friendship. – declares **Salvatore Geraci** – This tradition, with deep roots, tells of joy, popular participation, reflection. Welcome to all of you on this festive day, a national celebration, that of Liberation. Those values are present today and they teach us to move beyond rhetoric to fully experience them. That regained Freedom, on April 25th, '45, continues to act and points us towards new goals of sociality, work, peace, especially peace".*

Drums heralded the beginning of the Festival, preceding the solemn arrival of the **Bersaglieri** band, which along Via Roma performed the beloved military corps' music. Following was the **flag-raising** ceremony entrusted to **Aurora Lanza, Naval Officer**, while the national anthem was played; an institutional moment of value, shared by all present, which preceded the mayor's welcome greeting and the godmother's speech with the **Brigade** of the **Ladies Cerdesi**.

"I return to my homeland, I embrace my roots. It is a great emotion for me to share this day of celebration and joy with all of you", said moved Giusi Battaglia, recalling that often Cerda's traditions are well present in her recipes. Acclaimed as a star, Giusi Battaglia and Salvo La Rosa, the event's host, summoned to the stage the charming ladies of the Brigade, reserving

for them the place of honor they deserve on this day. Gratitude and recognition were loudly expressed by the entire municipal administration and the authorities present on stage.

Not just a simple culinary feast around the spiny artichoke of Cerda, but a real national attraction brand under the spotlight of the media and the press. This is the **Cynara Festival** which from **April 20th** (the day of its inauguration) until today, has already recorded a remarkable success with the public, coming from all over Sicily. The goal is to leave an indelible mark beyond borders, relaunching this timeless cultivation.

Packed with meetings and initiatives until Sunday, April 28th, every day the event is an opportunity to rediscover **Cerda**, a community deeply linked to the symbol product of local agriculture, cultivated by around **two hundred producers** for a turnover slightly exceeding **20 million euros**. A production always synonymous with quality that, like many other realities, finds itself dealing with drought and abnormal heat.

The protection of a tradition comes from the use of cutting-edge tools and of course from its knowledge; the same knowledge that companies and farmers starting from **Wednesday, April 24th**, tried to convey to a group of journalists who went directly into the field, to experience firsthand the authenticity of this artichoke in the lands of **Himera**. Space therefore for the most widespread cultivar of an area of over **700 hectares cultivated** with artichokes, ranging from the medium hills bordering the **Madonie** to the **northeast coast of Palermo**.

A strongly identifying vegetable, the daily bread of generations of families entirely devoted to this cultivation, which not surprisingly rhymes with culture. A coexistence of knowledge and flavors that the hands of the **Brigade of the Ladies Cerdesi** have brought back to life through tasty and genuine recipes. Omelets, "intuppati" artichokes, caponatas, stuffed rolls, penne with cream: these and other dishes with them like **Clotilde Lo Verde, Pina Geraci, Ninetta Virga, Lina Parasiliti, Rosalia Bartolotta, Tiziana Cirà**, members of Fiordaliso circle, will be spokespersons for a gastronomic heritage of substance.

The praise to the mainstay of an entire local economy that today more than ever looks confidently towards the future, focusing on the enhancement of productive specificities and the **agri-food biodiversity of the island**; the hope, therefore, of verticalizing a complicit supply chain with its roots, ready to dare among new generations and unprecedented synergies with the tourism and catering industry in an itinerary between Palermo and Cefalù.

Also, a late afternoon talk was dedicated to the artichoke civilization, in the **Council Hall of Via Roma**, which saw together the **Mayor, Salvatore Geraci**, the **president of the DOC Monreale, Mario Di Lorenzo**, and **Giusina Battaglia**, journalist and Cerda native, godmother of the 42nd edition of the Cerda Artichoke Festival, retying the threads of this administration's strong commitment, with the Cynara Festival, to enhance this product, transmit its identity, make it known to the world. To Giusina Battaglia, in fact, the honor of baptizing the Cynara Festival with the **award** included in the Cynara Festival. **Sofia Abbinanti**, winner of the debutante ball of Verbania 2023, **Salvatore Riolo**, flying jeweler, **Daniela Cappadonia**, teacher and marathon runner, **Amedeo Passafiume**, ornithologist, and **Aurora Lanza**, Naval Officer, are the Cerda excellences, appreciated within and outside Sicily, and to whom the precious recognition went.

The day of April 24th ended with the emotions of lights and colors that recalled *The ancient myth of the Nymph Cynara transformed into an artichoke by the God Zeus*, the **video mapping** dedicated to the deity Cynara and projected in the spaces of the Villa Comunale. According to Greek mythology, *Cynara* was the name of a sweet deity, with green and purple eyes, and long ash-colored hair. The Sovereign of Olympus was madly in love with her, but at the umpteenth refusal, he got so angry that he transformed her into the famous vegetable.

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