

## 2017 : 25 years of Italian astronauts in space

In 2017 we commemorated "25 years of Italian astronauts in space".



The first event was celebrated in **Villarbasse** (Turin), where ASITAF is based.

In the eighteenth century Palazzo Mistrot an exhibition divided into three strands was prepared: 1. historical-**philatelic exhibition**, 2. Models and mockups of Italian spacecraft (with the collaboration of Thales Alenia Spazio), 3. **Space food** (with the collaboration of Altec and Argotec).

Guest of honor at the event was **Umberto Guidoni**, who had been Franco Malerba's back-up in 1992.

Guidoni opened the exhibition in

the presence of the Mayor, and of Nino Boeti, the Vice President of the Piedmont Region. A commemorative postcard and a special cancellation were available for the event.

The exhibition remained open to the general public for 15 days, and was visited by many school groups.



*The exhibition in the hall of Palazzo Mistrot (photo © Paolo Drago and Gianfranco Gabbatore)*

In the afternoon Guidoni entertained the public, in a crowded meeting room, with his lecture “A flight beyond the sky” speaking about his experience during his two flights into space.



*Umberto Guidoni during the conference "A flight beyond the sky". (photo © Marco Scarzello)*





From June 2-4 we celebrated the 25th anniversary again during the 1st **Flight Festival** held in **Milan**, in the ex-Area Expo, where AS.IT.AF. was in charge of the "Space" section, and arranged 4 different exhibitions with the help of many companies, including Thales Alenia Space, Altec and Argotec, and organized a successful conference with prestigious speakers, including the Guest of Honor **Franco Malerba**, the scientist **Amalia Ercoli Finzi**, known as "the mom of Rosetta", and the Italian-American artist **Emanuele Viscuso** who in 2007, then Delegate of the Italian Academy of Cuisine in Florida, convinced NASA to organize the first historic *Space Convivium of Italian Cuisine*, which marked a milestone in space nutrition.



*The speakers during the conference.  
From the left:  
Amalia Finzi,  
Frank Malerba,  
Umberto Cavallaro,  
Emanuele Viscuso,  
Marco Majrani.  
(Photo Vaccari)*



*Nicola Fiasconaro (on the right in the first photo) owner of FIASCONARO Srl (who in 2007, thanks to Viscuso, supplied the sweets for the historic *Space Convivium*) offered to all 500 attendees a faithful reproduction of the "Ricci di Mandorla" sent to the ISS 10 years earlier (photo in the center)*





*Franco Malerba with Nicola Fiasconaro and Emanuele Viscuso (left), Prof. Amalia Finzi (center), Umberto Cavallaro (right) © Valfro Minoretti*

The event, which attracted no less than 10,000 visitors, exhibited in the "Space" section the 1:1 mockup of the **Tethered Satellite** (made available by Thales Alenia Spazio) launched by the Shuttle STS-46 when Franco Malerba flew as *Mission Specialist*. Alongside, an exhibition of about 80 samples of **Space Food** illustrated the first historic banquet of Italian Cuisine in Space, which marked a milestone in space nutrition.



The thirty panels of **WOMEN IN SPACE** and **ITALY IN SPACE** were exhibited in the atrium of the EXPO building.





At the end of July AS.IT.AF. organized, once again, the "space section" of the 5th edition *Scienza Fantastica 2017 in Spotorno* (*Fantastic Science in Spotorno*). Guest of honor was **Umberto Guidoni**.



The renewed and enriched **Space Food** exhibition was a great success that attracted interested and curious public. About ninety samples were presented, representing mainly bonus food produced for Italian and European astronauts, and also some samples of Japanese bonus space food.



The exhibition was guided by a set of **explanatory panels** that, in our style, illustrated the evolution of the "space food" in the last sixty years, starting from the first "Soviet food experiments" of the early 1960s up to the "space food of the future", when during interplanetary travels space explorers will build their own lunch by using the 3-D printer

*ASITAF Member Andrea Vercesi, visiting the Exhibition*





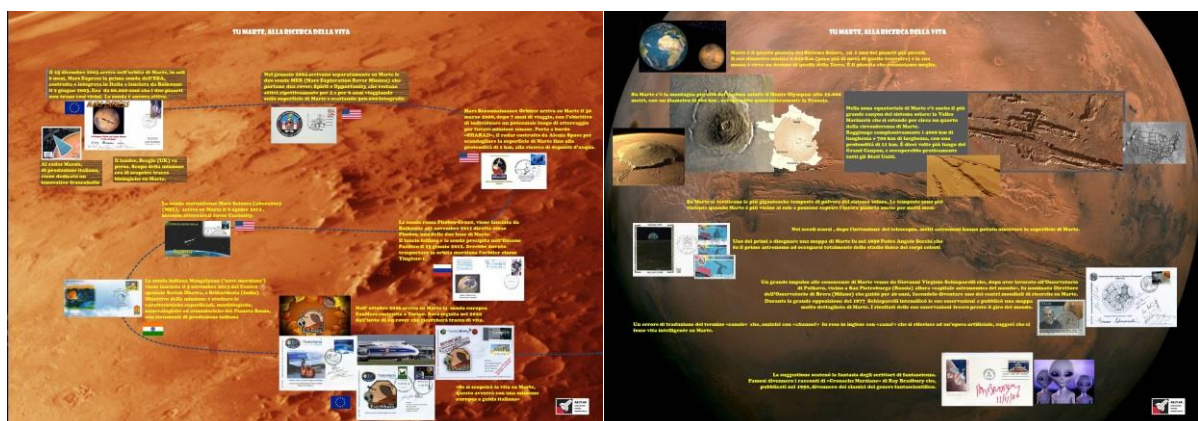
*The official card of SCIENZA FANTASTICA 2016, by the artist Roberto Giannotti*

Topic of the year of SCIENZA FANTASTICA 2017 was the exploration of Mars.

Once again our member Annibale Rega patiently set up the Mars area – with the Schiaparelli and rover models, and the Mars terrain made available by Thales Alenia Space (as already presented in March in Villarbasse and then in Milan, in June, during the *Flight Festival*).



A new series of panels accompanied the exhibition area, summarizing the story of the **exploration of the Red Planet** over the last 50 years.





Simultaneously ASITAF also contributed to the preparation of the *Space Festival* that in the same days at the end of July celebrated the 25th anniversary of **Franco Malerba's** space flight in **Busalla** (Genoa), his hometown. The ASITAF panels were exhibited for over a month in the magnificent Villa Borzino headquarters.



*The ASITAF panels on show at Villa Borzino in Busalla*



While we were celebrating the event in two different locations simultaneously (that is in Busalla and Spotorno), on July 31. It was the Launch day of the Space Shuttle mission STS-46 which in 1992 led Franco Malerba to become the first Italian astronaut in space. Thanks to an ASITAF initiative, the anniversary was also commemorated on the **International Space Station**, where **Paolo Nespoli** had just arrived and promptly proceeded to have the covers stamped and postmarked with official on board cancels.

A special set of the flown covers, without postage stamp but with the rare personal board seal of Paolo Nespoli's VITA mission was reserved for ASITAF Members. The cover was presented in a refined folder designed, once again, by Alec Bartos,



*Massimo Trenta, Umberto Cavallaro and Pietro Della Maddalena deliver to Paolo Nespoli the folder with flown cover*



At the beginning of September we were invited by the **USFI** (Unione Stampa Filatelica Italiana) to speak – during the annual congress that was held that year in **Genoa** – about our experiences of "innovative exhibition" and panels prepared for the general public and schools.

Umberto Cavallaro's report "Space philately goes to the square" triggered keen interest and stimulated many questions.

*Cavallaro during his speech at the USFI meeting  
(Foto USFI)*

In October ASITAF participated with its own booth at **ItaliaFil** which this year was held in **Genoa**. Among the competing classes was astrophilately, with **10 exhibits**, prepared by Barberis, Della Maddalena, Bussolino, Matteassi, Mauri, Pantanella, Rega (2), Toniaccini and Trenta.

At the end of the year the English version of the book "DONNE NELLO SPAZIO": "**WOMEN SPACEFARERS**" was released in New York. It was first published in Italian by Mursia in 2015, with ASITAF's and Thales Alenia Space's sponsorship.

The essay traces the history of women's participation in space flight.

The original version was expanded and enriched with interviews made in the meantime. The book was welcomed on the international scene - where in over 10 years no book was issued on this topic - and greeted as a "reference book", also appreciated for its original and discreet "philatelic slant".

