

GAETA & FORMIA'S



Cathedral of Saint Erasmo in Old Gaeta

The festa di **Sant'Erasmus e Marciano** (Feast of Saints Erasmus and Marciano) is always in early June. This celebration of Gaeta and Formia's patron saints lasts for three days as the waterfront near the LaSalle's pier in Old Gaeta is transformed by carnival rides, music, food, and games. Processions, including the parade of the statues of SS. Erasmo and Marciano from the Cathedral of St. Erasmo to City Hall, special masses in honor of the saints, and a traditional offering of candles and flowers are part of the ceremonies. Music and fireworks traditionally close the festival.

A bit of history: St. Erasmus was martyred in Formia. After fleeing Syria in 303 A.D., he was persecuted by Roman pagans who attempted to convert him from Christianity. Erasmus refused and was killed during an anti-Christian purge by the Emperor Diocletian. He was buried in Formia and revered as a saint by believers. How did he make the move up the coast to Gaeta? When the Saracens raided Italy from their North African home base, they set up camp near Cleopatra's Bridge. Nearby communities were raided

PATRON
SAINTS

By ICR Specialist Marisa Di Nitto

and pillaged by the Muslim pirates – Scauri, Minturno, Formia and Gaeta were attacked. Because Gaeta was a fortress, many people fled within its walls for protection, bringing with them Erasmus' body and relics. Here he stayed from 842 A.D. to the present. In 1279 the Cathedral of St. Erasmus was constructed to house his remains.

Saint Erasmus is a fitting patron saint for Gaeta, as he is also the patron saint of sailors. Another name for him is Saint Elmo. The eerie glow sailors sometimes see running along the surfaces of their ships before storms is called Saint Elmo's fire. It shows his protection and guardianship during bad weather.

San Marciano was a disciple of Saint Peter, who sent him to Sicily to spread the word of Christ. He converted many people before he was killed by Romans. San Marciano was canonized and his remains preserved. In 827 A.D., sailors from the port of Gaeta brought his relics back here for protection. Though their times and deeds are part of the deep past, Gaeta provides a vibrantly modern celebration in honor of its patron saints.

P.S. Formia celebrates another patron saint, San Giovanni, on 24 June. They put on a terrific fireworks show. Don's miss it! ☀

EVENTS IN LATINA PROVINCE JUNE 2003

Note: Events may be subject to change call the Fleet & Family Support Center to verify any variations. Events may consist of outdoor music, games, fireworks, crowds, noise festive atmosphere

Corpus Domini (or Corpus Christi). The most unique and beautiful Manifestation with carpets of flowers in main street.
 ITRI (Latina) -60 days after Easter

Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic -Mon, 2nd

Feast of Saint ERASMO Patron Saint of GAETA and FORMIA - Mon, 2nd

NINFA, the world famous garden

south of Rome OASI DI NINFA (Latina)
 First entire weekend and third Sunday from 9:00 to noon and 2:30 pm to 6:00 pm

Strawberries and Sword-Lily flower festivals. NEMI (Rome)- First Sunday

Cherry Festival about 20 miles northeast of Rome. PALOMBARA SABINA (Rome)- Sat, 7th

Flowers on the balcony and candles in the winecellars. In the Evening the wineries offer tastings of their wine. Vetralla (Viterbo)
 Second weekend of June

Gastronomic Festival Piazza Umberto I and along Corso Vittorio Emanuele II - COLLEVECCHIO (Rieti)- Last Sunday

Peach Festival MONTE SAN BIAGIO (Latina) - Mid June

Cherry Festival CELLENO (Viterbo)
 Last weekend of June

Torrita Blues Festival featuring American and Italian blues artists TORRITA DI SIENA (Rieti) - End of June

Feast of Saint Giovanni FORMIA (Latina) and Rome (Rome) - Mon, 23rd and Tues, 24th