



EXPERIENCES

CRUISES

FOOD & WINE

HOTELS & SPAS

BOOKS & GEAR

TIPS

CONTESTS

SCOOPS

# MORE TIME TO TRAVEL

INFORMING & INSPIRING TRAVELERS OVER-50

DESTINATIONS • FEATURED

## Wine Windows in Florence Enjoy A Renaissance

AUGUST 13, 2020

Search here...





#A

W  
to

For  
ca  
an  
Al

a  
COU

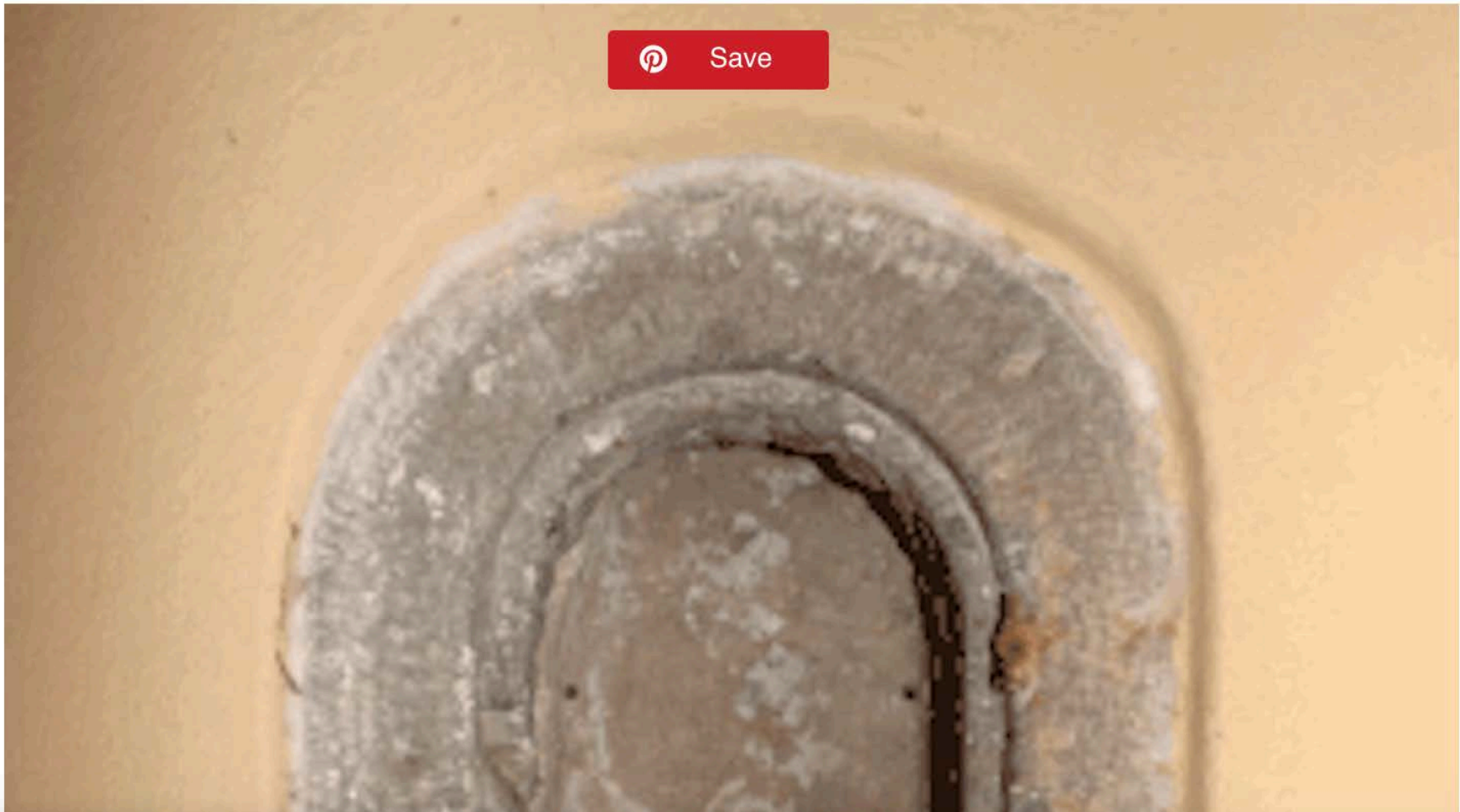
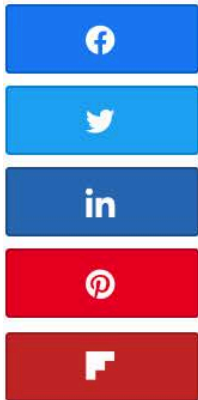
W MEDIA

IRI



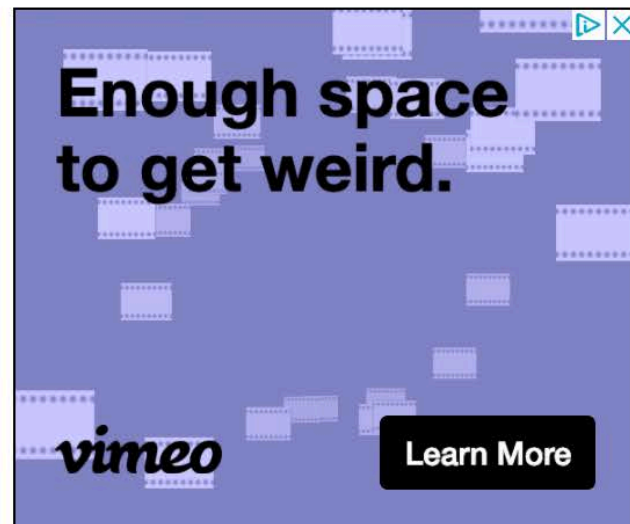
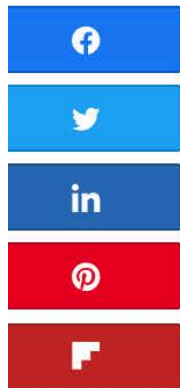
Diminutive wine windows (*buchette del vino*) chiseled out of the facades of stone buildings in Florence and elsewhere in Tuscany are experiencing a rebirth on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of the small windows (also called wine holes) actually look like miniature doors. Usually (but not always) arched and similar in size, the design of each handcrafted window is one-of-a-kind.





Ancient wine window at via degli Alfani in Florence (Credit: Associazione Buchette del Vino)



MEDIAVINE

Report this ad

## The long history of wine windows in short

As a young child, Tuscan winemaker **Bernardo Gondi** recalls watching carriages drawn by horses or oxen transporting wine from the countryside to a wine window in Florence as late as 1958. But the emergence of these windows—perhaps the first contactless, retail sales outlets—goes back



centuries.



Save

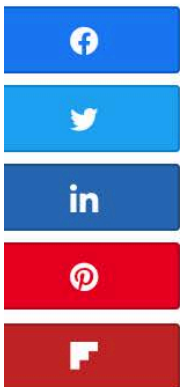


in





Wine window at Via del Giglio, one of the best preserved in Florence (Credit: Associazione Buchette del Vino)

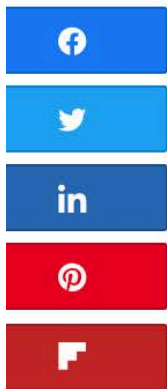


MEDIAVINE

Report this ad

*Buchette del vino* were used to prevent infection during the outbreak of bubonic plague, known as the Black Death, which swept over Italy in successive waves in the 1600s. Predominantly In Tuscany, but also in some other regions in Italy, buyers rapped on one of the *palazzos* or other nobles' houses with a wine window to signal their interest in buying some *vino*.



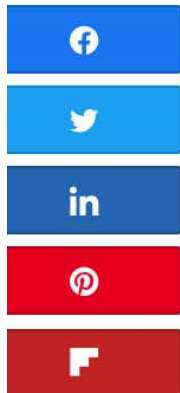


The plague of Florence in 1348 as described in Boccaccio's Decameron (Credit: Wikipedia/Wellcome)

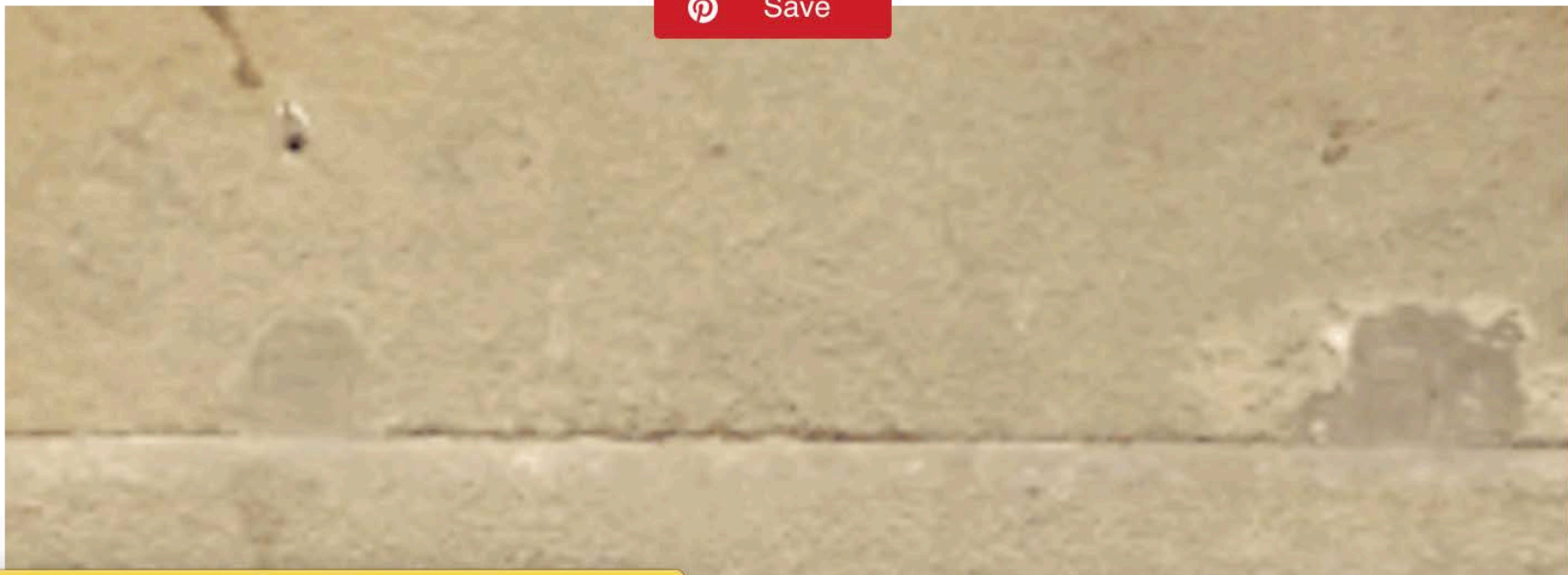
To avoid the person-to-person contact that typically occurred in taverns, the seller poured wine directly into the buyer's flask or bottle placed in the little window, and then used a metal scoop (disinfected with vinegar between transactions) to collect payment. A recently found manuscript,



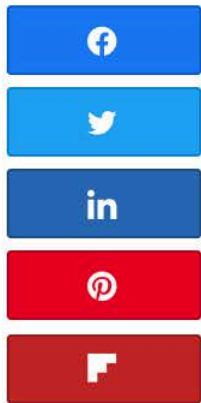
dating back to 1634, documents their existence.



## Preserving history and tradition





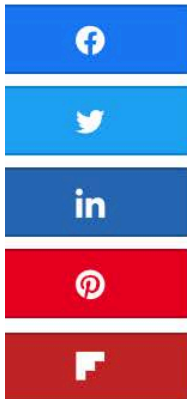


The wine window at Via de Ginori is a kneeling window, placed almost at street level (Credit: Associazione Buchette del Vino)

Matteo Faglia, a Florentine who works in the field of publishing, noticed that over time, the rich historical and architectural traditions of the windows were fading into obscurity. With wines being bottled and sold in shops, the windows all but disappeared.

Four years ago, with two friends—Diletta Corsini, an art historian and Mary Forrest, an American author and editor living in Florence—Faglia decided to create an organization, *Associazione Culturale Buchette del Vino*, to promote the “knowledge, enhancement and protection” of these characteristic wine holes. The group has grown to 50 members.

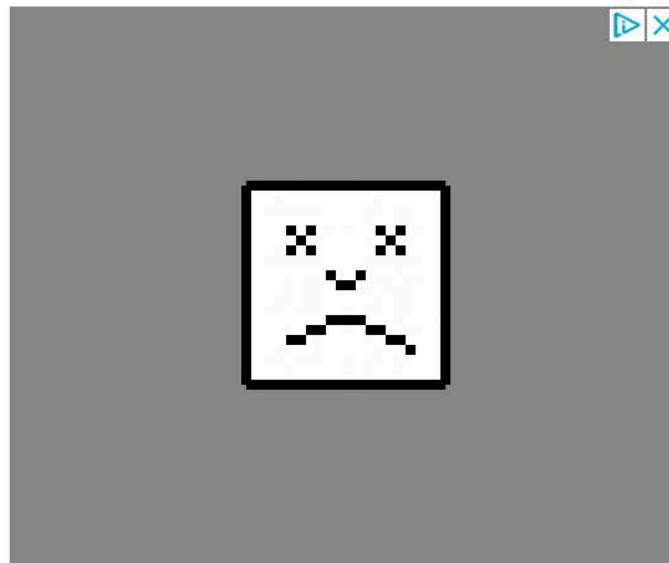
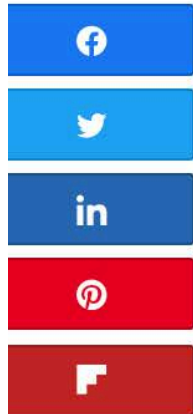
“We try to inform all people about them [*the buchette del vino*]— not just in Italy—and sensitize them about their importance and preservation,” says Faglia in an email interview. To date, the group has discovered some 250 *buchette del vino* in and around Florence. It also has created a [website](#) mapping locations and cataloguing information about their history.







Couple at a wine window as Villa Albizi in Florence (Credit: Associazione Buchette del Vino)

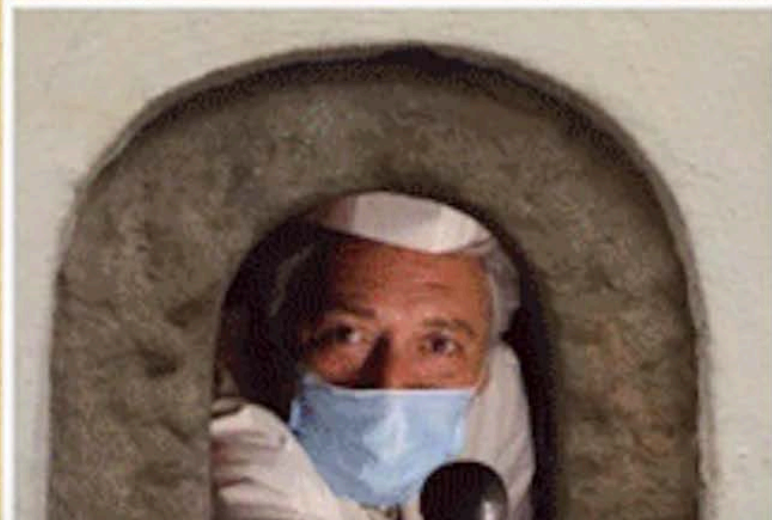
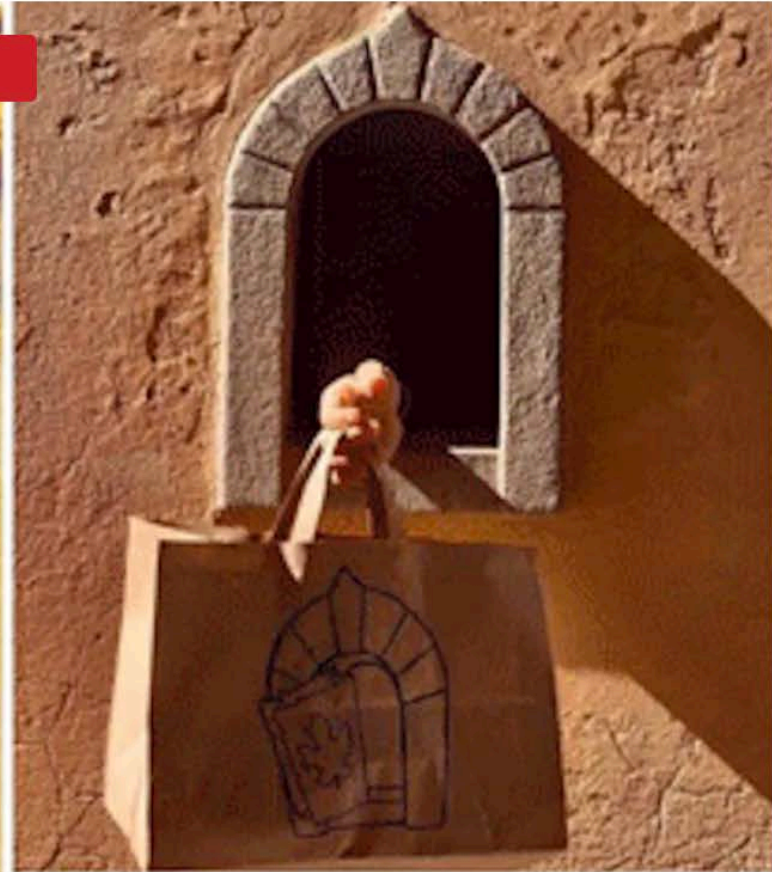
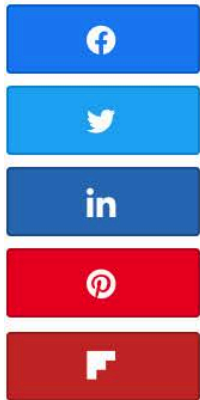


MEDIAVINE

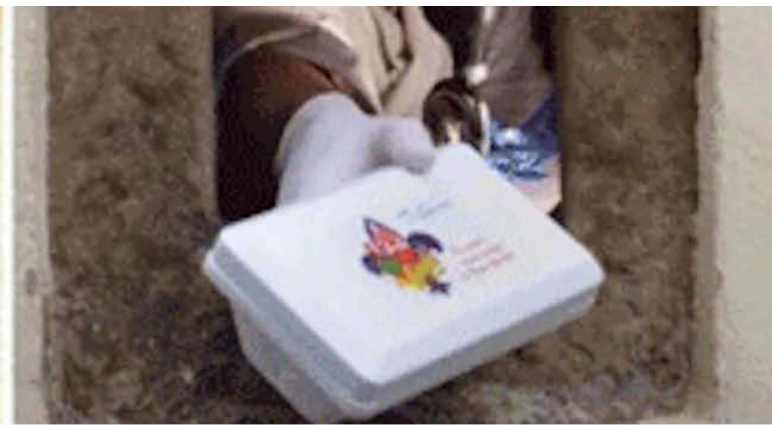
Report this ad

As new windows are identified, the group posts metal plaques nearby each one attesting to its authenticity, and hoping to protect the legacy and longevity of this unique tradition. Previously, many windows were neglected, vandalized, lost to floods, converted into mailboxes, or otherwise disappeared. But even some of those are archived in old drawings and photographs.

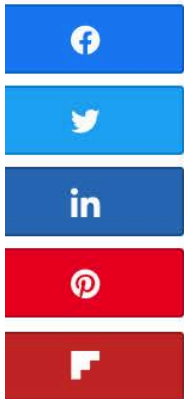
## A pandemic resurgence







Wine windows during the coronavirus pandemic (Credit: Associazione Buchette del Vino)



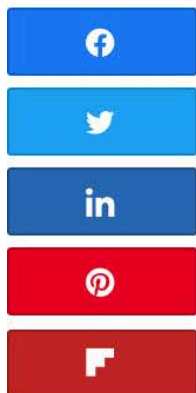
Wine and food are deeply woven into the fabric and culture of Italian life.

A sign of the changed times, a spate of wine windows have reopened in Florence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, entrepreneurial locals are once again offering socially-distanced, contactless sales at a time when the public is worried about the spread of infection. This time, expanded menus often not only wine—but also gelato, panini, and cappuccino.



**osteriadellebrache\_firenze**  
Osteria Delle Brache

[Visualizza profilo](#)





*All photo credits: Associazione Buchette del Vino (unless otherwise noted)*

Map showing the concentration of Bucette del Vino in the historical center of Florence (Credit: Associazione Buchette del Vino)

