# The Antioch College Chorus Reunion in La Morra, Italy: Day 3: Return to La Morra

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The morning of the final day of our tour, we clamored onto our bus in Alba — with Silvia, our erudite and passionate tour guide, and Domenico, our driver, and his built-in espresso machine!

Domenico drove us toward the village of Serralunga d'Alba, one of the eleven wine villages of Barolo. Silvia named the specific vineyards we were passing and commented on the nature of the wines they produced.

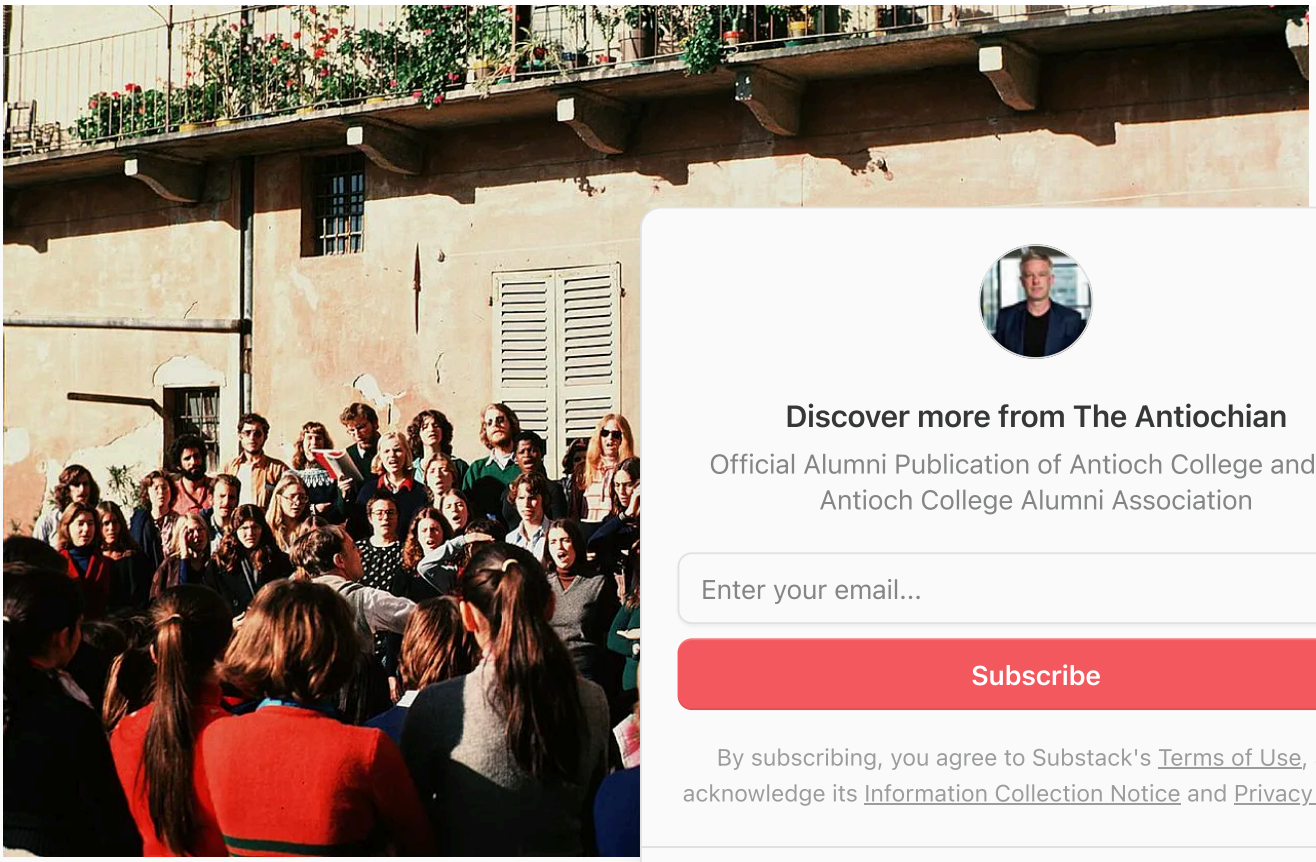
In Serralunga, we toured the Massolino family winery, making Barolo since 1896. We were led through the cellars, with their casks taller than us, and past clay amphorae, no different than those used by the ancient Greeks. We watched the bottling and labeling process, and ended the tour in their tasting room, where we sampled a selection of Langhe Nebbiolo and Barolo.



Touring the Massolino Winery in the small hillside village of Serralunga d'Alba. The Antioch Chorus visited countless wineries such as this one in the fall of 1975.

We then drove to La Morra, parked outside the village, and walked up into the center.

This was, for most of us, a place we had not seen since November 1975. Back then, we were fifty-six college students. There were no hotels in the village then, except for the Hotel Belvedere, which had only a couple of rooms. So John Ronsheim had arranged for townspeople to put us up for two nights. A different family took in each of us — it was like staying with warm and welcoming Italian relatives!



The 1975 Antioch Chorus sings Renaiss
a gathering of young attentive stud
autographs and taught us a sweet "Alleluia" to sing as a round.

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That first night, we sang mass at San Martino, one of La Morra's Baroque churches. Surprisingly, for a Wednesday evening, the church was full, with entire families there to hear us sing. Babies crying, mothers admonishing children, children scampering around giggling. It was like a Fellini film — so much irrepressible life spirit!

After mass, we all had dinner at the extraordinary Ristorante Belvedere in the Hotel, with a dining room perched over the valley below. On our way in, John stood at the doorway with fistfuls of white truffles we were about to eat. "Smell these, people!"

We had two wonderful meals at the Belvedere prepared by the chef/owner, GianFranco Bovio. With our meals we drank local wines representing the best vintners of the region, including the last remaining bottles of an outstanding 1971 vintage Barolo by Paolo Cordero di Montezemolo.

Back to our October 9, 2025 return to La Morra. Earlier this year, we had invited Signor Bovio's granddaughter, Elisa Boschiazzo, to join us for lunch, along with the

town historian, Armando Gambera.

Silvia led us up the narrow “main street” of La Morra to the restaurant More e Macine. We entered our dining room to find Elisa, a gorgeous 23-year-old, already there. And Armando Gambera. Accompanying him was Marialuisa Ascheri, mayor of La Morra, and a man who was the deputy mayor, along with the son of winemaker Paolo Cordero.




The Mayor of La Morra, Marialuisa Ascheri, with town historian, Armando Gambera, holding a brochure that commemorates the 1975 Antioch College Chorus visit to La Morra and the return of its alumni 50 years later..

At each place setting on our tables was a commemorative booklet. This booklet was created by Signor Gambera, who we discovered had helped John bring us to La Morra

in 1975 when he was just 26 and head of the cultural organization Pro Loco. In the booklet were photos of the chorus singing mass in San Martino, Armando and John conferring, GianFranco Bovio and his mother in the kitchen of their restaurant — and their famous crema caramello, which we all remembered to this day! He was helped in creating this beautiful gesture by the Bovio family, the Cordero family and the mayor of La Morra. This thoughtful ceremonial welcome came as a complete surprise to us. We were all stunned and very moved, some of us to tears.

We asked Armando Gambera to tell us the story of how our professor John had come to bring such a large group of students to such a small Italian village. In his telling, translated from Italian by our guide Silvia, we came to understand not just what La Morra had meant to us, but what we had meant to La Morra.

In his mind, and those of the darling school children we met and the families we stayed with, we were exotic American students who were touring the continent, performing in the grandest cathedrals ever constructed, in the most cosmopolitan cities of Europe… and yet we chose to veer off that path, to a town tourists from other countries had rarely ventured, to sing at their humble church and celebrate their food and wine.

It had never occurred to us until that moment that we left the same indelible impression on them that they left on us.

After a wonderful lunch at More e Macine, capped off by two superb magnums of 2015 Barolo generously gifted to us by the Bovio family winery, Mayor Ascheri led us to San Martino. There in the chapel we sang a bit of the Ockeghem mass we had sung there in 1975 — along with a sweet alleluia that one of us had learned from schoolchildren in La Morra during that same visit. Everyone, both Americans and Lamorresi, were very moved.

**The 1975 Antioch College European Chorus Tour alumni in the same La Morra elementary schoolyard as the archival photograph above, 50 years later.**



Back row, left to right: Jeff Treistman ’76, Michael Kerner ‘76 , Adam Haas ’77, Mark Trexler ’78, Rick Ray ’75, John Pacht ’76, Richard Robinson ’77; Front Row: Laurie White ’77, Shannon Edwards ’78, Joanna Gerngross Hediger ’79, Polly Young ’79, Sherri Roberts ’78, Roger Stigliano ’77, Susanne Johnson ‘76.

Standing in the town’s main piazza, taking commemorative group photos in front of the now shuttered Hotel Belvedere, we made a pledge with Armando and the mayor to return in five years. We hope to help celebrate the Belvedere’s reclamation into La Morra’s new cultural center, complete with its own new restaurant serving the provincial cuisine of the Langhe — as well as celebrate, as Armando put it, friendship between peoples, brotherhood, peace and high culture.

Finally it was time to board the bus back to Alba. There we said our good-byes to the wonderful Silvia and headed off to a farewell dinner at a casual restaurant in Alba.

And in the morning, it was over and we all went our separate ways — with more than a few tears discretely shed. As La Morra had rung in our memories for fifty years, our return there will ring for the rest of our lives.

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