

June 2023

Western view from Villa Riparbella, Volterra, Tuscany - June 6, 2018



ITALY A&M CLUB

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Members of the 2022 national champion Fish Drill Team, marched during the Tulane Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Mardi Gras Drill Meet.

CIAO A TUTI AND HOWDY, AGS!



The first chapter of the new year has come to a close as we find our footing with routines and rituals new and old. June will usher in warmer weather and longer days. The Corps has completed their final review and passed along the leadership batons to the next generation. For students in Aggieland, finals are over and the summer break has begun, spring graduations are completed and a new crop of now *former students* will turn their Aggie rings around to face the world.

June weather in Italy is traditionally spectacular. The tourists are just beginning to arrive but crowds are not overwhelming...yet. Beach resorts will open along with restaurants that have been closed for their long winters nap, wild flowers are abundant and spring and summer edibles are just beginning to come into season.

June is such a lovely month in Italy, it is hard to pick the best things to see and do: you can visit almost anywhere and find it attractive.

This month we will take a look at a few **places to visit in Italy**, a look back at **our clubs first Aggie Muster**, an **Aggie sports update**, along with a club members favorite **June recipe**. Read about our exceptional club members with 12 questions as we get to know one member in our **Ask an Italy Ag** (*we plan on highlighting one or more members each month*) column and a few other updates as well.

We hope you enjoy the information and let us know if there is anything you would like to see in future updates.

Thanks, Ciao and Gig'em!

Ryan '91



Club presidents shown from left are John Lovett '89 (San Jacinto County), Rufo Reyes '95 (Lake Travis), Ryan Price '91 (Italy) and Matt Ortega '13 (Bee County). These four clubs and three others received charters at the February Leadership Council Meeting. Whoop!

Morning sunrise of Albritton Bell Tower.





CINQUE TERRE

June is one of the best times of the year in Italy, a time of bright days, warmer temperatures and the first hint of summer in the air.

If you visit Cinque Terre make sure you book in advance as there is no such thing as a quiet time here! June normally brings gorgeous weather and less rain than the spring so it can get quite busy. Make the effort to find moments to yourself – on the trails (there are plenty of others besides the main trails between the villages) or on a boat in the sea.

Relax with a gelato or a glass of white wine and a plate of pasta al pesto. Or, pack a picnic of the region's *focaccia* and head to the rocky beach.

Association Leadership Council Meets, New Clubs Chartered

In February, The Association of Former Students' Leadership Council met in College Station to hear updates from the Aggie Network. The Leadership Council, composed of the Board of Directors, Past Chairs of the Board, the Sul Ross Group president, Class Agents, Area and National Representatives, Representatives at Large, Class Presidents of current students, the Student Loan Fund Trustee and Constituent Network Representatives, acts as the highest governing body of the Association.

The weekend began with a reception, celebrating both leadership Council and the six new A&M Clubs chartered across the world. The new Italy, San Jacinto County, Lake Travis and Bee County Club presidents each received their Club's charters that night, while the new Aspen, Colorado, and Triad, North Carolina, Club presidents were unable to attend but still received charters.

The next morning, the Leadership Council met to hear updates on organizational initiatives and impact from Association leadership. Attendees also heard from Dahlia Taha '23, graduate and professional student body president, as she shared her Aggie story and the impact that The Association has had on her life.

That afternoon, members of the Leadership Council heard from Association staff who offered training for the volunteers, including marketing strategies and best social media practices to reach more current and former students.

The Leadership Council will reconvene in the fall.

To learn how to get involved in the Aggie Network, visit tx.ag/Reconnect.

To contact or follow the Italy A&M Club

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Instagram: [italy_am_club](https://www.instagram.com/italy_am_club)



Volterra, Italy. You may recognize it from the Twilight movies.



ITALY A&M CLUB

MUSTER REVIEW 2023: IGNITING AGGIE SPIRIT

As an upcoming senior, recovering from the financial decision of being a study abroad student, I recount the moment that I felt the most of being an Aggie.

By: Caitlyn Porras '24

Environmental Design and Journalism Major

Villa Riparbella, Volterra Tuscany - April 21, 2017

Every Aggie knows the annual, moving event that is Muster. It is hosted in over 300 locations, with its largest congregation being at the place every Texas A&M student has once called home, College Station, Texas.

Having entered my freshman year in 2020, I felt disconnected these past 3 years from the Aggie traditions that incoming students would usually learn during the infamous New Student Conference and Howdy Week. I did not understand the excitement that came with entering a new chapter of a college student's life or of meeting the people who would grow with you as you continue furthering your education. I felt I had missed the Aggie spirit in some ways. This past semester, however, I had the privilege of experiencing my first Muster thousands of miles away from the comfort of Reed Arena. It had been the final weeks of the architecture program's study abroad in Florence, Italy when a few classmates and I were able to share a night with all generations of Aggies to remember those who fought to serve the United States and are laid to rest on Italian soil.

I remember the comforting feeling that washed over me seeing each ring that rested on the right hands of those around me while waiting for the ceremony to begin. It had been a long and adventurous 4 months for our twelve student program and while I was not ready to say goodbye to the Italian lifestyle I grew to appreciate, this found family reminded me of the pride that comes with being an Aggie. Around the large table that sat upstairs in a restaurant known for their truffle pasta, with no Aggie forgotten we practiced for several hours the tradition of "getting together, eating a little and living over the days spent at the A&M College of Texas".



Italy A&M Club First Muster – Cipolla Rossa Osteria, Florence , Italy – April 22, 2023

With Aggies who have not seen College Station in years to Aggies who still live there, the stories that were told were full of life lessons and fond memories. The endearing question, “Is that still there?” grew frequent as Old Ag’s asked the younger ones about their plans once returning back home. It warmed my heart most passing The Battalion’s latest print to the Aggies at the table who call Italy their home, as a way to softly call them back to a place they knew so well.

It was my first time partaking in the ceremony of saying the name of each Aggie that has passed away. This Muster was unlike the one taking place back home, however. Fortunate enough to have no Aggies pass in the prior year, the Italy A&M Club remembered the 15 Aggies that were buried in the Florence and Sicily-Rome American cemeteries after laying down their lives in World War II. The names that were spoken held emotion on behalf of their family members generations later.

I will forever remember the lighting of the tea-light candles that sat in the middle of the table, sandwiched between A&M flags. I will remember the strong and collective ‘**Here**’ that was announced for each of the absent, and I will remember the *Aggie War Hymn* that rang throughout the restaurant as we stood shoulder to shoulder, showing that even flung across the world, Aggies will always have the support of other Aggies.

Gig’em!



Of all the stunning hill towns in Italy, Civita di Bagnoregio may be the most dreamy and surreal. Because of its unique topography and fantastical setting, the town is frozen in time and has escaped modernity. Fall - 2019

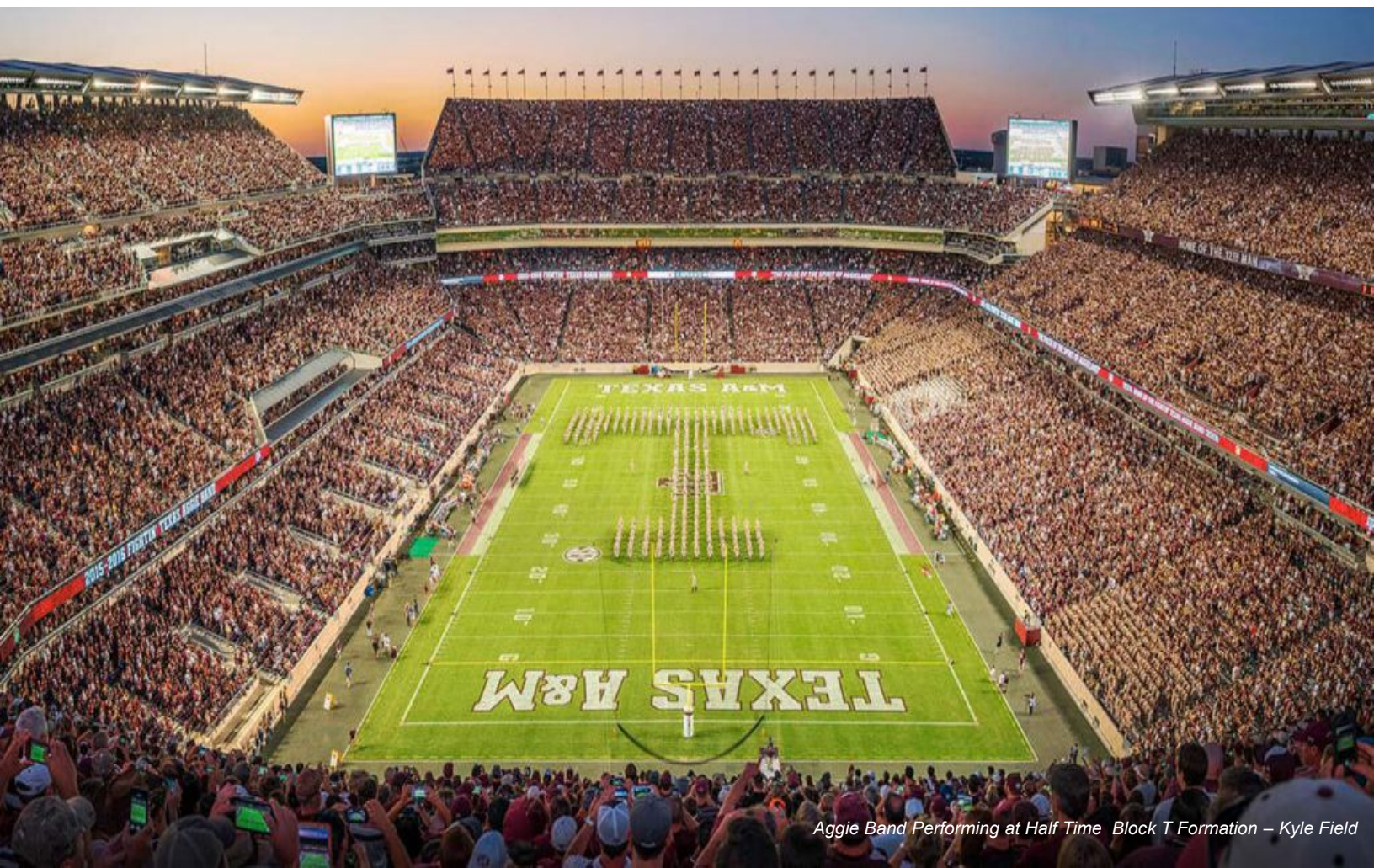
AGGIE SPORTS UPDATE

Baseball [Texas A&M baseball](#) heads to [Palo Alto for the Stanford Regional](#) beginning Friday evening June 2, at Klein Field. The Aggies, who picked up the second seed after an improbable run through the SEC Tournament last week, will face No. 3 seed Cal State Fullerton at 9 p.m. *Lets go Aggies!*

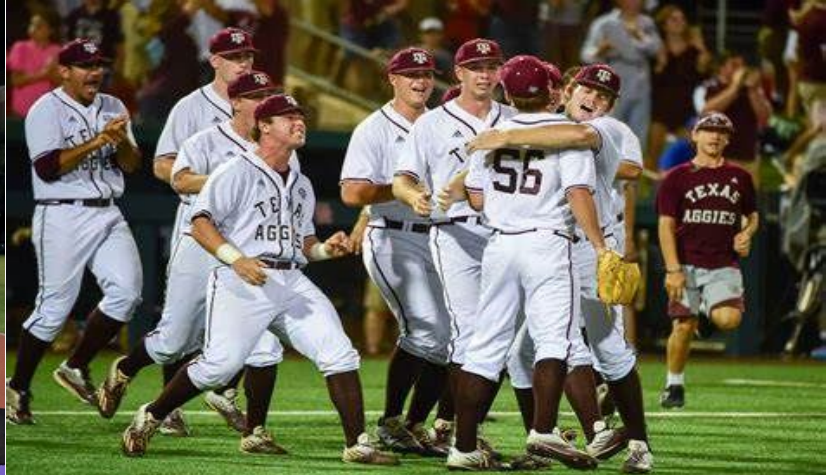
Women's Golf - The SEC champion Texas A&M women's golf team advanced to the NCAA Division I Women's Golf Championship semifinals for the second straight season as the Aggies ended rival Texas' aka t.u. season, 3-1, at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, AZ...*WHOOOP!* Unfortunately, the Lady Aggies lost to the No. 2 Wake Forest Demon Deacons 3-0 in the semifinals of the NCAA Championships In doing so, they completed the best season in the history of the women's golf program at A&M.

Men's Golf's historic finish of the Salem Regional was one for the record books, but more importantly it punched their ticket to the NCAA Championship for the second straight season. The Maroon & White capped off the season with a fifth-place showing at the NCAA Salem Regional and 13th-place finish at the NCAA Championships.

Softball wrapped 2023 with an appearance in the NCAA Austin Regional final. With the season on the line, Texas A&M catcher Riley Valentine launched a three-run homer! over the left-field wall at McCombs Field to keep the Aggies alive Sunday afternoon in Austin. That lasted all of two innings before the No. 13 t-sips found life once again in the top of the seventh and went on to win the game 11-5 in the Austin Regional Final. The lady t-sips now advance to the super regional's for the fourth time in five seasons.



Aggie Band Performing at Half Time Block T Formation – Kyle Field



Track & Field concluded the SEC Outdoor championships with both squads posting their highest finish since 2019. Coach Henry's men's team finished fifth while the women placed third. The Aggies are currently in Sacramento preparing for the NCAA West Preliminary Rounds, with the NCAA Championships beginning June 7 in Austin.

Women's Tennis saw its memorable 2023 campaign come to an end in the NCAA Elite Eight, as the Aggies fell to a red-hot Stanford squad. Coach Weaver and the team completed the year as back-to-back SEC Champions and advanced to the quarterfinals for the second straight season, a school record. Several Aggies competed in the NCAA Individual Championships in Orlando.

Men's Tennis also has several players in Orlando for the NCAA Individual Championships, as Coach Denton and the Aggies' 19-win season came to an end in the tournament's second round on the road at eventual national semifinalist TCU. It marked the 27th consecutive NCAA appearance for the program.

Texas A&M Graduates 79 athletes at Spring Commencements on May 11-13 at Reed Arena. Out of the 79 student-athletes, seven received their master's degrees. Additionally, men's track & field's Johnathon Blaine and baseball's Mason Corbett earned their juris doctor degrees. Congratulations to all the graduates this spring for becoming Former Students of Texas A&M.

Five Texas A&M Rec Sports clubs bring collegiate national championship titles back to Aggieland - Texas A&M Rec Sports Clubs have had an impressive year. Texas A&M Trap and Skeet, Texas A&M Polo, Texas A&M Waterski Club, Texas A&M Cheer Squad, and Texas A&M Cycling Team each brought top honors home this year.

WHOOOP!



Bianca strada (white road) near Volterra – April 2023

RAIN, RAIN GO AWAY!



Water soaked streets in Bologna, Italy – May 2023

Six months worth of rainfall in just 36 hours has devastated Italy's Emilia-Romagna and parts of the Marche regions, leaving nearly 36,000 people displaced from their homes and at least 15 people dead.

The disaster affected roughly 100 cities. One of Italy's more wealthy regions, Emilia-Romagna is home to cities such as Parma, Bologna and Ravenna. Making matters worse, the flooding has caused landslides as the historic rainfall erodes hills and mountains. It was Italy's worst flooding in a century and many areas remained underwater a week after torrential rains inundated Emilia-Romagna and Marche.

The flooding likely was made worse by months of severe drought which compacted soil and made it less capable of absorbing water. The tropical-like rainfall left many towns and cities flooded by overflowing rivers, blocked highways and railways, and triggered numerous landslides. Violent downpours transformed streets in the cities and towns of the Emilia-Romagna region into rivers.

The intense rainfalls came as Italy had been bracing for a second year of drought, which has depleted its largest river, the Po. The river supports agriculture in the vast Po River Valley before emptying into the Adriatic Sea east of Bologna.

While northeast Italy was hardest hit by the downpours, flooding also caused damage in the south. On the island of Sicily, rescuers carried out scores of interventions in the countryside between Palermo and Trapani, for flooding, fallen trees and other problems triggered by rainstorms.



HOW TO HELP EMILIA-ROMAGNA



Fifteen people have lost their lives and more than 36,000 have been evacuated from their homes due to severe flooding in the **Emilia-Romagna** region. Now the world is reacting and establishing ways to help those affected. If you are currently in **Bologna** or are planning on travelling there soon, see [this website](#) with updated information.

If you would like to help with the clear-up in Emilia-Romagna or need to report hazardous situations or notify the authorities about people requiring assistance, call the Emilia-Romagna Regional Helpline **800024662**, which is manned daily from 8am to 8pm.



WAYS IN WHICH TO SUPPORT THE PEOPLE OF EMILIA-ROMAGNA AFTER SEVERE FLOODING



Tuscany's chefs are joining forces to help. The media company **Il Forchettiere** is organizing the **Il cuore oltre l'Appennino (Heart over the Apennines)** campaign to raise funds through restaurants. Fifty restaurants have signed up so far and will be donating a percentage from each meal sold, which mostly features an ingredient from Emilia-Romagna, to the region's civil protection service. [Find out more here in Italian and it can be translated if needed.](#)

Donate directly to the [Italian Red Cross](#), whose 300 or so volunteers have been working on the front line since the beginning of the emergency.

Donations can also be made directly to **Emilia-Romagna's Protezione Civile** association, which is working directly with the people and communities affected by the emergency. Donate by bank transfer to **IBAN IT69G0200802435000104428964** and **BIC/Swift UNCRITM1OM0** from abroad.



Levanzo Harbor, Sicily

The island of **Sicily** has gained much popularity in recent years, and rightfully so. It's the home of some of the country's best shorelines, perfectly-preserved archaeological sites, and a spectacular climate that makes it an oasis for Italy's most prized produce and architectural marvels.

Sicily remained off the radar in comparison to Italy's other island paradises and tourist hotspots – but having now picked up popularity, with its most famous Palermo province having hosted around 2.5 million overnight stays for international and domestic tourists in 2022, travelers are beginning to realize the island's full potential and breadth of beauty.

As Italy's largest island, its territories have, over thousands of years, developed a rich history dating back to 12,000 BC when the island is thought to have been first inhabited. Sicily has been home to some of Europe's most ancient civilizations, such as the likes of the Greeks, Byzantines, and Arabs, which have shaped its landscapes and influenced its culture to be what it is today.

Three of our club members call Sicily home.



ONE-POT PASTA PRIMAVERA WITH SHRIMP

Recipe submitted by: Club member Connor Larza '22

Primavera means springtime in Italian so Pasta Primavera really is a pasta dish loaded with all types of spring vegetables. Even though the majority of March gusts with a winter chill, the hope of April showers and the warmth of May brings a spring renewal that is most definitely enjoyed! Spring and summer's long-anticipated arrival heralds the return of some of our favorite Italian dishes. Fresh fruits and vegetables, bright colors and crisp textures — as the days get longer, it's all waiting to be cultivated for mealtimes.

There are many classic Italian dishes that are at their best in the spring and summer. As the weather warms, these ingredients will get easier and easier to procure at your local grocery store. Start meal planning now to take advantage of peak freshness!

ONE-POT PASTA PRIMAVERA WITH SHRIMP

This lightning-fast version of a classic pasta recipe calls for just the right amount of water that magically cooks down to create a silky sauce (no draining necessary!). Bright green vegetables, cherry tomatoes, and plump shrimp round out this springy /summer meal that can be enjoyed all year round.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
1 onion peeled and diced
3 cloves of garlic minced
¼ teaspoon chili flakes
2 cups (285g/8oz) sliced mushrooms (shiitake, white, cremini)
12 oz/ ¾ lb of penne pasta (any short pasta like penne, rigatoni, bow ties)
3 cups (24oz) of broth or water (chicken or vegetable broth - plus more if needed)
½ cup (4oz) of cream or milk (sub with more broth/water if keeping it lighter)
1 ½-2 cups (6oz) asparagus, trimmed and chopped into approx 1 inch pieces
340 grams/11oz large shrimp, peeled, deveined, tails left on or off
1 cup (185 g/5oz) green peas, fresh or frozen
3 tablespoons (1.5oz) unsalted butter
¾ cup (6oz) finely grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
Zest of one lemon (slice and serve with pasta after it's zested)
1 pint (2 cups/19oz) cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh basil or fresh parsley

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet or pot over medium-high heat and add the onion, and mushrooms stir and cook for 2-5 minutes until softened and translucent. Add chili flakes and garlic, and cook stirring for 1 min. Season with salt and pepper to taste and stir to evenly season.
2. Add the pasta and stir in 3 cups of broth and ½ cup of cream or milk. Cover and bring to a simmer. Once boiling, uncover and cook, setting a timer for cooking pasta according to package instructions and stirring often. (If pot starts to dry out at any point, add another ½ cup broth.)
3. When 2-3 minutes remain on timer, stir in shrimp, peas, asparagus and butter. Cover and continue to cook for remaining minutes, then uncover and cook, stirring, until pasta is tender, shrimp are cooked through, and sauce is reduced.
4. Remove from heat. Stir in ¾ cup Parmesan and toss to coat until it's melted into sauce.
5. Toss in the lemon zest, basil and tomatoes and season with more salt and pepper, if needed.
6. Divide pasta among plates. Top with additional basil, and additional Parmesan.
7. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up 2-5 days. Reheat stove top or in the microwave with a splash of broth or cream if needed to loosen up the pasta to desired consistency.

Buon Appetito!

EMILIA-ROMAGNA

History, art, cuisine, tradition: you don't always have to head to a major tourist town to experience these classic treasures we associate with Italy. Head to one of the country's "borghi" instead: ancient, tiny villages retaining the atmosphere of times gone by, thanks to their well-preserved historic buildings and a slower pace of life, which only contributes to their charm.

Three of our Club members and their families call Emilia-Romagna home.



Emilia-Romagna is affectionately known as the legendary "bread basket" of Italy. Summer - 2019

ASK AN ITALY AGGIE - 12 QUESTIONS

PIETRO CASALI

1. Tell us a little about yourself. Where you grew up, what your interests were, family, pets?

A: I grew up in a small town in the north of Italy, Pontenure. I always lived in a dichotomy between rural and international realities. Since I was a kid I traveled, especially to Poland, where part of my family is. But I also liked my town, and even a smaller village in the Appennini from where my grandfather (and my tea addiction) comes. Every academic step I took has also been a comfort zone enlargement. Went to high school in the nearest city, to Bachelor studies in the biggest northern Italian city, Milan (at Bocconi University), and for my Master's degree in Vienna, from where I took an exchange semester at A&M. I always valued a good education, and I knew I was interested in Business and Economics since I was young. And in general, I was always eager to know more, and I would get passionate about a range of topics. I have always been active in my community, especially in church-organized activities. Recently, I become an uncle as my older sister had twins :).

2. Why did you choose to attend Texas A&M, and what did you study and why?

A: Having to choose where to go for one semester I could have picked any of some European capitals, or other US cities. I thought of Texas as it would have probably fit my personality more than either of the coasts, and A&M was a great university name. At that time I still didn't know I could have had such a great time there, and make such meaningful connections so I also think I was inspired from above to put it as my first choice.

3. What was your favorite memory from your time at Texas A&M and why?

A: Even in just one semester, I collected a lot of great memories but I have to say that I haven't felt that moved in a while, whenever I went to my first Silver Taps.

4. What is your hidden talent?

A: I can make a great tiramisù.

5. Describe your perfect day.

A: Wake up naturally 5 minutes before the alarm. Cappuccino e brioche at the bar for a different breakfast than Tea and cookies. Do the work needed for the day, with a good lunch in between. Go home and watch something, then go out for pizza and chat with friends. No need to say that it will be fun, cause with my friends I know it will be. Read something before going to bed. Vacation-wise: either trekking in the mountains or being "lost" in some European village/town, as no plan was made for the trip.

6. What is your favorite movie/TV show/music group, why (answer all three)?

A: If a series of movies counts, then the 5 canonical "Don Camillo e Peppone". Although in black and white, you can see the color of the story in the perfect fit between actors and characters, the great comedy, and the historical references. If not, I find "The Truman Show" to be the greatest movie, for how it engages you in the story, the narrative, and the way it is directed. As a TV show, I have recently enjoyed "The Good Place" for its commentary on philosophy and the afterlife. My favorite artist is James Blunt, but as a group, I would say that no one will ever beat the Beatles.

7. What are your hobbies or interests?

A: Playing the guitar, although I am still learning it. Reading and discovering poetry written in my local dialect, some poems are really awesome.

8. What is the one thing you couldn't live without, and why?

A: Even though I spend a good amount of time on the phone, whenever I digitally detox I never felt any withdrawal effects. Some things for which I felt them, are pasta and tea, so I would say those are the things I can't live without.

9. What do you do or what do you want to do for a living and if you could have any other career, what would it be?

A: As I am at the end of my university life, I am looking for a job that can give me the opportunity to learn a lot and grow. Ideally, I am looking at anything related to Marketing and Sales, but as I have a strong background in Accounting and Finance, I am sure I would be able to give my contribution and add value from multiple angles within an organization. In the future, after "having done my homework", I would love to also become even more active in my public life, helping my current and my future community.

10. What do you miss most about Aggieland?

A: Its spirit. And how dynamic was College Station, always something interesting going on.

11. Tell us about three people who have had the largest impact on your life.

A: My grandfather, he was always with me when I was a kid and he taught me math by playing cards. My best friend Matteo, a good person who I am sure always has my back. Don Mario, who made me be "sul pezzo" i.e. more extroverted, and able to take decisions on the spot.

12. Take Sides – choose your preference between the following dichotomies. The **Bold** and maroon colored are Pietro's selections:

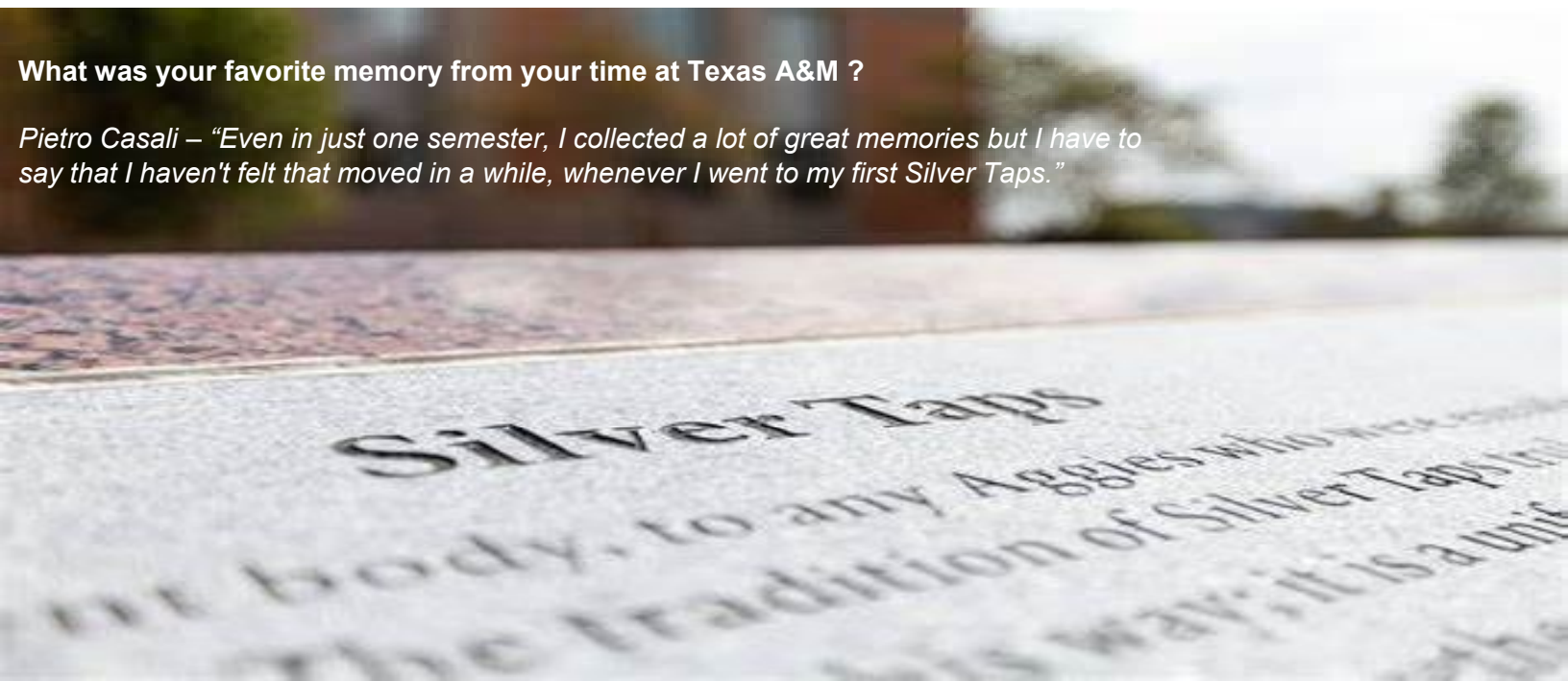
- Playlists or **podcasts**
- **Shoes** or slippers
- **Pork** or beef
- **Swimming pool** or beach
- Fruits or **vegetables**
- Beer or **Wine**
- Sweater or **Hoodie**
- Motorcycle or **Bicycle**
- **World Cup** or Super Bowl
- Pasta or **pizza**
- Energy drinks or **coffee**
- Texas or Italy - **BOTH**
- **No internet** or no running water
- Loose leaf tea or **Tea bag**
- Panna cotta or **fresh cannoli**
- Which is worse - Sunday night or **Monday morning**
- **European Football (Soccer)** or Aggie Football
- **Limoncello** or Grappa
- Winter or **summer**



*Pietro Casali – Graduate Student
Study Abroad at Texas A&M - Fall 2022*

What was your favorite memory from your time at Texas A&M ?

Pietro Casali – "Even in just one semester, I collected a lot of great memories but I have to say that I haven't felt that moved in a while, whenever I went to my first Silver Taps."







THE ITALY A&M CLUB NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE



The Italy A&M Club Needs Your Help!

• Website Needed

If anyone can assist in building a **club website** and a separate *Facebook* page so we can post news articles, periodic/monthly newsletters, *Instagram* postings and other social media it would be extremely helpful. Please reach out to me directly.

• Italy A&M Club Scholarship

The club is exploring the possibility of establishing a scholarship program. The scholarship would be available to club members who live in Italy but are attending Texas A&M, their family members who are attending Texas A&M or possibly students who are studying abroad from Texas A&M in Italy (semester abroad program).

We are considering hosting a silent auction to help raise funds for the scholarship. If you are interested in donating to the auction or in the establishment of the scholarship please reach out to me directly.



• News – Extra, Extra Read All About it!

Please feel free to share any photos, news articles, announcements, births, graduations, Silver Taps, career changes or any other news you would like to share with the club. We will find ways to include them in the regular updates.

• Logo

We are looking to create our clubs logo and will be asking for assistance from The Association of Former Students Marketing Department. We need to generate a few ideas for our logo. If you have any ideas or thoughts please let me know.

• Recipes

Feel free to submit your favorite recipe(s) to be include with the monthly/periodic updates. We would love to share them with the group.

• Feedback

Please provide feedback on this format, the content and any ideas you may have on ways we can generate additional engagement. Please encourage other people to join the club and to follow us on *Instagram*.

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REVISIONE FINALE

Spring is winding down and now summer will soon arrive. With gorgeous flowers in Italy – found everywhere you look. This **explosion of color** and fragrance is around almost every corner of the country, plus it's a photographer's dream.

The season starts in late March when you'll begin to see individual flower buds dot the landscape. It is, however, **during the months of April, May and June** when you'll spot jaw-dropping fields in picturesque settings painted with red poppies and white, pink and purple wisteria. Purple lavender, yellow sunflowers and wild daisies, irises and roses, cosmos, dahlia's and lilies just to name a few can be found everywhere.

If you love flowers, Italy in the late spring and early summer is the place to be. You will not be disappointed. Have a safe summer and be well.

Ciao and Gig'em!

Ryan '91

P.S. Be sure to follow us on **Instagram** at: [italy_am_club](https://www.instagram.com/italy_am_club)

