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# Locations, Italian Style

From generous incentives to skilled crews and logistical support, there has never been a better time to shoot in Italy

While the golden age of Italian cinema lasted



**SHOOTING STAR: Renato De Maria's "La Prima Linea" made use of locations in Italy's Piemonte region.**

roughly from the end of World War II through the mid-1970s, a new one is in full force right now in the form of regional film promotion.

Never before has such an array of financial, technical and logistical support been available to filmmakers looking to shoot in the *Bel Paese*. All of Italy's 21 regions offer some kind of incentive to promote shooting, with budgets on the rise in most parts of the country.

The reason is simple, according to Silvio Maselli, director of the Apulia Film Commission, located in the heel of Italy's boot-shaped peninsula and one of the up-and-coming commissions in the area.

"We are catching on that cinema is a great way to promote a region," he says.

Increasingly, the national government is getting into the act, too. The famed Cinecittà Studios, built in the 1930s and a major force in the local industry throughout the golden age, fell on hard times during the '80s as local production diminished. But Cinecittà has seen an uptick in activity related to the Italian government's tax-incentive program.

The studio reports that productions like the George Clooney vehicle "The American"; "The Tourist" with Angelina Jolie; and "Letters to Juliet" starring Amanda Seyfried are among a group of recent films that have saved a combined \$10 million by taking advantage of the tax incentives, which went into effect two years ago. The incentive package, which must pass a "cultural test" as determined by the Ministry of Culture, includes tax breaks equal to a quarter of the overall production costs, up to \$6.6 million. Best of all, films can be shot anywhere in Italy and be eligible for the incentives.

"It's one of the most generous programs available and it has done a lot to make Italy more attractive to filmmakers," says Carole Andre-Smith, one of the heads of Cinecittà.

Here is a rundown of what some of Italy's most prominent regional film commissions have to offer.

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