Mondi Lucani widens international reach

Posted on July 25, 2026 by Sabina Castelfranco, Alina Trabattoni

MATERA — Basilicata's Premio Mondi Lucani turns recognition into obligation. Unveiling its 2026 winners at Matera town hall on July 22, the award named six recipients, from the international lawyer Joseph Gulino to an Argentine association, each bound to pledge something concrete back to the region on August 7.

That idea has a name here, *restituzione* (giving back), and it is the point of the whole exercise. Now in its eighth edition and run by the association Mondi Lucani APS, the prize honours *lucani* (people from Basilicata) who built careers elsewhere, then asks each of them to announce a specific commitment on the night rather than simply collect a trophy.

Gulino shows what that looks like. He is vice chair international of the National Italian American Foundation, a Washington based Italian American advocacy group, and a lawyer in Miami. His pledge centres on intercultural projects for young people and on helping companies in Basilicata work across borders.

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Joseph Gulino (Credits: Gulino)

“I am deeply honoured to be recognised as a 2026 recipient of the Premio Mondi Lucani,” Gulino said, “an award that celebrates individuals who have carried the values of Basilicata around the world while remaining committed to giving back.”

Six pledges

The other winners each bring their own. The contemporary artist Ilaria Del Monte and the coach Brunella Guida both pledge training, for students and institutions. Marco Di Liddo, director of the *Centro Studi Internazionali*, offers entrepreneurial mentoring. The actor Federico Castelluccio commits to art and cinema projects in the region, and the manager Michela Grimolizzi to local

development.

Simona Orsi, councillor for culture, tourism and events of the Municipality of Matera, explained that the prize carries “important significance for what our territory is.” She added that the special prizes will also reflect “substantive gender parity.”

Two new sections widen the reach abroad. The *Premio Radici* (Roots Prize) goes to Michael Lamacchia, a paediatrician at St Joseph’s Children’s Hospital in Paterson, New Jersey, whose family comes from Matera and Pomarico. The *Premio Identità Lucana* (Lucanian Identity Prize) honours the Centro Lucano di La Plata in Argentina.

Basilicata villages (*Credits: Italy Now*)

The bet

“The real prize is what is born afterwards,” said Maria Andriulli, president of Mondi Lucani, “because the recognition is a starting point for creating relationships, generating ideas, and giving value back to Basilicata.”

Behind it sits departure. Gregorio De Felice, chief economist at the main sponsor Intesa Sanpaolo, told the presentation that Basilicata has human resources of great quality but keeps losing its young.

An award measured by what its winners actually do once the applause stops is a modest answer to that, and an unusually testable one.

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