

# The Aeolian Islands that won’t be sold

Posted on June 19, 2026 by Alina Trabattoni, Sabina Castelfranco

LIPARI — There is a version of the Aeolian Islands that the travel industry has already written. Seven volcanic specks off the Sicilian coast, summer-only, reached by hydrofoil, best experienced with a glass of Malvasia (the sweet local wine). That version is not wrong. It is incomplete, and the people who live here are starting to say so, loudly.

When UNESCO (the United Nations cultural body that lists sites of global importance) designated the archipelago a World Heritage Site in 2000, it set in motion an economic rupture the islands are still navigating. The pumice quarries that had sustained Lipari’s working population for generations were wound down, their closure shaped by preservation pressures from outside that left locals to absorb the consequences.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/the-aeolian-islands-that-wont-be-sold/



Aeolian islands (*Credits: Benedetto Tarantino*)

What followed was two decades during which external operators, including mainland brands and absentee investors, took the margins, while locals watched the tourism economy grow around them without growing for them.

“Once cultural value is recognised, there are implications that must be borne, implications that often create a gap between public interests and specific interests,” said Stefano Monti, partner and economist at Monti&Taft. “It becomes essential that the benefits are distributed across the territory, without generating inequalities.”

A brand, Monti told Italy Now, can turn that value into wealth for the whole territory rather than a few operators.

For several years, something has been growing in reply, largely invisible to the mainland. It came from a small group of Aeolians who had spent long enough watching others define what their surroundings were worth.



Aeolian islands (*Credits: Benedetto Tarantino*)

**The young CEO**

At its centre is Andrea Corrieri, 24, born near Milan and raised on Lipari by parents who returned home. As CEO of Brand Eolie (an alliance of local businesses formed to keep ownership in Aeolian hands), he is almost certainly one of the youngest people running a registered European tourism brand anywhere on the continent.

He took the role, he says, not out of ambition but out of attachment. As a child he watched tourists join islanders dancing at the August 24 feast of San Bartolomeo, the patron saint, as fireworks lit the castle above Lipari.

“It created a connection that I don’t think words can fully explain,” he says. That is what Brand Eolie exists to protect.

His bet is that a place can stay famous and still belong to those who never left.

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