

My Fritlex is two months old!

In the month of August, browsing Facebook, I saw a very peculiar bag posted by a friend of mine and decided I wanted more information. I asked her, and she told me only good things about the bag and about the brand. This is how I discovered [Fritlex](#), a small Italian company producing artisan made (handmade) bags created with recycled materials. Used inner inner tubes are the soul of these bags but also the bags's lining is recycled. Fritlex bags come in different shapes and colours, well... wait a minute, I should not call the beautiful graphics on them "colours"! The man who invented this brand, Alex Gavazza, in fact, besides cleaning, cutting and sewing inner tubes, uses his artistic skills to create beautiful images destined to be featured on his bags. So... when you choose a Fritlex, you can choose a model and, within the model, a specific image. The choice is incredibly wide and you can pick one according to your favourite colours and style, or you can even ask Alex to let you create your own one. All you need to do to get your unique bag is to visit Fritlex website, [choose a model that allows personalization](#) and upload the image you would like to carry around. If you intend to do so, however, I suggest contacting Alex first to ask some advice on the quality of the image you are going to submit, he will surely know better than you if it will look nice on the finished product.

Look at the gallery here, my bag and the one a friend made for herself:

This is exactly what I did, I worked on some images with Photoshop and we later decided together which ones were going to look better. An order was then placed and, about one week later, I had my Fritlex delivered at home. Was it expensive? I do not think so, my model, the Shopper was priced 59 euros (including shipment) but in August there was a 20% discount

coupon on all the items so.... I paid a very honest price for something handmade and personalized. It is very well made and sturdy: I have been using it daily for about two months, in all weathers (it went to the UK with me!) and situations and it still look perfect. This sturdy and waterproof bag is also elegant and practical, it can be closed with a zipper and it has 4 inner pockets and a special clasp to which you can connect your key chain. Its measures are 35 x 33 x 10 centimeters and has two handles long enough to allow you to use it as a shoulder bag or, if you prefer, a strap to transform it in a cross body bag.

Quality/price ratio is exceptional but, most of all, I am super happy to have my dog Briony featured nicely on a bag. This does not look like the standard printed bag you can get from any photo printing service. This is a beautiful, handmade in Italy, bag with your own personalized design, I couldn't ask for more!

This is the sort of bag (or laptop bag or wallet!) people would like to get as a gift, or a good gift for yourself!

[Fritlex Facebook Page](#)

[Fritlex Website](#)

La mia Fritlex compie due mesi!

Nello scorso mese di agosto, navigando su Facebook, ho visto la fotografia di una borsa molto particolare e sono subito corsa ad informarmi, scoprendo soltanto buone cose. E' così che ho scoperto il marchio [Fritlex](#), una piccola ditta italiana

(la sede è in provincia di Vercelli) che produce borse artigianali, fatte a mano, con materiali riciclati. Il cuore delle borse, infatti, è costituito da camere d'aria riciclate, ma anche le fodere interne sono fatte con stoffe di seconda mano. Le borse Fritlex esistono in vari modelli e colori, è un po' inappropriato parlare di colori dal momento che si tratta di splendidi disegni. Alex Gavazza, l'uomo che ha inventato le Fritlex, non è certo cresciuto lavando, tagliando e cucendo camere d'aria: è un grafico e usa le sue capacità artistiche per creare immagini cui abbellire le borse Fritlex. Scegliere una di queste borse non è quindi affatto facile: oltre ai tanti modelli ci sono i tanti disegni e un ventaglio di scelta così ampio ti permette di decidere in base al colore preferito, in base allo stile e persino di andare oltre richiedendo una borsa con un disegno su misura. Alex può crearla per te! Avere una Fritlex personalizzata è molto semplice, tutto quello che devi fare è andare sul sito della ditta, [scegliere uno dei modelli personalizzabili](#) e caricare l'immagine che vorresti sempre portare con te. Per accertarti che la tua immagine sia adatta allo scopo, puoi anche contattare direttamente Alex e chiedergli un parere: io ho agito così ritenendo che lui potesse immaginare molto meglio di me il prodotto finito.

Guarda la gallery con la mia borsa e la borsa fatta personalizzare da un'amica qui sotto.

Così, ho elaborato alcune immagini che mi piacevano con Photoshop e poi abbiamo scelto insieme quelle più adatte. Circa una settimana dopo la mia Fritlex è arrivata a casa con il corriere. È stato costoso? Direi di no: il mio modello è la Shopper che, nella versione personalizzata, di listino costa 59 euro, spedizione inclusa, in agosto c'era uno sconto del 20% su tutti gli articoli quindi... direi che ho pagato un prezzo estremamente ragionevole per un prodotto fatto a mano e personalizzato. La borsa ha buone rifiniture ed è molto

robusta: la sto usando ininterrottamente da due mesi, in tutte le situazioni e in tutti i climi (è anche andata in Inghilterra con me!) ed è sempre come nuova. Oltre ad essere robusta e impermeabile, la borsa è anche elegante, si chiude con una cerniera a prova di ladro, ha 4 tasche interne e un gancio a cui attaccare il mazzo di chiavi. Le misure sono 35 x 33 x 10 centimetri e ci sono due manici che permettono di indossarla come borsa a spalla o, se preferite, una lunga striscia in tessuto per trasformarla in una tracolla.

Il rapporto qualità prezzo, in definitiva, è eccellente ma, soprattutto, io sono contenta di averla potuta personalizzare con Briony. Quella che ho ottenuto non è la solita borsa fatta stampare online, è un prodotto di qualità, fatto a mano, in Italia e su misura, non potrei chiedere di più! Queste borse, così come i portafogli e le valigette porta laptop possono essere un regalo gradito da fare agli amici, o anche a voi stessi!

[Pagina Facebook Fritlex](#)

[Sito internet Fritlex](#)

On Italians training, hunting and trialing abroad

Italy won the European Cup for British Pointing Breeds (Grande Quete), the European Championship for English Setters and the European Championship for English Pointers (other results are still pending at the moment). Everybody is happy, but many rumours started and the social media went crazy. I read every sort of rumors, polemics, attacks and accuses, which I do not want to spread further, but two topics deserve a deeper

analysis, especially the second one. People complain about dogs whose nationality changes to make them able to enter the competition. Right? Wrong? I think this is a grey area. Italy has a huge number of dogs whose natural qualities make them suitable to these high level competitions. There are dozens, or more likely hundreds, of Italian English Setters and English Pointers that, potentially, could do very well. No other country can claim the same but... Some dogs have been seen and campaigned more than others because there are big fishes and small fishes. If you are a sardine, forced to swim among tuna, you will soon realize you cannot afford the trendiest trainer, nor the amazingly expensive travels all over Europe to stay on the top the circuit. Your dog will not have the same opportunities of a "richer" dog, you are perfectly aware he is unlikely to be asked to represent Italy. Maybe it is a good dog but, to compete at certain levels, being good is only part of the package.

So, let's imagine you gave up any hope to compete in the European Cup but, let's say, Transilvania proposes you a place in its team, would you accept? And if you, Mr. Sardine, accept, are we entitled to persecute you? I don't think so and, let's be honest, what would any of us do, if offered such an opportunity? What would I do? I do not know, but I might say yes to a country I feel connected to (I am not very patriotic, I know...), whereas I would probably decline the offer if it were coming from a country I don't know anything about, nor I speak the language. This said, I do not think I have any rights to be judgmental about other people choices.

The second, more important, topic I am going to discuss still relates to foreign countries, but in another way. When I published the article on [training problems in Italy](#) and on the [scarcity of game at Italian trials](#), someone suggested me writing something on Italians going abroad for hunting, training and trialing. Well, the truth is that, as far as small game, Italy is in a bad place. These animals are poorly,

if ever, managed, and if you want to hunt or train your dog, going abroad can be a good choice. Can you train a dog in Italy? Of course you can, but it is going to be way harder, and your risk to pay in fines the same amount you will spend for a nice training holiday abroad. There is nothing wrong in going abroad to offer a dog more opportunity. If you have the time and you can afford it, why not? Serbia, nowadays is very popular, but before Serbia, Italian hunters and trainers had colonized other countries. I am not concerned about going abroad, I am perplexed about being dependent on "abroad".

Many important Italian field trias (with CAC valid for the Italian Championship) are now run in Serbia. If you ask why, you hear different answers and some, the most convincing ones, pertains grounds, game and laws/local realities. Let's start from grounds. Giacomo Lugari (an Italian famous hunter and video maker) , answering a post on Facebook remembered the European Cup run in 1999 in Tollara, Piedmont, Northern Italy. So the grounds... we have some suitable ones! I think so, but what about the game? The answer, this time , sadly is a no. I have never been to Serbia, but many, many Italians routinely go there and come back with happy tales about grey partridge. You cannot imagine how many partridges are there! You cannot believe! This is what they tell me and, yes I can believe them. I know what happens with grouse in the UK and I know that good wildlife management can produce tremendous results. Proper wildlife management is demanding, time consuming, costly and forces farmers, hunters, wildlife experts, gamekeepers and politicians to work together. Something must be sacrificed and people must learn to negotiate good meeting



points, this is difficult but not impos

Someone justify Italy stating that Serbian agricultural techniques are 50 years older than ours and that this is a good thing for greys. Probably but... If we truly are 50 years ahead, we should be able to use our more advanced knowledge to recreate an habitat that might suit greys. I refuse to believe this cannot be done: do you remember Renaissance? Italy gave birth to Leonardo da Vinci and other geniuses and now, their descendents, cannot successfully manage four birds?

And what about the money? In Serbia up to 500 dogs run in a day. Each entry costs 30 euros, multiply them for 500 and subtract something for "expenses". Accessing training grounds costs about 100 euros a day (regardless of the number of dogs you have with you), so remember about these money as well. I am a terrible accountant, but I came to the conclusion that Serbian grey partridge are producing quite an income. The Serbians have been smart in recognizing this and I think that grey partridge are improving the lives of those living there. There are the training grounds money, the field trials entries, people staying in hotels, people dining in restaurants... The Serbians are doing the right thing, and the Italians? What shall we do, besides thanking them for the opportunities they provide us? I think that maybe we shall get inspired and consider the grey partridge an excellent business partner: some more determined people would resuscitate dinosaurs for similar amounts of money!

The laws, adds someone else, we have more bureaucracy and more

rules than Serbia. We have animal right activist and an outdated law on wildlife management and hunting. This law must be changed , says someone else, but in Italy is hard to be proactive, each time you try, obstacles get thrown in the way. This is true, but is this enough to give up the hope in a better countryside, for better fieldsports? I truly don't know.

Field trials and... the (half) naked woman

When I write that Italian field trials, and Italy itself, are a world apart and that they are unpredictable... I mean it! Yesterday I reached the venue with quite a delay after wandering in the fog for about an hour. What happened? Nothing unusual: the local government decided to close a bridge because it was going to collapse, a very good thing but... drivers would have enjoyed a "slightly" less vague description of the alternate route. Last summer a dog (MY dog) made my fall into a farm ditch fully provided with livestock waste. I a professional dog trainer, whose truck was equipped with a water hose for dogs, later washed me, covered the car seat with a black garbage bag, kept calm and carried on. Yes, all the men present had a good laugh but my fall cannot surely be compared to what they experienced during last Friday' snipe trial.

As the British Pointing Dogs Stake ended fairly early, some of us stopped to watch the few HPR's (Continental Pointing dogs) who dared to face snipe. We parked by a house and focused our attention on a small Brittany running at full speed: it did not last long. As a female voice behind us called "Fabio" and everybody's heads turned in the same direction: there was a

woman at the window. Well, not just a woman: she was half naked and wearing some sort of black lingerie. She was a crossbreed between Sofia Loren in [*Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*](#) (google her, this one had the same hair and the same underwear) and Anita Ekberg [*calling Marcello*](#) (Mastroianni who, guess what, managed to act in both films!) from the Trevi's Fountain in [*La Dolce Vita*](#).



Marcello, come here!

All the men were on point and, as it was cold and foggy, someone stated: *"Ohhh poor thing! She must be cold!"*.

As the woman disappeared, the hormonal flare vanished and they remembered I was there: several "sorry" followed, with me laughing being I am quite used to be "forgotten". My naughty side, however, made me ask "Is there any Fabio among you?" A chorus of no, accompanied by eyes focused again on the Brittany, followed.

The lady, however, seemed to be extremely determined to find her Fabio and she came out again yelling that name. Needless to say the Brittany was forgotten for the second time. Once back at the venue, other judges and competitors asked if we had seen anything nice and, despite being the question obviously dog related, my fellow spectators informed everybody that they had seen a (half) naked woman, gave out her full address accompanied with very detailed description. I bet that

from now on, people – especially guys named Fabio- would be very pleased to run on that ground and I am 99% sure that none would complain about the lack of snipe by that house.

Ps. The so sought after Fabio never replied and never showed up so I elaborated my very own secret theory on his identity: I think he is a pet, most likely a cat, but please, don't tell around!

Entering a trial: Italy vs UK. Part I: Italy

It seems easy but it is not! Let's start from Italy.

How can you enter a trial in Italy? Well... You first have to find the trial. Trials are held almost daily in different part of the country, all year round but for spring and early summer (during this period there are still some trials on quail). To further complicate things, the ENCI (Italian Kennel Club) allows some Italian trials to be run abroad, in places such as Serbia, Poland and more. Anyway, let's say you want to stick to Italy, all you have to do is go to the ENCI website and click on the section [Manifestazioni e Eventi](#), pick a month and choose which kind of trial you are interested in. Grande Cerca (Grand Quete)? Caccia a Starne (Grey partridge)? Classica o attitudinale a quaglie (different kind of trials on quail)? Selvaggina Naturale (wild birds)? Let's say you'd go for Selvaggina Naturale, which are the most popular trials, which kind of birds do you want your dog to be graded on? Pheasant, partridge (red legged and grey) suit you, or do you want anything more specific such as woodcock, snipe or mountain birds? Once you have found something you like, click on it to

get the details of those organizing and let the fun begin!



Pizza

Sleeping

Bag

<https://www.etsy.com/listing/96236038/plain-slice-of-pizza-sleeping-bag>

You call the number you have found: none answers because that office is supposed to be open only from 5 to 7 Pm on Thursday (even days), and on 10-11 Am on Friday (odd days). You then try the second listed number, just in case, and nothing happens, again. Before giving up, you send an e-mail but, two days later, you realize you have not got any answers. At this point you begin worrying and decide you start tracking "the secretary" using informal channels, aka through common acquaintances. Once you obtain a cell phone number, and manage to speak to a human voice, he – the voice- (keep in mind all those involved with pointing dog trials in Italy are men) will usually answer that it is ok, you can enter the dog and he will check your e-mail right away. Sometimes the voice will drop you a line to ask you if you are REALLY sure you want to own & handle the dog at the same time, as normally pointing dogs are handled by professional trainers at trials. Most often, however, your email will remain unanswered. There are times you are not even given a number, the acquaintance just tells you to keep calm and that he will enter the dog for you..

When the morning of the trial comes, therefore, you are not going to be sure whether you are expected to show up or not. In such a world of uncertainty, however, nobody seems to be interested in your money, entering a trial usually costs 30 Euros, but I have never been asked to send any money in advance. Everybody is expected to pay in cash at the venue. Why this policy? I do not know exactly but, given the fact you are often allowed enter a trial until the day before it takes place, there would be simply no time to collect the money in advance. Also, most of the competitors are not familiar with computers and credit cards and our postal service is awful: none would send any banknotes in the mail and banks take commissions on cheques. Together with the money, you are supposed to bring with you the dog's vaccination booklet stating he has been vaccinated against rabies; documents related to his microchip and the "libretto delle qualifiche" (results booklet). The "libretto delle qualifiche" is a

special diary in which all the results obtained by the dog are written, show after show and trial after trial: it is compulsory for Italian owned dogs, foreigners can do without. Microchipping is compulsory and the dog's identity might be checked at the end of the trial, a tattoo can be accepted for foreign dogs.

During trials, British pointing dogs are expected to run with a brace mate, snipe trials and some woodcock and mountain trials (plus the Puppy Derby) are the only exception. HPRs (continental pointing dogs), instead, run alone. Each trial is made up of multiple Open Stakes, the number of the stakes is decided upon the number of the dog entered, there are usually about 12 braces in a stake. It is perfectly normal to have 3 or 4 Open Stakes running simultaneously. Stakes for younger dogs or for females only (Oaks) are very rare, but can take place sometimes, Novice stakes do not exist. Normally CAC trials are judged by one judge, while trials in which a CACIT is awarded require two judges. Each dog is expected to run for 15 minutes (if he does not make any eliminating mistakes...) and can be asked to have a second round, but a second round is not compulsory to be graded. Mistakes made during the first minute of the run are not taken into account.



Painting by Roberto Noguel

When it comes to trials, great flexibility is required: you cannot enter a trial with great advance because dates might be changed, for different reasons: sometimes local governments postpone, or deny, the authorization to run on public grounds;

some other times the farmer "forgets" to cut the crops, or maybe snow and floods force to cancel an event. This is why you should check the ENCI website constantly.... I sadly have to admit that in Italy it is almost impossible to program anything (not just trials) with great advance, because something MIGHT happen and is likely to happen. It is not unusual for an event date to change, it keeps happening with my university exams with dates changing last minute; trains are never on time and sometimes they never show up and workers can go on strike at any moment. While I do not like this lifestyle, I try to see the good in the bad, Italians are often capable to invent last minute solutions and make everybody happy.

Ps. Things might sound a little vague and confusing but people are usually very welcoming and helpful. They really do their best to help novices and foreigners.