DIGITAL DESTINATION ITALY: TOURIST DESTINATIONS THAT STOOD OUT IN THE EYES OF ITALIAN AND INTERNATIONAL VISITORS UNCOVERED

The Data Appeal Company - Almawave Group presents the tourism Oscars
40 million "digital traces" and 876 thousand points of interest analyzed
"All Italy's data 2023" Report presented

- *Destination with the best reputation award **Basilicata** (2nd Apulia; 3rd Lombardy)*
- *Destination with the best food and wine range award: **Langhe Monferrato Roero** (2nd Paganella Dolomites, Trentino; 3rd Valle d'Itria and Murgia dei Trulli, Puglia)*
- *Destination Sustainability Index Award: **Trentino***
- *Inclusivity Index Award: **Bologna, Emilia-Romagna***
- *Secondary City Award: **Pesaro, Marche***
- *Most popular destination for foreigners award: **Umbria** (2nd Trentino; 3rd Basilicata)*
- *Most popular European destination for Italians award: **Crete, Greece** (2nd Canary Islands, Spain; 3rd Andalusia, Spain)*
- *Almawave Smart Destination Special Award: **Bari, Puglia***
- *Cashless Destination Special Award: **Emilia-Romagna***

Rimini, October 11, 2023 **-** The official ceremony is underway for the presentation of the "Digital Destination Italy" awards, the tourism Oscars awarded by The Data Appeal Company - Almawave Group as part of the TTG Travel Experience, Italy's benchmark event to promote global tourism, which began today in Rimini.

The award, conceived in 2016, is now in its eighth year and is given to the regions and tourist destinations delivering the best online performance, standing out in the eyes of tourists and visitors in terms of online perception, with a focus on the overall offer and quality of hospitality, services and experience.

The ranking is based on the analysis of millions of contents published online, related to thousands of points of interest throughout Italy. Rankings are developed for each award on the basis of data, comments and reviews collected online and analyzed by The Data Appeal Company - Almawave Group's algorithms and Artificial Intelligence, using the company's proprietary indexes. In detail, we are talking about 40 million "digital footprints", which enabled the monitoring and examination of as many as 876 thousand tourist, historical and cultural points of interest, as well as accommodations, short term rentals, clubs and restaurants. The coverage period is September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.

Through these extensive insights, the organizers are able to build up a comprehensive picture of tourism perceptions in Italy, while offering a novel reading of tourism in the "Belpaese" from the direct impressions of guests.

With a talk on the theme of *"Smart tourism vs Overtourism"* Mirko Lalli CEO & Founder of The Data Appeal Company - Chief Group Digital Strategy Officer of Almawave, will open the event, alongside Mario Romanelli, Sales Director Italy of The Data Appeal Company and Giovanna Manzi, industry expert, former CEO of Best Western Italy, now on the Board of Directors of The Data Appeal Company.

The "Digital Destination Italy" award, whose Main Sponsor is Almaviva, was presented with the support of Almawave, Alpitour, Best Western Hotels & Resort Italia, HBenchmark, Maggioli and Onde Alte. The Data Appeal Company will in attendance at the three-day TTG Travel Experience at Booth 229 in Hall A4.

The results of the "Digital Destination Italy" award

A total of 9 awards were presented at today's ceremony. These include:

Basilicata takes first prize as the Destination with the Best Online Reputation, thus the favorite among Italian and international visitors. This was followed by performances from Valle d'Itria and Murgia dei Trulli (Apulia) and Valtellina (Lombardy).

The Oscar for the Destination with the Best Food and Wine Offer is awarded to Langhe Monferrato Roero in Piedmont, known for its world-renowned wines. This is followed by the Paganella dolomites (Trentino) and Valle d'Itria and Murgia dei Trulli (Puglia).

Also awarded this year were the Destination Sustainability Index Award, which went to Trentino, and the Inclusivity Index Award, won by the City of Bologna. Both awards are given based on performance recorded by the proprietary KPIs of the same name devised by The Data Appeal Company.

The Secondary City Award, dedicated for the first time to smaller cities that are performing strongly in terms of economic growth, particularly through their tourism sector, is presented to Pesaro.

The favorite destination for foreigners in Italy is Umbria, followed by Trentino and Basilicata. While the favorite destination for Italians abroad is Crete, Greece, a nation that also received the same recognition in 2022 with the Aegean Islands. Two Spanish destinations stand out next: the Canary Islands and Andalusia.

Winning the Almawave Smart Destination Special Award is the City of Bari, for distinguishing itself in innovative, digital and data-driven destination management.

Emilia-Romagna, on the other hand, goes with the Special Cashless Destination Award, for the destination with the highest use of electronic transactions.

The "All Italy's data 2023" Award

The ceremony is accompanied by the exclusive presentation of the "All Italy's data 2023" Report, a survey that aims to measure the state of the Italian tourism offer, as experienced and narrated by online users between 2022 and 2023.

Compared with last year's edition, the data collected by The Data Appeal Company - Almawave Group saw a sharp increase: from 770 thousand points of interest analysed in 2022, to 876 thousand this year. Points of interest (POIs) are defined as all activities related to the tourism industry reviewed online, such as hotels, restaurants, cafes, museums, galleries and any other attractions. In contrast, online reviews and comments collected and normalized by websites, portals and social networks grew from 33 million to 40 million, reflecting a strong recovery in tourism across the country.

Among the most interesting aspects that emerged from this year's report is that the analysis of accommodation rates, online portal saturation (i.e., sales on online tourism platforms), and sentiment for the June-September period clearly shows that while average rate and saturation move together, these are inversely proportional to Sentiment. This data trend is symptomatic of a picture in which, as costs rise, travelers have higher expectations of service and quality, which however fail to materialize due to the increased pressure of mass tourism on supply. In other words, this year many visitors complained of a worsening of the overall experience in the face of a marked increase - particularly in some cities - in hotel and non-hotel rates compared to 2022.

Regarding the origin of visitors who spent their vacations in Italy, the top markets - after Italians themselves - are tourists from Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. Foreigners, in total, account for 56.8% of visitors. Compared to 2022, there was a sharp decline in Italians (-5%) against an increase in foreigners (+5%), mainly from English-speaking countries.

The ranking of the top 10 attractions most commented on and appreciated by tourists indicate many differences from 2022: the Colosseum (in first place) and Milan Cathedral (in fourth place) - absent from the ranking last year - star once again - perhaps due to the increase in international arrivals this year. The Tower of Pisa and the Pantheon ranked second and third, respectively.
Sentiment reached record levels, exceeding 95/100 in several cases.

For the first time ever, The Data Appeal Company - Almawave Group, also wanted to analyze the **popularity of wineries**: wine and food offerings actually remain one of the Peninsula's most attractive elements and deserve special attention.

The top three most highly rated wineries in Italy, in order of ranking, were: Tenuta di Castellaro (Lipari); Castello di Verrazzano (Greve in Chianti); Antinori in Chianti Classico (San Casciano Val di Pesa).

A total of 129 thousand facilities were surveyed for accommodation. Sentiment is 85.1/100, down slightly from the previous period. The area where sentiment registers higher than the Italian average is Southern Italy, with 86.7/100. Staff, again this year, is the most discussed and most liked topic in reviews (sentiment 94.2/100), followed by catering and cleanliness.

For **short-term rentals**, i.e., vacation homes, private houses, room rentals and apartments, 175 thousand active online offers were to be found in Italy. Sentiment expressed by travelers for this category of lodging remains very high, although slightly down from the previous 12 months: 90.2/100. Location and host are the aspects with the highest sentiment in the eyes of visitors among the most discussed topics. Internet connection however gives rise to criticism and is clearly poorer than that offered by hotels.

In the area of **establishments and catering**, 336 thousand restaurants, bars, pizzerias and various establishments were analyzed. Sentiment is 86.4/100, basically stable compared to 2022. Among the most discussed topics, hospitality and location are the aspects that register the highest sentiment, and together with atmosphere and food quality, weigh most heavily on the overall visitor experience. The perception of costs was very negative, with a Sentiment Score of 52/100.

The analysis of attractions, with 141 thousand active online (parks, museums, monuments and others) records a very high sentiment of 90.9/100 again this year, a slight increase from 2022. Location and atmosphere are the most appreciated aspects. Costs are the most criticized aspect, with a sentiment of 61/100, along with accessibility (69/100), highlighting the growing importance of the issue of inclusiveness in the world of culture and tourism as well.

For any further details, please refer to the "All Italy's data 2023" Report, available in its entirety at this link: https://datappeal.io/it/italia-destinazione-digitale/

The Data Appeal Company - Almawave Group

The Data Appeal Company, through a proprietary algorithm based on artificial intelligence, machine learning and semantic analysis collects, measures and analyzes all feedback posted online, combining it with geographic and contextual data. For companies - across all sectors - it leverages human experience to help them with business decision-making, gain in-depth market knowledge and establish a competitive advantage. The Data Appeal Company SpA (formerly Travel Appeal) was acquired in 2022 by Almawave Spa, a company listed on the Euronext Growth Milan market of the Italian Stock Exchange and belonging to the Almaviva Group. The company's mission is to democratize and simplify the use and understanding of data to help companies and institutions make effective and informed decisions.www.datappeal.io

Almawave profile

Almawave S.p.A., an Almaviva Group company, is an Italian Artificial Intelligence and written and spoken natural language processing player. Almawave leverages cutting-edge proprietary technologies and applied services to deliver upon the potential of AI as enterprises and the public sector evolve digitally. An international focus is provided by Almawave do Brasil and Almawave USA. The Group has dedicated technology laboratories and over 400 professionals with significant expertise of enabling technologies and the main frameworks - Big Data, Data Science, Machine Learning, AI Architecture and Integration - in addition to broad business process knowledge. Almawave's technological asset base, conceived and built as a model of natural experience in the interaction between man and machine, can interpret text and voice in 40 languages, interacting in multi-channel mode, analyzing data and information with a view to knowledge development and automation. The company has a customer base of over 300, with thousands of final users of its platforms. Two new companies were added to the Group scope: The Data Appeal Company, operating with an AI-based product in the world of location intelligence for the Tourism, Fintech and Retail and Sistemi Territoriali, offering decision support system solutions, Geo spatial analytics and Big Data expertise in the Utilities and Government sectors. www.almawave.it

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