

# Bella Vita

FAMIGLIA, TRADIZIONE e SURF

UNA PELLICOLA DI JASON BAFFA



JASON BAFFA FILMS in association with HAYMAKER PROJECTS present

## BELLA VITA

starring CHRIS DEL MORO / DAVE RASTOVICH / CONNER & PARKER COFFIN / LEONARDO FIORAVANTI  
with ALESSANDRO PONZANELLI / LAUREN L. HILL / ALESSANDRO FORTE & FRATELLI FRACAS  
edited by CARL CRAMER & TING POO / director of photography SCOTT KASSENOFF  
music by LEE FERRIS & DAVID BOWICK / music supervision BRYAN RAY TURCOTTE  
executive producers JASON BAFFA / SCOTT GRIEST / GREG SCHULTZ / ANH-THU LE  
produced by ANH-THU LE and GREG SCHULTZ

directed by JASON BAFFA





**Athletes, Leonardo Fioravanti, Chris del Moro and Dave Rastovich with Director Jason Baffa will be available for interviews upon request.**

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A SURFER'S JOURNEY THROUGH ITALY REVEALS A MODERN WORLD OF CULTURE, TRADITION AND PASSION

A JASON BAFFA FILM



# BELLA VITA

**Run Time:** 86 min

**Genre:** Documentary

**Aspect:** 1:1:28

**Audio:** 5.1 Surround

**Directed by:** Jason Baffa

**Starring:** Chris del Moro & friends

**Produced by:** Greg Schultz & Anh-Thu Le

**Executive Producers:** Jason Baffa, Scott Griest, Anh-Thu Le, Greg Schultz

**Production Company:** Jason Baffa Films in assoc. with Haymaker Projects

## PRESS NOTE

Filmmaker Jason Baffa, known for the modern surf genre classics **One California Day, 2009** and **Singlefin: yellow, 2004**, joins professional surfer, artist and environmentalist Chris del Moro to make **Bella Vita**, an exploration of the blossoming and first-time-documented by an international team, Italian-surfing-scene.

Both from Italian-born-fathers, Del Moro and Baffa spent three months traveling the Italian countryside not only in search of rideable surf but on a quest to re-connect with their Italian heritage and study how a land of old-world-tradition is embracing the modern sub-culture of surfing.

At age 30, Del Moro has made a career of chasing the world's best waves, **Bella Vita** finds him at a transition in life with an urge to find a deeper meaning to his travels and life experiences. The film captures him during this journey and explores the importance of family and culture in life. It also exposes to the world, that against popular belief, there are world-class waves in the Mediterranean Sea.

Baffa, who has proven a strength in romantically capturing the surfing aesthetic and ideals through independent productions puts emotional weight in **Bella Vita** taking the audience to a place beyond a surf film. Baffa comments, "**Bella Vita** is at it's heart, an intimate story about life as seen through the eyes of surfers."

Produced on a very tight budget, **Bella Vita's** crew consisted of director Baffa, cinematographer Scott Kassenoff and camera assistant Jonathon Taylor. The three man team wrangled all production including, an audio recording package, two high-speed 35mm film cameras, 3 digital cinema units and 2 super 16mm film units. A grass-roots endeavour would be the best way to describe the 108 day shoot.

The Los Angeles producing team, Anh-Thu Le, Scott Griest, Jason Baffa and Greg Schultz credit success to the support of the Italian people like the Castellani Wine family who offered free housing during the shoot and Jeep, who supported with the use of three vehicles during the trip. Baffa stated, "without the support of the people of Italy and the fine people at Jeep with free trucks, this film never could have happened."

The production also utilized crowd-funding through kickstarter.com to raise much needed finishing funds for the project. The 30 day campaign raised over \$30,000 USD that went towards editorial, sound and finishing costs.

**Bella Vita** is currently accepting offers for distribution in all territories.

## SYNOPSIS

Born of mistral winds and witness to the birth of Western Civilization, the waves of the Italian coast have carried merchants, fishermen, travelers and kings. Preserved like a Roman ruin, the surf of the Italian coast now carries surfer, artist, and environmentalist Chris Del Moro on a pilgrimage back to his ancestral homeland to explore a culture where old-world-convention and traditional craftsmanship have matured into a modern surf lifestyle and destination.

Filmmaker Jason Baffa chronicles Chris and his friends Dave Rastovich, Lauren Lyndsey Hill, Conner & Parker Coffin and Italian stand-outs Alessandro Ponzanelli and Leonardo Fioravanti as they explore the burgeoning new surf culture blossoming among the Mediterranean's oldest and cherished traditions.

A visual epic captured in stunning 35mm, **Bella Vita** is an intimate and powerful journey of self-discovery, seeped in culture, tradition, and passion- where family comes first.



## CAST BIOS

### Chris del Moro

30 years old - International full time traveling surfer and avid environmentalist. Chris is half-Italian and spent a great deal of his childhood in Florence and exploring the coast of Tuscany. As the feature character of the film, he bridges the gap of global nomad and native that ties the rest of the cast to the film's story and themes. Chris' passion is to restore the Mediterranean environmentally to its bountifulness of his grandfather's memories.

### Dave Rastovich

33 years old & girlfriend Lauren Hill – Dave has the privilege of traveling the world as a professional free-surfer and is considered as one of the most talented surfers in the world today. Driven by his personal beliefs and convictions "Rasta" is far more than just a surfer and devotes large portion of his time to combatting the ever growing issue of ocean pollution and the affects it has on it's inhabitants including the Mediterranean. His partner and traveling companion is the beautiful, surfer, model and environmentalist Lauren Hill. Together, they spread joy, aloha and a focused commitment to improving the environment.

### Conner & Parker Coffin

19 and 17 years old - Santa Barbara, California brothers who are second-generation Italian. The Coffins, while young, are quickly rising in the professional surfing ranks with their incredible aerial-approach while still rooted in classic full rail-to-rail, power surfing. For a second year in a row, Conner won the US Open of Surfing Pro Junior, Huntington Beach (2012 & 2013). The duo runs their own blog called, [youngwisetails.com](http://youngwisetails.com) that elicits around 50,000 hits per month. They just released their firstself-made short film, **Electric Wilderness**.

### Leonardo Fioravanti

16 years old – Born and raised in Rome, Leo started surfing Lazio's shores at age six and is Italy's first surfing prodigy. He has dominated every Junior-division competition in the world, including winning the 2012 European Championships and taking 2nd place at the 2013 International Pro Junior event (Leo was the only surfer representing Italy). Leonardo is in the process of putting Italy on the surfing map.

### Alessandro Ponzanelli

28 years old – Recognized as Italia's most respected and soulful free-surfer, Alessandro perfectly expresses classic Italian style of grace, un-inhibited ambition and bold lines in his 1960's inspired longboard surfing. He spends half the year working for his sponsor Sundek and the other half chasing waves throughout the Mediterranean Sea.





## Filmmaking Team

### Jason Baffa

#### executive producer / director & camera

Award winning filmmaker, Jason Baffa, has been working on his craft for over 30 years. On the heels of his independent film success with **One California Day** and **Singlefin: yellow**, Baffa continues to work as a director/dp and has shot multiple commercial and film assignments for advertisers, studios and other filmmakers.

Among recent productions was directing, *One Beach*, presented by Barefoot Wine (E.J. Gallo) which screened at numerous film festivals including South by Southwest and did a television premiere on the Sundance Channel. The film was created for a new-era-digital-release, premiering on Facebook to a live audience and available for online-stream-viewing on it's dedicated micro-site. Baffa's filmmaking background and work as a commercial director & cameraman (Patagonia Clothing, Oakely, SPY Sunglasses, Ford Motors, Kashi) and reputation as a modern surf-genre innovator, fuel **Bella Vita** with an intimate and romantic perspective woven amongst an awe-inspiring travel pictorial.

### Anh-Thu Le

#### executive producer

Anh-Thu Le – Executive Producer. With twenty years of experience in commercial advertising, Anh-Thu holds the position of Executive Producer at a global Advertising Agency in Los Angeles, California, where she manages and produces commercials for the likes of Apple, Nissan, Infiniti, Activision, International Olympic Committee (IOC), Sony PlayStation, Crate & Barrel, The Grammys, & Pepsi to name a few.

She is experienced in over-seeing and filming award-winning international productions in six continents and knows what-it-takes to deliver projects on schedule and on budget. Her passions evolve around bringing 'ideas' to life across different formats & platforms. In addition to working with some of the largest brands and top film-directors in advertising, Anh-Thu finds pleasure and contributes time to producing awareness films for non-profit organizations such as Movember, OPCC Women's Shelter, and the Nguyen Foundation - an organization focused on women's health in Vietnam.

She is a longtime resident of Manhattan Beach where her and Baffa became close friends. This is their first co-production, a long awaited venture in the making.

### Greg Schultz

#### executive producer & branded content specialist

Emmy Award-winning producer Greg Schultz, draws on over 20 years of producing experience. In particular, he specializes on initiatives that emphasize exploring new entertainment formats for reaching increasingly fragmented consumer audiences on multiple distribution platforms.

Schultz's recent producing credits include the pilot for the 2008 Emmy Award-winning Best Drama *Mad Men* on AMC; the 2006 Emmy Award-winning History Channel documentary series *10 Days that Unexpectedly Changed America*; the documentary series, *Iconoclasts*, created for the Sundance Channel in 2005; and the docu-reality series *Battlegrounds*, which ended a three year run on MTV in 2005. Schultz has held Executive Producer positions at @radical.media, RSA Films (the forty- year old commercial production house of Ridley and Tony Scott) and Epoch Films / Dandelion (producers of *Junebug* and *Gigantic*) where he advised and set up the branded entertainment divisions of these companies.

### Scott Griest

#### executive producer / production finance & marketing specialist

As National Promotions & Event Manager for American Isuzu Motors (the distributor of passenger SUVs Trooper and Rodeo in the US market), Scott understands how to deliver value to sponsors by maximizing their sponsorship investments. He spent over eight years in various corporate marketing positions with both Volkswagen of America and American Isuzu Motors developing marketing programs to support brand initiatives, drive consumer traffic to showrooms.

Scott also produced countless corporate video productions including Isuzu's NPR Product Launch project that won a Silver Medal at the New York Film Festival. He was principal investor in Baffa's *Singlefin: yellow* and *One California Day*.



## Filmmakers continued

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Director of Photography:</b> | Scott Kassenoff                |
| <b>Camera Operators</b>         | Jason Baffa & Scott Kassenoff  |
| <b>Film Editors:</b>            | Carl Cramer & Ting Poo         |
| <b>Additional Editing:</b>      | Jason Baffa & Adam Lichenstein |
| <b>Oringal Score:</b>           | Lee Ferris & David Bowick      |
| <b>Music Supervision:</b>       | Bryan Ray Turcotte             |
| <b>Sound Mix:</b>               | Chris Carpenter                |





## CHRIS DEL MORO - interview

INTERVIEWER:

What are your early memories of traveling through Italy?

DEL MORO:

Yeah, well I guess for me what, what I think of when I think of my earliest memories of being in Italy is my first kind of taste of independence. It was really my first little bit of freedom. My mom would let me go at the airport in LAX and I'd go on this 15, 16 hour flight by myself, which was, I can remember being pretty intense as a kid you know, because I was only six years old and I'd leave LA which was one world, and show up in Florence which was like a completely polar opposite of where I just left.

When I think back on my time as a child, it was, it felt like a fantasy land like I'd come over here (Italy) and it was like I was in some movie. It was the time when I was out of school so I'd spend 2 ½, 3 months a year gettin' to explore with my dad and his wife and all my family over here and got to do things that we didn't do in California. Just a different vibe, a different style. Everything was Italian style. It was big family, big parties, a lot of eating, a lot of nature, and I spent a lot of time with my grandmother, which was an amazing thing for me because she's a great cook, a really loving woman, and she taught me a lot.

I feel a lot of gratitude for that because I, I got to kinda shape who I am with their help and with also, you know, my independent spirit. It was a really important time for me and I think I wouldn't take any of it back. It wasn't always easy for sure you know, having two parents and the turmoil that comes along with that isn't always the best, but at the same time there was a lot of gifts within it.

INTERVIEWER

Can you outline the dynamic of how your geographies got separated?

DEL MORO

Well, my mother is also a traveler and she came to college here in Florence and she came to explore something new, and fell in love with my father, and pretty soon there after was a little Christopher, and we spent my first five years, just over five years here in Italy and things between my mother and father went their own separate ways so we left Italy.

My mom and I went back to the states and my grandparents took care of us and from there I kind of, had already started a relationship with the ocean but as soon as I got back to California my cousins, really my whole family ended up raising me, you know because my mother went to chiropractic school and so I had a lot of time by myself and from that point on they found it important that I still have that father figure and have time with my dad. So, I was sent every summer for 2 ½ to 3 months to come and explore and stay with my father in Tuscany and kinda went on his journey as he moved around Italy. So I got to see a lot of different things and up until about fifteen, I spent every summer here. It was this wild way to just pull yourself out of Southern California culture and have this whole other life, whole other language, whole other way of doing things.

INTERVIEWER

it's been fifteen years since you've really been able to put time in like we are now, right?

DEL MORO

Definitely. Yeah, through my childhood I was lucky enough to, you know spend my summers here and have brief encounters with the culture, but from fifteen till thirty I, there was a big gap.

## CHRIS DEL MORO - interview cont'd

This is really my first time I've been able to kind of put the rest of my world on pause and really dive back into my culture and experience it with fresh eyes as an adult and, and really get to have this amazing time with my family and introduce my friends to this place. This is the first time I've ever done that. It's just a whole new experience. I'm not a little boy anymore, and I feel like seeing it as a man, has just been a really special and eye-opening experience and perfect timing for where I'm at in my life.

INTERVIEWER

What have you learned kind of about yourself sharing it with your close friends?

DEL MORO

I think a lot about my culture, you know, a lot, a lot. I've thought about the split, and the dynamics of my family. My friends in California, I've realized that a lot, a lot of times things are more personal. You're personal. You end up spending more time with a select amount of friends and sometimes that makes me a little closed off. You know?

I go into my little safety bubble and I'm comfortable there. Where in Italy, there's no safety bubble. It's like you're open and on all the time and you're always with friends and family and that's something that I don't want to neglect when I go back home. Just the ability to be open and share with large groups is maybe something that I've learned to kind of close down a little bit from life in Southern California cause I'm a lot more weary of where I place my energy with people. I don't feel like I need to be as weary in Italy. So maybe taking that spirit and traveling with it and living in that is something I find really important and eye opening to coming back from Italy.

INTERVIEWER

The Weather and surfing experience in Italy is pretty unique?

DEL MORO


Well from what I've seen this time around, Italian weather patterns are very dynamic and very fast moving, I think that has to do with the fact that we are on this very narrow strip of land surrounded by water. So, one second it's just a gale force wind with white caps as far as you can see, and literally an hour later it can be surfable, fun. It could even be off shore and an hour later it can be flat.

So forecasting in Italy is not easy. It takes a lot of energy and dedication and passion to be in the right place at the right time and most importantly like the pattern of weather themselves, it's an emotional experience. You are taken through the highs and lows of the surf stoke. You know? You're wanting it but it's not always there to have and sometimes you think it will be there and you just have to be very open to, to what nature is gonna give to you. It's not always easy to read but so rewarding when it all comes together. The majority of Italians don't even think there are waves in Italy. But there are surfable waves in Italy. There is no question about that!

For me I get very uplifted when I'm in the Italian surf culture cause it feels fresh. I feel like we're just starting to see you know, this wave of Italian surfer that's kind of the next level. This new generation and it's exciting. I think there will be plenty of great things to come from Italian surfers in the future.

I'm honored to capture just a small portion of that with our film, **Bella Vita**.



A full-page photograph of a surfer in a black wetsuit performing a high takeoff from a wave. The surfer is in mid-air, with their arms outstretched and legs bent. A large, white splash of water is visible behind the surfer, indicating the point of exit from the wave. The water is a deep teal color. The overall image has a grainy, cinematic quality.

for more:  
[bellavitafilm.com](http://bellavitafilm.com)