

THE **EDEN** MAGAZINE

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Academy Award winner Paolo Sorrentino ("The Great Beauty"), as well as the director and creator of the Emmy Nominated television series "The Young Pope," starting Jude Law, was present at the London Hotel in Los Angeles to accept the inaugural Italian Television Award at the first-ever Italian Television Festival (ITTV), for his contribution as an Italian filmmaker internationally, and for successfully bringing Italian stories to the forefront of the entertainment industry. The actual award, called "Hand...The Winner Is" was custom-made by Italian artist Fidia Felaschetti and inspired by his neo-pop piece "You Hand Me." The award is a sculpture of a hand holding a remote control to symbolize the modern-day viewer's freedom to choose whatever she/he so desires.

The Festival is the brainchild of Valentina Martelli, Francesca

Scorcucchi and Cristina Scognamiglio (Good Girls Planet Productions), along with Marco Testa, president of Armando Testa Group. The evening was a kick-off of what will become an annual Italian TV Festival in Los Angeles.

"The point of this Festival is that Italy is producing so much content with really good talent, and it's starting to be recognized internationally. It's an Italian TV renaissance," says Martelli. "It's a never-ending market, so why not bring this opportunity to the states?"

Netflix has opened the door to many international titles. The demand is such that television, and not just Netflix, but all streaming services, are seeking out more non-domestic programming to fill the tastes and needs of the North American viewer.



Sorrentino's original television series "The Young Pope" (HBO), has been loved by critics and audiences and garnered several nominations including a win in Italy with the Nastro D'Argento. The follow up to the success of the show is the highly anticipated second series "The New Pope." The ITTV Festival had the honor of screening the US premiere of the trailer.

Sorrentino accepted his "Hand...The Winner Is" award, and in modest fashion, as he's quite shy about speaking in front of large groups said, "I'm not good at speaking in public but I'm good at receiving awards and arranging them at home. I'll put this one close to my Oscar."



I had a chance to speak with Sorrentino. He was very honored and humbled to be a part of the Festival and understood the importance of what Martelli, Scorcucchi, Scognamiglio, and Testa were hoping to achieve with ITTV, "It's a necessary event, today."

I was curious to know what Sorrentino felt was the most significant difference between working for Italian television versus American. "There isn't much of a difference. The language is universal. And when it's universal we all get it and understand it no matter what the characters are speaking. There's a lot of excellent work going on in Italy right now."



When I asked about how his life has changed since winning his Oscar, he didn't have to even think about it and immediately responded, "It has not changed at all because my wife keeps me grounded. All credit goes to my lovely wife Daniela (D'Antonio), for making sure that nothing has changed."

Many Italian filmmakers (not just Italians) grow up dreaming of working and making it in Hollywood. I asked Sorrentino if as a child, growing up in Naples, Italy, did he ever dream of one day winning an Oscar, working in Hollywood, or being presented the first-ever ITTV award? He smiled and said an emphatic, "No." And then went on to say that when he was growing up, he didn't know what he wanted to be. If anything, he said, he wanted to be a soccer player. But at 18 something changed. He started thinking about movies, and the rest is history.

Sorrentino and his family have recently moved to Los Angeles for one year. He was not able to discuss his reason for being here or divulge any details of his upcoming project. But with Sorrentino's highly creative vision, we can't wait to see what he comes up with next.

Among the other guests who attended the event were, Jarred Harris, ("Chernobyl"), nominated for 19 Emmys, Francesco Baudo ("Ford vs. Ferrari"), Moran Atlas ("The Village"), Emanuela Postacchini ("Who Is America"), Logan Laurice Browning ("Dear White People"), Stefania Spampinato ("Grey's Anatomy"), Massi Furlan ("Versace, American Crime Story"), James Kyson ("Heroes"), Lorenzo Lamas ("Lucha Underground"), Shawna Craig ("Housewives of Beverly Hills"), Oscar-nominated composer Marco Beltrami, and producer Martha De-Laurentis.

The Festival was sponsored by the Consulate General of Los Angeles and the ITA, the Italian Trade Agency.