



SAN DONATO

by Darren Henderson & Nadine Smith

F E S T E D E L L A C H I E S A S A N D O N A T O

A U G U S T 5 T H & 6 T H 2 0 0 6



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SAN DONATO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARREN HENDERSON & NADINE SMITH

IMAGING
Aspect

One's sense of community is largely defined by one's willingness to engage in the lives of those around them. Nowhere is a sense of community more obvious than amidst a church's congregation. Every Sunday Catholic mass is given in churches around the world. However, dotted throughout the rural landscape of Italy are smaller churches whose doors only open once a year.

In August 2006, Nadine and I traveled through the Piemonte region of northern Italy to the town of Cantarana (45 minutes from Torino). During our stay we were privileged to participate in "Feste della chiesa San Donato" (Festival of the church San Donato).

The festival began on a Saturday night with dinner entitled "Cena della chiesa San Donato". Amidst the lively chatter, seven or eight courses were devoured along with a plentiful amount of 'vino'. To help raise money locals handed over €2 each in a competition to guess the weight of a salami. It was a great evening that concluded with young and old singing heartfelt folk songs.

On the Sunday afternoon a mass was given by the priest from Cantarana. The small church of San Donato can only accommodate around 15 to 20 people, so most sit quietly and listen from outside the church. Humorously for an outsider, but seriously for those that work the land, the mass concluded with the blessing of a tractor.

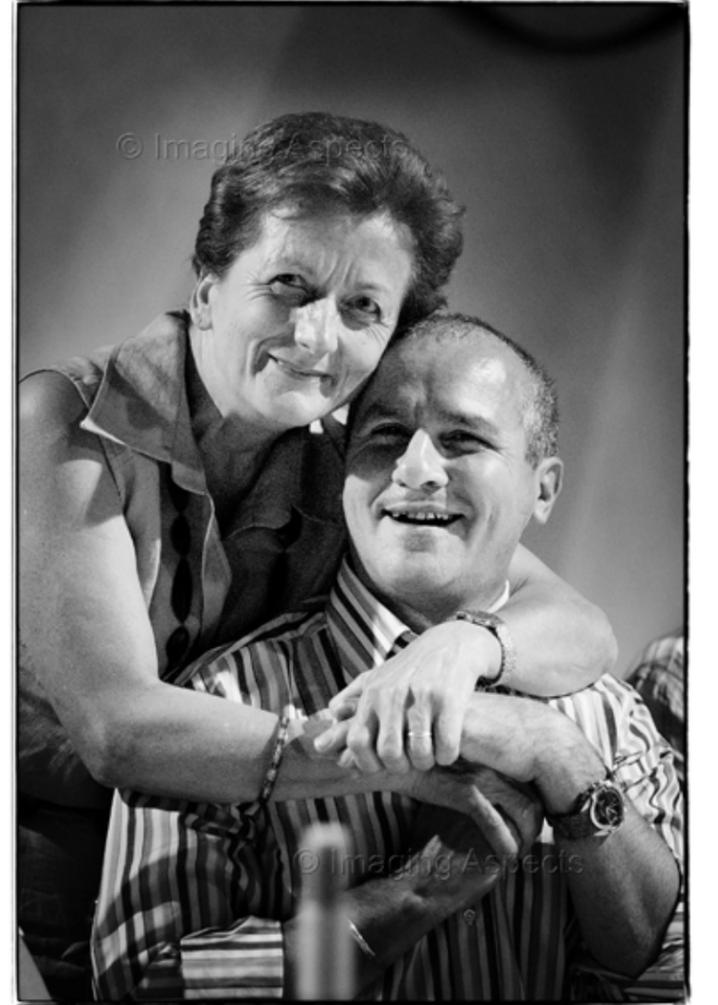
Money was also raised with a cake stall and the auction of an original painting by local watercolourist Michael Carr (British born). The Italians live to eat, so there was more food and wine as the afternoon continued. At "Feste della chiesa San Donato" everyone got involved; from infants to the 86 year old farmers that still work the land.

Darren Henderson
September 2006

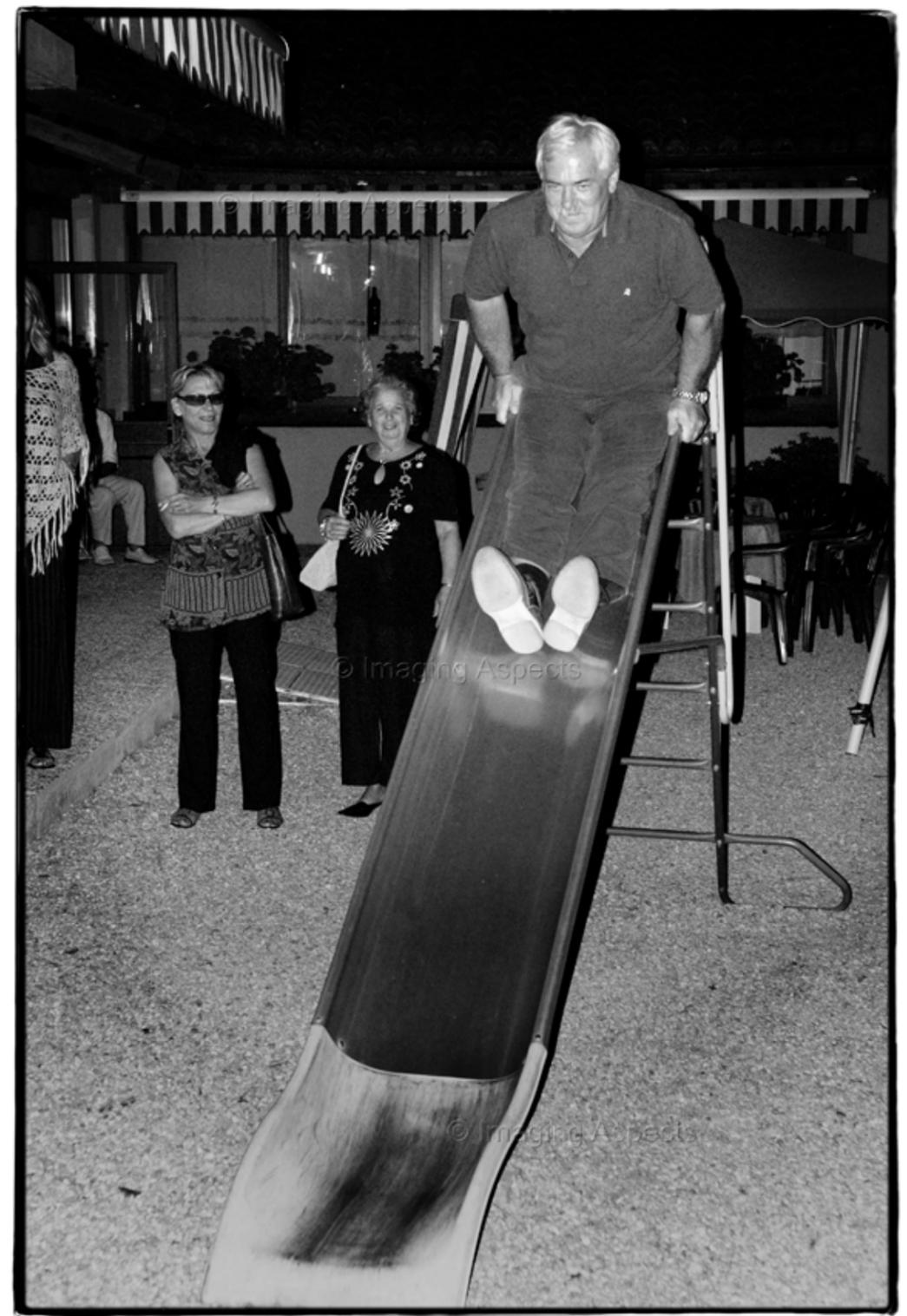




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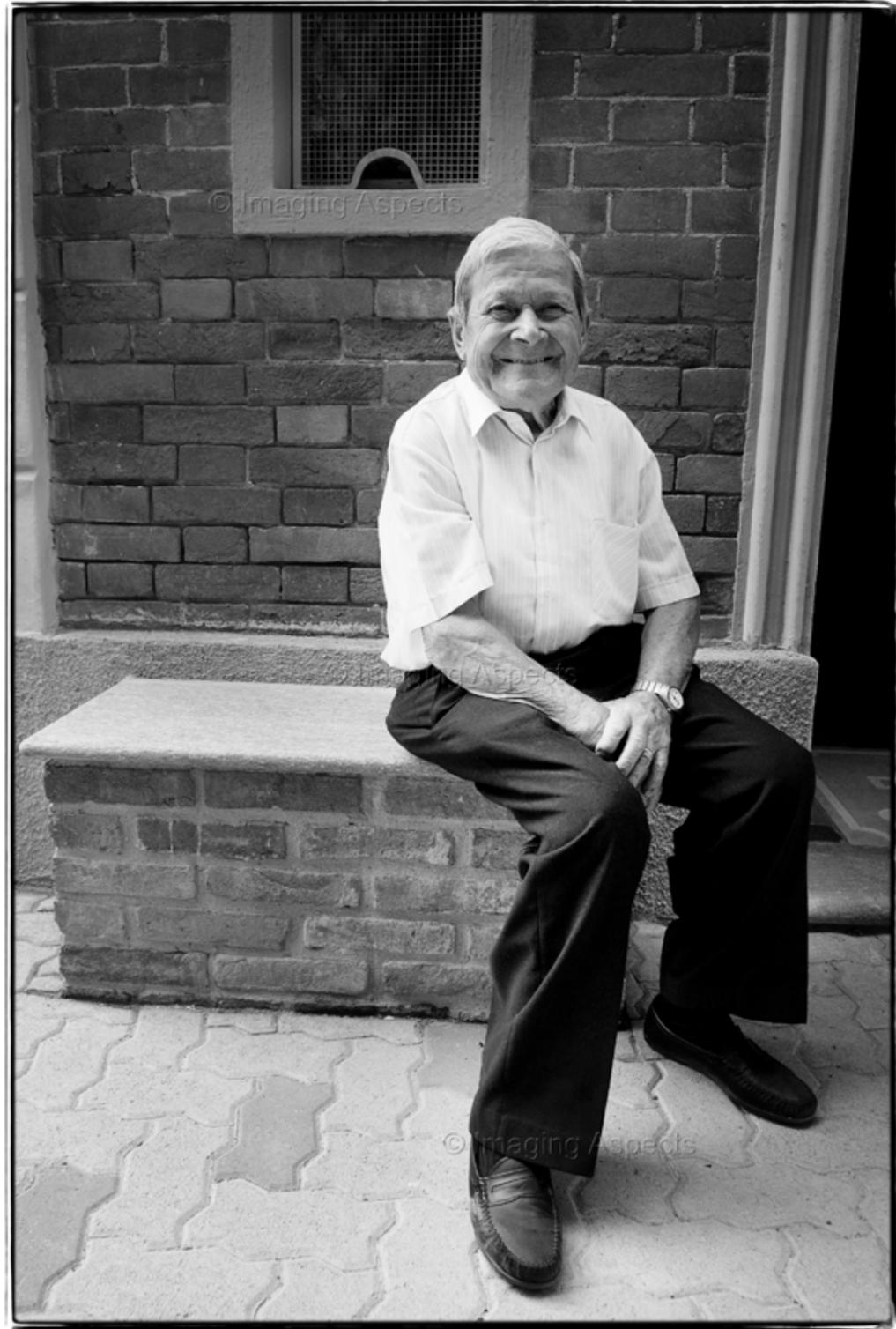
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By the time Sunday afternoon had come to a close, I walked away for *San Donato* feeling moved by what the people of Canatarana had shown and shared with us.

Grazie Mille.