



"Fine pena mai"

The Italian Job

Versatile locations, modern studio facilities and strong incentives have transformed the Apulia region of Italy into a world-class shooting destination

By Eric J. Lyman

ROME — Apulia, tucked away in the southeastern most corner of Italy, is taking steps aimed at placing it right in the sights of filmmakers looking to make a movie in Italy.

The region that makes up the heel of Italy's boot-shaped peninsula has taken steps in the last three years that leapfrog into many discussions about filming locations in Italy, ranging from the establishment of a film commission, the development of two "Cineporto" film labs, and a wide-ranging program with local cinemas aimed at creating a generation of sophisticated moviegoers.

"The region has always had great natural gifts, whether the beauty of its mountains or beaches or its historic buildings," says Oscar Iarussi, the president of the Apulia Film Commission. "All we've done is taken a few steps to give people another reason to take a look."

The effort to transform sleepy Apulia into a world-class location for making films began in 2007 when a tiny film fund operated by the city of Lecce was folded into a region-wide alternative, creating the Apulia Film Commission. The commission's budget draws on funds from the regional government, all of the region's provincial governments, and most of its cities. It is worth a modest €1.6 million (\$2.25 million), but organizers take steps to lever-