

The school of gladiators in Rome
THE LAST GLADIATORS

by Carmine Flamminio/IPPA



ROME, THE DE FACTO NATURAL CAPITAL OF IRREDEEMABLY INSPIRED DREAMERS, WAS STILL THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE OLD ROMAN EMPIRE. ABOUT 2000 YEARS AFTER THE END OF THE EMPIRE, SERGIO IACOMONI, A BANKER BORN IN 1952 IN THE MEDIEVAL TOWN OF VITERBO, SET UP THE GLADIATOR SCHOOL IN THE STREET WHERE THE FAMOUS REBELLION OF THE SLAVES COMMANDED BY SPARTACUS TOOK PLACE IN 73 BC.

SINCE NEWS OF SCHOOL'S SETTING BROKE AFTER FEW DAYS, HUNDREDS OF VISITORS COME FROM THE US AND RUSSIA. PARTICULARLY AMERICANS ARE OBSESSED WITH THE HISTORY OF ROME AND THE GLADIATORS. THE SCHOOL CURRENTLY HAS FOUR INSTRUCTORS, INCLUDING ONE WOMAN. THE INSTRUCTOR CAN USE A GLADIO - A SWORD ABOUT 60CM LONG - AND A SHIELD. THEY DON'T RISK PEOPLE'S LIVES. THE WEAPONS USED - LANCES, SMALLSWORDS, BOWS SPEARS, TRIDENTS AND ARROWS - ARE EXACTLY THE SAME. FOR INSTANCE, THE WOODEN SWORDS ARE EXACTLY THE SAME MEASUREMENTS AS REAL ONE BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE A SHARP POINT THAT COULD CUT YOU.

THE REBELLION OF THE 73 BC WAS A VIOLENT BATTLE. ROME WON AND SPARTACUS AND THE SLAVES LOST. THOUSANDS WERE CRUCIFIED ALONG VIA APPIA ANTICA, THE ANCIENT ROMAN ROAD, WITH A CROSS EVERY 100 METRES. LEGEND HAS IT THAT SPARTACUS WAS CRUCIFIED IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL.

TODAY SERGIO IACOMONI - ALSO KNOWN AS NERONE - IS THE CHIEF OF THE GLADIATORS OF ROME. "RUSSELL CROWE HAS HELPED US" SERGIO IACOMONI SAYS. "WITH THE FILM GLADIATOR HE GENERATED A BIT OF EXCITEMENT AROUND GLADIATORS AND KICK-STARTED A FASHION. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE MOST EXCITABLE - THEY COME WITH THEIR FRIENDS. I LOVE SEEING VERY RICH PEOPLE - IMPORTANT MANAGERS, POLITICIANS AND OTHERS - GET COVERED IN MUD, DUST AND SWEAT TO EXPERIENCE THE FEELING OF BEING A GLADIATOR".







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