



**“MY ITALIAN SECRET: The Forgotten Heroes,” Directed by Oscar®-Nominated Director Oren Jacoby and Narrated by Isabella Rossellini to Have U.S. Theatrical Premiere on March 27**

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**March 4, 2015, New York, N.Y. – MY ITALIAN SECRET: The Forgotten Heroes**, directed by Oscar®-nominated director **Oren Jacoby** and narrated by **Isabella Rossellini**, will begin its national release with the U.S. theatrical premiere on March 27 at the Cinema Village in New York and at the Laemmle Music Hall in Los Angeles.

**MY ITALIAN SECRET** tells a heroic story that was all but lost to history, until now. The film recounts how WWII bicycling idol Gino Bartali, physician Giovanni Borromeo and other Italians worked with Jewish leaders and high-ranking officials of the Catholic Church, risking their lives by defying the Nazis to save thousands of Italy’s Jews. Their high-risk methods were ingenious. Bartali, a Tour de France champion, criss-crossed Northern Italy transporting fake identification documents in the frame of his bicycle. A physician, Dr. Borromeo, invented a fictitious disease to scare the SS away from the hospital where he was hiding Jews. Others disguised Jewish girls and women as nuns and hid them in convents. In this epic documentary, living characters return to Italy to reveal their stories, and to thank those who were willing to sacrifice their own lives to save strangers without ever seeking recognition or reward for their courage. Oscar®-nominated director Oren Jacoby resurrects the dramatic story of this secret underground, giving it the attention it so richly deserves.

The film draws from a vast archive of rare documentary images that were recorded by Italians, Germans, Americans and British during the war.

**MY ITALIAN SECRET** is a release of the The Film Sales Company.

To download press materials, visit: [myitaliansecret.com/press](http://myitaliansecret.com/press)

**Press screeners available upon request**

### **More About the Film**

A journey through time and memory, **MY ITALIAN SECRET** is the story of a few individuals who risked their own lives to rescue innocent people, but serves as a prism to view the larger untold story of many Italians who helped Jews during World War II. Though more than seven thousand Italian Jews died in the Shoah, eighty percent of the country’s Jewish population survived. **MY ITALIAN SECRET** presents living characters who were children in Italy under

Fascism, and who survived World War II thanks to Italians, like Bartali, willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to hide or help strangers being pursued by the Nazis.

Gino Bartali is an Italian cycling legend who won the Giro d'Italia three times (1936, 37, and 46) and the Tour de France in 1938 and 1948. But Bartali's most heroic deeds were never known during his lifetime. He risked his life time and time again, transporting documents in his bicycle frame to save Jews threatened by extermination. As an entire continent was engulfed in a genocide, which took the lives of most Jews in Nazi occupied Europe, more than eighty percent of Italy's Jews survived. Bartali, like most of the rescuers, never sought recognition or reward. Few of those he helped knew his name or what role he played in their rescue.

[myitaliansecret.com](http://myitaliansecret.com)

**MY ITALIAN SECRET** (US, 2014, 92 minutes) Directed by Oren Jacoby. Narrated by Isabella Rossellini. Cinematographer: Bob Richman. Editor: Deborah Peretz. Consulting Producer: Steven M. Engel. Voice of Gino Bartali played by Robert Loggia. A release of The Film Sales Company.

**MY ITALIAN SECRET** was funded by the **Italy and the Holocaust Foundation**, founded in 2010 as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. The Foundation's goal is to tell stories of survival that were possible because people had the courage to care for their neighbors. In sharing these little known stories, the Foundation seeks to educate generations to come. For more information, please visit: [italyandtheholocaust.org](http://italyandtheholocaust.org)

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