

## TOF!

This weekend led me to an event that seemed very interesting, especially considering the choice of my next summer holidays: the TOF-Travel Outdoor Fest 2019 of Parma, which opened Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February. In the words of the Parma Fair CEO, Antonio Cellie, "Outdoor tourism must be accessible above all. The secret of this fair is accessibility. We must make our destinations accessible. To do this you need to use light vehicles such as campers and caravans. To make them usable you need to equip yourself with good bikes, good shoes and even good golf clubs. Fiere di Parma has made an investment effort by combining more disciplines to make people understand how and how much can be varied and active tourist experience. Now it's up to the industry to get organized. There is an intermediate range of non-competitive sportsmen, even abroad, who would like to do experiential and outdoor tourism in Italy but do not always find the right offer. This Fair is the moment of ongoing formation and organization of the offer. Because without supply there can not be demand and market".

How did I find this event? From Luisa, of course, whose partner is (was?) a passionate camper. It was she who insisted that we go, arguing that, even in previous years, one of the focuses was hiking and trekking. And so we went to Parma. Overall it was a good experience, also a lot of fun, even if the results are not homogeneous. The CEO himself, in the final press release, noted the slight decline in the number of visitors compared to last year (a more than respectable result of 30,000 visitors for three days, in any case). Let's see the positive, first of all. Getting there is easy and well marked. If we didn't get lost even once, it means that the municipality of Parma has done its duty. Fast and efficient press accreditation, also provided with free parking (Innsbruck should really think about it ... to increase the number of parking spaces available for exhibitors and press - the latter are zero); many good and inexpensive bars, restaurants – of course, in Parma!- mirrored bathrooms, and even places to rest, extremely kind and enthusiastic exhibitors with a special mention to the councilor of a small town in the Pollino park, not only because Matera is the European capital of culture, but because she was truly in love with its territory. The same for the area of Volterra and Cecina in Tuscany. I had never climbed on a camper before ... I know there is always a first time and thanks to Luisa I almost wanted to buy one (it must be said, she had a greater competence than that of some sellers) ... if I survive the attack of claustrophobia that almost immediately took me on entering.

In negative ... It is one of the few business – to - client events in the sector, so I would have expected a greater presence of institutional tour operators, who have interest in favoring tourism of this type, accessible and of moderate environmental impact. Apart from my territory, sadly absent from the Piedmont stand, although very large and well stocked, many regions were missing. Little of Lombardy (only the Val Camonica) absent Liguria and much of the South. Great space, of course, Emilia, and the area of Parma. And then ... a bit too many small exhibitors (like the seller of knives, so to speak), that in an event of the kind are bit' out of tune...

There were a few well known testimonials, like former cycling champion Francesco Moser, and Davide Cassani, Team Manager of the National road cycling Team. I really love watching kids who climb and / or ride by bike, especially if girls, because I know too well how difficult it is for women's cycling to emerge on a professional level, despite the fact that in Italy there are / were champions who really won everything. My former student Gaia Tortolina, a professional biker for two years, had to look for a Belgian team to be able to emerge.

This is an event that can still grow a lot (and I really hope, because I have every intention of returning next year!)