

# Italian Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero Announces New Miami Trade Office at First Florida Official Visit

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More than 200 leaders in South Florida's business, civic, governmental and cultural communities greeted Italian Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero in his first official visit to Florida, as he announced the upcoming opening of a new trade office and other recent initiatives.

Swire Properties sponsored the May 9 reception at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Miami, and Florida law firm [Shutts & Bowen LLP](#) organized it under the patronage of the [National Italian American Foundation](#) (NIAF) and the [Italian Consulate in Miami](#) during the 2013 Year of Italian Culture in the United States. Swire, established in Hong Kong in 1972 and active in the United States real estate market since 1980, has played a major role in transforming Miami's skyline, and is now building [Brickell CityCentre](#), a 5.5-million-square-foot, \$1.05-billion mixed-use development complex comprising shops, restaurants, three office buildings, two residential towers and a 243-room hotel.

NIAF Board Member and General Counsel [Arthur J. Furia](#), a partner in Shutts & Bowen's Miami office, organized and hosted the event. Those welcoming the ambassador included: Miami's Italian Consul General and Mrs. **Adolfo Barattolo**; NIAF's Chairman **Joseph V. Del Raso**, and former FBI Director and NIAF Vice President-International **Judge Louis Freeh**.

As evidence of growing connections with South Florida, Ambassador Bisogniero announced the planned September 1 opening of a full-fledged office of the Italian Trade Commission within the offices of the Italian Consulate in Miami.

The ambassador noted that trade between the United States and Italy reached an all-time record of \$52 billion in 2012, with a 9 percent increase in Italian exports over 2011. Italy's \$21-billion trade surplus with the United States is the highest surplus Italy has with any country in the world.

Ambassador Bisogniero said that Italian companies are finding growing success in South Florida.

Miami-Dade County recently awarded [AnsaldoBreda](#) a \$300-million contract to supply a fleet of cars for the Metrorail network. A smaller Italian company, [Brieda Cabins](#), has signed a contract with the Port of Miami to supply four high-tech cabins for operating cranes. [The TREVI Group](#) has been awarded a contract for maintenance at the Herbert Hoover Dike near Lake Okeechobee. The Ambassador emphasized that Italy and Florida have common thriving economic sectors, particularly in cruise liners, port infrastructure, design, fashion, life sciences and medical research, and agro-food.

Guests at the reception included Senator Gwen Margolis, who presented the ambassador with a proclamation from the State of Florida; Miami-Dade Deputy Mayor Russell Benford, who awarded the ambassador a Distinguished Visitor Certificate; U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill of the Middle District of Florida; Shutts & Bowen partners Bowman Brown, Chair of the firm's Executive Committee, Peggy Rolando, John Mariani, Maxine Long and Francois Henriquez; Consul General of Brazil Hélio Vitor Ramos Filho; federal and state district court judges; St. Thomas University President Msgr. Franklyn Casale; Miami Museum of Science President Gillian Thomas; Dr. Carol Damian, director of the Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum at Florida International University, and Dr. Camillo Ricordi, Professor of Medicine at the University of Miami and a leading authority in cellular transplantation.

As part of the evening's entertainment, Italian-American tenor [Roberto Larussi](#) performed the national anthems of Italy and the United States for the guests. Mr. Larussi, who is regarded by many as the most important Italian-American tenor since Mario Lanza, also sang "I Believe," from his new album of the same name, recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra and produced by Grammy-award winner, Jorge Calandrelli.

The 2013 Year of Italian Culture in the U.S. showcases Italy's cultural tradition exemplified not only by artists such as Michelangelo, da Vinci, and Caravaggio, and composers such as Rossini, Verdi and Puccini, but by the nation's design, research, technology, food, wine and fashion – in a word, the Italian lifestyle. The year-long celebration involves 200 events in 50 cities. Ambassador Bisogniero presented his credentials to the president of the United States and assumed the functions of Ambassador of Italy to the United States on January 18, 2012. Prior to being named ambassador, he was NATO Deputy Secretary General, responsible for a variety of security and strategic issues. Learn more at [www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it](http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it).

Please click [here](#) to see photos of the event.