





Preface - Just a Friendly Chat

Picture this: it's a quiet morning in Venice. The Rialto Bridge is stretching awake, wrapped in the smell of fresh espresso and the salty breeze from the lagoon. Gondoliers glide by slowly, shopkeepers arrange their goods, and tourists smile as they snap their first photos of the day.

And then there's my little shop.

The shutter has just rolled up, the window display catches the light, and nestled among reflections on the glass are dozens of tiny treasures: cameos, coral, stones... and him — the star of this book.

The lucky horn.

People stop, point at it, smile.

"Does it really bring good luck?" a lady asks, pulling her coat tight.

And just like that, I begin to tell a story...



Why This New eBook

It's not a technical manual, and it's not some academic guide.

It's a conversation — like the ones I have every day in my shop.

We start with the lucky horn, and before you know it, we're talking about life, memories, dreams, old Venice, and my father.

In these pages, I'll take you through myths and legends, behind-thescenes stories and little secrets from the shop.

I'll share true stories — like the time customers crossed half the world just to buy that little horn, or when it became the perfect gift at life's big turning points. Really, I'll be telling your stories.

A Bridge Between Superstition and Art

The lucky horn is a double symbol: part folk superstition, part art.

It's the artisan's hand turning raw material — coral, gold, silver, or any apotropaic stone — into something more than beautiful.

It becomes something with a soul. And it's not just the horn.

You'll meet its travel companions: the horned hand, the "Manofico", the hunchback, and the Nazar eye.

Each with its own story, ritual, and legend.

About Me: My name's Marco Jovon, and my family has been working with coral and traditional cameos since 1934.

I grew up surrounded by wooden counters, jeweler's tools, and customers who always walked in with a story to tell.

My father used to say: "Jewelry is just the excuse — the story is the real treasure." And he was right.

So let's begin... as always... buckle up!







THE WORLD OF ITALIAN LUCKY CHARMS

In Italy, luck is a serious thing. Not quite an obsession... but close.

It's a red thread running through generations, family stories, and everyday habits.

We have this extraordinary ability to blend faith, superstition, art — and just the right touch of drama.

The lucky charm? It's the perfect symbol of that mix.

A Silent Companion

A lucky charm is that little thing you keep in your pocket without thinking — until it really matters.

Before a big exam, a trip, or an important meeting, you hold it tight. It doesn't even matter if you really believe in it.

Just having it near makes you feel... grounded.

It's like an invisible hug, a quiet sign that someone — or something — is rooting for you.



"In the shop, I see it every day."

There's the person who walks in, dead set on buying a coral horn "because it brings good luck," and then there's the one who gets drawn in by a silver horned hand or a little cobalt-blue Nazar eye hanging in the window.

And almost always, beyond the object, what people really want is a story: they want to know where it comes from, what it means, and why it's special. Sometimes I have to bite my tongue — otherwise I'd talk for hours and never stop.

But what can I say? I've got a big heart, and I believe in what I do.

And when I see someone listening, eyes sparkling with curiosity, I know I'm not just selling jewelry...

I'm passing on a piece of tradition. Not Just Superstition

A lot of people think lucky charms are something for old aunts or farmers from a century ago.

But the truth is, they're part of our culture.

Each symbol has a specific origin — some rooted in pagan rituals, others in religion, and some in everyday life.

The horseshoe? It used to protect the stables, the very heart of rural life.

The horned hand and the Manofico? Ancient gestures to ward off the evil eye, passed down through generations.

And the *cornicello*? The undisputed king — with roots going back to the Neolithic and fertility cults.



A Bridge Between Generations

A lucky charm isn't just an object — it's an **heirloom**.

It's the keepsake a grandma gives to her granddaughter, the necklace a mother passes to her girl, the pendant a friend brings back from a faraway trip with a simple, "I thought of you."

I remember one American customer who told me:

"My grandmother was from Naples," she said. "When I was a kid, she used to slip a little plastic horn into my coat pocket. I don't know if it brought me luck, but it made me feel loved."

And honestly, that's what real luck feels like to me.

Even some hand gestures we now see in the world of rock music actually have their roots in old Italian folk traditions — but we'll get to that later!

An Italy of Symbols

Every corner of Italy has its own customs, rituals, and lucky charms. It's an endless mosaic: move just a few miles, and you'll find that what one town hangs on the door, another wears around the neck. What's fiery red in one place might be carved wood or colored glass in another.

Some keep their charm at home, like a quiet guardian.

Some carry it in their pocket, ready to squeeze in decisive moments.

And some hide it — because, as they say, "luck likes to be subtle".



Every Charm Has a Story

Every community — big or small — has a story to tell about an object that "brings good luck."

And those stories shift in accent, flavor, and gesture depending on where you are.

That's the magic of Italy: a heritage of symbols and superstitions you won't find in history books, but in people's hands, in local markets, in grandma's stories, and in those little gifts given "just in case."

The Gift of Good Luck

There's an unwritten rule: a lucky charm works best when it's given to you.

Because beyond tradition, there's intention.

Whoever gives it to you is passing along a wish, a good thought, a small act of love.

And even if the magic isn't "real" in the classic sense — that feeling of protection, of someone thinking of you... that is 100% real!

Poeep Dive Calling in Good Luck: A Guide to Italian
Superstitions and Amulets







THE EVIL EYE: THE INVISIBLE ENEMY

Every Charm's Story Begins Here

Every lucky charm story starts with this: the enemy it was made to fight. Because an amulet wasn't born to be pretty — it was born to protect. And in Italy, for centuries, that "enemy" has had a very specific name: the evil eye.

What Is the Evil Eye?

In Italian folk tradition, the "*malocchio*" — or evil eye — is a stare loaded with envy or bad intentions, believed to cause misfortune, illness, or worse.

It's not black magic in the classic sense.

It's the power of envy made real — that emotion Shakespeare once called "the green-eyed monster" (Othello), capable of consuming the one who feels it... and wounding the one it's aimed at.



The ancient Romans called it "fascinum", the Greeks "baskania."

The names may change, but the idea stays the same: the gaze holds power — and that power can strike.



The Jettatore: The Bringer of Bad Luck

In Italian folklore, beyond the evil eye, there's another figure: the jettatore — someone believed to bring bad luck just by being present or saying the wrong thing.

They're not necessarily evil... but tradition says it's best to keep your distance.

In Naples, they say you can spot a true jettatore by their serious face, dark clothing, and tinted glasses.

And if one walks into a room? Someone's likely to make the horn gesture under the table — just in case.





How to Protect Yourself

To guard against the evil eye and envy — that subtle, silent kind that can even hide inside an overenthusiastic compliment — tradition created a set of gestures and amulets:

- The horn gesture: made inside your pocket or behind your back, to deflect negative energy.
- The figa hand (Manofico): a fist with the thumb tucked between the index and middle finger, another ancient shield against a hostile gaze.
- The Nazar eye: that deep blue charm said to send envy back where it came from.
- The cornetto: the most iconic protection, combining shape and material to "cut away" bad influences.
- The horseshoe: hung on the door, to stop misfortune before it even steps inside.
- The hunchback ("O' Scartellato"): a symbol of wealth and abundance.

It doesn't matter whether you believe in them literally or treat them as a kind of affectionate ritual.

The real strength of these symbols lies in the feeling they give you. Wearing them, or just keeping them close, is like carrying an invisible armor.

It makes you feel safer... and maybe, paradoxically, it's exactly that confidence that keeps bad luck away.







HIS MAJESTY: THE LUCKY HORN

Ah, the Cornetto!

No, not the warm, flaky pastry you grab at an Italian café in the morning — but the slender, curved pendant that stands as the symbol of **good luck in Italy**.

It's the king of lucky charms, the one even skeptics end up wearing... "just in case."

Ancient Origins

The cornicello has its roots in pagan and Roman cults.

Its long, curved shape is no accident: originally, it evoked the male phallus — a symbol of strength, fertility, and protection.

For the ancients, it was a way to ward off evil spirits and guarantee prosperity.

And history backs it up: at the **National Archaeological Museum of Naples** (MAN) and in the ruins of Pompeii, you can still admire phallic symbols with clear apotropaic intent — a testament to a



culture that placed great importance on protection against evil and the attraction of good fortune.

They weren't exactly the <u>Cornicello</u> as we know it today — but you could call them the "ancestors" of the modern charm.

Cornetto and Red Coral

According to tradition, the most powerful cornetto is the one made of Mediterranean red coral.

The secret of the Coral Cornetto lies in the union of form and substance:

- The form Long and slightly curved, it evokes growth and vitality, but also the spiral of life and movement — a universal symbol of protection.
- The material Red coral, born and grown in the sea, is considered a "living" substance, capable of absorbing and repelling negative energy. Its color recalls blood and life force a warm energy that protects and gives courage. Like Wine!

In short, when form and substance come together... luck shows up twice over!



18 kt Gold Cornicello

If coral is the king of the sea, then gold is the king of the land... and also of Italian grandmothers.

Because let's be honest: an Italian grandma would never tolerate a cornetto made of gold with anything less than 18 karats.

Not because she's a snob — but because in her mind, "gold" means real gold.

And in Italy, real gold is 18 kt. End of story!

And trust me, if you dare to argue, you'll end up stuck in a 30-minute lecture under the stern gaze of someone who's seen it all and has no intention of changing her mind.

But what's the difference between a gold cornetto and a coral one? Tradition says gold brings money and prosperity, while coral brings health and protection.

And here's an old saying I often repeat to customers:

"With health, you can make money — but with money, you can't always buy health."

So, to keep everyone happy and get the best of both worlds, we came up with the perfect solution: a red coral cornetto topped with an 18 kt gold cap and crown.

A little masterpiece that unites tradition, superstition... and most importantly, grandma's approval.





A brand-new Italian horn, to be truly effective, must be "activated" with a small ritual — just as tradition requires.

See Chapter 6 for the full ritual and Grandma's advice on how to turn it into a true lucky gift.

Legends, Family Stories, and Italian Spirit

There are stories that sound made up... and yet they really happened.

Once, a young man from Naples told me that on the day of his graduation, the cornetto he wore around his neck broke in two. He was frightened, but his grandmother reassured him:

"It took on a piece of bad luck that was meant for you."

Or the Argentine customer, with Sicilian roots, who bought a coral cornetto saying:

"I don't know if it will bring me luck, but I do know that every time I touch it, I'll think of my grandfather."

That's the cornetto: part shield, part memory.

But above all, it's cultural heritage — and a symbol of Italian identity.

Whoever wears it carries with them a piece of history, tradition, and that unmistakable Italian creativity: the art of turning a simple object into a distinctive sign that speaks about who we are.







THE CORNICELLO'S TRAVELING COMPANIONS

The cornetto walks never alone.

Like any self-respecting king, it travels with a court of other symbols — allies ready to stand guard against bad luck, envy, and the evil eye.

Each amulet carries its own story, and once you get to know them all, you realize they're not competitors... they're companions.

Hand Charm Mano Corno

Two fingers raised, the others folded down: an ancient gesture born as a shield against the evil eye.

Its roots go back to Roman culture — and beyond. In some parts of Italy, making the "horns" gesture toward someone is still a way to push away negativity.

The singer *Ronnie James Dio*, grandson of an Italian grandmother, made this gesture famous on heavy metal stages around the world.

But for him, it wasn't just stage theatrics — it was a genuine apotropaic gesture, something he had learned in his family.

Proof Possible Proof Possible Proof Pro





Hand Mano Fico in Coral

A closed fist with the thumb tucked between the index and middle finger: a simple gesture, yet a powerful one.

Back in Roman times, it was already used as protection against misfortune, and in some parts of Italy, it's still very popular today.

Its name comes from the fig fruit, a symbol of fertility — which is why it's often given to young couples as a wish for prosperity.

Hunchback (O' Scartellato) Charm

Small, curved, but packed with luck.

According to tradition, the lucky hunchback brings good fortune especially in business and winnings.

His smiling figure — with hat and tailcoat — appears in endless variations: wood, metal, plastic... and yes, even in gold, for those who like their luck with a touch of "luxury."

Lucky Horseshoe Charm

Hung above the door, with the ends pointing upward, it collects and holds on to good luck.

In Italy, they say it must be found on the street — never bought — to truly work.

And if you do find one... well, just make sure the horse isn't too close by! ***







Gold Nazar Eye Charm

A deep blue circle, with a white ring and a black dot at the center: an ancient symbol spread all across the Mediterranean, from Greece to Turkey.

Legend says the Nazar eye captures and deflects the envious gaze of anyone who looks at you with ill will.

In Italy, it has become especially popular in recent decades — often paired with the cornetto for full, 360-degree protection.





An Army Against Bad Luck

Many customers ask me: "But if I wear them all together, do they work even better?"

My answer is always the same: luck is also a state of mind. If you feel protected, you walk with more confidence — and that opens more doors than you'd think.

Combining several symbols isn't just about carrying more protection. It's about carrying more traditions, more stories... and as you know, I'm quite a fan of stories.



Sacred and Profane: A Perfectly Italian Match

In Italy, the sacred and the profane often walk hand in hand.

There's nothing unusual about wearing an apotropaic amulet — born from folk superstition — right next to a Christian symbol like a cross or an image of the Virgin Mary. In fact, for many, it feels completely natural: stacking different layers of protection, as if two worlds joined forces to watch over the same person.

It's another one of those Italian "magics" — blending faith, tradition, and a touch of folklore, without ever feeling like a contradiction





CORNICELLO IN ART AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

IThe cornicello is not just a lucky charm — it's a small masterpiece of craftsmanship.

From the choice of material to the final polish, every step is the result of skill, experience, and — let me say it — a good dose of love for tradition. That's why a handmade Italian Horn will never be identical to another: each one carries the "signature" of the artisan who created it.

Coral: Working with a Living Material

Mediterranean red coral is one of the most precious — and delicate materials to work with.

First, it must be carefully selected: the color should be deep, uniform, and free of major imperfections. Then comes the cutting and shaping, always following the natural lines of the branch to avoid fractures.

The final polish isn't just about beauty — it's the moment when the **Red Horn** comes alive, revealing the full depth of its color.

And believe me, when in the workshop we pass that last wool cloth over a coral Neapolitan Horn and see that vivid red light up, the satisfaction is the same as a painter adding the final brushstroke to a canvas.





Deep Dive → How We Work Coral at Eredi Jovon



Gold: Strength and Splendor

Gold — especially the beloved 18 kt kind cherished by Italian grandmothers — is a noble, durable material.

It can be shaped into thin yet sturdy forms, perfect for creating elegant, long-lasting cornicellos.

Many artisans use it to craft caps, crowns, or hooks that embellish a coral Italian Horn, combining two powerful symbols in one.

Other Apotropaic Materials

Beyond coral and yellow gold, there are other variations of the Neapolitan Horn that carry strong symbolic power.

- <u>Silver Horn</u> Considered a lunar element, silver reflects light and, by tradition, sends the evil eye "back to the sender." It's elegant, cool to the touch, and ideal for those who want discreet but constant protection.
- White Gold Horn A more modern and "fashionable" choice. It retains the strength of gold while offering a sober, contemporary look. Perfect for those who want a lucky charm to wear every day without giving up on style.
- Red Enamel Horn Necklace Especially in red, enamel offers
 an alternative for anyone who wants the color of fortune
 without using coral.

The result? A world of hornlets — each different in shape, material, and style — but all united by the same purpose: to guard, to protect, to bring a little extra luck.



Red enamel keeps the connection to vital energy and protection, but allows for special shapes and finishes — from glossy and sparkling to more matte and refined tones.

The choice of material can depend on aesthetics, budget, or simply personal taste: each option carries its own shade of meaning and a unique personality.

In the end, the amulet can be made of gold, coral... or even plastic. But the real magic only works if grandma approves.

Because a **Red Horn** may protect you from the evil eye... but nothing will ever protect you from grandma's disapproval!







RITUALS AND SUPERSTITIONS: HOW LUCK IS USED

The Italian Horn isn't a "silent" object: by tradition, it lives, breathes, and reacts with the person who wears it.

And like any true lucky charm, it comes with rules, rituals, and little superstitions that make it unique.

How to Gift a Cornicello

The golden rule: a Neapolitan Horn works best when it's received as a gift.

Why? Because beyond tradition, there's intention: whoever gives it to you is passing along a wish, a positive thought.

But if you absolutely want to buy one for yourself, just follow grandma's trick: ask the seller to give you one cent back in change.

That way, part of the Red Horn has been, technically, "gifted."



P Deep Dive → 😝 How to Gift a Lucky Italian Horn

It's not enough to just wear it: the cornicello has to be "activated." Here are a few rituals passed down from generation to generation:

Rub it between your hands to warm it up with your own energy

- Keep it in your pocket for three days before wearing it around your neck
- Put it on during an important event, so it "absorbs" positive energy



Cornicello Activation Ritual

Grab it and visualize banishing anything you want to drive away!

Focus on someone you love and power your amulet with positivity!

Connect with your cornetto by resting its tip on your left palm!

Wear proudly your super amulet and banish all your troubles!

Incant: 'Whatever you wish for me, I wish double for you!



What Never to Do

There are some "unwritten rules" that every Italian knows:

- Never lend your Italian Horn it's personal and tied to your energy.
- Never throw it away if it breaks it means it took on a misfortune in your place.
- Never leave it forgotten in a drawer the more you wear it, the more "active" it becomes.



When Amulets Speak: Stories from My Shop

I've seen customers cross half the world just to replace a cornicello identical to the one they lost, convinced that without it, bad luck would surely catch up with them.

And then there are those who wear two or three Italian Horns at once, "just to be safe" — like an armor made of symbols.

The beauty is that behind every amulet, there's a personal story: a passed exam, a love found, a business deal closed... or simply the smile of someone who feels a little more protected.







CORNICELLO TODAY

IThe Italian Horn has over two thousand years of history behind it — but it has no plans to retire.

On the contrary, it's living a second youth: from fashion runways to city streets, it's back in the spotlight... and back to bringing good luck.

Tradition Reinvented

If once it belonged mostly to grandmothers and village markets, today the cornicello has become a cross-style accessory.

Teenagers wear it with sneakers and hoodies, elegant women pair it with tailored suits, and tourists pick it as the most authentic Italian souvenir.

The difference? Nowadays, it's worn freely, without fear of mixing styles: a coral Red Horn can sit comfortably next to a smart watch and a minimalist bracelet.

And then came COVID.

After months of fear, uncertainty, and a hunger for protection, many rediscovered the value of carrying a little "bad-luck shield" with them.

It wasn't just an amulet — it became a small **sign of hope**, a concrete gesture to tell yourself "everything will be okay" — even if only for superstition's sake.





Believe in Yourself Every Day

A Special Chapter: Fortuna Mecum

Among the many ways the Neapolitan Horn has been reinterpreted in modern times, one project closest to my heart is our <u>Fortuna</u> <u>Mecum</u>.

It's a lucky ring that brings together two historic symbols: the Italian Horn, king of apotropaic protection, and the horned hand, the universal gesture against the evil eye.

The name comes from Latin and means "Fortune with me" — the very motto engraved on Roman legionnaires' rings as their personal amulet.

In this piece of jewelry, tradition and meaning meet: it's not just something beautiful to wear, but a message to carry with you every day — almost like a "combat talisman" against life's challenges.



What do I love most about it?

That whoever wears it isn't just carrying a piece of jewelry — but an idea: that luck isn't something you just sit around waiting for... it's something you call in and keep close.

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Fashion and Design

In recent years, many designers have rediscovered the charm of the Italian Horn, reinterpreting it with clean lines, unusual materials, and unconventional colors.

And here's a truth that applies even to high fashion: nothing is ever truly invented — everything gets reimagined, maybe dressed in a new style.

Even the greatest designers draw freely from tradition and craftsmanship, transforming a popular folk symbol into a runway piece.

Some present it in white gold, others in satin-finished silver, and others still in multicolored enamel.





Its iconic shape always remains recognizable — but its "face" can change depending on who creates it and the message it's meant to convey.

Page Dive → Carnicello and Traditional Italian Lucky

<u>Jewelry</u>

Shop Testimonials

In the shop, I often meet foreign tourists who, after hearing about it, come looking for "the real Italian horn."

Once, an Australian girl bought one for herself and one for her sister, telling me:

"I don't know if it will bring me luck, but every time I see it, it will remind me of Venice."

And then there are long-time customers, who come back to buy a cornicello for a newborn grandchild — as if closing a circle of family tradition.

The Future of the Cornicello

As long as people seek a little protection and a symbol that tells a story, the Neapolitan Horn will always have a place in the hearts (and pockets) of Italians.

Its strength lies exactly in this: being a simple object, yet capable of carrying centuries of culture, superstition, art, and affection.





THE REAL MEANING OF LUCK

Luck: A Strange Concept

Luck is a strange thing: it escapes precise definitions and changes face depending on who's looking at it.

For some, it's winning the lottery.

For others, it's finding a parking spot right in front of their house.

And for others still, it's simply waking up in the morning and feeling good.

The Italian Horn and other Italian lucky charms are, in the end, elegant excuses to remind us to keep hoping —

to believe that something good lies on the horizon, and that we can, in some way, draw it toward us.

A Bond Beyond the Object

When I hand over a cornicello in my shop, I'm not just selling a piece of coral or gold.

I'm passing along a story, a fragment of tradition, a little piece of Italy.

And if the person receiving it smiles, I know I've done my part.

True luck can't be bought or sold — it's cultivated in relationships, in gestures, in taking care of ourselves and of others.

The Cornicello is simply there to remind us of that.



A Personal Invitation

If you've read this far, take one thought with you: luck loves those who go looking for it.

Whether it's a cornicello in your pocket, a horned hand hanging from your rearview mirror, or a Fortuna Mecum ring on your finger — what matters most is believing in it.

Because sometimes, the very first step toward something beautiful... is simply to truly believe.

"Carry luck. Share stories. Believe."

The Biggest Hug of the World

Marco Jovon



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"A Family Affair since 1934"













CORNETTO ACCORDING TO GRANDMA CARMELA

Let me introduce you to Grandma Carmela: a graduate of the University of Life Experience, with her flowered apron that smells of fresh laundry, the mischievous look of someone who's seen it all, and a smile full of stories. She's a little bit of a magician too: superstitious, witty, and perfectly capable of turning a simple cornicello into a true talisman against the Evil Eye.



Q: Grandma, tell us the truth: does this cornicello really work?

Grandma Carmela (throwing her arms wide): Of course it does, figghiu miu! Without a cornicello, you're naked in front of the Evil Eye. It's like leaving the house without your health undershirt — you'll get sick right away!

Q: What material does it have to be made of to be truly good? Grandma Carmela (shaking her wooden spoon): Coral, gold, olive wood... all are fine, as long as it's not plastic. Plastic only brings shame! But coral, ah... coral sings against envy, like cicadas in the heat of mid-August!



Q: Is there a special way to activate it?

Grandma Carmela (making three fake spits in the air): Ptu! Ptu! Ptu! That's how you chase envy away! Then three counterclockwise turns and a quick little prayer — it never hurts. And don't forget: the cornicello has to feel the warmth of your heart... otherwise it stays as silent as an actor on stage with no audience!

Q: Some say it has to be given as a gift, others say you should buy it yourself... who's right?

Grandma Carmela (slapping her hand on the table): As a gift, always! If you buy it yourself, luck gets offended... But here's the trick: the seller gives you **one cent back as change**, and poof! You didn't pay the whole thing — a part of it was "gifted" to you. **Luck is blind, you just have to fool it a little!**

Q: Does it only protect against the Evil Eye, or also from other misfortunes?

Grandma Carmela (winking): It protects from everything: evil eye, envy, jettatori, bad news... but listen, from taxes and the mother-in-law? Not even a cornicello as big as the Empire State Building will save you!

Q: And what if grandma doesn't approve of the little horn?

Grandma Carmela (dead serious, crossing her arms): Uhhh... then it's over, figghiu miu! The horn will protect you from the Evil Eye, but from an angry grandma? Not even Saint Gennaro can save you! So always listen to grandma... and "accattate sto cornicello!"



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- Giorgio, for his elegant tie covered in little horns
- Naples, because it's as red as good wine and life itself!
- And Venice... because, despite everything, it's still Venice!





The Author



Marco Jovon was born in Venice in 1973 and grew up surrounded by the art of masterpieces created in the Jovon Jewellery. In 1998 with the passing of his father

Bruno, he inherited the family business and he proudly carries on an almost century-old tradition.

A convinced supporter of "ethical marketing" he is the curator of the highly followed **Blog specialized in Jewellery** and often participates with great pleasure in **TV Broadcasts** to support true Made in Italy.

Active member of **ASSOCORAL** (the Italian association for the protection of cameos and Italian coral) he is authorized by it as an **Official Certifier**.

Author of the E-book The Italian Red Coral which you can download for free below:

