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## Celebrating 500th Anniversary of Verrazzano's Discovery of New York Harbor

**Giovanni da Verrazzano:** (1485-1528), great Italian Explorer and Renaissance Humanist, born into noble family in Val di Greve, Tuscany, who under patronage of **King Francis I of France**, made three exploratory voyages west, hoping to find passage to the Far East.

**1524:** After a stormy departure from Europe, Verrazzano landed in present day North Carolina; turning south, then set sail up the east coast, interacting with local Native American tribes.

**April 17, 1524:** On his flagship *La Dauphine*, **1st European to enter present day New York Harbor! 500 years ago, and 85 years before Henry Hudson entered New York Bay in 1609!!**

**First European to explore entire east coast of North America**, discovering also current day Block Island and Narragansett Bay, venturing as far as Newfoundland.

**1527:** Second voyage, followed coast of Brazil.

**1528:** Explored the Florida Coast, Bahamas and Lower Antilles, encountering the indigenous Carib people, ultimately leading to his capture and death.

**2024:** On **April 17th, Quincentennial celebrations begin** at Battery Park statue event with the NYS Governor, Italian and French dignitaries, and the Italian American Leadership Forum; and the co-naming of a S.I. Street *Giovanni da Verrazzano Way*.

**Cellere Codex:** His letter to King Francis I, a detailed description of (America's) eastern coastline, including its geography, with its flora and fauna; its inhabitants, including their appearances, customs, traditions, societal structure, led to a definitive world map and sociological understanding of the New World, guiding future explorers. A rare manuscript copy of his Codex is in the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City, along with one of the earliest world globes, depicting the world according to Verrazzano's exploration.

**His legacy lives on** in his estate, where the Cappellini family purchased and restored the *Castello* and the ancient vineyards, preserving the Verrazzano history.

**April 17 and the Commemorative Year 2024: Important dates for Verrazzano, New York, North America, France, Italy, and the world!**

## Celebrating Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge 60th Anniversary.



Imagine Verrazzano on the bow of his small, three masted *La Dauphine* carrack, entering New York Bay in 1524...and in 2024, 500 years after his discovery and 60 years after the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge's inauguration...spectators, mid bridge, 228 feet up from the high tide, experiencing the same historic view!

The Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge spans the tidal strait that connects New York Harbor to the Atlantic Ocean, and Brooklyn to Staten Island, at the mouth of the Hudson River.

**A Long Way from Idea to Reality:** A crossing, tunnel or bridge, first proposed in 1920s. Construction began on August 13, 1959; **Upper Level:** Opened, November 21, 1964, and at that time, was the longest suspension bridge in the world. **Lower Level:** Opened, June 28, 1969.

**Champions of the Bridge:** Robert Moses, Urban Planner & Chairman of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority; New York City Mayor William O'Dwyer proposed "Liberty Bridge"; Governor W. Averell Harriman signed \$600 million spending bill and authorized construction of the bridge; Gov. Nelson D. Rockefeller put the name "Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge" into law, albeit misspelled. He officiated at its inauguration.

**Champion of the Bridge's Name:** John N. LaCorte, Director, Italian Historical Society of America, first proposed the Verrazzano name in 1951 when a bridge discussion began. He successfully advocated for the Verrazzano statue to be moved from storage and placed in Battery Park, NYC. He succeeded in naming April 17 *Verrazzano Day*. LaCorte lobbied for several years to firmly establish the Verrazzano Bridge name, against all opposition, through his historical knowledge and commitment to preserving Italian culture and history.

**October 1, 2018:** Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the bill correcting the misspelling of Verrazzano by the addition of a second "z" to new road signs.

**November 21, 2024:** 60th Anniversary of the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge Celebrations in New York.

**Facts and Trivia:** Designer: Othmar Ammann; Engineers: Leopold Just and others at Ammann and Whitney; Brooklyn Harris Structural Company; Tons of Bethlehem Steel used; 1,200 workers a day, for 5 years - 10,000 individuals over 5 years; 2 levels, 13 lanes; Length: 13,700 feet, Width: 103 feet, Height: 693 feet; 1 million bolts, 3 million rivets! Thousands cross daily; opened up Staten Island to families/businesses.

**The Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge: The Gateway to New York!**  
A tribute to the Italian discoverer of New York Harbor, mapping it to share with the world. A tribute to the Italian Americans who fought to preserve the Verrazzano legacy, Italian heritage & culture.

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