



## MEMO

To:

From: Kerrie Tripp

Date: January 26 – 29, 2026

Subject: Italian Sales Mission Report

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Discover New England (DNE) hosted a sales mission to Italy from January 26–29, 2026, with stops in Milan, Turin, and Verona. The delegation included representatives from Meet Boston, Connecticut Office of Tourism, Yale Visitor Center, Maine Office of Tourism, Wolfe Adventure Travel, and Discover Newport. Over the course of the mission, the group engaged with more than 130 travel trade professionals through trainings, presentations, and networking events.

### **Program Overview**

The mission began in Milan with trainings at Alidays, Naar Bespoke Travel, and Volonline. At each stop, the delegation provided training for staff and associated travel agents, allowing for direct education with all interested parties. In total, the delegation presented to 44 attendees across the first three appointments in Milan.

The delegation hosted an informal lobster roll dinner training with GOING / Bluvacanze, which included 26 tour operators, product managers, and agents.

Discover New England hosted a boutique trade and media event with Touring Club Italiano, welcoming approximately 40 attendees. The delegation conducted a full training prior to the hosted lunch. The event featured the authors of the newly updated *Boston and New England Guide* by Touring Club Italiano who shared their experiences and participated in a Q&A session, first with the delegation and then with media and trade.



In Turin, the delegation had separate visits to tour companies: America World, hosting approximately 25 sales and product staff, and Amo il Mondo with two product managers.

The mission concluded in Verona with a Visit USA Workshop attended by approximately 30 travel agents. The workshop was structured as an appointment-style event, where each delegate hosted a table and engaged directly with attendees. Each appointment lasted 15 minutes, with five total tables; Discover New England and Wolfe Adventure Travel shared one table.



### Market Sentiment

Italian operators remain confident in U.S. travel demand with strong emphasis on FIT and experience-driven travel.

### Key Themes

- Tailor-Made Travel - Tailor-made travel is highly important in this market with strong interest in products that are new or packaged in unique ways.
- Authentic Experiences - There is strong interest in hands-on, immersive experiences, such as lobstering or rail biking. Operators are also interested in drawing parallels between New England and Italy—such as comparable town sizes, cultural elements, and ease of travel—while still emphasizing distinctly New England culinary and experiential offerings.

- Transportation Flexibility - There is notable interest in itineraries that do not rely solely on a car, incorporating public transportation, trains, and ferry services to connect destinations such as Boston and surrounding communities.
- Established Product Awareness - There is strong familiarity and enthusiasm for programs such as Dark Skies & Natural Places, particularly those packaged through receptive operator Jonview.
- Technology & AI Integration - Many companies are expanding their use of AI and booking platforms and are increasingly looking for destination partners to provide content that supports both their systems and their teams.

### Challenges

- Positioning New England within broader U.S. Itineraries remains a challenge requiring clear differentiation and strong storytelling to highlight the region's unique and authentic experiences.
- Luxury travel expectations between New England and other global destinations continue to require education and strategic positioning.

### Conclusion

The mission strengthened key relationships and reinforced the importance of continued engagement in the Italian market. As Discover New England's first sales mission to Italy, the delegation was very well received, and the effort to meet partners in-market was greatly appreciated—an important factor in building and maintaining long-term relationships

