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Fashion Italy in Chicago

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If you notice more Italian designers in local stores in the coming months, it could be a result of work by the [Florence](#) and [Milan](#) chambers of commerce, both of which have chosen Chicago as their base of operations in this country. Milan opened its office last year, Florence just a month ago.

Although [PromoFirenze's](#) Silvia Raffa acknowledged that Chicago was chosen partially for its relative affordability, she also noted that it's easier for smaller designer brands to get noticed, thanks to the lack of competition and the city's [own fashion initiative promoting homegrown talent](#).

The chambers hope to foster connections between local retailers and Italian agents and distributors, although they'll host events for the public as well, most notably as part of the annual [Italian Expo](#) in September.

Perhaps it's not coincidental that this program comes at a time when [some people are observing that Milan's star may be dimming](#), due not to a drop in quality but to tight budgets, frayed attention spans, and [maybe even Anna Wintour's schedule](#).