



To: All Starbucks partners

Date: February 28, 2016

Re: With Humility and Great Respect, Starbucks to Open in Italy

Dear partners,

More than 30 years ago, on my first business trip to Italy, I ducked inside a small espresso bar in Milan. I was captivated by what I experienced: a welcoming “buongiorno” from a barista as he gracefully crafted espresso drinks behind a bar, the warming aroma of freshly roasted coffee beans that greeted me as I entered, the exquisite taste of an espresso crafted especially for me, and the sense of community I felt, even as a stranger, in this unfamiliar place where the barista seemed both artist and friend to customers that gathered as comfortably as they might in their own homes. I was overwhelmed and inspired. That was the day I discovered the ritual and romance of the Italian espresso bar, and came to appreciate the power of a perfectly crafted cup of coffee. The entire experience was so deeply ingrained in Italian culture, yet exuded a universal sense of the human connection.

Starbucks evolved out of that immersive, sensory experience, yet Italy is a country without a single Starbucks store. While I always envisioned that Starbucks would someday arrive in this magnificent country, I knew the timing had to be right. I knew that we had to create an experience that would honor the Italian culture, its history of coffee excellence, and its commitment to craftsmanship.

After years of careful consideration and planning, I believe that the right time has arrived. Today, it is with tremendous humility and great respect that I announce our intent to open the first Starbucks store in Milan, Italy in early 2017.

In doing so, we will have the privilege to work alongside Percassi Group, a well-respected and prominent Italian company known for its premier brands, retail development and real estate business, to launch the new store in Milan as well as subsequent Starbucks stores across Italy. The Percassi family has a proven track record of operating major brand partnerships across Italy and shares Starbucks passion for the history and cultural heritage of the country. I have every confidence that, together, we will deliver the *Starbucks Experience* in a manner that demonstrates reverence for the Italian coffeehouse tradition, and will make you all proud.

Over the next year, a gifted and passionate group of Starbucks partners will design our new store, creating what will be a stunning visual experience that can only be topped by the quality of our coffee. As the time draws near to invite our first customers to the store, we will assemble a talented team of baristas to showcase their knowledge and passion for coffee and pay tribute to the Milanese coffee artists I first met more than 30 years ago.

It has been a long, incredible journey from my first moments in Italy in 1983 to today. It is with humility that we now turn our sights to Italy and proudly share what we have learned over the past 40 years, demonstrating our great respect to the country and culture that inspired Starbucks.

Onward,

Howard