

## The Italian in Me **Dina Morrone** *by Shirley Prince*

Actress **Dina Morrone** is wowing audiences at the Globe Playhouse in WeHo in her one-woman show *The Italian in Me*. What makes this Italian lady so special? Hey, it's her Italian background, that's what!

**SP** Your grandmother (Nonna) seems to have been quite an influence on your life. What is the most valuable lesson that she taught you?

**DM** Courage! She was a very strong woman not only emotionally but physically as well. In her little village in Italy, with no formal education, she became like the village doctor. She nursed people, delivered babies, aided dying people at their bedside, milked other women's babies, worked very hard in the fields of Calabria, and watched three of her own children die at the ages of 11, 5, and just a few days old, and still my Nonna kept on going and never showed weakness. She was a woman way ahead of her time and had she been born in North America, she would have most certainly become a doctor.

**SP** What has been the reaction of the Italian community to your show, particularly the men, who are often portrayed as oversexed (for a better word) horn-dogs?

**DM** The Italian community... well, I couldn't be more thrilled. The Consul General of Italy and Vice Consul were present at my show opening night and they LOVED it. They told me I nailed it. Some other very special Italians were at my show the same night and said the same thing. When I saw the smiles on their faces and heard their



compliments - well, that was just a huge satisfaction. I was moved! The wonderful thing about Italians is that we can be the first ones to poke fun at ourselves. Italian men are wonderfully charming and fun and hey, my father and grandfather

and brother are Italian.

**SP** How did your encounter with the "Maestro" **Federico Fellini** influence your acting or how you approach a role?

**DM** Wow! My encounter with the Maestro was magical and so unexpected. I had told the story of our one-hour meeting many times and then one day I realized that I should put it in a show. And I did. When I do the part of Fellini, I don't try to be Fellini; I just think about that moment, the tenderness, his spirit, and it just comes out of me. The first thing he said to me, was "Tell me about yourself, but not as an actor. When actors talk about their work, it's so boring." Well, that changed me for good. First of all I realized that he wanted to know about the person and not the actor, and I have always remembered that. I work on me, Dina, as a person, a human being, on my life, and focus less on the acting. I feel that if the person is interesting, then the story and words, hence the acting and show will be interesting. Thank you, Fellini! See ad previous page for info.