

## Andrea Bocelli

### Internationally known singer

BY BEKAH WRIGHT

Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli's father once told him that, for a country boy with no connections in the entertainment industry, making music a profession was like hoping to win the lottery. Still, from age 6, Bocelli was encouraged by his family to study piano, flute, and saxophone. He discovered his great love, singing opera, upon winning his first competition at age 12 and continued to perform for audiences as a teen. When he did not get the big break he was hoping for, Bocelli pursued a more practical profession. "I earned a law degree and was sure I'd make my living as a lawyer," he says. "However, I never stopped singing, listening to music, and playing various instruments in search of beauty through the art of sounds." He was 37 when Italian record producer Caterina Caselli Sugar discovered him. Today, at 54, Bocelli is an award-winning, multiplatinum artist with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. "For me, music is joy," the legendary tenor says. "It's a way of giving lightness to life." This summer, Bocelli's tour schedule will land him in California, a place the Italy-based celebrity considers a home away from home.

#### What do you love about California?

California is for the United States what Tuscany is for Italy. I feel at home here. I grew up in a rural area of Tuscany, where my father produced wine on his land for pleasure, a family tradition my brother, sister-in-law, and I are continuing. Not only do I feel that your land and my land have peaks of beauty in common, but as a wine producer, I can join the chorus from everywhere in the world praising Californian wine. California is one of the very few places in the world where I can enjoy the sea, sun, perfect temperature, and the presence of many dear friends. If my children weren't in the middle of their schooling in Italy, I'd consider living here. Who

knows, in the future such an idea might become reality.

#### Where is a favorite place to perform in SoCal?

The most glamorous site is the Hollywood Bowl, with its concentric circles that grow on a slope, naturally blending nature with architecture.

#### Does performing before a live audience inspire you?

It's a belief I've had since childhood that makes me, after 20 years in this career, get on planes and travel the globe. Meeting new audiences, at all latitudes, is an extraordinary experience; to feel the affection of the public through direct contact and see how music can become an emotional communication channel which



defeats cultural barriers is a priceless joy.

#### Is there a special destination on your travel wish list?

When I'm on tour, I have a tight, to-the-minute agenda, so, unfortunately, I only experience the airports, hotels, dressing rooms, and stages. Topping my travel wish list is always the silence and peace of my home in Tuscany, next to my children and the people I love. If I had to choose an itinerary, I'd take in the beauty, magic, and unspoiled countryside of my region from horseback.

#### Where would fans be surprised to find you singing?

A funny episode occurred awhile back during a football match among the European countries. At the end of a match with Germany, which we won, the people of Forte dei Marmi, a place on the Tuscan Coast where I live, crowded the streets. My sons and I were there in the middle of the confusion. I stood up on

the seat of my small, electric convertible with the top down, and in my hand was my tricolor flag, transformed into a wand, which I used to direct the crowd to sing our national anthem.

#### How do you enjoy your downtime?

When I'm not on tour, I study every day and try to lead a normal life. Beyond singing and spending time with family and friends, I have many passions: horseback riding, boating, swimming, and reading. I'm also a boxing fan.

#### What's next?

Sing, sing, and once more sing! On the opera side, I have an upcoming recording of Puccini. My busy agenda is already giving a rhythm to the calendar for the next few years. **W**

Andrea Bocelli is scheduled to perform at the Hollywood Bowl in L.A. on June 8 and at the Honda Center in Anaheim on June 9. For more information, visit [andrebocelli.com](http://andrebocelli.com).