

Italian town welcomes first baby in almost 30 years

By [Pietro Lombardi](#), for CNN

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The alpine town of Ostana, in the Italian region of Piedmont, welcomes its first baby in 28 years

Story highlights

Tiny town of Ostana in Italy's Piedmont region welcomes its first baby in 28 years

Pablo's parents moved from Turin to manage an alpine refuge five years ago

(CNN) — A tiny alpine town in northern Italy has welcomed its first baby in 28 years.

Born a week ago, little Pablo is the youngest resident of Ostana in the Piedmont region; when his parents brought him home from the hospital in Turin where he was born, their fellow residents celebrated the arrival of only the town's 85th

inhabitant.

"At first I couldn't believe it was true," Giacomo Lombardo, the town's mayor, told CNN.

"The news almost shocked me. It's a dream come true."

Since only about half of the population lives there year round, Pablo and his family, father Josè Berdugo Vallelago, mother Silvia Rovere and sisters Clara and Alice, make up about 10% of Ostana's "permanent" residents.

Sotto il Monviso arriva il bambino atteso 28 anni <https://t.co/wsq2nhpmJy> pic.twitter.com/1qysJN

— La Stampa (@la_stampa) [January 28, 2016](#)

"We love challenges," said Josè, 36-year-old physiotherapist originally from Madrid, Spain. "Five years ago, we decided to leave Turin and change our life."

The couple planned to move to Reunion, a French island in the Indian Ocean, but their life took an unexpected turn when they got the chance to manage an alpine refuge.

"When the city selected our project, we moved to Ostana, and we have never regretted our decision," said Josè. "We love the quality of the life here. Ostana is a safe place for our daughters, and we feel part of this community."

Silvia Rovere about to register her son Pablo at local registry office

Home to more 1,000 people a century ago, Ostana has seen its population [slump](#) in recent decades; in the 1980s only five people lived there permanently.

"The decline accelerated during the 1970s, and the last baby was born in 1987," said Lombardo, who has been mayor for 20 of the past 30 years.

For two decades, the community has tried to reverse the trend, investing in cultural activities and tourism to create new jobs and attract young people.

Ostana is not alone in its fight against depopulation. It is estimated that [the number of Italian ghost towns already tops 6,000](#).

Small towns throughout the country have seen their population dwindling, as young people leave to study and chase better job opportunities elsewhere.

A variety of solutions have been tried: The Sicilian city of Gangi has [offered abandoned houses](#) for free, demanding only that their new owners renovate them; in other cases, [entire villages](#) have been put up for sale.

[#montagnachevince #ostana #vallepo #monviso](#) nasce un bambino dopo 28anni. Rinasce il [#borgo TerreAlte](#) rivivono! pic.twitter.com/G8bAucm6R1

— Uncem Piemonte (@UncemPiemonte) [January 26, 2016](#)

People in Ostana hope that the model stork carrying a blue bundle built to celebrate Pablo's arrival will soon welcome even more babies.

"We broke the ice," said Josè, "and I hope other people will come here."



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