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Villas of Delight

Five villas and a very special forest are ready to enchant visitors with their natural beauty and an exciting calendar of events.

"To enchant, amuse and celebrate the grandeur of their owners." These were the motives for creating the noble residences known as the "villas of delight" (ville di delizia), scattered across the Lombardy countryside, which reached their maximum splendour during the 17th and 18th centuries. The Network of Aristocratic Villas in Lombardy aims to enchant and amuse once again, while telling the story of this extraordinary artistic heritage, a stone's throw from Milan yet still little-known.

Founded in 2010 after a study phase a network has succeeded in bringing together properties of inestimable historical and cultural value, such as Villa Arconati in Bollate, Palazzo Arese Borromeo in Cesano Maderno, Villa Cusani Tittoni Traversi in Desio, Villa Visconti Borromeo Litta in Lainate and Villa Crivelli Pusterla in Limbiate.

In 2015, the network continues to promote the five Ville Gentilizie (Aristocratic Villas), extending also to the Bosco delle Querce Nature Park in Seveso e Meda.

With an invaluable contribution of hundreds of volunteer guides, the Network has been successful in promoting, educating and exhibiting to an ever-growing public these magnificent palaces, great works of art and ancient gardens with astonishing water features. Now it is also possible to hire bicycles along the routes, which have been specially designed to link the historic and natural sites by "soft mobility".

With increased visitor numbers and a packed calendar of events, particularly during EXPO 2015 - but at other times too - these marvellous places offer an ever-growing public the opportunity to share a dream!

Villa Arconati (Bollate)



Count Galeazzo Arconati, who began building this villa in 1610, was a great admirer of the genius and talent of Leonardo da Vinci. For this reason he acquired the Atlantic Code, the collection of the Florentine maestro's study notes, which is today preserved in Milan's Biblioteca Ambrosiana. On his numerous trips to Rome the count added important paintings and works of art to his collection, such as

the Roman statue of Pompey the Great, which can still be seen in the villa. Working from Leonardo's designs, the Arconati family installed complex water systems in the villa's gardens, allowing magnificent water features to be created. Subsequent owners of the villa shared a love of art: in the eighteenth century Giuseppe Antonio Arconati, patron to writer Carlo Goldoni, wanted to make the Villa into an Italian Versailles. The noble residents took great pleasure in delighting their guests with juice from the precious lemons grown in the orangery - now restored - where delicious drinks and sorbets were served during the sultry summer days. Today the Villa is the seat of the Fondazione Augusto Rancilio and an extraordinary venue for cultural events, including a famous music festival; and now the doors to its remarkable interiors are open to visitors.

Via Madonna Fametta 1, Località Castellazzo • Bollate www.villaarconati.it

Palazzo Arese Borromeo (Cesano Maderno)



Palazzo Arese Borromeo was built in the 17th century by Bartolomeo Arese III, a key figure in Lombardy politics under Spanish domination and a deeply cultured man. The

Palace has retained its original appearance practically intact: the building is linked to the town with a semicircular piazza, and centres on the grand courtyard, overlooked by a covered loggia on the first floor.

The building's imposing exterior gives no hint of the richness of the rooms within, which were designed to a complex iconographic system established by the Count. The rooms were adorned with frescoes by the most sought-after Milanese artists: Ercole Procaccini the Younger, Montalto, Giovanni Ghisolfi, Giuseppe Nuvolone, Federico Bianchi, Antonio Busca.

Between the Arese Borromeo Palace and its Garden there is constant dialogue: the typical Italian garden, modelled on the French style, is balanced by tree-lined walks with statues, aedicules and fountains, evoking links to the Classical world.

Via Borromeo 41 • Cesano Maderno www.comune.cesano-maderno.mb.it

Villa Cusani Tittoni Traversi (Desio)



Summer residence of the Cusani family since its construction in the 17th century, owes its present form to the work of Imperial architect Giuseppe Piermarini during the 18th century. The celebrated

designer of the Teatro alla Scala and the Royal Villa of Monza brought his unmistakable neoclassical approach to the villa, and also gave its garden an English flavour. The villa was included as one of the must-see sites in 19th century romantic tours: many illustrious travellers have passed this way, including composer Vincenzo Bellini and writer Stendhal, who was so struck by the building that he set his comic operetta "Stranger in Italy" here. Other famous architects, such as Pelagio Palagi in the 19th century and Luca Beltrami in the 20th, also added to the building. The villa became a venue for diplomatic meetings, hosting delegations from around the world, including Russia and Abyssinia, and visits from King Victor Emmanuel.

Via Giovanni Maria Lampugnani 66 • Desio www.parcodelleculture.it

Villa Visconti Borromeo Litta (Lainate)



This Medici-inspired monumental complex was built in 1585 by Pirro I Visconti Borromeo, who transformed a farmhouse into an enchanting "villa of delight", employing great artists from the Fabbrica

del Duomo di Milano association. In the 18th century the property passed to the Counts of Litta, attracting well-known individuals such as Johann Christian Bach, son of the great composer Johann Sebastian, who was engaged by Count Agostino Litta to lead the family's private orchestra and provide its scions with a musical education; the splendid Music Room, recently restored, is still the scene of concerts to audiences of distinguished connoisseurs. The aristocracy also sought pleasure in the Villa's beautiful gardens, embellished by the magnificent Nymphaeum, with its

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complicated and inventive water games to fascinate illustrious visitors. Stendhal later wrote: "The garden is full of fountains specially designed to soak the visitor. When I set foot on the first step of a certain staircase, six water jets sprayed me between the legs." *Largo Vittorio Veneto 12 • Lainate*
www.villalittalainate.it

Villa Crivelli Pusterla (Limbiate)



A real Sforza intrigue lingers around this villa. The story goes that in the 15th century Margherita Visconti, besieged by the indiscreet attentions of her cousin

Luchino, managed to ward off his unwelcome advances with the help of Francesco Pusterla, who paid for this affront with his life. This tale of Milanese political intrigue under the Viscontis was retold in 1838 by writer Cesare Cantù, who chose Villa Pusterla as the setting for his historical novel. The Villa, with its splendid Italian garden, pleased Napoleon so much that he not only moved his court here, but also arranged the weddings of his two sisters, Elisa and Pauline, in the adjacent Oratory of St Francis. Villa Pusterla was subsequently abandoned, and in 1863 became one of Europe's most important psychiatric hospitals. Today it is home to the "Luigi Castiglioni" Agricultural College, whose students carefully maintain the ancient plants in the villa's grounds.
Via Montegrappa 40 • Località Mombello, Limbiate
www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/architetture/schede/MI100-03846

Il Bosco delle Querce (Seveso e Meda)



The Bosco delle Querce (Oak Forest) covers an area of 43 hectares, 35 in the Comune of Seveso and 8 in Meda. The forest was created in the area most severely contaminated (Zone A) by the toxic cloud which was released on 19th July 1976 from the ICMESSA factory in

Meda and which contained, among other toxic substances, dioxins. The environmental and forestry project began in 1984 and concluded in 1986. Following the incident in July 1976, the whole of the area affected by the poisonous cloud was decontaminated in a vast cleanup operation. In 1984, when the decontamination was complete, a single plant was left alive: a great poplar tree, which became a symbol of the resistance of life in spite of everything, and the desire to start again. In 2006 the Bosco delle Querce became a Regional Nature Park. Today this is a public place, open to all communities, which has a story to tell... "in continual and ceaseless dialogue between past and present". And which looks to the future.

Via Ada Negri, 1 • Seveso (MB)
www.boscodellequerce.it

Art and nature by bike

This year, it's easier to visit the Network of Aristocratic Villas and the Bosco delle Querce, even by bike! Thanks to the VELOEXPO project, visitors in search of an adventure in history, culture and nature a stone's throw from EXPO 2015 can use three Velo Points for bicycle hire, located at the Nord Milano - Bollate Nord railway station, at Palazzo Arese Borromeo in Cesano Maderno and in Via Isonzo next to the Villorosi Canal at Villa Litta in Lainate. An assistance service is also available, in case of breakdowns or accidents. For information and bookings: www.veloexpo.it • info@fabbricadeisegni.it

Join the Touring Club Italiano Volunteers for Cultural Heritage.

Find out more at: www.apertipervoi.it
Tel. 02 92868540 • Cell: 327 2578817

Care of:
www.villegentilizielombarde.org

August highlights

Duomo tours in English

Every day from Tuesday to Friday; starting at 12.00 and 16.00. The Cathedral history in 45 minutes. €6. Entrance 5 minutes before the starting time, c/o the Museo del Duomo, Piazza Duomo • M1/3 Duomo

Sunset along the "Terrazze" starting at 18.00. Guided tour on Friday and Saturday during sunset along the "Terrazze". See more in what's on.

Sailing at Idroscalo

Until September. Milan's section of the *Lega Navale Italiana* (Italian Naval League) is giving its members the chance to make the most of the water by offering group and individual courses, both for adults and children, in sailing or SUP - Stand Up Paddling, the Hawaiian sport practiced on a board with a paddle. Alternatively if you are ready to go it alone they have boats and boards available for hire. At the nautical center of the Idroscalo you can also rent canoes, use the gym or relax on the deck chairs in their beautiful garden. Membership fees for 2014: €10/80. www.leganavale.mi.it

Disabled friendly Milan

Eco-friendly hybrid taxis are available; zero emission vehicles, LPG, methane-fuelled, Euro 6 petrol-fuelled and fully equipped to transport people with physical disabilities. To call a Eco-friendly hybrid taxi, and any taxi, just call any radio taxi 02.7777 and get redirected to the first taxi available.

Democratic Party festival

From 25th August to 6th September. Admission free. *Giardini Montanelli, between Via Palestro and Porta Venezia • M1 Palestro or Porta Venezia, M3 Turati*

Area C

From 10th to 14th August. The city center will be open to the normal car traffic.

Outdoor concerts

In case of bad weather, the concerts in the Triennale di Milano listed in the calendar will be performed inside the nearby theater. *Teatro dell'Arte, Triennale, Viale Alemagna 6 • M1/2 Cadorna; bus 61; tram 1*

Swimming and sunbathing in pools

Until 31 August. There are 7 public outdoor pools in Milan: Argelati, Lido, Romano, Scarioni, Cardellino, Saini and Sant'Abbondio; at Lido and Argelati an exclusive area is available where, for an extra fee, you can have a sunshade, a sun bed, a snack and a free gift. The pools that do not have open spaces are equipped with a solarium: Arioli, Cantù Cozzi, De Marchi, Mincio, Murat, Procida, Solari, Suzzani. Milan is the only Italian city where the bathing centers and the swimming pools are also accessible to the disabled, who can enter the water aided by a mechanical arm. € 4.50/5.00 /5.50. Info: www.milanosport.it.

Mosquitoes

Unfortunately summer brings with it the hassle of sharing evenings outdoors with ravenous insects. Before deciding on an evening "al fresco", make sure you arm yourself with the right spray to keep them away.

Fitness map

Milan has 153 basketball fields, 44 football fields, 48 bocce fields, 30 skating rinks, 5 skate parks, 11 areas for fitness and exercise, 10 tracks for running and walking, 2 public rugby fields, 2 tennis courts and one baseball court, 9 areas for parkour and 2 for slackline. The map to find and use these fields can be found at: <http://bit.ly/palestracieloaperto>; or www.comune.milano.it or from social network <https://www.facebook.com/comunemilano.benessere>

Fun in the park

Until 31st August. Behind the castle, near the park there is a 375 square meter indoor dance floor, with daily events to suit all tastes. All info www.comune.milano.it/verdestate, in Italian, English, German, French, Russian and Chinese. Admission free. *Piazza del Cannone, behind Castello Sforzesco • M1 Cairoli, MM2 Lanza*

Free museums

Every first Sunday of the month in Italy, entrance to Italian State owned monuments, museums, galleries, archaeological excavations, parks and gardens is free or discounted.

1st August 2015: Saturday

18.00: Sunset along the "Terrazze". Guided tour in English to enjoy a fantastic atmosphere. €18, under 6 free. Booking requested at visita@duomomilano.it. Starting point from the tickets office at the left side of the cathedral. *Duomo, Piazza Duomo • M1/3 Duomo*
18.30, 20.30: Holy music concert. The "Rosenkranzsonaten" by H. I. F. von Biber, performed by the Ars Antiqua Austria ensemble. €10. *Church of Santo Sepolcro, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Piazza San Sepolcro • M1 Duomo*

21.00: Open air concert. Sacri Cuori. Admission free. *Triennale di Milano, Viale Alemagna 6 • M1/2 Cadorna*

21.30: Open air concert. München Klang. Mendelssohn Sinfonia Italiana; Haydn, Te Deum. Admission free. *Castello Sforzesco, Cortile delle Armi, Piazza Cairoli • M1 Cairoli*

2nd August 2015: Sunday

All day open air music. Music performed inside the Monumental Cemetery beautiful garden. *Cimitero Monumentale, Piazza Cimitero Monumentale • M2, Passante Ferroviario Porta Garibaldi + bus37*

18.00: Symphony music. Music by Nicola Campogrande Glazunov, Beethoven, Tanejev, Stravinskij, performed by Orchestra Sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi, conducted by Francesco Lanzillotta. €15/35. *Auditorium di Milano, Largo Gustav Mahler 1 (Corso San Gottardo) • M1 Duomo + tram 3; M2 Porta Genova + bus 59*

19.00: Film in Czech, with Italian subtitles. "Ukradená vzducholo" (The Stolen Airship) directed by Karel Zeman. Starring: Jan Bor, Josef Stranik, Jan Malat, Cestmir Randa, Jan Cizek. Admission free, with annual membership card €6. *Spazio Oberdan, Viale Vittorio Veneto 2 • M1 Porta Venezia*

3rd August 2015: Monday

18.15, 21.00: Film in English. "The Longest Ride," directed by Tillman, starring S. Eastwood, B. Robertson. €4.50/6,50. *Cinema Anteo, Via Milazzo 9 • M2 Moscova, tram and buses: 11,33, 41, 43, 94*

20.30: Symphony music. Music by Martin Honegger, Rossini, performed by Orchestra Sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi, conducted by Francesco Maria Colombo. €9/15. *Auditorium di Milano, Largo Gustav Mahler 1 (Corso San Gottardo) • M1 Duomo + tram 3; M2 Porta Genova + bus 59*

4th August 2015: Tuesday

18.15, 21.00: Film in English. "The Longest Ride," directed by Tillman, starring S. Eastwood, B. Robertson. €4.50/6,50. *Cinema Arcobaleno, Viale Tunisia 11 • M1 Porta Venezia*

18.30, 20.30: Baroque music concert. The "Clavier-Übung", Part II, "Italian Concerto" and "French Overture", by J. S. Bach, performed by Jos van Immerseel, harpischord. €10. *Church of Santo Sepolcro, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Piazza San Sepolcro • M1 Duomo*

21.30: Open air concert. Collegium Musicum Colonia. Mozart, Requiem. Admission free. *Castello Sforzesco, Cortile delle Armi, Piazza Cairoli • M1 Cairoli*

5th August 2015: Wednesday

Sorry, no events on this day

6th August 2015: Thursday

18.15, 21.00: Film in English. "The Longest Ride," directed by Tillman, starring S. Eastwood, B. Robertson. €4.50/6,50. *Cinema Mexico, Via Savona 57 • M2 Porta Genova F.S., tram 14*

20.30: Symphony music. Music by Nicola Campogrande, Revueltas, Surinach, Albéniz, performed by Orchestra Sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi, conducted by Marco Parisotto. €15/35. *Auditorium di Milano, Largo Gustav Mahler 1 (Corso San Gottardo) • M1 Duomo + tram 3; M2 Porta Genova + bus 59*



Michael Radulescu

20.30: Baroque music concert. The "Clavier-Übung", Part III, by J. S. Bach, performed by Michael Radulescu, organ. €10. *Church of Santo Sepolcro, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Piazza San Sepolcro • M1 Duomo*

21.30: Open air concert. "Social Early Dance" performed by Letizia Dradi. Admission free. *Castello Sforzesco, Cortile delle Armi, Piazza Cairoli • M1 Cairoli*