

Four-monthly Art magazine of the Italian Historic Houses Association

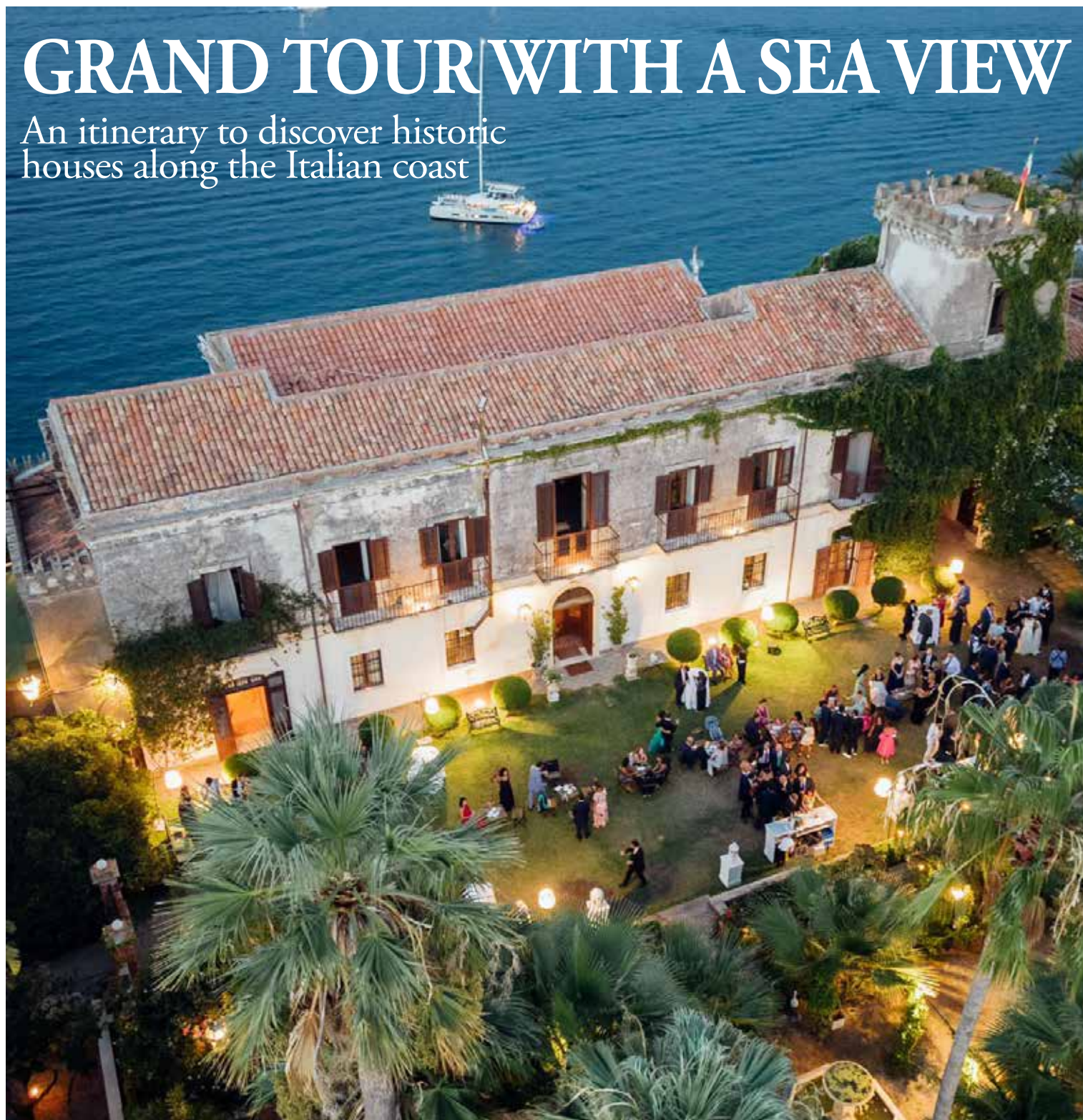
ADSI
Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane

le DIMORE STORICHE

Issue 2 - Year 2024

GRAND TOUR WITH A SEA VIEW

An itinerary to discover historic houses along the Italian coast





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(credits: Antonio La Malfa)

GIACOMO DI THIENE

Table set for Nicoletta
Polo Lanza Tomasi's
cooking classes



A World Heritage, in the kitchen as well

These pages unveil outstanding historical houses in our country, many of which were probably unknown to the reader. Today, more and more are in the process of opening to the public. One example is the Castello Quattro Torri in Piedmont, ready now to welcome guests in its newly renovated rooms. And we carry on further, offering a number of itineraries ranging from the sea to the mountains, all characterised by extraordinary villas, palaces and castles that draw visitors who are eager for a memorable stay. Such landmarks play a crucial role in the life of the local community. The significance of historic houses as central elements of Italian towns and villages is what inspires us to describe with a sense of us admiration the commitment of a task force that has given shape to the country's longest cycle path, stretching along the Apennines from Liguria all the way to Sicily. The operation of this system has been carried out with financial resources that are limited, to say the least. Yet if brought to the attention of the public, and if supported by all those who are present along the Apennine ridge – including ADSI members and their homes – then it will be possible to relaunch this precious area, ever mindful to maintain the right balance between nature and human beings, embracing slow tourism and the optimisation of historical, artistic and cultural heritage. Something similar has happened in Cilento – a geographical region known the world over not only for its beauty but also because it is here that the road began leading to UNESCO's recognition of the Mediterranean Diet as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The following pages lay out a route through this wondrous corner of the world, linking together a variety of its historic residences. Speaking of UNESCO, the moment is approaching when Italian cuisine itself will finally boast the title of World Heritage, as we hear from Maddalena Fossati, editor-in-chief of *La Cucina Italiana*, promoter of the initiative, together with the Fondazione Casa Artusi and the Accademia Italiana della Cucina. This is a goal we all look forward to, for it will crown the development of recipes and the verbal and practical promulgation of cooking techniques that began in the kitchens of our ancestors, who prepared good food for daily sustenance in simple homes and for great events enlivening grand palaces. The Italian Association of Historic Houses is ready to toast this coveted recognition. Naturally. Think how many ceremonies took place “at the palace” and in the kitchens of historic residences, combining tradition with gastronomic innovations perfected over the course of time. We need only await the official announcement of the good news. In the meantime, happy reading and have a wonderful summer.

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le DIMORE STORICHE
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Via Cavour, 256 - 00184 Roma
Tel. + 39 06 68307426
segreteria@adsi.it
www.associazionedimorestoricheitaliane.it

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MUSIC WITH A VIEW, IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESIDENCES



This year's **Musica con Vista Festival** got underway with the inaugural concert on 8 June at the **Castello di Miramare** (Trieste), performed by the Goldberg Quartet with music by Verdi and Ravel. The 2024 Festival will continue for the entire summer, offering over 30 concerts and more than 300 related activities throughout Italy. Most of the venues hosting this festival are publicly or privately owned historic residences. The summer programme includes concerts to be held at **Palazzo di Varignana** (Bologna), **Palazzo Biscari** (Catania) and **Villa Ghislanzoni Curti** (Vicenza). We spoke with **Francesca Moncada**, president of the Amur Committee, and president and founder of Le Dimore del Quartetto (The Houses of the Quartet), the event's creators and organisers. "For seven years now," Moncada told *Le Dimore Storiche*, "we've worked closely with historic houses, and this understanding has given rise to a partnership that generates value for private residences that are open to the public. In the meantime, starting from Italy, we have reached a European dimension, thanks to the collaboration with **European Historic Houses**, a partner in the **Merita Project**, which has created a continental platform for the circulation of talents and the optimisation of European cultural heritage." The main objective of Musica con Vista—Music with a View—is to support the new generation of young talents in chamber music, to enhance Italy's cul-

tural heritage, while creating widespread events for travellers to enjoy, tying in the main cities to outlying areas and villages, stimulating local micro-economies as well. The Festival promotes a slow, passionate and curious form of tourism, bringing a heterogeneous public closer to the discovery of a hidden Italy. With the Amur Committee and Le Dimore del Quartetto, the "open air" classical music festival that characterises Italy's summer cultural scene is supported by a consolidated network of partners including the Italian Historic Houses Association ADSI, the FAI Fund for the Italian Environment, Touring Club Italiano, the Cologni Foundation for the Artistic Crafts, the Civita Association, Museimpresa, the Italia Patria della Bellezza Foundation, Garden Route Italia, the Symbola Foundation, The

Branding Letters, the Association for Responsible Italian Tourism, plus the patronage of ENIT and as of this year, Federculture and the Ministry of Tourism as well, committed to guaranteeing artistic excellence and promoting a major event that unites the Festival's strong national flavour with its importance at a European level. After the prologue at Miramare, the programme proceeds with a concert on 21 June, the first day of spring, at the cloister of the Eremitani Museum in Padua; it will conclude on 21 September, at the end of the summer, with a double date in both Rome and Trento, wrapping up its tour of the entire peninsula. The complete calendar of all concerts can be viewed on musicaconvista.it. The Amur Committee was founded in May 2020, inspired by the desire to gather a variety of Italy's most important chamber music institutions into a single body, with the aim of promoting common activities and objectives. Le Dimore del Quartetto is a creative cultural enterprise which, since 2015, has supported young international string quartets and chamber music ensembles in launching their careers and enhancing European cultural heritage through a circular-economy model. "The festival represents Italy at its best: music, culture, public and private heritage together forming a network to offer an extraordinary and exciting summer, accessible to all," added Francesca Moncada.



Francesca Moncada and, in the opening photo, the inaugural concert at Castello di Miramare





Alessandra and Vittoria Zucca in the garden of the castle

PIEDMONT, CASTELLO QUATTRO TORRI INAUGURATES ROOMS FOR GUESTS

In Arignano (Turin) the new hospitality project kicks off thanks to tourism-upgrading funds from the Historic Houses Association

BY CAMILLA ROCCA

The **Castello Quattro Torri** —the Castle of the Four Towers—is located in the historic town centre of Arignano. Its enviable position made it a hub of activity during the Renaissance. Built at the end of the 14th century, it is the only Piedmontese Renaissance building that has not undergone structural modifications, hence its charm. Opened to the public in 2022, it would never have become an accommodation facility and its most hidden beauty would have remained solely for the eyes of a privileged few, had the owners not won the Italian Historic Houses Association's call for tenders in 2023 for the redevelopment of residences for the purposes of tourism and accommodation. Funds totalling 150,000 euro specially earmarked to make the residence fully accessible were therefore allocated not merely to restore a relic of the past but also to reinstate its crucial role as a new driving force for the town, generating economic initiatives for the community. Thus, apart from the portion inhabited by the family, the formerly empty rooms of the castle are finally being brought back to life. The funds have been used to create five en-suite rooms with an average size of 47 square metres each. The period suites, with their 5-metre-high ceilings, emanate lovely Renaissance charm. At last the castle is reopening to the public and to high-quality tourism that embraces a love of culture and of the landscape. There surely is no lack of culture in the west wing, where visitors may view a collection of wooden inlay artwork, unique in all of Italy, an original creation by the family father, artist Renato Zucca. Seat of the Costa family through to the 1600s, the Castello di Arignano was the nerve centre of the town's economic and social activities. The townspeople looked up to its illuminated windows; parties, dances, business undertakings, music and discussions filled its halls. Then came a period of decline following the Costa family's move to Turin. The building lost its centrality; its rooms became storage areas, stalls, stables, then a farmhouse, a warehouse for Fiat during the War, and finally the site housed a galvanising plant. In 1980, the property passed into the hands of family father Renato



The castle dates back to the 14th C.; it opened to the public two years ago



Zucca and then the two sisters **Alessandra** and **Vittoria Zucca**, who come from different career backgrounds. Alessandra is a manager specialising in professional relocation and a consultant for various companies; Vittoria earned a degree in education and then became active in the sphere of agriculture, with a passion for Costa family history. “Without the endowment that followed the call for tenders, it would have been impossible to reopen the castle as an accommodation facility. Too many management costs, too many Fine Arts constraints in restoring the Quattro Torri to its former glory, too many burdens that private individuals cannot face without outside intervention,” says Alessandra Zucca. “The funding has created an important opportunity, because it means the building will remain in the same hands from generation to generation, avoiding the prospect of a sale to increasingly foreign interests.” And it will reopen, especially in the summer months when guests can visit the large park, providing modern health activities throughout its 11 hectares. “To the delight of the youngest visitors, an app has been created for a Treasure Hunt, model 2.0. By framing faces carved in the bark of trees, the history of the castle is told. At the moment, we have decided to keep the facility open from April until mid-October,” says Alessandra Zucca.



CASTELLO QUATTRO TORRI

Via Giuseppe Garibaldi 4,
Arignano (Turin)

Original construction:
late 1300s

Open from
April to October

Info: castelloquattrotorri.com



A view of the Maccarese Estate from the turret of the Castello di San Giorgio

PROJECTS AT TENUTA MACCARESE

On the Roman coast, the vast property of the Edizione Holding Company has already become an attraction for environmental and cultural tourism, thanks to its four WWF oases and its incredible archival resources. Now hospitality is being developed, following on the success of the five restaurants

BY CRISTINA CIMATO

Tenuta Maccarese has all the ingredients of a contemporary fairytale. There is the ancient castle that once belonged to a prince; there are nature reserves, the largest almond orchard in Italy and a rich century-old history of labour and life in contact with the land. A crossing point between Rome and the sea, a junction between Lazio and Tuscany, the estate has at its centre the Castello di San Giorgio, the first traces of which date back to the 1200s. The property has been owned by various noble families over the centuries—first the Anguillara, then the Mattei and the Pallavicini, before being handed over as a dowry to the Rospigliosi princes. Significant restructuring took place in 1756, giving the castle its current appearance, with its dramatic entrance, grand staircase and noble main floor, hunting and music rooms, and a ceiling adorned with flowers and heraldic coats of arms. In 2022, the residence underwent major conservative restoration and it is now part of ADSI, the Italian Historic Houses Association. To celebrate the next *Carte in Dimora* “Papers in the House” Day to be held in October, the manor will open the doors to its archive, a vast collection of priceless documents. Comprising 165 volumes, 1,750 registers, more than 2,000 envelopes, charts, photographs and 35 linear metres of various files, the archive bears witness to a long history of agricultural enterprise and to the community that grew around it.

ITALY'S LARGEST ALMOND ORCHARD

The estate surrounding the castle was passed on to the State in 1925 with the foundation of Maccarese S.a.B. (Limited Company for Land Reclamation), now the Maccarese S.p.A. joint stock company, which rehabilitated the entire area. “The land encompassing 3,200 hectares was designated for agricultural cultivation and livestock breeding and is one of the most important examples in the country. The company specialised in leasing, sharecropping and co-partnership contracts,” says **Claudio Destro**, managing director of **Maccarese**

From above, a view of the residence reflected in the water of the fountain. Below, the civic hall where weddings are celebrated and, bottom, two images from the Carlo Benetton historical archive. Facing page, an image of the village. On the opposite side is the entrance to the restaurants. Below, an aerial view of the almond grove and the town centre

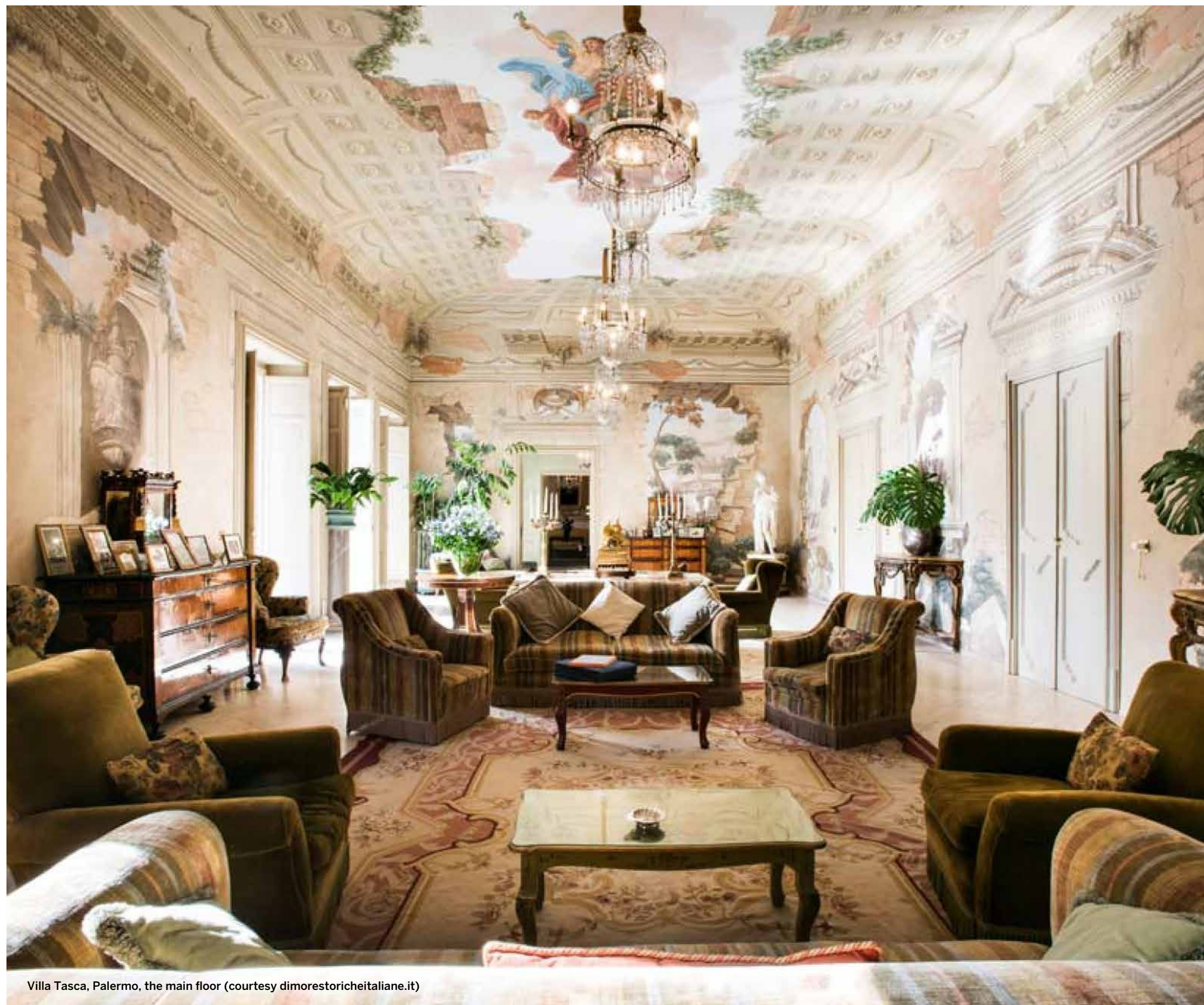


S.p.A., a subsidiary of the **Edizione** Holding Company owned by the Benetton family, which in 2023 recorded 17 million euro in revenue. “The first equal pay agreement in Italy was signed here in 1961, truly a historical first. From a few dozen inhabitants in 1925, Maccaresse has become a thriving community in which immigration, from the north as well, has taken root, including the construction of a school, Carabinieri barracks, a cinema and a health clinic.” Today, almonds are cultivated on 325,000 trees, making up the largest almond orchard in Italy. What is more, 18 million litres of milk are produced annually, along with meat and durum wheat. In 2021, the company became a Benefit Corporation, changing its statute and becoming the first Italian agricultural company within the UN Global Compact. Its aims are environmental protection, development and innovation, with special attention paid to precision agriculture. “Thanks to two biogas plants, we promote a circular economy in which livestock effluents become energy. In addition, we are surrounded by 500 hectares of Mediterranean scrubland, managed since 1988 by the WWF, which has transformed the area into four natural oases that attract 30,000 visitors every year. The WWF also owns an adventure park in Fregene,” the manager points out.

ROOMS COMING SOON

In 2025, the Maccaresse estate will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and the mansion, today used for events, concerts and ceremonies, will expand the services it provides. “In front of the castle, in what is called Borghetto, there are buildings that will be transformed into a 24-room visitor-accommodation facility. The project will be developed together with a partner in the sector, hopefully,” Destro explains. “In addition, the location is distinguishing itself as a food and wine destination, thanks to the five existing restaurants found there. Especially noteworthy is the San Giorgio. Named after the castle, this extraordinary eatery has set its sights on becoming a Michelin-starred restaurant.”





Villa Tasca, Palermo, the main floor (courtesy dimorestoricheitaliane.it)

CINEMA AND TV ENTER PERIOD BUILDINGS

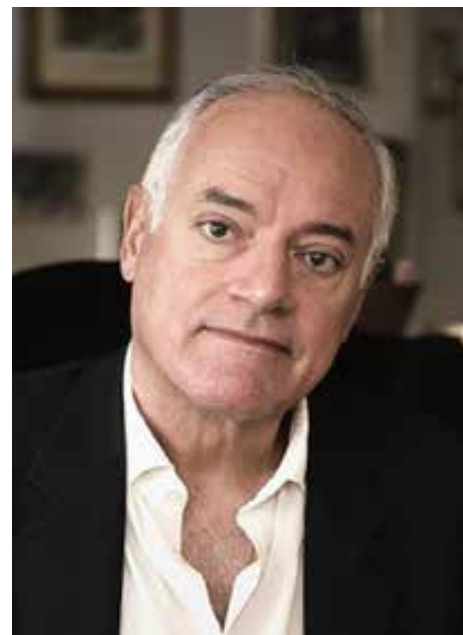
As creators of projects shot in villas and castles, Chiara Basile Fasolo and Luca Verdone talk about their visceral relationship with the historic locations they have always found special

BY MATTEO MINÀ

*H*istoric houses permanently influence our life. This is no cliché, but the message emerging from talks with people who have been enraptured by their charm from a young age. So much so, in fact, that these creators have turned such buildings into frames for their profession, making these places known to a wider public.

CHIARA'S ITALIAN DREAM

She was already under their spell when she was only 13. Today the actress and presenter **Chiara Basile Fasolo** is producer, director and star of the TV series *Sogno Italiano—Villas and Castles*. In the enthralling “Italian Dream” programme, Chiara, dressed in period costume from the 1800s, travels through the centuries, discovering wondrous places replete with traditions, secrets, adventures and curiosities. Translated into many languages, *Sogno Italiano* is now available in streaming on Prime Video in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and many other countries, enjoying great success with a variety of audiences. “Doing a programme on historical residences has been a desire of mine since I was 13 years old. I used to visit them with my family and was fascinated by them,” says Basile Fasolo. “Even back then, I started to imagine a series to show to the whole world so as not to leave these masterpieces accessible only to the very few. At the time it seemed like an unattainable dream. Then I worked as an actress and presenter on Italy’s RAI television, and in Los Angeles as well as. The turning point came with the pandemic, when I felt I had matured the necessary skills.” Each 20-minute episode focuses on a single location, personally chosen by the creator. Among those involved are one-of-a-kind buildings such as the Castello di Thiene in Veneto, the Cervara in Liguria, the Villa Tasca in Sicily, La Scarzuola in Umbria, and the Palazzo Pfanner in Tuscany. The series made its debut in the United States in February 2023 and arrived in Italy in January of the present year. “The aim of *Sogno Italiano* is to narrate all



that the residence seeks to communicate. A great deal of research goes on behind the scenes, and the plot reveals the story of each building from when it was constructed, down through the centuries to the present day, including the involvement of the owners and their family histories. The programme has a fresh, dynamic and youthful slant, even though in some cases it deals with challenging topics and even complex language on the part of the hosts. Every two to three minutes we change rooms or go into the gardens to keep the pace up.” Chiara, who has worked with directors such as Pupi Avati and Alexis Sweet, adds, “The first two five-episode seasons have already been aired and we are in pre-production on the third.” But how were the historic houses selected? “Research began with Google, then thanks to ADSI, the Italian Historic Houses Association, I was provided with good contacts. Basically, I only choose locations that are still true to their essence.” Basile Fasolo goes on to describe the feedback she has received. “The programme already reaches millions of people around the world, with the United States and Japan as the first two countries. The number will continue to grow, as I am opening up to South America and Southeast Asia. On social media, people tell me they can’t wait to come to Italy to see these wonderful places. For me, the greatest satisfaction is to welcome the public to take part in my dream from when I was thirteen, now some 20 years later.” And when asked which villa or castle impressed her the most, Chiara has no doubts. “All of them. It’s like asking a mother which child she loves more than the others. If I could, I would make a mansion that encompasses them all.” Chiara then underlines a singular perspective. “To Asian audiences, the buildings hardly seem like real places. In fact, I’m often asked whether they truly exist. I think we have treasures that we don’t fully appreciate. Perhaps we have grown numb to just how much beauty actually surrounds us.” Commenting on the role of historic houses in countering mass tourism, Basile Fasolo says, “I believe the phenomenon is destroying the very concept of travel. My idea from the beginning is to attract an elite and, above all, conscientious audience to the residences that are more open to this type of tourism, to experience the territory with greater awareness. But it’s also up to the owners of some locations to recognise the opportunity and do what they can to take full advantage of the programme’s potential.”

THE PROJECTS OF LUCA VERDONE

Director of documentaries, television programmes and feature films, Luca Verdone is in love with historic houses. As he puts it, “I have always appreciated them, so much so that in the past we were to do a book with the *Poligrafico dello Stato* (State Printing Press) on the use of great Italian residences by cinema and famous directors. The project did not take off, but in any case it got me thinking about many important images, such as the scenes from Luchino Visconti’s ‘The Leopard,’ Federico Fellini’s ‘Eight and a Half,’ and Antonio Franconi’s film ‘The Marvellous Adventure,’ which I directed, about an 18th-century circus impresario.” Verdone, son of film critic Mario and brother of Italian cinema star Carlo, went on to explain how his passion for these places came about. “As early as 1971, I had a very significant experience with Roberto Rossellini while he was filming the miniseries ‘Cartesio’ in the Villa Giustiniani Odescalchi in Bassano Romano, near Viterbo. I was 18 years old, fresh out of high school, and this influenced me greatly. Then, I returned to using these characteristic locations when I shot ‘The Memoirs of Giorgio Vasari’ in 2018. For this film, which in recent weeks was shown again in Vasari’s native city of Arezzo in commemoration of the 450th anniversary of his death, I shot scenes in Palazzo Farnese in Caprarola, in the province of Viterbo. I used several views of Viterbo itself and others shot inside the Camaldoli Monastery in Arezzo.” For Verdone, period villas and palaces offer a plus for the production of films and documentaries. “Working with ancient techniques, I like to do very careful research on light and set design, I am attentive to colour and image, and these places are fundamental to the effect I am seeking.” Historic residences will also play a role in the director’s future work. “I have a new project. I cannot reveal many details, except to say that it is the biography of a very important artist from the past. I plan to film it in Siena and Florence, and in several villas in the Tuscan countryside. After all, at university I was a student of Cesare Brandi, an art historian and illustrious figure who passed on to me his love for the Siena area and the whole of Tuscany,” Verdone concluded.

Below, Castello di Thiene (courtesy dimorestoricheitaliane.it)
Opposite, Chiara Basile Fasolo at La Scarzuola, Montegabbione, and below, Luca Verdone



GRAND TOUR WITH A SEA VIEW

From Cinque Terre to Etna, a journey along the Italian coast, visiting residences that offer hospitality and enchanting views from their gardens overlooking the seaside

BY EUGENIA TORELLI

Ischia, view of the Castello Aragonese (courtesy Castello Aragonese)



Villa Bonaccorsi Paradiso at Capo Milazzo, Messina (credits: Antonio La Malfa)

*S*umptuous palaces and strongholds, country cottages and manor houses, in which nobles and notables of past centuries set aside their big-city commitments and concentrated on managing farmlands instead. Not only inland areas, but also the Italian coasts are dotted with historical houses that still hold stories from the past about personalities, territories and entire communities. In summer, the sea calls to us with its sunny beaches and salty waves. So why not set out on a Grand Tour to discover gorgeous jewels within the great ADSI collection, far from every tension, at a peaceful retreat where you can breathe the soul of time along with the sea breeze amidst the natural beauty that lies a short distance from the shore?

EREMO DELLA MADDALENA, THE SEA FROM ABOVE

Though the **Hermitage of Santa Maria Maddalena** was officially documented for the first time in 1244, its oldest structures appear to date as far back as 600 AD. Nestled amidst the woods and Unesco World Heritage landscapes of the **Cinque Terre National Park**, the Hermitage today is a private residence where you can plan a comfortable and relaxing stay, overlooking the sea just a few kilometres from Monterosso. Enjoy the swimming pool, garden and panoramic terrace, lovely rooms and a splendid cloister in which to linger, sipping a cocktail or a glass of Cinqueterre DOC wine produced in the estate's vineyards. The facility is also open to the public, with visits to discover the history of the building. Try a walk through the vineyards before treating yourself to a wine-tasting.

THE MAGIC OF BOLGHERI, EXPERIENCED FROM THE CASTLE HAMLET

A plunge back in time, your gaze stretching from the hills of Bolgheri to the islands of Elba, Capraia, Corsica and Gorgona. Erected by the **Counts della Gherardesca** around the year 1000, the **Castello di Castagneto Carducci** has belonged to the same family for 34 generations. Today, the palace offers visitors the opportunity to walk through its halls and gardens, and it is also the ideal venue for weddings – which may be celebrated in the Church of San Lorenzo within the walled town – or for concerts, photographic and film shoots, corporate events and much more. The extensive estate includes a hunting reserve and provides private access to the sea, as well as numerous facilities, including villas and country cottages amid the greenery.

ISCHIA AND ITS HISTORY, SURROUNDED BY THE SEA

You can sense more than two millennia of history within the walls of the **Castello Aragonese d'Ischia**. The first settlements on the promontory to the east of the island date back to the 5th century B.C. The fortification evolved into a castle over time, reaching its peak between the 1400s and 1500s after the Aragonese conquest. Today the Castello is cared for by the third generation of the **Mattera family**, responsible for its rebirth since the last century, undertaking restoration work which has respected the original structure as much as possible. Now these places come alive again with cultural and musical events, guided tours, cafés and



restaurants, as well as accommodation, such as the hotel converted from what was formerly the convent of Poor Clare Nuns.

BEAUTY BETWEEN FIRE AND THE SEA

Behind it, the menacing mass of the volcano; in front of it, the blue sea. Located in **Torre del Greco** at the foot of Vesuvius, **Villa De Cillis Carafa** welcomes the visitor into the haunting beauty that no doubt enticed European travellers in the 18th century, drawn here by the mythic wonders of the Grand Tour. The villa's current structure was commissioned by Marchesa Eleonora Carafa D'Andria De Cillis in 1918. Its Art Nouveau and neoclassical soul is still tangible in its stylishly furnished rooms, as well as in the Italian-style garden, among trees, flowers and a citrus grove where several varieties of rare citrus fruits are cultivated. Now converted into an accommodation facility, the villa offers lovely rooms and suites, and guests may further enjoy numerous experiences in the elegant common areas.

TASTES AND RELAXATION AT THE FOOT OF ETNA

From volcano to volcano, from sea to sea, the Grand Tour of discovery among historic coastal houses leads to the slopes of Etna, in **Viagrande**, Catania, where the **Relais San Giuliano** is located. This boutique hotel of understated and discreet luxury was once the home of the Marquises of San Giuliano, who in the early 18th century decided to situate their country residence here. Built around an internal courtyard, with a *palmento* winepress and *bottaia* barrel-cellar, a farmhouse and stables, the now revived structure is a modern accommodation facility with rooms, suites, a swimming pool, spa and all the comforts. While enjoying a relaxing stay, be sure to sip an elegant aperitif at the Palmento Serra Bistro and Lounge Bar, and then sample the refined cuisine of the Ristorante **I Palici**, led by executive chef Gaetano Procopio.

LIKE CASTLE LORDS, BY THE SICILIAN SEA

From a promontory overlooking the sea, the **Castello di Falconara** dominates the southern coast of Sicily, in the area called **Butera**, preserving the appearance of an ancient military manor. Boasting battlements, impressive walls and towers, the castle has developed over the centuries around its large central tower. With the conquest of Algiers in 1830, the defensive function that had characterised it since the 1300s disappeared, and the palace was transformed into a manor house to oversee agricultural activities in the surrounding area. Today, the castle hosts private events as well as photographic and film shoots. Travellers come to savour a regal holiday, staying in the period-furnished rooms of

the manor house or in the modern annexes in the park, with a unique natural swimming pool and private access to the beach.

A GARDEN SUSPENDED OVER THE SEA FACING THE AEOLIAN ISLANDS

Capo Milazzo juts out over the sea, like a springboard helping you leap towards the Aeolian Islands. Visiting the **Villa Paradiso Bonaccorsi**, however, you are likely to wait before leaping, tempted to linger first among the gardens and the timeless rooms. Owned by the Bonaccorsi family for over a century, the villa stands on the ruins of a 17th-century watchtower that commands an incredible 180-degree view. It is decorated with frescoes by Carlo Righetto from Padua that alternate with the colours of Sicilian majolica. At the end of the 19th century, the garden, lying just beyond a centuries-old olive grove, was enlarged by the Bonaccorsi family. Thrilling the senses of delighted guests, it looks out towards Stromboli and Panarea—a uniquely evocative setting for private events, film shoots, vintage car rallies, art workshops and cultural activities.

AN OASIS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE INLAND FROM OSTUNI

Whitewashed walls, olive groves of the Apulian countryside, red soil and blue sky, just a few kilometres from the sea. The **Masseria Paradiso** is located inland from Ostuni. The earliest sources documenting its existence date back to 1657, recording its purchase by the Ostuni Cathedral Chapter. Over the years, various changes of ownership and extensions took place, until the recent conservative restoration brought to light its original structure with its central courtyard, main buildings, trulli and cellars. Sober in its architecture, the Masseria today offers B&B accommodation, relaxation areas in the park, large pergolas and a splendid stone swimming pool amidst the olive trees.

CALABRIA, SEA BREEZES AND MEDITERRANEAN SCRUB

Two centuries of agricultural history of the Calabrian territory, preserved in a farmhouse with an authentic structure, overlooking the sea from the greenery of olive trees, lemon groves and Mediterranean Maquis shrubland. A short distance from **Tropea**, the **Torre Galli Country Residence** is located on a plateau some 320 metres above sea level, surrounded by organically cultivated land. Here you can enjoy an easeful stay surrounded by nature, in a building that recalls the architecture of old country houses, renovated with a conservative approach. Inside, there is a choice of three rooms and a suite, in addition to the communal areas offered by the living room, veranda and sea-view terrace, while outside you can enjoy the garden and an art trail among sculptures and installations.



Facing page, from top: Castello di Falconara (courtesy Castello di Falconara), Eremo della Maddalena (courtesy Eremo della Maddalena), Relais San Giuliano (courtesy Relais San Giuliano). Below: Castagneto Carducci Castle (courtesy Castagneto Carducci Castle)



Aerial view of the Ascea cliffs (credits: Alessandro Rizzo)

CILENTO, LAND OF SEA, MOUNTAINS, FLAVOURS AND HISTORIC HOUSES

An itinerary in the Cilento national park, a Campania-region UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1998, exploring four private houses open to the public for visits or overnight stays

BY LAURA GUERRA

Time moulded its past; time defines its many contemporary souls; time is the *fil rouge* linking stories and encounters, daily life and history. The winds of the Cilento and Vallo di Diano have breathed life into impressive homes over the centuries, endowing stones with a soul that you can perceive if you know how to listen as you walk, attentively gathering all that each house has to offer. And each provides a sense of roots to its guardians, who often are women endowed with the imagination necessary to envision plans for the future. How? By lovingly caring for the property and opening the doors to guests who may spend the night here, discovering authentic taste treats, reviving the ancient halls with the rustling of clothes and the sounds of festive music, spending time together, coming away with the memory of exquisite scents and flavours.

Four historic houses, like pearls strung together, have over the centuries become places rich in memory for their local communities and for guests who come to visit.

THE MAJESTIC HALLS OF CASTELLO MACCHIAROLI

Let's start in Teggiano. Facing the square dedicated to Cono, the child saint and protector of the town, **Castello Macchiaroli** looks out over the valley from above. Built by the Sanseverino family in the Norman period and style, the castle was a fortress, a feudal residence, a place for banquets and political battles; it was here that the Conspiracy of the Barons was hatched in 1485 against the King of Naples, Ferdinand I of Aragon. Since then, centuries passed as owners came and went, until the property was purchased in 1857 by the Macchiaroli family. Stefano received the vision from his liberal and anti-fascist grandfather, then from his father Gaetano, enlightened publisher and founder of the magazine *La parola del passato*, directed by Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli, the reform-minded politician, fine cultural animator and creator of important exhibitions such as the one featuring the manuscripts of Giacomo Leopardi, which set off from Teggiano and toured the great European capitals and New



York, and the exhibition dedicated to Mimmo Iodice's photography. Now that vision shines in Gisella's clear eyes. With a solid international background and great experience in communications in the field of leading hospitality brands, Gisella heeded the call of family roots, returning to the Castello with the feeling not so much of being its owner as of belonging to it intimately. She attends to its care, undertaking architectural enhancement projects within a contemporary framework. In the majestic rooms, the sense of design blends ancient stone with wrought iron, wood, natural fabrics and native colours—all with well-balanced, refined aesthetic taste. The rooms become the settings and stages for romantic weddings, parties, banquets, and events enriched by gastronomic offerings cooked on the premises in thoroughly equipped modern kitchens. In each dish, territory plays a leading role through the skilful use of local ingredients, traditional recipes, and native produce, including the time-honoured red pepper known as "Sciuscillone," which is dried even today following the age-old techniques and wisdom handed down in peasant homes. Thanks also to the start-up company "I Segreti di Diano"—the Secrets of Diano—Sciuscillone red pepper is an ingredient that enlivens the menus and gourmet pizzas of many important names in Italian cuisine.

Crowning the Castello, which on Friday evenings transforms into an atmospheric disco, are the famous 13 churches, the Diocesan Museum and the Lapidarium, the Herb Museum and the Museum of Popular Traditions. From here, travellers are encouraged to visit the Certosa Carthusian Monastery of Padula, the Baptistry of San Giovanni in Fonte, the picturesque village of Roscigno Vecchia, and the Valley of Orchids in Sassano.

PALAZZO MAZZIOTTI, SUITES WITHIN EASY REACH OF THE SEA

In Celso, a village within the municipality of Pollica, stands the magnificent **Palazzo Mazziotti**, now carefully tended to by Orsetta and Federico, brother and sister, the young heirs of the Mazziotti di Celso family. They proudly picked up the baton of history by organising guided tours for townspeople and local schools, inviting them to share the Palazzo's beauty and importance. Many had beheld it as an unmoving, unknown presence; the distance was then bridged by visits to its rooms full of original furnishings, period books, correspondence and documents certifying the decisions made by important people who had passed through—Giuseppe Garibaldi, for example, who changed the course of Italian history.

The renovation and restoration of the rooms are part of a project to provide hospitality in two suites, to which a third will soon be added, and two deluxe rooms. The plan is to organise the residence to host exclusive events and romantic weddings immersed in an ancient fairytale atmosphere. Not far away are the beaches of Marina di Ascea and Marina di Camerota along the crystal-clear sea. The beaches have been awarded the coveted Blue Flag for their pristine beauty; the towns provide the tasty opportunity to discover the authentic flavours of the Mediterranean Diet, a longevity-inducing food philosophy native to these parts.

DOMUS LAETA, THE ART OF BANQUETING

In Giungano, a village beloved by walkers and hikers who reach it along the historic *Sentiero della Sposa*, or "Bride's Path," **Domus Laeta** celebrates its 20th anniversary as a location for exclusive weddings. Credit goes to Camilla Giannuzzi Savelli for the insightful idea of offering complete accommodation packages for the bride and groom, their guests, the wedding ceremony in keeping with each couple's faith, and then the festive banquet.

Domus Laeta has given new life to the *genius loci* linked to the family home, thanks to a plan that respects its rural history as "narrated" by furniture and interior design, plus work tools such as an antique olive press made of wood. Authentic old-world atmosphere is created by the watchtowers with arrow-loop slits along the walls, the historic library, the ancient water-collection basin next to the spring well, which has now become a swimming pool with hydromassage, surrounded by a magnificent Mediterranean garden. Nearby are the archaeological sites of Paestum and Velia, the Certosa di Padula, the village of Roscigno, and the Castelcivita caves. Wine-lovers will enjoy the best labels from local harvests; food-enthusiasts will savour produce from the garden served either fresh or in preserves. The renowned Cilento white figs are delicious as soon as they are picked, or they become king of the Christmas table when filled with dried fruit and covered in chocolate.



TAVERNA PENTA, FARMSTEAD AND CHEESE FACTORY

En route during our return to the city, we stop at Pontecagnano Faiano. We are at **Taverna Penta**, an ancient rest station for travellers and their horses along the Calabrian carriageway, a consular road that connected the Piana del Sele plain with the south of the Peninsula. The farmstead is an emblematic example of noble rural architecture, beautifully restored by Filippo Morese, who in the 1990s proved a true visionary in terms of the ethical and aesthetic refurbishment of the property he inherited. In addition to preserving Taverna Penta's layout and structure, Morese re-energised its agricultural vocation. The old storerooms on the ground floor now house a modern dairy that transforms buffalo milk produced on the farm itself into delicious mozzarella, braided mozzarella, creamy ricotta and delectable yoghurt, which many visitors love to eat while sitting in the cool air of the lovely garden. The entire estate and production procedure, from milking to the sales counter, is open for visitors to experience by taking part in guided tours. Completing the offer is the recently restored stable on the ground floor, reintroduced now as a well-equipped multi-purpose room that hosts wedding parties, corporate conventions, and rural-chic events. If you want to spend a few days relaxing in the area, you may stay overnight in the comfortable family flats of the nearby Auteta resort, immersed in the easy pace and soothing sounds of the countryside. While here, you might well visit the Pontecagnano Archaeological Museum dedicated to the "Etruscans of the Frontier Region." Taverna Penta is centrally positioned with respect to motorway junctions, which will soon become even more convenient with the opening of the Pontecagnano Airport. It is an ideal starting point to reach the Amalfi and Sorrento coasts, Paestum and the villages of the Cilento and the Vallo di Diano National Park.

The grounds are rich in history and in stories of endurance through the ages combined with a sense of belonging. As Gisella Macchiaroli told us, "It is I who belong to the castle." Her words express a powerful sentiment serving as the emotional underpinning of this journey that has revealed so many souls, made up of stones smoothed by the winds of time.

Castello Macchiaroli in Teggiano (courtesy Macchiaroli Castle)
Facing page, the exterior of Palazzo Mazziotti in Celso (courtesy Palazzo Mazziotti) and a view from the Lovers' Path (credits: Alessandro Rizzo)



"A day cooking with the Duchess" cooking courses led by Nicoletta Polo Lanza Tomasi (courtesy Butera 28)

ANCIENT WORKSHOPS FOR CONTEMPORARY RECIPES

In the kitchens of the mansions, grand dishes were created for grand occasions, transforming local products. The cooks' secrets have been collected and handed down from generation to generation, as happened in Friuli, Piedmont and Sicily

BY DANILO POGGIO

In Italy, history is intertwined with beauty and culture in many places. Historic residences hold secrets that go far beyond the centuries-old architecture and precious frescoes. Their treasures include art, yet also a culinary heritage that tells the stories of families, territories and cultures, often handed down from generation to generation. With a less conventional outlook, we can therefore map out a journey through precious kitchens where every dish tells a story of ancient flavours, authentic passions and innovations that have marked the evolution of taste. Indeed, it is often gastronomy itself that becomes a living narration of tradition over the centuries.

THE PERUSINI FAMILY AND TRADITION OF FRIULI

Our journey begins among the wines and recipes of **Friuli**. The **Perusini** winery, listed by Luigi Veronelli among the most significant of Italy's historic winemakers, has deep roots in 20th-century viticulture. Giacomo Perusini, grandfather of the current owner, distinguished himself through his dedication to the selection and recovery of native varieties, especially Picolit, in an era dominated by French wines. Giacomo's untimely death during the Great War did not stop the family's innovative drive. His wife Giuseppina Perusini Antonini, a painter, writer and also a skilled entrepreneur in her own right, gave new vigour to Friulian wine production, promoting it on national and international markets. A profound connoisseur passionate about her territory, she wrote *Mangiare e bere friulano* ("Eating and Drinking in Friuli") in 1962, the first printed collection of the region's food and wine traditions. She stated in the introduction, "My work, the result of long and meticulous research, is very imperfect, but it is only meant to be a testimony of how people used to eat in Friuli so that the memory may remain; let it therefore be an act of love for Friulian folklore so that our traditions do not disappear. Let it be an act

Table set for tasting dishes prepared under the “direction” of Nicoletta Polo Lanza Tomasi (courtesy Butera 28) and, below, the Abbey of Lucedio (courtesy dimorestoricheitaliane)

Facing page, from top: the 1962 book by Giuseppina Perusini Antonini, a dish made in the cooking class with Duchess Polo Lanza Tomasi and the dining room of Villa Pace in Tapogliano (Udine)



of homage to those Friulian women who, with dignity, succeeded in their roles as ladies, heads of homesteads, farmers’ wives, and all those who lived lives of sacrifice, of doing without, and managed to stay honest and strong, who, even when faced with adverse fortune, gave the homeland honest and virtuous children.”

Giuseppina’s son Gaetano, who became a university lecturer, pursued his study of agricultural methods and local grape varieties, while Giampaolo devoted himself to the development of Ribolla Gialla. The Castello di Rocca Bernarda, the family’s former home, was bequeathed by Gaetano Perusini to the Order of Malta, but the winemaking tradition has continued in the lands of Gramogliano. Leading the winery today is another tenacious and determined woman: **Countess Teresa Perusini**, Giampaolo’s daughter, who is flanked by her husband Giacomo and sons Carlo, Tommaso and Michele. “My grandmother’s book recounts recipes linked to the historical families of the area,” she explains. “In 2021, under the editorship of Carlo del Torre, we published a book that carries on this mission: *La cucina nelle dimore storiche friulane*—‘Cuisine in Historic Friulian Houses.’ Published by the Società Filologica Friulana, it contains recipes from collections of historical families in 22 different ancient residences. Among them is Villa Pace, the villa of my husband’s family since 1686 in Tapogliano, a few kilometres from Palmanova and Aquileia. The patron of the 17th-century building was Carlo Maria Pace von Friedensberg, Field Marshal to Leopold I, who distinguished himself in the wars against the Turks in the Liberation of Vienna (1683), the Liberation of Budapest (1686), and the Battle of Zenta. For the past 20 years, we have been working to renovate all the rooms to the best of our ability.”

RICE AND THE PRINCIPALITY OF LUCEDIO

Staying in northern Italy but moving towards Piedmont, the origins of rice in Italy can be found in an ancient abbey. In Trino, in the Vercelli area, **Lucedio** is a place with an extraordinary history, demonstrating how human ingenuity and dedication can transform a territory and give rise to traditions that also completely redefine the culinary identity of an entire nation. Founded in 1123 by Cistercian monks from Burgundy, it engaged in rice cultivation from the 15th century onwards thanks to the work of the monks, masters in the art of hydraulic engineering, who reclaimed the marshes, levelled the land and reshaped the woods. An immense amount of work was required to transform an insalubrious and marshy region into one of the most fertile in Italy, perfect for the cultivating the “novelty” of rice. At the base of it all was the perfect organisation of the “granges,” complete yet isolated farms equipped with all the necessary facilities for cultivating the fields and rearing animals. These farms were run by “*conversi*,” who had not taken vows but who worked to ensure the economic self-sufficiency of the monasteries. Besides their economic function, the granges also had a social and spiritual role, representing a meeting point between the monks and the local communities, influencing the surrounding agriculture and contributing to the spread of technical and agronomic innovations



throughout Europe. Positioned along the Via Francigena, the **Abbey of Lucedio** carved out a key role for itself over the centuries, so much so that it was visited by three different pontiffs and owned 10,000 hectares of land in total, reaching as far as Greece and the Middle East. After ownership by the Gonzaga, Lucedio passed to the Savoy and ended up as property of Napoleon, until it came into the hands of Marquis Giovanni Gozani di San Giorgio, a direct ancestor of the current owner, Countess Rosetta Clara Cavalli d’Olivola Salvadori di Wiesenhoff. After other turns of fortune, the entire complex returned to the family. “We run one of the oldest farms in Italy hands-on. The work,” explains **Count Paolo Salvadori di Wiesenhoff**, “has continued uninterrupted since its foundation. Apart from the church, the bell tower and the chapter house, everything else is austere, even in its beauty, and was designed to be useful and operational.” Today, the farm has 500 hectares (one-fifth are cultivated organically) and produces high-quality rice. It is also a place of culture. “We are proud to have reopened a monument, a historic place that has once again become a pole of attraction, leading to the blossoming of other economic and visitor-related activities throughout the area. Lucedio continues to be a driving force in development for the entire area, just as it was centuries ago.”

COOKING IN THE PALACE OF PRINCE TOMASI DI LAMPEDUSA

The journey ends in **Palermo**, in a splendid 18th-century palazzo overlooking the sea, the last home of Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa the author of *The Leopard*. With her great knowledge of tradition and her sharp-eyed, contemporary outlook, **Nicoletta Polo Lanza Tomasi**, Duchess of Palma, offers a unique culinary and cultural experience, which is more than just a lesson in Sicilian cuisine. Taking part in “*A day cooking with the Duchess*,” guests, before creating on the stove-top, may choose fresh ingredients at the Mercato del Capo, known for its lively Mediterranean atmosphere. Here Sicilian tradition is genuinely manifest amidst the scents of spices and citrus fruits. Upon return, the cooking lesson begins, leading to the preparation of lunch served in the palazzo’s dining room, overlooking the sea. “Cooking,” explains the duchess, “is also a way of putting Palazzo Lanza Tomasi to the best use. I am Venetian and have long been involved in translation projects and in organising cultural events. For many years, my husband Gioacchino Lanza Tomasi and I lived in many cities, both in Italy and abroad. We returned to Palermo in 2007 and resumed and completed the restoration of the palazzo. I have always been passionate about gastronomy, yet it was an American friend who suggested the idea of these original cooking classes. I don’t intend to found a full cooking school; still, every day I tell people from far and wide about the history and culture of Sicily through food. The model was my sister-in-law Anna Tasca Lanza who, as a true pioneer, created a cooking school in Regaleali, now run by her daughter, Fabrizia.” An integral part of the experience is also a visit through the palace, providing the chance to admire the original manuscript of Prince Tomasi di Lampedusa’s immortal masterpiece, *The Leopard*. “Behind every Sicilian dish is an ancient story. The chickpea-based *panelle* recall the Arab world, for example, and the biancomangiare blancmange evokes an ancient medieval tradition, which we interpret in a Sicilian key by using almond milk.”



ANTICIPATION GROWS... “IT WOULD BE THE FIRST UNESCO HERITAGE CUISINE”

Maddalena Fossati Dondero, editor-in-chief of *La Cucina Italiana* and a leading promoter of the candidature submitted in Paris, talks about the procedure and the tie-ins to historical houses as workshops for dishes destined for the great events of the past

BY ANDREA GUOLO



A systemic operation to affirm Italian cuisine as a World Heritage, steering clear of the divisions that often characterise the *modus operandi* of Italians in the world – the old pitfall of prioritising the particular individual, as described by Guicciardini, instead of making universal victory the goal. It is a complex challenge, especially since it is somewhat unprecedented, *Le Dimore Storiche* learns from **Maddalena Fossati Dondero**, editor-in-chief of *La Cucina Italiana*, a historic publication in the panorama of gastronomy and food culture, founded in 1929 and today at the forefront among the promoters of the UNESCO candidacy. To achieve this aim, it is important to create a broad-based consensus for the initiative baptised by the monthly Condé Nast magazine together with other leading partners – the Fondazione Casa Artusi, the Accademia Italiana della Cucina and the Collegio Culinario, jointly drawing up a dossier entrusted to a group of experts coordinated by Pier Luigi Petrillo and Elena Sinibaldi. This came about at the Festa a Vico, the festival organised in Vico Equense (Naples) by chef Gennaro Esposito with the participation of a wide range of protagonists in the best national and international cuisines, dedicated in large part this year to supporting the candidature as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The chefs

are thus fully involved because, as Fossati says, “they represent the standard-bearers of a cultural value, and this candidacy is a great rebranding operation for a historical heritage already loved and shared by humanity.” It was indeed at Festa a Vico, during a Michelin-starred dinner speaking in support of the candidacy, that Maddalena Fossati Dondero told *Le Dimore Storiche* about the project’s progress, describing too the role of grand houses in the historical development of Italy’s gastronomic identity.

Where are we on the path that should lead, as hoped, to the recognition of Italian cuisine as a UNESCO Cultural Heritage? The dossier has been submitted in Paris, the process has started, and in December 2025, maybe a little earlier if we are lucky, we will be judged. The expected waiting period is about a year and a half.

There is talk of a strong bid for Italian cuisine, favoured by the fact that there are no similar bids in the running. Is this correct?

The commission in charge judges the dossiers one by one, so there would be no relation to other bids in any case, but it is true that we are not aware of any other national cuisine candidates. We feel optimistic. It should also be pointed out that, to date, no national cuisines have been rewarded with UNESCO recogni-



Maddalena Fossati Dondero with chef Gennaro Esposito during the opening talk at Festa a Vico



Group photo with the chefs attending the "Dinner of Stars," organised this year to support the candidature of "Italian Cuisine, Between Sustainability and Biocultural Diversity" as a UNESCO intangible heritage

tion in their entirety. Those awarded to France or Mexico, to cite two examples, pertain to specific parts, techniques, moments of those cuisines and not a *unicum*, as in the case of our candidature.

There are many aspects that determine the uniqueness of our cuisine—the historical component, the regional variations, the wide biodiversity present in the recipes. Which facets are the most important in terms of UNESCO recognition?

First of all, there's the fact that Italian cuisine has a highly inclusive value, but at the same time has remained true to itself throughout its evolution. It is a mosaic of values and cultural differences, but it is still Italy. And it is undoubtedly the most loved cuisine in the world.

Historic houses are the places where Italian cuisine has expressed some of its most important recipes, the workshop where the dishes were born to be served in moments that mattered. How involved are the great houses in this much-desired recognition?

In the eyes of the magazine of which I am editor, the cuisine of historic houses is an extraordinary source of recipes that are equally historic. This cuisine constitutes a heritage in its own right, and it

has become a fundamental part of the larger heritage that embraces peasant cooking and the dishes of the aristocracy alike. The great residences' contribution to our country's culinary identity is enormous, and therefore they are entirely involved.

More and more residences lately are being opened to catering activities. How do you view this?

I consider it a highly fascinating phenomenon. And it is so because the gastronomic offering of a historical residence becomes, by its very nature, different from that of haute-cuisine restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias and other types of food providers. In the great houses, one can find recipes from particular eras, the rituals that have now disappeared from the gastronomic scene, the locations where those recipes were born and have been handed down from generation to generation. It is therefore a unique and distinctive experience.

Which historic house is closest to Maddalena Fossati Dondero's heart?

The choice is not easy, because in every village in Italy there are palaces and residences of extraordinary importance. However, I have a special bond with the Certosa di Calci, near Pisa, close to the house where I spend my summers in Tuscany. The beautiful thing is that it has remained as it was 500 years ago, a unique and special place.

AN OCCASION FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ARTISTIC HANDICRAFTS

From Sicily comes a story that opens a path towards women's emancipation and equal opportunities through the revival of artistic handicrafts. It is the *Progetto donne artigiane*—the Women Artisans Project—and it is the brainchild of Filomena "Melina" Greco, notary and president of the Beata Maria Cristina di Savoia Cultural Convention, a supporting member of ADSI, which presented this project in Rome on 7 June at the National Congress of Cultural Conventions, presided over by the national president Silvana Alesiani. "Our initiative," says Greco, "is aimed at women who, due to a lack of economic independence, may be victims of violence, not only physically but also psychologically and morally, because they do not have the means to support themselves. As Sergio Mattarella, the President of the Italian

Republic, said, economic independence also provides the freedom to denounce abuse." This training project focuses on the rediscovery of ancient arts such as embroidery, bobbin lace-making and tatting.

These arts, Greco explains, are in great demand today by fashion companies finding themselves in difficulty due to the lack of qualified artisans. On 30 January, a memorandum of understanding was signed at Kore University in Enna with the aim of relaunching handicrafts in Sicily, further giving the opportunity to create cooperatives between artisans and to access the tax benefits needed to achieve economic sustainability. The memorandum of understanding, promoted by the Maria Cristina di Savoia Culture Convention, involves the participation of entities and institutions

including the Municipality of Enna, the Kore University of Enna, the Chamber of Commerce of Palermo and Enna, Confartigianato, Cna and Fidimed, and it is the intention of the participants in the protocol to use funding from the Municipality of Enna to start an effective school of crafts in the Sicilian city. "This way, skills can be handed on and job opportunities will consequently be created for women."

The proposal for the pilot Women Artisans Project will be translated into three languages, published in the magazine of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations and then distributed in 52 countries around the world. The core of the Women Artisans Project may be summed up as the "Five C's": Culture, Cognizance, Competence, Consistency, Courage.



Precious embroideries from the historical heritage of the city of Enna



TWO JEWELS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PERUGIA

BY CAMILLA ROCCA

Castello Monticelli, restored and transformed into a Residence of Charme, dates back to the 6th century and offers the chance to taste the best Chianina meats. Nearby, Villa Montefreddo is the perfect venue for memorable events



Umbria, with its gently sloping green hills, is a land of *castelli* built to control the territory. Today the castles are a great draw for history-loving travellers. **Castello Monticelli**, on the outskirts of Perugia, witnessed military events since the 6th century. First a fortress of the Eastern Roman Empire on the border with the Lombards and then a Benedictine monastery, it served as a place of prayer and observance of the rule, and also as a refuge for wayfarers and pilgrims. In 1470, local nobles bought it and used it as a summer residence for hunting. From 1920 to 1960, it became a farm, though during World War II it was also used as a prison. Written documentation of the Castello includes a papal bull from 1115 issued by Pope Paschal II, which attributes the pre-1115 Church of St Paul to the Monastery of St Peter of Perugia. This destination is recommended for travellers curious to explore the apse and view the frescoes from 1315-19, the work of Meo da Siena, a pupil of Giotto. It is also the ideal setting for a wonderful holiday in the green heart of Italy.

Having survived over the centuries thanks to its solid walls and to the various functions it served, the building had fallen into ruin until 1999. Then a 15-year-long restoration process began, returning the castle to its former grandeur and transforming it into a hospitality facility, creating 16 suites and 10 holiday flats, with terracotta floors, ceilings with oak and chestnut beams, trusses and tiles. Completing the delights offered to guests are two swimming pools, a heated whirlpool, a small wellness centre and an organic vegetable garden. The masterminds of the castle's rebirth are the current owners, Andrea Tullio and Giuseppe Tullio. Inside the complex, be sure to visit the Osteria with its Gothic hall dating back to 1230 with a cross-vaulted ceiling, courtyard and terrace overlooking Perugia. Here you can enjoy meat from the Chianina breeding farms in the area, fresh pasta made from organic flour and bread baked in the castle's ancient wooden oven, once used to supply all the inhabitants. From the castle windows, take in the views of the Umbrian hills, the city of Perugia and Mount Subasio overlooking Assisi.

Not far from Castello Monticelli is **Villa Montefreddo di Bagnaia**, a late 17th-century Renaissance residence, commissioned by Count Angelo degli Oddi di Laviano and handed down to the **Marini-Clarelli family**, the current owners. Inside is a three-storey sandstone Medieval tower and a large inner courtyard, closed by two bossage portals. A long avenue of centuries-old cypresses leads to an impressive Italian garden, structured on four terraces with steps. The Baroque taste of its origins lives on in the decorations: wrought-iron gates, pillars supporting grilles, surmounted by pinnacles and volutes, fountains and the geometric patterns of box hedges and pruned yews. Here visitors can admire the largest lemon house in the Perugia area, some 60 metres in length, frequently used as a venue for receptions. Inside, ogival arches and plinth-like bases adorned with herms lead to a double flight of stairs and then to a gallery of busts. A hiding place for precious art masterpieces during the Second World War, today the rooms of the villa are often the scene of memorable events.



In alto, due immagini di Villa Montefreddo di Bagnaia (Instagram) e, a lato, una suite ricavata dal restauro di Castello Monticelli. In apertura, veduta dall'alto del borgo di Monticelli, alle porte di Perugia

PALAZZO COLUZZI, FAMILY HISTORY IN AN ARCHIVE

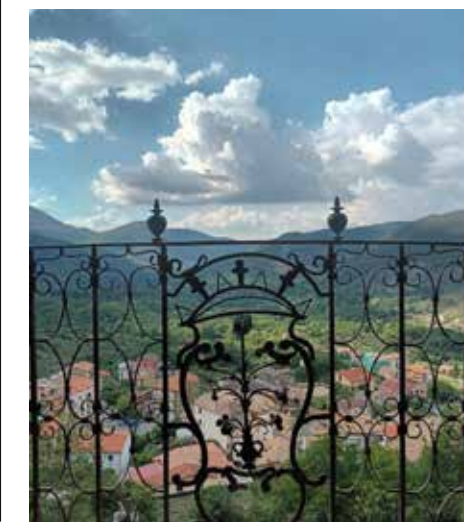
BY ANDREA GUOLO

Marina Pasquali Coluzzi has recovered the ancient property in Carpineto Romano, its origins dating back to the 12th century. Now a house-museum, it offers visits conducted by Marina herself, revealing a unique documentary heritage

“I decided to recover this Palazzo in loving memory of my father, motivated also by the passion I have for ancient heritage,” says **Marina Pasquali Coluzzi**, a descendant of the family to whom Cardinal Giovan Francesco Albani assigned the title of his *“Famigliari”* in the 18th century, thus ascribing them to the Roman patriciate. The palace in question, located in **Carpineto Romano**, has taken the name **Palazzo Coluzzi**. Its original core dates back to the 12th century, when it was erected as a tower-house by the Annibaldi family, Counts of Ceccano. In the 14th century, the Annibaldi united by marriage with the Caetani, giving rise in the following century to the Coluzzi family, as depicted in the logo intertwining the letter A with two letters C. The origin, for curious readers, is linked to the last count of the Annibaldi family, Nicola Sesto; his sons were called “Nicoluzzi” —Nicola’s little ones— hence the surname Coluzzi. In essence, the history of the palace is closely intertwined with that of the family that lived there until the early 1960s. “The last resident was my grandfather Francesco Antonio Pasquali Coluzzi. After his death, the building was aban-



From top: Marina Pasquali Coluzzi, letters from the archive and a view from the balcony of Palazzo Coluzzi in Carpineto Romano. Opposite page, a picture of the palace’s “Sala Rossa”



doned. It fell into decay until, just before the year 2000, I became the sole owner and decided to restore the palazzo,” Marina Pasquali Coluzzi recalls. All work was carried out respecting the original techniques using non-invasive materials, a choice dictated by her firm belief in the value of conservation. Even the ancient terracotta tiles of the flooring were individually numbered, mapped and then neatly stacked, with all the fragments to be repositioned in their original placement. Today, the palace has returned to its former splendour, from the spectacular frescoed hall known as the “Sala Rossa” due to the presence of a dark red 19th-century carpet covering the entire floor area, to the cellars with a museum of rural tradition. Several side rooms open out from the central hall, and at the end is the family chapel, a genuine church with its floor covered in 16th-century majolica tiles designed by Andrea Della Robbia. “Inside there are original furnishings and objects that make the building feel alive and inhabited once again, which is why the municipal administration of Carpineto Romano wanted to make it a house museum, a place that tells the history of the territory. I myself am proud to retell this history during the visits I lead personally,” Marina remarks. Of particular importance is the palace’s archive. Its uniqueness is due to the presence of documents reconstructing more than eight hundred years of history, including personal letters, wills, property lists and correspondence with Prince Aldobrandini, who shared with the Coluzzi family one of the mills for the production of extra-virgin olive oil. On Saturday 12 October, for the third annual *Carte in Dimora* “Papers of the House” Day, Palazzo Coluzzi will open to the public, sharing its heritage with visitors and enthusiasts of documentary history. “This is a step that envisages a gradual strengthening of activities at the palace. Guided tours are already taking place today, and in the future we also count on being able to open for ceremonies, having a private chapel for the celebration of weddings,” concludes the owner.



Cyclists along the Cycle Route in the Apennines. (courtesy Vivi Appennino)

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CYCLING IN THE APENNINES, AMONG VILLAS AND CASTLES

The Cycle Route along the mountain chain that runs down the Italian peninsula is the most extensive in the country, covering some 2,600 km. Here is a three-day itinerary inside the region of Emilia Romagna

BY GIAMBATTISTA MARCHETTO

Inaugurated in 2021, the *Ciclovia dell'Appennino* (Apennine Cycleway) is indeed the longest cycle route in Italy, running without interruption for approximately 2,600 kilometres, criss-crossing the mountain ridge along the Italian Boot. Following a portion of the Ciclovía route (and then departing from it), adventuresome travellers may spend a weekend on the pedals while discovering villas and historical palaces from Piacenza to San Marino, gliding through the beauties of Emilia all the way to Romagna, savouring the extraordinary food and wine panorama along the way. Special signs have been installed on the Cycle Route to enable cyclists to find their bearings and, whenever possible, avoid busy roads, passing instead through villages and rural areas, parks and protected areas. The Apennines hold a unique mountain heritage, rich in enchanting views of an unexpected and unspoilt natural landscape. Following a part of the Ciclovía Cycleway, which includes a “pit-stop post” with a column serving as a cycle workshop every 70 kilometres, here is a route among the ADSI historic houses, letting you cover 380 kilometres in three days without too much difficulty. The overall difference in altitude is 360 metres, meaning it's easy to tackle, especially if you're riding an e-bike.

FROM PIACENZA TO THE LANDS OF LAMBRUSCO REGGIANO

The starting point is just below Piacenza, setting off from one of the few European examples of a manor house surrounded by an ancient village, largely intact to this day. The **Castello di Rivalta** – still inhabited by the family of Counts Zanardi Landi, the owners since the late 1200s – has welcomed nobles and royals over the centuries, as well as heads of state and diplomats from around the world. The 54 rooms of the ancient manor house, furnished with period furniture and rugs from the 1400s onwards, have been set up now as a Military Costume Museum, receiving tens of thousands of tourists every year (www.castellodirivalta.it).

From above, Casale La Colombara in Castell'Arquato (courtesy Casale La Colombara) and a view of the Castello di Rivalta (courtesy Castello di Rivalta). Facing page, an aerial view and the hall of frescoes of Palazzo de' Rossi in Sasso Marconi (courtesy Palazzo de' Rossi).



it). The earliest mention of the Castello di Rivalta's existence seems to date back a thousand years, when it was destined shortly to become a monastic seat. After a couple of centuries of alternating events, Obizzo Landi, who had purchased it from the Ripalta family, became lord of the village and feud. His descendants still live in the monumental complex and have enhanced its facilities for events, also providing hospitality within the village. Converted from pre-existing stone buildings, the Residenza Hotel Torre di San Martino is part house and part hotel. Thus you can rest in the ancient rooms before mounting your bike to follow the Apennines towards Romagna.

Pedalling in a south-easterly direction, you reach the **Casale La Colombara** near the village of Castell'Arquato, recently opened to the public for events (www.casalelacolombara.it). Dating back to the mid-15th century, this historic residence began its life as a farmstead for sharecropping families. In the early 1900s, the Anguissola family sold the property to the Capelli-Norén family who, after the Second World War, began the restoration and renovation work that has made it an ideal location for private events.

The next leg of the journey takes us to Salsomaggiore Terme in the area of Parma. Set in a dominant position on a rocky spur, the **Castello di Tabiano** is among the most imposing feudal fortresses of Upper Emilia. It was built in the 11th century on a Roman settlement to guard the Via Francigena and the salt wells of Salsomaggiore. From its walls, one can admire a panorama sweeping over the plains as far as the Alps. Under the bastions of the walls, in the context of an agricultural estate with restored farmhouses, the ancient medieval village has been transformed into a Relais de Charme with suites and wellness facilities. During your first-night stopover, you may choose between the two restaurants, one of which is housed in the old cheese factory (www.castelloditabiano.com).

The longest ride fills the afternoon, crossing the Lower Parma area and on toward Reggio Emilia. Setting out from Tabiano Castle, you can head straight for Parma, cycling through the fascinating historic centre with its visible history of stratified cultures, or passing below through the Parco dei Boschi di Carrega woodland park and the Taro River Park, going through Rocca Sanvitale and villages such as Felino and San Michele Tiorre. After a visit to the museum of the Magnani-Rocca Foundation in Mamiano, we reach the 19th-century **Tenuta di Roncolo** for an overnight stay. Today the estate houses the Relais Roncolo 1888



and the Venturini Baldini cellars, devoted to intriguing expressions of Lambrusco Reggiano wine, without forgetting the vinegar cellar that combines tradition and contemporary flavours.

FROM THE GOTHIC STYLE OF REGGIO EMILIA TO THE HILLS OF BOLOGNA

The early bird gets the worm, even for those who have to pedal for kilometres. Remaining in the hinterland of Reggio Emilia, a quick ride takes us to Albinea to discover the architectural and landscaping complex of **Villa Arnò**. Built in the second half of the 19th century to a design attributed to Pio Casoli, rather than allude to the formal repertoire of 16th-century Veneto architecture, the composition refers to the picturesque taste of Romanticism developed in England starting in the second half of the 18th century. The “castelletto” recalls hints of the Gothic Revival; a large English-style park surrounds the villa.

From Albinea, you may cut straight for Scandiano, Sassuolo and Maranello – perhaps leaving yourself time to admire the four-wheeled works of art at the Ferrari Museum – or you can lengthen the route, choosing to reach Modena via the nature reserve of the Secchia River Expansion Basin. For a lunch stop, you may choose a *gnocco fritto* with cured meats in an *agriturismo* farmhouse, or try a plate of homemade tortellini. You can't go wrong in either case while riding through what is rightly described as Food Valley.

The next destination lies among the hills of Bologna, before Sasso Marconi. **Palazzo de' Rossi** was built in Pontecchio during the second half of the 1400s by Bartolomeo de' Rossi, a senator of Parmesan origins. The sumptuous residence hosted nobles, intellectuals and ecclesiastics visiting Bologna, including the writer Torquato Tasso and Pope Julius II. Although the Palazzo has undergone several modifications since then, it still retains its majestic nature and noble atmosphere, the perfect setting for events. Thanks to the architectural regeneration work initiated by the Bevilacqua Ariosti family, the medieval hamlet offers dining and hospitality services, including Charme hotels and flats (www.palazzoderossi.it). If you decide to continue without stopping for the night at the hotel in Palazzo de' Rossi, a relative quick lengthening of the day's cycling takes you to **Palazzo di Varignana**, where you may choose to arrive via the Colline di San Luca hills. Palazzo di Varignana stands on





Two images of the royal carriage transformed into a dining area at Palazzo di Varignana (courtesy Palazzo di Varignana) Facing page, from above, views of the Castello di Santarcangelo di Romagna (courtesy dimorestoricheitaliane.it) and Palazzo del Poggiano (courtesy Palazzo del Poggiano)

the hills of the town from which it takes its name. The heart of what is now a luxury resort is Palazzo Bentivoglio – a beautifully restored ancient villa dating back to 1705 that respects the charm of its history. The surrounding complex lies on 30 hectares of green spaces, parks, and water sources. Immersed in nature are residential structures that make up a hamlet dedicated to hospitality, with 134 spacious rooms where you may rest before taking to the road once more on two wheels. An experience not to be missed is dinner aboard a restored 1921 royal railroad carriage with gold leaf decorations, a restaurant setting unlike any other.

ROMAGNA OF FORTRESSES AND PALACES

The third day takes us into the land of Romagna, amidst delicious piadinas and Sangiovese wine. After Imola and Castel Bolognese, a rest stop would undoubtedly be Faenza, with its large porticoed piazza and streets embellished with beautiful historic buildings. Above all, the Romagna Apennines are rich in natural beauty, and there is no shortage of opportunities to be distracted by the spell of a winery. We are in fact on the hills of the Rocche di Romagna, chosen precisely to tell the story of wines that express the best of a varied territory. The second to last stop, on a third cycling-filled day, is the **Castello di Santarcangelo di Romagna**, a few kilometres from Rimini, standing on a small tuffaceous hill. Its bulk defines the outline of the village of Santarcangelo, a well-preserved mediaeval hamlet. Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta rebuilt the castle in 1447 on a site that was already fortified at the end of the 9th century. It is the residence of the family that owns and preserves it. In addition to events, the castle is open to the public every Sunday and can be visited with an expert guide. For those who want to treat themselves to an unusual experience, there are also two luxurious tower suites available that offer the opportunity to spend a night in an authentic courtly atmosphere (www.castellosantarcangelo.it).

Our cycling journey through the natural beauty and exquisite flavours of the Apennines ends at a fortified noble palace in Poggio Berni, originally belonging to the Malatesta family. Much coveted over the centuries, **Palazzo del Poggiano** changed hands from the Malatesta to the Montefeltro family, to the Dorias, to the Gonzagas and up to the Medici, and finally to the Tosi family who modernised the structure between the 19th and 20th centuries. The restoration work carried out by the current owners has returned the ancient residence to its full splendour, showing, moreover, the stratification of architectural changes during its history. In addition to events, the Palazzo is also accessible for guests wishing to reward themselves with a night in one of the two suites overlooking the park (www.palazzodelpoggiano.com).



BIKING FROM LIGURIA TO SICILY

It unites 300 small Italian municipalities—from Altare in the province of Savona, down to Alia in the province of Palermo, through 14 regions, 33 provinces and 56 protected areas, parks and nature reserves. The route is recognisable due to the placement of North-to-South signposts, and the Cycleway has facilitated access to inland areas and the many small villages that characterise the Apennines. Its germinal idea first presented in 2017 at the G7 Ministerial Meeting on Environment in Bologna, the Apennine Cycle Route project has now become a reality, thanks to the support of the Italian Ministry of the Environment as a strategic solution for the development of the country's inland areas, and thanks also to the governance coordinated nationally by Appennino Bike Tour and Vivi Appennino, which saw the involvement of Legambiente, local administrations and territorial associations. Upcoming steps foresee completion of the main route in 2025, and the installation of the South-to-North return signposts. Equipped with Ministry-approved signs, secondary branches will also be developed, making it possible to implement a national bicycle network that will connect the main route to the more than 1400 municipalities of the Apennines. The itinerary, helped by the support of an important Italian food brand and annual animation campaigns carried out by Vivi Appennino and Legambiente, is now equipped with a recharging station and mini-bike workshop in each of the 44 stopover municipalities, one every 70 km or so.



Bird's-eye view of Piazzale Libertà (photo by Eugenio Mazzone)

PESARO AS CAPITAL: THE CITY OPENS UP TO THE WORLD

A look at the many initiatives taking place in the centre of the Marche region, which also hosted ADSI's National Assembly, celebrating the 2024 Italian Capital of Culture through arts, music and technology

BY ELISABETTA MARSIGLI

With its recognition as the **2024 Italian Capital of Culture**, the city of **Pesaro** has cast its gaze into the future, focusing on the regeneration of culture. Its candidacy project, entitled "The Nature of Culture," explores contemporary relations between nature, art and technology, for this is the very conjunction that defines the main challenges facing people today. The project encapsulates the answers proposed by Pesaro to address these issues. The central idea is that of a city on a human scale: not only the concept of the 15-Minute City (launched by Sorbonne urban planner **Carlos Moreno**), but also an emphasis on the roots of the city's sense of cultural development and output, extended then over an entire province, starting from origins and archetypes, while further positing culture as a tool for conceiving a new city, a new province and a new society springing from culture itself. Investigating the nature of culture means envisioning the city that is not there, together with its citizens, from the neighbourhoods to the villages in the surrounding area, placing links between art, nature and technology at the heart of a new concept of widespread, inclusive culture, in dialogue with the environment that humanity shares with all other living things.

PESARO IS CULTURE

This vision fits in perfectly with the identity of a city that has made culture the driving force of its own splendid renewal. In 2017, a first international accolade was achieved when Pesaro won recognition as the **UNESCO Creative City of Music**—in part, to honour the city as the birthplace of Gioachino Rossini, yet also to acknowledge the fertile and fervent movement that has generated bands and musicians who have distinguished themselves on the indie and singer-songwriter scene, so much so that Pesaro has been dubbed "the Seattle of Italy." Rossini's legacy made it possible to found a world-class musical institute, the Conservatorio Rossini, where courses began in 1882. The technological and interactive National

From above: the façade of Palazzo Ducale (photo by Luigi Angelucci), the Bicipolitana and Pesaro Beach (photo by Eugenio Mazzone)
Facing page, from above: Villa Miralfiore and the village of Novilara (photo by Culto Productions)



Rossini Museum was inaugurated in 2019, flanking Rossini's birthplace along the itinerary dedicated to the great composer. In recent years, other spaces have opened, in addition to the Rossini Theatre and the Sperimentale Teatro experimental theatre, where viewers enjoy music, dance, theatre and the performing arts. The museum circuit is no less impressive, including the **Civic Museums**, which also house the prestigious ceramics collection (another source of pride for the territory) the **Domus** (bearing the original Picene traces) the **Library** and **Oliverian Museum**, the **Synagogue**, and the **Pescheria Visual Arts Centre** dedicated to contemporary art. Another distinctive feature of Pesaro is the **Sculpture Park**: a route of exploration that wanders between the historic centre, the sea, the port and the outskirts, allowing visitors to admire works by prestigious artists such as Arnaldo Pomodoro, Ettore Colla, Nino Caruso, Pietro Consagra, Mauro Staccioli, Loreno Sguanci, Marcello Guasti, Agapito Miniucchi, Giovanni Gentiletti, Giuliano Vangi, Eliseo Mattiacci and Giorgio Bompadre.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

A network of decades-long relations involves events that are now historical for Pesaro, such as the **Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema**, the International New Cinema Exhibition (14-22 June) and the **Rossini Opera Festival** (7-23 August), along with various special projects launched for Pesaro 2024, including **The Life**, running throughout the spring, conceived and realised by **Marina Abramović**. Viewers experience an encounter, at once intimate and digital, in which the artist, thanks to the mix of real and virtual elements, transits between worlds, dissolving and remanifesting both as art and as energy, time and space. And there's the innovative **Kagami** concert (29 August-11 September) created by composer Ryūichi Sakamoto in collaboration with Tin Drum, merging three-dimensional moving images with the real world to provide a presentation of mixed reality never experienced before. This intimate musical happening resonates with deep human connotations, transforming the entire operation into a unique opportunity for emotional and artistic connection.

THE ROLE OF HISTORIC HOUSES

Among the most exciting projects within the dossier presented by Pesaro is one that broadens vision to embrace the entire province, creating new synergies for the relaunch and participation of the whole community. And if Pesaro has been defined as "the orchestra city," the surrounding area presents itself as a boundless fresco, with places of rare beauty in terms of scenery and architecture, drawing visitors and culture-lovers from far and wide. In the

framework of this fascinating collective challenge, the community itself becomes the main vehicle for promotion. Over the course of 50 weeks, each municipality has prepared a programme to highlight its potential for synergy between local organisations, institutions and stakeholders: a starting point that looks ahead to 2024 and beyond while focusing attention on the development of long-term projects for future collaboration. It is in this context that **a musical project has arisen in close contact with historic residences in the province of Pesaro Urbino**, involving local excellence such as the G. Rossini Symphony Orchestra and the festival that explores the origins of Belcanto. On 15 and 16 June, we start in **Cagli**: first at **Palazzo Mochi Zamperoli** and the next day at **Palazzo Mochi Felici**, with soprano Laura Khamzatova and mezzo-soprano Tamari Kirakosova, accompanied on the piano by Emma Principi, performing arias by A. Catalani, G. Bornaccini, I. Colbran, S. Mercadante, G. Spontini, N. Vaccaj. On 13 and 14 July, the concert will be repeated in **Fano** at **Palazzo Castracane** and the **Pinacoteca San Domenico Museum** respectively. On 30 August, **Villa Imperiale** in Pesaro will host an intriguing excursion into "*Il buffo all'opera*," with music by L. Ricci, P. Generali, N. De Giosa, G. Cordella and P. A. Coppola. Villa Imperiale will carry on its longstanding collaboration with the city, hosting other events within "The Nature of Culture" series. For years, this historic house has been the setting of multiple forms of contemporary artistic expression. The months during which it is open will be enriched with appointments to share new and unprecedented responses to the theme of Pesaro as capital, through the language of photography, architecture, performance and digital arts, music and contemporary dance, testifying to the fact that this place is very much alive today. Its thrilling history continues to be written day after day.

A HERITAGE OF 27 HISTORIC HOUSES

Of the 123 historical residences in the Marche region, 27 are located in the province of Pesaro Urbino. The city of Pesaro, which recently hosted the annual meeting of the Historic Houses Association in the Salone Metaurense of the Ducal Palace, is home not only to Villa Imperiale but also the Cenobio S. Bartolo, Palazzo Baldassini, Villa Vismara Currò (formerly Villa Ciacchi) and Villa Miralfiore. In terms of hospitality in Pesaro, we would like to mention the Alexander Museum Palace Hotel by the sea, and Villa Fontalba in Cagli. For Pesaro, 2024 will be remembered not only as the year of the Italian Capital of Culture but also as the year in which the city hosted the annual assembly of **ADSI, the Italian Historic Houses Association**, on Saturday 4 May, an opportunity for the owners of historic residences to discover the city's beauty and cultural heritage.



THE “SEVERE” MANSIONS OF MY CATALUNYA

Victoria Bassa Garrido is president of Monumenta, the association that brings together historic-building owners within the autonomous community. She tells us about the wonders to be found in Barcelona, Tarragona, Vic and other Catalan cities

BY ANDREA GUOLO

*S*ome to more than 7.5 million inhabitants, Catalonia is a lodestone for tourism in Europe, thanks especially to the allure of Barcelona, with its monuments and major buildings such as those designed by Antoni Gaudí, and to the remarkable beauty of the Costa Brava with its seaside resorts. In a broader sense, this autonomous community of Spain holds a rich heritage of historic buildings that deserve to be discovered. Hence our encounter with **Victoria Bassa Garrido**, president of **Monumenta**, the association that promotes the preservation and knowledge of this heritage—one further reason to spend a holiday and explore the beauty of Barcelona and the other three provinces (Gerona, Lleida and Tarragona) of Catalonia—known locally as Catalunya.

What is the situation of the historic houses in Catalunya?

Monumenta, of which I currently have the honour to be the president, is an association of owners of castles and listed buildings in Catalonia. It is a member of European Historic Houses. José Luis Vives Conde set up the association in 1992 in response to owners' concerns regarding the maintenance and preservation of this special kind of heritage. Some thirty years later, the goal has not changed. Progress has been made



Victoria Bassa Garrido and, to the side, Crypt of the Colònia Güell (designed by Antoni Gaudí) Opening photo, Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau in Barcelona

in the value of the heritage and its preservation, but public administration's support for the owners is still lacking and society remains largely unaware of the enormous effort required for maintenance. Monumenta works on all these fronts, and seeks to involve public administration in order to increase awareness. We are currently experiencing a historical-political period marked by a certain paralysis, and we are not moving forward as fast as we would like to.

What are the most important and best-known historic houses in your country?

Spain is a country with an impressive cultural wealth and we are truly fortunate to have such a great range of heritage buildings, magnificently preserved over the centuries and visited by millions of tourists from around the world. In the case of historic houses, we have such a spectacular legacy all over the country that it is difficult to single out the most important residences. When it comes to a noble and colossal legacy, we may well highlight the House of Alba, for its properties include the Palacio de Dueñas in Seville and the Palacio de Liria in Madrid, which has recently opened to the public—a wonderfully successful initiative. In Catalonia, we have magnificent historic houses. It could be said that this Catalan historical heritage, held in private hands, is architecturally more severe yet no less important. We invite you to visit the Monumenta website (www.monumenta.info) to view the many superb buildings that are members of our association throughout the Catalan geography. Infinitely worth seeing are exemplary modernist buildings in Barcelona: the Hospital



Casa Lleó i Morera (designed by Domènech i Montaner) and, left, Palau de la Música Catalana

de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau, Casa LLeó i Morera, Hotel Casa Fuster, Hotel Espanya, Palau de la Música Catalana, all by by Domènech i Montaner, and, moreover, Antoni Gaudí's famous buildings such as the Pedrera-Casa Milá, the Cripta Güell and Casa Vicens, all of them Monumenta members. In Barcelona alone, we already have nine World Heritage buildings. Plus, of course, the number of privately owned castles, estates, *masías* and so forth that make up the greater part of the extraordinary Catalan heritage.

Could you suggest an itinerary for visiting Catalunya, including the “unmissable” historic houses?

Our land is a global reference point in terms of tourism. More often than not, the usual, well-established routes lead travellers only to the most famous buildings, with Barcelona clearly as the central hub. Yet there is an abundance of architecture and heritage to be found off the beaten path. We have magnificent castles in the province of Lérida, historic properties with a spectacular baroque heritage in the Osona region, especially in its main city Vic, and then there's monastic and modernist architecture, to say nothing of traditional dry-stone architecture in the Tarragona region, as well as breathtaking historical cities in the province of Gerona. Throughout Catalonia, you'll find

beautiful historic houses, and we here at Monumenta are at your disposal to suggest a variety of exciting routes.

Can you tell us about your historic house?

Our house, Cal Gener, is a Catalan *masia* located in the interior of the province of Tarragona. The *masia* is a type of architectural structure characteristic of Catalunya. It is part of our history and tradition. The years 1698 and 1778, inscribed on the façade, indicate the dates when the building was enlarged during periods of prosperity. The owners of this house used to live on the noble main floor, with large rooms and bedrooms. The workers on the ground floor shared the spaces linked to the fields, the kitchen, wine production, the cellar and domestic animals. The top floor was used for drying and storing food. What fully characterizes the house is its magnificent 18th-century sgraffito façade, with traditional figurative images, geometric drawings and a beautiful sundial. My father restored it in 1984 with a grant from the Catalan government and the help of Ferdinandus Serra, a sgraffito craftsman who also restored the sgraffito on several important buildings in Barcelona such as the Casa de la Seda. Cal Gener has middle-level architectural protection (BCIL-Bien Cultural de Interés Local).

The façade of Cal Gener with the sgraffito characteristic of the Catalan tradition and, on the other page, a detail of the historic house owned by Victoria Bassa Garrido



Is your historic house open for visits by the public?

Thirty years ago, my father decided to use the house itself to generate income to contribute to its maintenance. That was his reason for starting a rural hospitality business, which is still active today. From time to time, the City Council has asked us to hold events in the house, and we show it to anyone interested in visiting. It is a special kind of museum for the village. The guests are mostly families, and often they're exploring various specific cultural routes throughout the area.

What upcoming projects do you have in mind for your estate?

We are currently at a crossroads. Our father has lived in this house for the last forty years and he is no longer young. Our own role has already shifted from simply enjoying the house in a relatively stress-free fashion to now maintaining it with a great sense of responsibility in order to preserve our family's legacy. We are working hard to prove ourselves worthy of the task.

What advice would you give to owners in Italy who are increasingly oriented towards opening their historic houses to the public?

Well, with an educational viewpoint in mind, we are making culture widely accessible, thanks to the very fact of opening our house, exhibiting artwork and showing a whole way of life from the past, at the same time giving visibility to the effort and responsibility involved in maintaining this heritage. This is vital for everyone to understand. Circumstances are becoming increasingly complicated, and future generations will face greater difficulties maintaining this heritage. We must set our sights on future solutions that will make additional income

available for maintenance and preservation. This “family” issue must be addressed well in advance.

What is your favourite historic house in Italy?

I am an architect. Professionally, I work primarily in the restoration of old buildings. I have had the opportunity to work on magnificent buildings of great simplicity and constructive wisdom. I have learned a lot about them and with them. For this reason, my passion for ancient and traditional architecture is enormous. My trips to Italy have been a true architectural experience for me. It is difficult to choose between so much wonder and so much harmony. I am impressed by the courage of the proportions and the concept of scale. We could go from the Roman architecture of the Pantheon, through Palladio's villas, through basilicas and churches, any Venetian palace, through the historical urban planning of cities with their impressive squares such as Siena, and thousands of towns like San Gimignano and its towers. Everywhere you look, you see something breathtaking, and so I could continue listing hundreds of buildings, spaces, cities, each more impressive than the last. How easy it is to get excited while walking through a historic Italian city! That's why I also wish to underline the importance of preserving the traditional and area-specific architecture with which towns, cities, regions are built, a silent heritage full of strength, essence, tradition, that gives identity to our environment and landscape. We must protect this architecture and intervene respectfully, taking care not to damage it. It is important to work on the recovery of traditional materials, techniques and artisans to help us preserve this heritage.

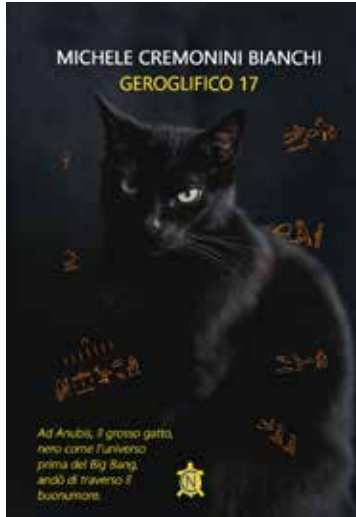


IL MALE IN BOCCA. LA LUNGA STORIA DI UN'ICONOGRAFIA DIMENTICATA

MARCO BUSSAGLI
Medusa Edizioni - 2023

Art historian and artist Marco Bussagli teaches at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and is already the author of *Michelangelo's Teeth: An Iconographic Case* (Medusa Edizioni). Building on his previous book, the author analyses the origins and development of the iconography of the central incisor from Archaic Greece to the 20th century. Tied to a real-life dental anomaly (known to medical science as “mesiodens,” consisting

of a supernumerary incisor in the centre of the upper or lower dental arch, or both), the iconography of the fifth incisor takes on negative symbolic values—except that, with significant examples, it also marks the face of Christ, the only one capable of defeating, for the salvation of humankind, “the evil in the mouth.”

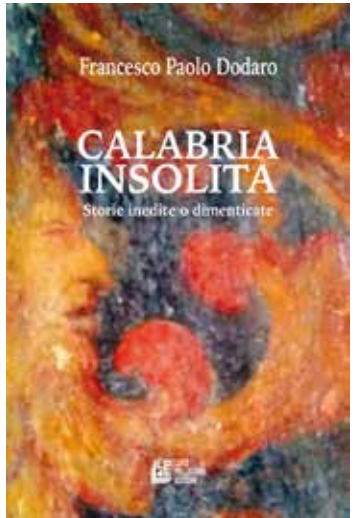


GEROGLIFICO 17

MICHELE CREMONINI BIANCHI
CN Edizioni (Oligo Editore) - 2023

A noir, sequel to *The Cat's Logic*, set in the Castello Mina della Scala between the provinces of Cremona and Mantua, where it was recently presented in the “Libri in Castello Cremona 2024” review. A mysterious message in ancient Egyptian symbols prior to a murder triggers a no-holds-barred treasure hunt. It is a complicated case for the new police inspector Gilberto Contessina, who meets singular characters along his path, such as Copernicus, his wild, almost imaginary friend,

and the mysterious and extremely dangerous Voce—characters whom the reader has already met in *Uccidi anche me* and *La Logica del Gatto*. Once again, however, it is Anubis, the big cat, black as black can be, who will make the ultimate difference.



CALABRIA INSOLITA. STORIE INEDITE O DIMENTICATE

FRANCESCO PAOLO DODARO
Luigi Pellegrini Editore - 2024

Born in 1993, a scholar of history and art, Dodaro has numerous publications to his credit, including the monograph *The Palaces Speak: A Guide to the Historic Houses of Old Cosenza* (Pellegrini, 2015). This new work contains a series of essays on places, characters and episodes in Calabrian history. Most of the writings are in alphabetical order from “A” for Aciri to “S” for Sila, in keeping with the specific locations to which they refer. The research presented here shines a light on unpublished or at least lesser-known

aspects of the local cultural panorama, motivated by the notion that what goes on behind the scenes of official history is crucial in stimulating new perspectives of study. It is in fact micro-histories that make up “grand history,” reconnecting and blending in different ways.

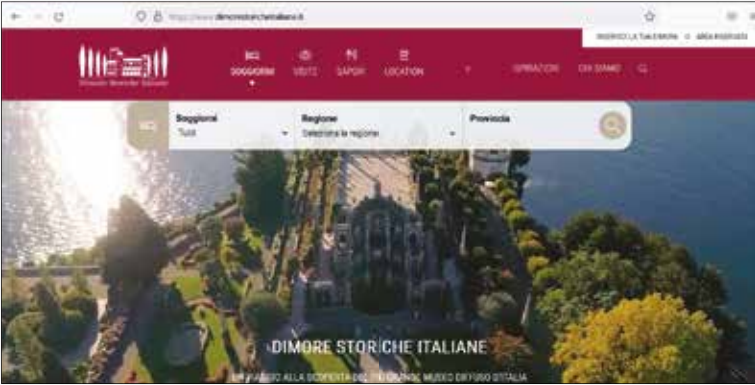


ITALIAN HISTORIC HOUSES

A journey to discover the most broadly spread out museum in Italy

“**Italian Historic Houses**” is a project under the auspices of ADSI Consulenze e Servizi SRL (a single-shareholder company owned by the Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane, A.D.S.I.). All residences appearing on the site are owned by members of the Italian Historic Houses Association. The project stems from the desire to create an online platform for the promotion of historic monumental Italian real estate in synergy with the cultural excellence of the country. For almost four decades, the Italian Historic Houses Association has been actively involved in the enhancement and protection of Italy’s private monumental real estate. With this goal in mind, intense nationwide activity has been launched through itineraries dedicated to the discovery of these architectural treasures, which are the natural repositories of important artistic and historical artifacts, traditions, identity and culture. It is also thanks to historic houses that the ancient professions of craftsmen remain in existence. Through the portal, you have the opportunity to discover extraordinary places and gain access to **cultural journeys** which, thanks to experts from the Italian cultural scene,

let you relive the atmosphere and emotions of the **Grand Tour of the 1700s**. From **Venetian Palladian Villas** to the **Castles of Sicily**, from **Tuscan villages** to the **ancient fortified farm estates of Puglia**—an odyssey through time to discover the manifold identities of Italian cultural through direct experience in diverse parts of the nation. Explore not only the historic houses of the most famous Italian cities but also other hidden pearls scattered throughout the peninsula, unknown to the general public but of absolute importance and beauty. Here, where nature blends with art and traditions, the character that makes this country unique, largely undiscovered, sings through. In numerous houses it is still possible to get to know firsthand the world of Italian **oenogastronomy** which, replete with **fine wines, unspoiled landscapes and crenellated towers**, allow visitors to savour history and share in the delights of Italy. All properties included are subject to Ministerial Constraints pursuant to Legislative Decree 42/2004 (formerly Law 1089/39) and have been evaluated and approved by the Italian Historic Houses Association.



INFORMATION: info@dimorestoricheitaliane.it - www.dimorestoricheitaliane.it

**CRISTINA CIMATO**

Born and raised in Milan, Cristina proudly defends her Calabrian origins. A journalist since her university days, she covers design, art, food and tourism. She loves writing, reading, travelling and drinking good wine. Her dreams include studying the cello and writing a novel.

**GIAMBATTISTA MARCHETTO**

A freelance journalist and blogger in the fields of economics, food and wine, tourism, art and culture, Giambattista collaborates with *Il Sole 24Ore*, *Il Gazzettino*, *Pambianco*, *Food & Wine Italia*, *Winenews*, *Italia a Tavola*, *Paneacquareculture*. He directs *VinoNews24* and supports the editorial staff of *ItalianWineTour*.

**DANILO POGGIO**

Director of information for a historic Piedmontese TV news magazine, wine taster, Danilo writes for several leading magazines in this field. He is a presenter and guest speaker on national TV and radio programmes aimed at the general public.

**LAURA GUERRA**

A professional journalist specialising in social communication and food-writing, Laura lives in Naples, which makes a big difference in the way she views reality. Putting her signature on a piece means pulling readers into a world that was unknown until a moment before, touching people, their stories, the places they inhabit.

**ELISABETTA MARSIGLI**

Elisabetta writes about culture and entertainment in the *Corriere Adriatico* and contributes to several online magazines. She loves, has seen, organised and done theatre in all its forms. Passionate about science fiction and detective stories, she is working on a fantasy-noir story of her own.

**CAMILLA ROCCA**

Camilla collaborates with *La Repubblica*, *Vanity Fair*, *Io Donna*, *Elle*, *Capital*, *Food & Travel*. Specialising in travel, hotels, food & wine, she now heads a vertical team in these four-account sectors. Her secret? Always on the lookout for enticing news to share.

**ANDREA GUOLO**

An economics journalist, Andrea ranges from food to fashion, from design to spirits, telling the story of all that is Made in Italy. He writes for *Vogue Italia*, *Milano Finanza*, *Gambero Rosso* and many other Italian and foreign publications. He is a theatre author, essayist, ever driven by a passion for new projects.

**MATTEO MINÀ**

Born in Florence yet a staunch supporter of the South of Italy, Matteo is a journalist and fashion lecturer. For years now, he has reported on the fashion world and other sectors in newspapers, periodicals, e-zines and on the radio. He is co-author of the books *Funiculi & Funiculi*, *Machiavelli social* and *Il Galateo del Third Millennium*.

**EUGENIA TORELLI**

Tuscan roots, Venetian by adoption. Eugenia has her nose in wine and spirits since taking it out of books and her past in intercontinental flights. She writes for *VinoNews24*, *Linkiesta Gastronomika*, *Corriere della Sera* and *Spirito Autoctono*. She travels, tastes, listens a lot and speaks when needed (various languages).

Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane— Italian Historic Houses Association

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF AN ITALIAN LEGACY

The **Italian Historic Houses Association (A.D.S.I.)** brings together the owners of historic properties from all over Italy, for they represent an important component of our cultural heritage. Historic houses are cultural assets of significant historical and artistic interest, “subject to constraints,” and therefore protected by the State, which must favour their conservation, and are entrusted to the responsibility of the owners. It is a vast and heterogeneous heritage: houses and palaces, villas and castles, as well as gardens and agricultural estates. They are distributed throughout the nation and, in almost 80% percent of the cases, are located in the countryside or in the province. Each of these assets has a precise identity, unique in Europe, in terms of its individual history, its cultural value and close ties to the territory where it is located.

However, the serious difficulties entailed in the maintenance of these assets are also extraordinary, and the owners, in their role as custodians, must face such challenges every day. Yet these assets, if well-maintained and well-managed, can make an important contribution to the cultural, social and economic life of the communities where they are located. To achieve this result, the Italian Historic Houses Association, with its 4,500 members, is constantly

committed, together with the European Historic Houses Association (EHH), to promoting the protection and enhancement of historic homes.

The commitment of A.D.S.I. is therefore devoted to ongoing work in several directions:

- towards the Members who own the assets, to whom it provides legal, administrative, tax and technical advice and assistance regarding the management of the houses;
- towards national and local institutions, towards public and private bodies with which it collaborates in planning interventions, including those of a legislative nature, most suitable to the conservation and enhancement of listed properties in Italy, also in terms of tourism;
- towards the school and university system, to promote knowledge among young people of the opportunities offered by the protection and promotion of these resources. The historic houses, in fact, cannot be relocated, and they create precious job opportunities in the territories where they are located;
- towards public opinion and the media, to promote knowledge of such a significant part of our cultural heritage.

ADSI

Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane



INFORMATION: info@adsi.it – www.associazionedimorestoricheitaliane.it

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