

Four-monthly Art magazine of the Italian Historic Houses Association

ADSI
Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane

le DIMORE STORICHE

Issue 3 - Year 2024

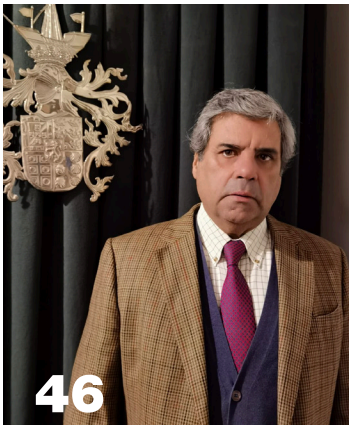
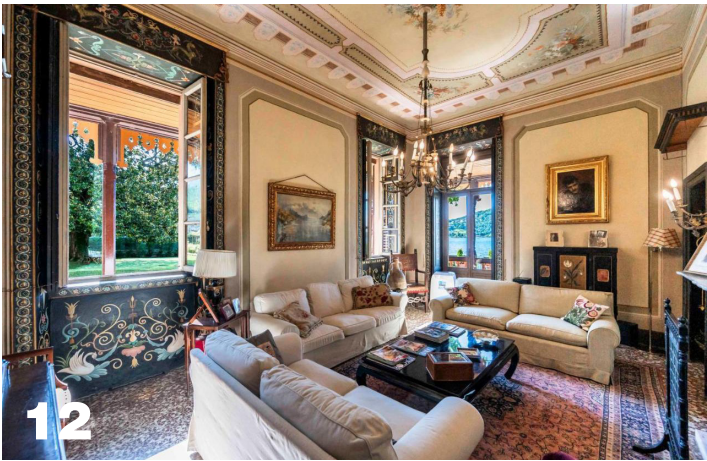
JUBILEE 2025

A TOUR OF THE HISTORIC HOUSES

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THE NEW PORTAL IS LAUNCHED**

**THE APPENNINES IN WINTER —
SKIING AND CASTLES**





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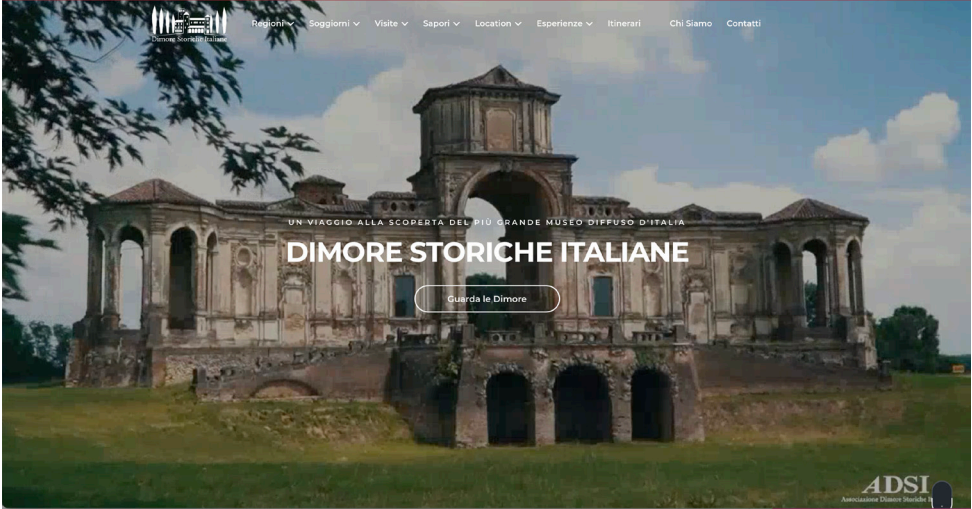
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COVER PHOTO
Photo Pixabay

GIACOMO DI THIENE



The natural answer to overtourism

The creation of the new portal dimorestoricheitaliane.it – the focus of an article in this issue – is one further step in the Association’s broader strategy to become an increasingly active element in the processes of protecting and enhancing the **cultural heritage sites and the territories** where they are located. This timely and necessary action stems from the growing awareness – based on data provided by Patrimonio Privato/Osservatorio patrimonio culturale privato/Roma – of how the cultural, social and economic value of the industry of culture and well-being can be an element of development for the nation and for inland areas in particular.

In this regard, as the then Airbnb country manager pointed out a couple of issues ago, Italy stands as a sort of driving horse for the whole of Europe, from the inclusion of residences in booking platforms to the realisation of events such as *Carte in Dimora*, the third staging of which was a wonderful success, reinforced by the awarding of the governmental medal by the Head of State. What was missing, however, was a digital solution that our Association could handle directly, constituting not only the great online showcase of historic houses, but also the place to engage in dialogue with them and purchase products. And now we have this one-of-a-kind portal. The effort was substantial but necessary. This system, our new portal, has the characteristic of being dynamic, continually updated, aimed at those who want to tailor their own vision of travel, sewn for them as though it were a handmade suit. It is a natural answer to the kind of overtourism I believe all of us have experienced in our post-Covid travels, as defined so accurately by the World Tourism Organisation: “the impact [...] on a destination, or parts of it, that excessively and negatively influences the perceived quality of life of citizens and/or the quality of visitors’ experiences.” Historic houses are something else entirely or, perhaps, they simply transform the adjective “negative” into its exact opposite, “positive.” A surprising journey can be built around residences, around the mindset of immersion instead of “hit and run,” including direct contact with history and with the people (the owners of the residences) and with the places where these assets, unique in the world for quality and quantity, are located. Choosing a historic home as a destination also means economically supporting an area and those who take care of it. Thus, as we await the opening of the Holy Door that on 24 December in St Peter’s will sanction the event of the year – the 2025 Ordinary Jubilee with the theme “Pilgrims of Hope” – our cover story shines a spotlight on Rome and on an itinerary through the capital’s historic houses. It will be an invaluable resource for those who want to combine attendance of the great event with the unmatched quality of the experience.

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leDIMORE STORICHE

Issue 3 – Year 2024

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ALMOST 2 BILLION INVESTED IN PRIVATE CULTURAL HERITAGE



A moment during the presentation of the 5th Private Cultural Heritage Observatory Report

In 2023 alone, private cultural heritage sites welcomed 34 million visitors, a sharp increase compared to previous years. And investments by owners amounted to more than €1.9 billion last year. This is what emerges from the **Fifth Report of the Observatory on Private Cultural Heritage**, a reference point for defining the economic, cultural and social role of the system of private properties of historic-artistic interest in Italy. The presentation of the report took place on 21 October at the Marco Biagi Plenary Hall of the National Economic and Labour Council. Produced by the ETS Foundation for Economic and Social Research, the Observatory is promoted by the Italian Historic Houses Association, Confagricoltura, Confedilizia and the Institute for Sports and Cultural Credit, in the hope of providing institutions with a useful tool to support the definition of policies to be adopted for the purpose of sustaining private cultural heritage. The presentation was attended by ADSI president **Giacomo di Thiene**, the president of the National Economic and Labour Council **Renato Brunetta**, the president of the ETS Foundation for Economic and Social Research **Paolo**

Marini, the coordinator of the Private Cultural Heritage Observatory and scientific co-director of the ETS Foundation for Economic and Social Research **Luciano Monti**, the president of Confedilizia **Giorgio Spaziani Testa**, the national vice-president of Confagricoltura **Giordano Emo Capodilista**, and the president of the board of directors of the Institute for Sports and Cultural Credit **Beniamino Quintieri**. The above-mentioned numbers highlight the consolidated importance of private cultural heritage sites, yet the Report shows considerable room for growth, based on two factors. The first is the still unused spaces within the historic houses: it is estimated that there are over 20,000 properties with unused spaces totalling 13.4 million square metres that cannot currently be used. The second factor is the more than 10,000 owners who have not carried out economic initiatives in their residences but who would be interested in doing so if they had the necessary start-up funds. Added to the current 19 thousand owners undertaking a structured productive venture (with an ATECO code) and/or occasional venture, the threshold of 30 thousand economic operators in the

sector could thus be reached. Giacomo di Thiene, President of ADSI, pointed out that “the Fifth Report on Private Cultural Heritage represents the culmination of a long journey to enhance not only the precious historical and cultural heritage of residences but their social value as well. In this regard, we have chosen this year to add a section devoted to investments in heritage conservation and enhancement and to initiate a reflection on the unused spaces of the houses, which with the right investments could increasingly expand and consolidate the role of private heritage sites as productive centres that cannot be relocated and are inextricably linked to the territory.” Renato Brunetta added, “Historic residences are an integral part of the territory, the city, the community, history, and also the economy. As Lord Kelvin used to say, what cannot be measured cannot be controlled, and this is precisely why it was an honour to host the presentation of the 5th Report of the Cultural Heritage Observatory at the CNEL. This report is an essential tool to enable institutions to give the proper support to historical residences and consolidate a conscious and virtuous public-private partnership.”



Archive of the Claricini Dompacher Foundation (courtesy Oldino Cernoia)

“CARTE IN DIMORA,” A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Over one-hundred private archives have joined the 12 October event, offering the public the chance to admire authentic rarities. Among them, the Guidotti Magnani Archive Foundation in Bologna, the Villa de Claricini Dornpacher Foundation in Cividale del Friuli and the Amat Foundation in Cagliari

BY CAMILLA ROCCA

The journey through Italy and its history comes alive again in the event promoted by the Italian Historic Houses Association: **“Carte in dimora. Archives and Libraries: History between the Past and the Future.”** The third annual event titled *Carte in dimora* (literally, “Papers in the House”) took place on Saturday 12 October, providing access to the archives of the historic residences taking part in the initiative. Visitors enjoyed the chance to consult documents, maps and parchments, immersing themselves in pieces of Italian history that are often little known and difficult to view, given that so many historical documents are kept in private homes. The initiative exalts the significant role of the historic house owner, not only as the custodian of the past but also as the person responsible for the appreciation and dissemination of history through various means including documents and archives. More than one-hundred properties participated in this year’s event, offering enthusiasts and scholars the opportunity to consult the documents kept in castles, fortresses and villas nationwide. Visitors were thus able to personally admire rare and valuable specimens of books, papers, manuscripts and other sorts of collections. Many histories are linked to these archives; here are three that we have selected as especially meaningful.

STORIES OF FAMILY AND OF BOLOGNA

The **Guidotti Magnani Archive Foundation (FAGM)**, chaired by **Paolo Senni Guidotti Magnani**, safeguards papers, books, manuscripts and private letters retelling an era and a history that links the past to the present. The aim is to preserve and promote Bologna’s rich historical and artistic heritage, together with educational projects. The Foundation collaborates with schools, universities and cultural associations in the area, with a focus on promoting local talent and contributing to community development. There are many documents recording the stories of families intertwined with the history of Bologna. The Foundation comprises several archival bodies of the Bolognese senatorial Guidotti family, to which the



A MEDAL FROM THE QUIRINAL

The Head of State, **Sergio Mattarella**, has assigned a medal of the President of the Republic as an official state prize to the third staging of **Carte in Dimora** ("Papers in the House"). Depicting a "turreted" Italy, the medal is a recognition awarded by the Quirinal to initiatives of particular cultural, scientific, artistic, sporting or social interest. And *Carte in Dimora* 2024 is among them.

Magnani family has been added, as well as other collections acquired through inheritance or marriage such as the Tedeschi, Senni and Pascale collections. In 1600 the Archive was reordered with modern cataloguing for the first time. It contains the Guidotti collection, with archival bodies from the 1100s, the Magnani collection composed of archival bodies from 1351 to 1808, the Francesco Guidotti Magnani Senator collection that includes documents regarding the administration of the Guidotti estate and public bodies as of 1825. The Alessandro Guidotti Generale collection conserves documents from 1810 to 1848, while the Pascale and Senni collection brings together documents of the two families married by the two Guidotti Magnani sisters. The archives are housed in the historic Palazzo Guidotti in Bologna, a prestigious villa dating back to the 1300s. The current building was renovated in 1862-1864 under a decree concerning the urban redevelopment of the city centre, one of the first official acts after Bologna's accession to the Kingdom of Italy, a decree that marked a sign of modernisation after papal stagnation. The building displays rich capitals adorned with friezes and portraits, including those of Coriolano Monti. Palazzo Mariani, on the other hand, another historical residence of Paolo Senni Guidotti Magnani, is located in Reggio Emilia and dates back to the 1500s: the documents, although to a lesser extent, are still part of the Foundation's encyclopaedic archive. The main floor of the Reggio Emilia residence is home to a cycle of frescoes by Ludovico, Annibale and Agostino Carracci, depicting the Stories of the Founding of Rome, and it contains Floriano Ambrosini's fireplace decorated with statues by Gabriele Fiorini.

PRODUCING CULTURE IN CIVIDALE

The **Villa de Claricini Dornpacher Foundation** is located in the villa of the same name in Bottenicco di Moimacco on the outskirts of Cividale del Friuli in the province of Udine. Built in the 17th century by Francesco Claricini, the villa is a symbol of the social and economic prestige achieved by the noble family. Since 1952, the country palace has been registered as a Veneto villa and is part of the Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia heritage of productivity, culture and beauty. Since 1961, the historical Claricini Dornpacher complex has been protected by the Italian state. The family came from Bologna to Cividale in the mid-1200s at the time of the Patriarchate of Aquileia. It took root in the Cividale area and consolidated itself from the 15th century onwards, acquiring increasing wealth, prestige and power. In 1418, an imperial investiture granted the Claricini the coat of arms of the Dornpacher, and from the 19th century on, the family was officially called Claricini Dornpacher. Also in the 19th century, they received confirmation of nobility and the title of Counts. With the testamentary bequest of Giuditta de Claricini Dornpacher, the Foundation was established in 1971; **Oldino Cernoia** is now the president. Its purpose is to foster cultural, artistic and scientific activities, to preserve the historical and productive heritage and the surrounding land, and to promote studies, research, publications and cultural activities, as the Foundation's guiding phrase states: "Preserving and producing culture." Today, the Claricini

Dornpacher Foundation operates as a cultural institution, hosting events, exhibitions, concerts and conferences. The villa itself is an architectural treasure, with well-preserved interiors including frescoes and period furniture, while the surrounding gardens and vineyards add to its charm. The Foundation is committed to preserving the historical and cultural heritage of the villa, while also promoting research and activities in the arts and humanities.

THE MOST COMPLETE ARCHIVE IN SARDINIA

Palazzo Amat is a historical building located in the heart of Cagliari, known as the Castello District. Built in the late 19th century, it is one of the city's most significant examples of Neo-Renaissance architecture. The façade is adorned with classical columns, decorative mouldings and intricate details. Today, the building is used for cultural and public events, increasing its importance as a symbol of Cagliari's noble past. Overlooking Piazza Indipendenza, it contains the most complete medieval and modern archives in Sardinia, which are protected by the Ministry of Culture. The Foundation associated with the Palazzo was established to promote and support various forms of art, culture and technology in the region, with a focus on preserving cultural heritage and encouraging innovation. The Fondazione Amat collaborates with cultural institutions, universities and local authorities to organise exhibitions, events, educational programmes and research initiatives. These activities aim to enhance the cultural richness of Sardinia, while encouraging contemporary artistic expression and technological advances. The Foundation also plays a significant role in preserving and showcasing Cagliari's historical sites and buildings, often working in spaces similar to Palazzo Amat, combining heritage with modern cultural programming. Their mission is to ensure that Sardinian culture continues to evolve while honouring its deep historical roots. The archive was reorganised in 1838, following the decree of Charles Albert of Savoy, which imposed the redemption of feuds. It is therefore one of the oldest feudal archives in Italy. There are four sections within the reorganisation carried out to establish the value of fiefs drawn up by Vincenzo Amat, the great-great-grandfather of the present owner. The first section contains the series of titles and concessions of title in possession. The second contains genealogy, with passages from the first feudal lord to the current one. The third section contains all the cases made (the so-called judicial acts) for succession according to the *more italic*, following the Salic law, or the *more cathaluniae* if female progeny was not excluded. It was also important to trace back to the original concession, an activity opposed by the Savoy family whose not-too-veiled intention was to have the branches of the nobles extinguished without probative documents, so that their lands could return to the crown. Finally, the fourth section contains documentation of the feudal annuities, which in the time of the Savoy family were useful to understand the possible price to be paid for the redemption of the lands and management. The archive contains valuable and interesting material for possible use by scholars of various branches, from history to economic history and palaeography.



In the photos above, the archive of the Claricini Dornpacher Foundation (courtesy Oldino Cernoia)



Offering a new look and a new perspective on the history of the 20th century, Buscarino's story is a reflection on the historical and artistic places in the area where beauty is portrayed, places which often, even to those who think they know them well, offer extraordinary surprises.

Just recently, the story "**Villa Falconieri**" was presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's most important publishing fair. The setting is the historic Villa Falconieri in Frascati, which Buscarino knows in great detail, having been a guest there for a fortnight at an international conference. The story includes the play "Sogno Italiano" ("Italian Dream"), also written by Marco Buscarino, in which the hero is busy writing the text of a play with quotations from several other works. The story is also the springboard to describe one of our country's historical places of artistic and architectural value: the Villa, also known as "La Rufina," was the first to be built in Frascati (1540-1550) at the behest of Alessandro Ruffini (or Rufini), Bishop of Melfi.

STORIES INSPIRED BY PALAZZI

The latest story by journalist and writer Marco Buscarino is set in Frascati and is titled "Villa Falconieri," after the oldest historical residence in the Roman Castles

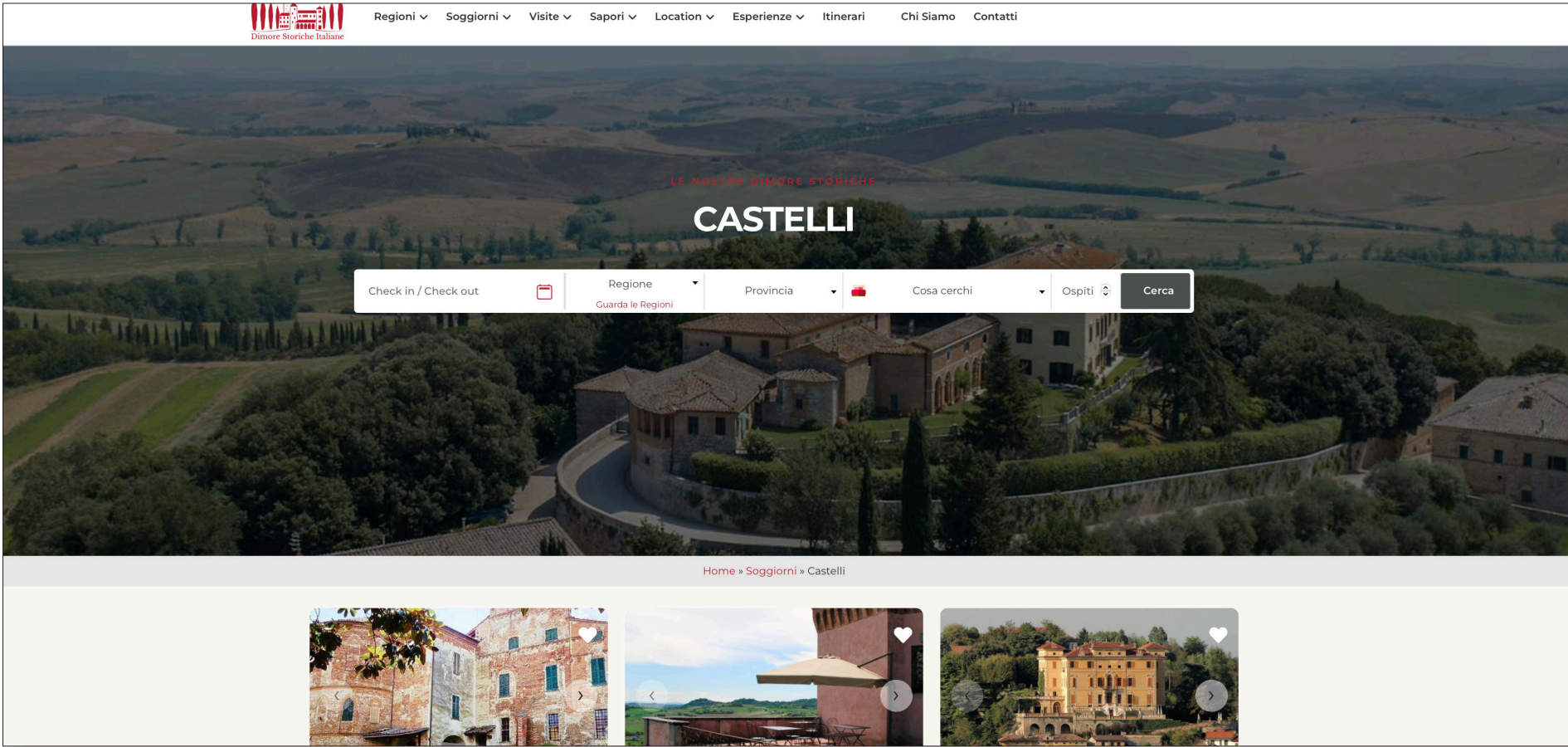
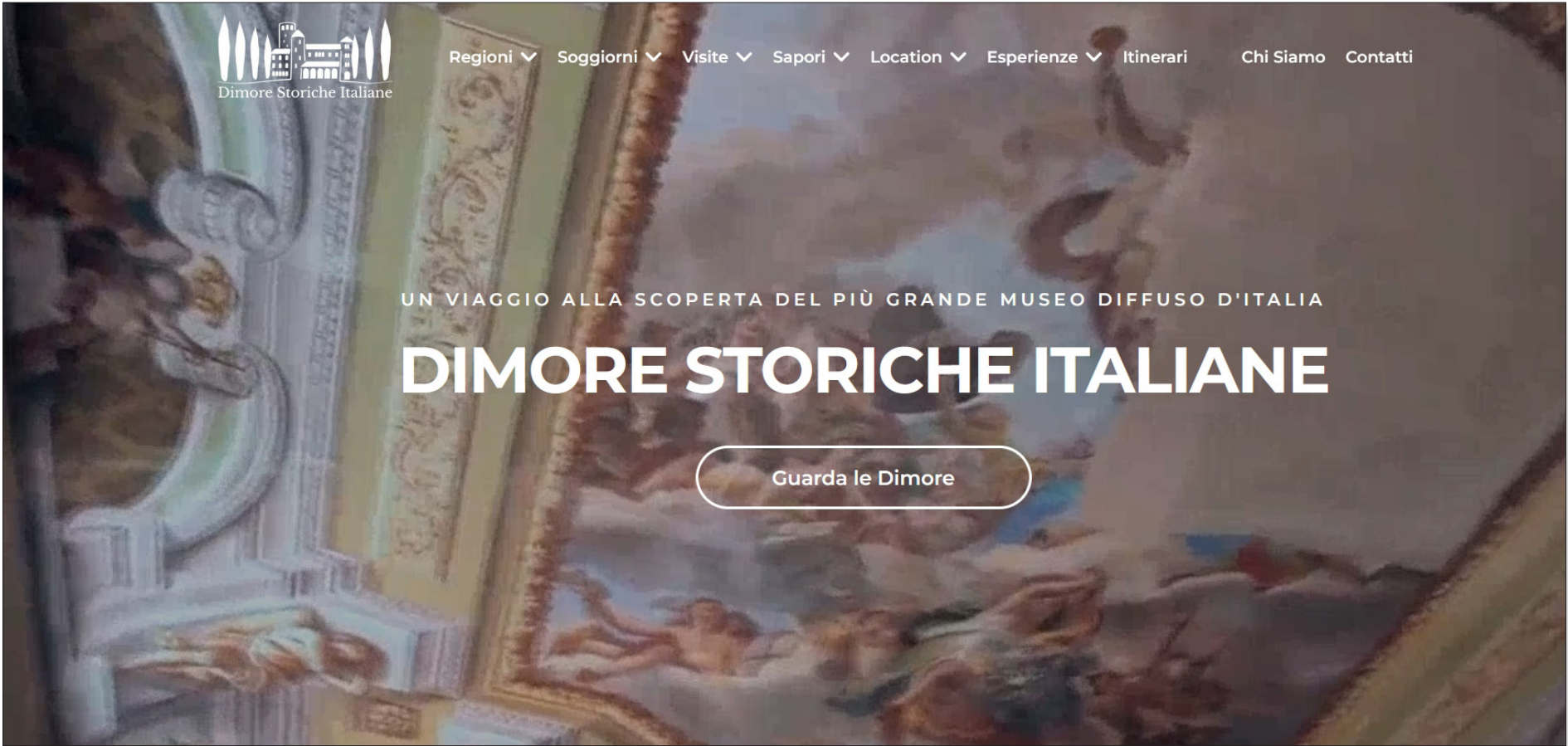
BY CAMILLA ROCCA

National Historic Houses Day is an opportunity to help official institutions and society at large become more aware of the role that historic residences play in the socio-economic fabric of the country. The opening of historic houses gave **Marco Buscarino**, fashion journalist, writer and playwright, the inspiration for three texts with a historical setting.

"**Memoria del Novecento**" ("Memory of the 1900s"), published in the anthology volume *Racconti Storici* (*Historic Stories*) published by Historica Edizioni, was presented at the Turin International Book Fair. The story offers an original fresco of the 20th century, rich in personal references to a changed world which nonetheless has passed on its teachings and unforgettable memories. The narrative moves from war to Liberation and the Referendum of 1946 through to the post-war years with the birth of RAI, the Italian broadcasting company, and its historical protagonists such as Mike Bongiorno, who granted Buscarino an interview during the San Pellegrino Terme stage of the programme "Giro Mike" in 1981. Among the main characters of the story appears Maria Pezzi, fashion journalist and Italy's prima fashion designer, who during the war, as Buscarino discovers, reached the Milan headquarters of "Fili Moda", published by Domus Editrice, and then for the sake of safety moved to Palazzo Roncalli in Bergamo Alta, travelling by bicycle all the way from Milan.



In the photos, exterior and interior of Villa Falconieri (courtesy Villa Falconieri); opposite page, from top, the Villa Falconieri complex (courtesy Villa Falconieri) and a portrait of Marco Buscarino



Screenshots from the new dimorestoricheitaliane.it website

THE PORTAL OF WONDERS

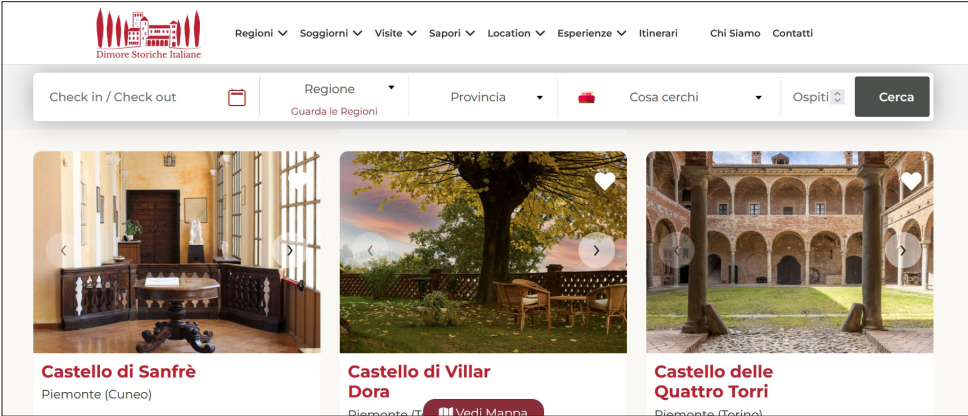
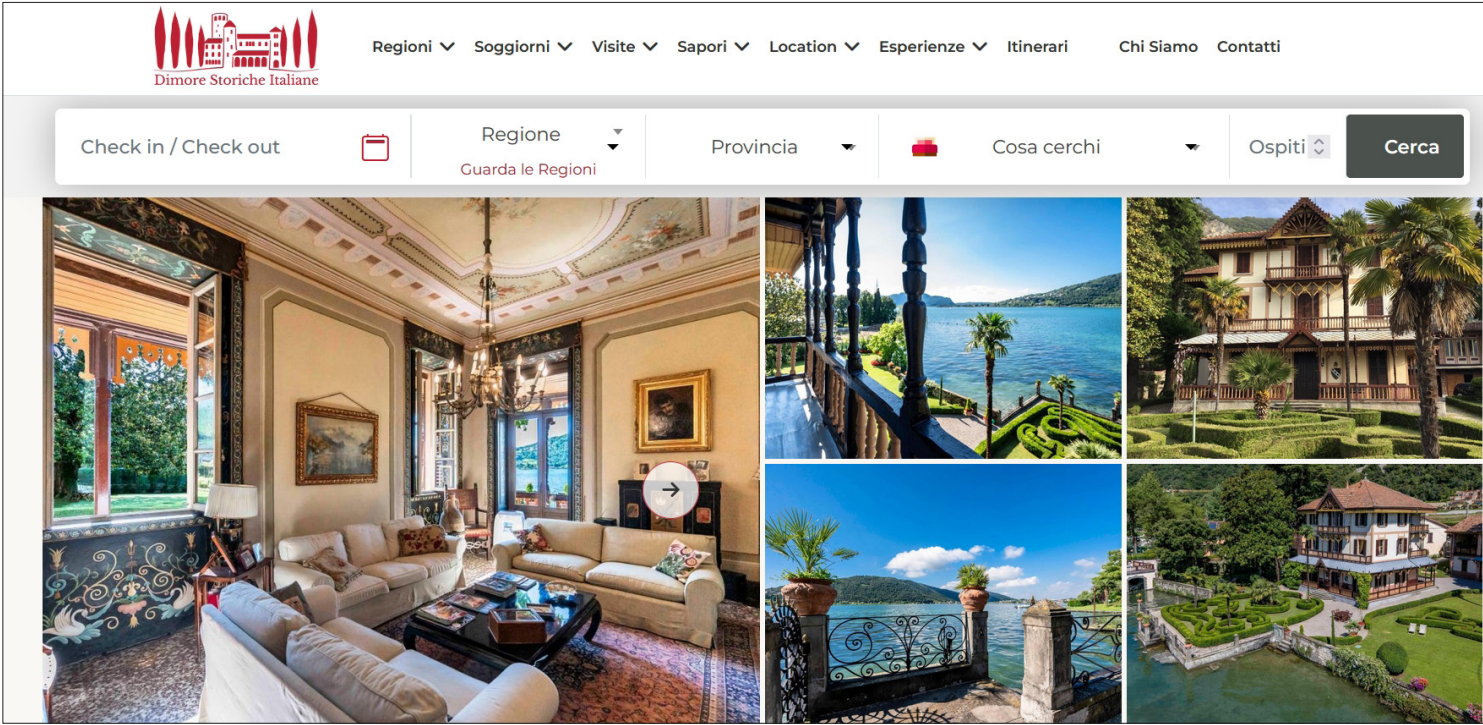
At the TTG in Rimini, the new version of the dimorestoricheitaliane.it platform made its debut. The transformation allows those who want to stay in a residence to also book experiences in the area, with everything enriched by a series of routes and itineraries

BY ANDREA GUOLO

There is a new tool available to those seeking an unforgettable holiday full of *charme* while exploring Italy's extraordinary heritage. This tool, called dimorestoricheitaliane.it, is the revamped version of the previous site, where fans of noble palaces and ancient private homes can "select" their own adventure for visits and overnight stays during their trip to Italy. After the restyling, today's platform offers much more, thanks to the search tools that allow computer- or smartphone-users to locate their ideal historic house on the basis of a wide range of parameters. A few examples? We gave it a try at TTG, Italy's most important event for the tourism and travel industry, where the **Italian Historic Houses Association ADSI** exhibited and presented the first results of this investment, officially establishing Italy's historic residences as a reference destination on the international scene among travellers preparing to visit Italy.

RESEARCH

Let's start with the algorithm, which is the basis of everything when it comes to search functions. The algorithm adopted by the new portal allows Internet users to design their own trips, be they individual enthusiasts looking for a more fulfilling travel experience in Italy, or tour operators outlining routes for groups or special bespoke packages for high-budget travellers. People may make their choices not only on the basis of the region to be visited but also according to the type of stay (palazzi, villas, masserie, etc.), family composition (with a special focus on pet-friendly places), duration (short or medium/long-term rentals). There's even a special section for residences with gardens or parks, an added value for those eager to relax in the midst of nature. Another search function, linked to the type of location, is perfect for those who want to treat themselves to a residence for a ceremony (weddings, birthdays and so forth), and also for companies wishing to organise meetings or team-building events in spaces characterised by an impressive history and by



the presence of artistic gems and distinctive architecture. The search further encompasses locations that offer spaces for co-working and those suitable for film sets; in this case, it is a useful service in terms not only of B2C (i.e., aimed at the end consumer) but also of B2B (i.e., for companies and professionals who manage potentially complex events). Finally, the search parameters allow for taste as a factor: the search for a residence to stay in can be refined by choosing structures that offer a restaurant, a wine cellar or spaces for tastings. In the future, there will also be the possibility of purchasing the historic house's products through an actual e-commerce site. Looking for pet-friendly residences? 34 solutions appear in Lazio, 23 of which have their own garden. They are mainly located in Rome, but if you want to narrow the circle to Viterbo, four appear. At that point, all you have to do is choose the one that attracts you most.

EXPERIENCES ON OFFER

The word *experience* is the key to defining the type of tourism that has become dominant today. A place chosen for a stopover and/or overnight stay must therefore be part of the experience that the contemporary traveller has in mind. Take cycling tourism as an example. Can you combine the desire to discover the beauty of Italy on a bicycle with the search for historic residences? The answer is yes, absolutely. The “experiences” section of the new site allows you to find historic houses equipped to accommodate those who travel by bicycle, with all that this entails in terms of internal equipment (bike storage, tools, stations for recharging e-bikes, perhaps even workshops for maintenance). Another

entry is related to food and wine. By entering the appropriate flag, the “foodie traveller” excludes residences that are not related to taste and can choose instead from among those that offer restaurants, tasting rooms and in-house workshops for local products. A further distinction can be made when searching for residences along trekking routes and cultural tourism circuits or amid Unesco World Heritage Sites. Residences may be chosen based on the possibility of practicing sports or on the presence of spas and wellness centres. Finally, a further search can verify whether there are outdoor spaces, parks and gardens. Some practical examples? Among the Unesco Sites, we find a long list of Venetian villas, residences in cities such as Mantua, Rome, Syracuse or the Amalfi Coast. Among the wine tourism destinations are residences with wine cellars in Piedmont, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Tuscany, though in many ways almost all of Italy counts as wine-growing territory, so you'll just have to map out the most interesting experience based on the itinerary you hold closest to heart.

ITINERARIES

Speaking of itineraries, no less than 52 are included and proposed in the new portal. Entering the appropriate section, the first one that appears is related to the province of Caserta, defined as “a city almost ‘crushed’ by the majesty of its main and most famous attraction, the celebrated Reggia by Vanvitelli, and which, in the collective mindset, is worth the trip solely for a visit to this enormous palace of no less than 1,200 rooms and its gardens, and then everyone goes home. Nothing could be farther from the truth! It is time to devote the right amount of time to Caserta, the time required to visit and discover a city with a long and complex history.” Thus a lesser-known cross-section of southern Italy opens before the traveller, an itinerary focusing on the Caserta area, where visits and overnight stays in historic houses are accompanied by chances to taste the world's best pizzas, such as those made by Francesco Martucci in the city centre (I Masanielli) or Franco Pepe in Caiazzo (Pepe in Grani), to say nothing of shopping for typical local dairy products (Mozzarella di bufala Campana, PDO, of course) and viewings of artistic and religious treasures (in this case, at the Basilica of Sant'Angelo in Formis, near Capua, with its magnificent frescoes dating back to the year 1000). Plus there are places where major historical events took place, such as Teano, where Garibaldi handed over the newly conquered Bourbon kingdom to Victor Emmanuel II, concluding the Expedition of the Thousand. Another example? A trip to Emilia, among the castles and residences of the ancient Duchy of Parma and Piacenza, where “detours” from the focus on historic houses include wineries that have been in business for centuries, such as Mossi 1558 in Val Tidone, renowned pastry shops such as Tosi in Salsomaggiore Terme, the spa centre in the same locality known to most as the long-time host of the Miss Italy finals, the enchanting theatre in Busseto where Giuseppe Verdi began his career before moving to Milan, the charcuterie factories of PDO products such as the Salumificio Rossi in Sanguinaro. There is really so much to discover, and more residences will surely be added, thus the portal is destined for ongoing evolution. As a guide, it is a true work in progress, which should also serve as a stimulus for future publishing initiatives.



From top: Castello di Villar Dora in Piedmont, Palazzo Margherita in Basilicata and Castello di Canelli also in Piedmont; facing page, from top, the search functions on the new dimorestoricheitaliane.it website, Villa Pizzo Darsena in Cernobbio (Lombardy) and Villa Trissino Marzotto in Veneto (courtesy dimorestoricheitaliane.it)

ROME AND THE JUBILEE: RESIDENCES, THE ANTIDOTE TO OVERTOURISM

Three days of “going against the flow,” away from the tide of the masses, to discover a secret but not forbidden part of the capital, which next year will be at the centre of the world thanks to the event starting on Christmas

BY ANDREA CUOMO



Vanvitelli Room, Galleria Colonna, Palazzo Colonna (courtesy dimorestoricheitaliane.it)

Rome, the open city. Almost wide open. In the more than two millennia during which it was (and, in some ways, still is) at the centre of the world, the capital has been recounted in a thousand different ways, from *The Annals* to *The Great Beauty*, from Goethe's *Roman Elegies* to *The Bicycle Thief*, from barbarian invasions to Pasolinian ricotta, from *Tosca* to conclaves, from Caravaggio to Great Fires, from chariots to Vespas, from the many sacred people to the ever more numerous profane. Everything, or perhaps almost everything, has been said about its shameless public magnificence, which both dismays and astounds. Still, something certainly remains to be told, for its private history has less often been the focus of attention. And the opportunity to remedy this could well be an itinerary through the sublime private historical residences in which Rome abounds, a familial and noble digression from the collective splendour of the Jubilee. You will enjoy a secret but not forbidden Rome, intimate and languid, aristocratic yet populous, which you can easily visit on foot, if Jupiter Pluvius doesn't plot against you (otherwise, there are always umbrellas, romantic and uncomfortable as life itself). Take as much time as you deem appropriate, although we would recommend at least three days to be unhurried. It's a route you won't regret. Against the mainstream. A silent antidote to over-tourism, hard-to-find taxis, queues, frozen carbonara, centurions vying to sell you a selfie.

STARTING FROM TRASTEVERE

You can start in the city's most identifiable and boisterous district, Trastevere. Hidden in the part that climbs towards the Janiculum Hill is the **Donna Camilla Savelli Hotel**, an intimate time-space capsule far from the Spritz-consuming din of Capitoline nightlife, nestled instead in an ancient medieval monastery near Rome's Botanical Garden. You will find yourself in the austere elegance of a structure designed by Francesco Borromini in 1642, commissioned by Virginia Camilla Savelli, wife of Pietro Farnese, and you will be forced to look at your iPhone to make sure you are still in the contemporary era as you wander through the hotel's main hall, housed in the erstwhile nuns' refectory and enchanted garden. And if you prefer the in-house restaurant to the typical taverns of the nearby district or to the fine dining of Cristina Bowerman's Glass Hostaria, you can enjoy the unusual experience of eating dishes from the Renaissance menu. Who knows whether for once you will resist the temptation to photograph them so as not to break the spell?

Setting out from Trastevere, crossing the 15th-century Ponte Sisto bridge, you will reach the historical centre proper, gliding along the triumphal backstreet of Via Giulia, built by Bramante in the early 1500s for Pope Julius II. In the Sant'Eustachio district you will walk at a slow pace because haste here is a sin forbidden to one and all. You will come to Via di Sant'Eligio, moving on then to Via Monserrato, where, at the corner with Via Montoro, you can visit **Palazzo Patrizi Montoro**, another historic residence rich in paintings of great artistic value. You will pass in front of the workshop of master lute-maker Michel Eggmann and enter Corso Vittorio Emanuele (simply "Corso Vittorio" for Romans) to reach, by way



of Via dei Filippini and the ancient hangout of junk dealers in Piazza dell'Orologio, **Palazzo Orsini Taverna** on Via di Monte Giordano. The building was erected in the 15th century on the ruins of a fortress. There you can admire the 17th-century fountain by Casoni, the late 19th-century Augusta Tower and the paintings by Sebastiano Ricci and Rosa da Tivoli in the reception rooms on the palazzo's *piano nobile*, or "noble floor." Also on Via di Monte Giordano is the **Navona Palace Luxury Inn**, a national monument since 1951, which houses the iconic Bar del Fico and the luxury spa Navona Salus, because the body at this point requires the attention hitherto reserved only for the spirit.

Nearby is one of Rome's most awe-inspiring sites, Piazza Navona. You can linger over the central fountain, the Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi, which salacious Roman gossip claims was designed by Gianlorenzo Bernini so that the sculpted characters who face the Church of Sant'Agnes in Agone, designed by his rival Borromini, would appear to be horrified. Nearby you can see Caravaggio's three works dedicated to St Matthew in the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi, and visit the National Roman Museum in Palazzo Altemps. In the square you will also find **Palazzo Massimo Lancellotti De Torres**, owned since 1625 by the Lancellotti family, who still reside there and rent it out as a venue for events and special openings to the public on appointed occasions.

FROM THE PANTHEON TO THE QUIRINAL

From here we move on to the Pantheon, perhaps the most bewitching place in Rome, first a pagan temple, then a Christian basilica and now home to the tombs of the Kings of Italy and famous artists such as Raphael Sanzio. Nearby is another historic home, the **Accademia d'Armi Musumeci Greco** House-Museum on the first floor of the 15th-century palazzetto, owned since 1878 by the Musumeci Greco family, which runs one of the most prestigious fencing schools in the world: Trilussa and D'Annunzio, Marinetti and Einaudi all lunged into, or simply admired, elegant assaults there. A place of bladed battles, also used as a venue for cultural events, cooking shows, and photographic or film sets.

You may then move on to Via della Scrofa, and at the corner with Via delle Coppelle, you will find the **Palazzo delle Pietre**, built before 1400 and now a period residence with eight flats available, accommodating up to 24 guests. Continue along Via della Scrofa, one of

the most elegant streets in Rome despite its name (literally, "Sow's Road"), and reach Piazza Borghese where, in the famous **Palazzo Borghese** (one of the four wonders of post-imperial Rome along with the cube-like Palazzo Farnese, the Caetani staircase and the Carboniani doorway), you will visit the atypically shaped Galleria del Cembalo. Once the space where the family displayed their collection of paintings and sculptures, today it is a renowned location for art exhibitions, private events and conferences. Walking down Via della Fontanella di Borghese (for the Romans, "Fontanella Borghese") you will find yourself at **Palazzo Ruspoli**, now the Residenza Ruspoli Bonaparte, where you can admire Caetani's grand staircase of honour, with one hundred and twenty steps, each carved from a single piece of antique marble, and you can imagine Napoleon III growing up here with the Queen Consort of Holland. Via dei Condotti has the boutiques of the great Italian and French designer labels, but you may choose to just windowshop before diving into the grandeur of Piazza di Spagna and Trinità dei Monti, our "stairway to heaven." From here, once you've walked along Via dei Due Macelli and around the Quirinal Gardens, you will arrive, by way of Via Rasella, at **Palazzo Mattei-Albani-Del Drago** on Via delle Quattro Fontane. This is a good opportunity to visit the Palazzo del Quirinale, seat of the Presidency of the Republic and palace of power par excellence for over four hundred years. It is wise to book your visit well in advance.

RETURNING THROUGH THE IMPERIAL FORA

A stone's throw from the Hill, but a great historical distance away, is **Villa Spalletti Trivelli**, a small elegant 20th-century building overlooking the artistry of an Italian garden, serving as a luxury residence for distinguished travellers since 2004. In front of the Scuderie del Quirinale and the Giardini di Montecavallo, you will find another private historical residence, **Casino dell'Aurora Pallavicini**, which Cardinal Scipione Borghese commissioned to be designed between 1612 and 1613 by the Flemish architect Giovanni Vasanzio, and which has the singular fortune of owing its decoration to slabs of Roman sarcophagi from the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Today it is a conference centre and venue for events and receptions. In the nearby Via della Pillotta is another magnificent sliver of Roman Baroque, the **Galleria Colonna**, open to the public on Saturday mornings and on other days for groups of at least ten people. It is full of paintings by the major artists from the 1400s and 1500s. From here you can head towards Piazza Venezia and there cast a glance at the Altare della Patria, which the Romans call "the typewriter" with affectionate derision because of its otherwise beautiful white bulk. You can head for the Imperial Fora and the Colosseum, or you can push yourself upwards to the Campidoglio. In any case, you will return to your path afterwards by crossing the Jewish Ghetto, making sure not to miss the opportunity to treat yourself to one of the many Jewish-Romanesque restaurants. Then, after a detour to the Theatre of Marcellus, you will cross the Tiber, glancing at the Isola Tiberina, and return to Trastevere, so full of beauty and history that you will be able to live off it for years. Or at least until your next Roman holiday.



On this page (courtesy dimorestoricheitaliane.it), the terrace of Palazzo Taverna; below, from left, the reception hall of Palazzo Patrizi Montoro and Casino dell'Aurora Pallavicini Conference Centre; facing page, from top, Luxury Hotel Donna Camilla Savelli, view of St Peter's Basilica (Wikimedia Commons), Palazzo Lancellotti and Villa Spalletti Trivelli





Abruzzo, the snow-covered Majella seen from Casacanditella (courtesy Consorzio Tutela Vini d'Abruzzo)

SLOPES AND MANSIONS, WINTER IN THE APENNINES

From Emilia to the Sila, nine ideal “combinations” of well-equipped ski resorts and historic buildings to visit or stay at après-ski for an original experience of local culture

BY EMANUELE A. GOBBI

The Apennines make up our peninsula's longest mountain range, embracing a wealth of differing features along the way. Stretching for more than 1,300 km in length, the range has a width that varies from a minimum of 30 km between the gulfs of Sant'Eufemia and Squillace to some 250 km between Ancona and Piombino. The Apennines cover 9.5 million hectares in area (almost twice the size of the Alps), spread out among 14 regions and well over two-thousand municipalities. As Antonio Stoppani suggested in one of the very first texts on the physical portrayal of the territory, modern maps inevitably use the plural. Portions of the territory baptized as “in-land areas,” often identifiable as a considerable portion of the nation distant from large urban and service centers, are frequently misperceived by popular belief to offer little to inhabitants and visitors alike. The contrary is true. The homeland of the Mediterranean diet, this mountain system is to all intents and purposes the “heart” of Italy, or rather its quintessence. Encompassing an array of environments and microclimates, thanks to its role as a “Mediterranean” link between lands and seas, food and wine products excel here—innumerable kinds of cheese and cured meat, outstanding cereals, extra virgin olive oils and, of course, great wines.

Forever considered as synonymous with mountain passes, exchanges and cross-influences, watersheds and frontiers, the Apennines are the backbone of Italy, not only because of their structural dimension but especially because of their role as “Mother Mountain,” the generator of culture and civilization. Visitors in search of affordable alternatives to overly standardised travel can sit at the table, climb, bike, trek and why not, ski! Here we ski, snow permitting, in places of creative mixtures, which are the roots of our history as well as the possible horizons of our lives.

Presented below is a series of “Apennine pairings,” where (winter) sports and art, relaxation and culture, landscape and architecture, food and wine and hospitality are intriguingly wed; locations, in other words, where visitors may discover stupendous heights,



skiing among breathtaking views and then heading to historic residences of undisputed prestige and beauty just a stone's throw away.

CERRETO LAGHI AND ROCCA DI VALLE DI CASTRIGNANO

The Cerreto Pass marks the watershed at the crossroads between the regions of Emilia-Romagna, Liguria and Tuscany. Nearby is Cerreto Laghi, a jewel of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines, famous for its crystal-clear lake and well-maintained slopes. Ski enthusiasts can enjoy descents amidst the incredible scenery, while welcoming mountain lodges offer local culinary delights. The Rocca di Valle di Castrignano, also known as Corte Campelli, is a fortified court of medieval origin in the Parma Apennines, still standing as an authentic testament to a past rich in history. Hospitality, excursions, gastronomy (Parmigiano Reggiano) are its cornerstones within the context of an important cultural heritage that deserves and needs to be protected.

ABETONE AND THE RICCI FOUNDATION

In the heart of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines, Abetone offers a perfect blend of sport and nature. Surrounded by enchanting landscape, its slopes wind through beech and fir forests, providing thrills for beginners and expert skiers alike: approx. 50 km of slopes, for a total of 28 runs, served by 17 lifts. About an hour's drive away, in the Lucchesia region of Barga, the Fondazione Ricci stands out for its commitment to promoting the culture of the Serchio Valley and to helping disadvantaged groups. The modern facilities of the Ricci Foundation, while retaining strong ties to tradition, offer a stimulating environment for exhibitions and meetings. The fusion of contemporary architecture and history make the whole a unique place dedicated to creativity and dialogue.



CORNO ALLE SCALE AND THE PALAZZO DE' ROSSI

Corno alle Scale (1945 m asl) is the only ski resort in the province of Bologna that lies between the mountains named Corno alle Scale, Cornaccio and Cupolino: 15 km of slopes, with stimulating off-piste routes near the Le Malghe and Duca degli Abruzzi refuges. Here champion Alberto Tomba used to train under the watchful eye of trainer Flavio Roda (current president of FISI, the Italian Winter Sports Federation). There's even a 2400-meter red slope named in his honour, Tomba 1, with more than 500 meters of vertical drop, one of the most interesting trails in the area. Descending toward Bologna, Palazzo de' Rossi stands in Sasso Marconi as an elegant example of Renaissance architecture that enchants with its harmonious lines and refined details. The beautifully decorated interiors tell stories of nobility and culture, while the surrounding gardens offer a private corner of serenity. A symbol of grandeur and refinement, perfect for events and cultural events.

MONTE AMIATA AND POGGIO ALLE MURA

Mount Amiata (m. 1738) is an ancient volcano covered by the largest beech forest in Europe. There are eight ski lifts, where 12 slopes (for a total of 10 km) form the ski area located at the mountain's key points: the Vetta, Prato delle Macinaie, Prato della Contessa, Rifugio Cantore and Pian della Marsiliana. What's more, from the summit visitors can enjoy a breathtaking view of the Sienese hills and the Maremma coastal area all the way to the Tyrrhenian Sea. The Castello di Poggio alle Mura—also known as Castello Banfi because it is the property and headquarters of this important Montalcino winery—was erected in its present form on a hillock at the confluence of the Orcia and Ombrone rivers in 1438. Surrounded by vine-



From the top, a view of Gran Sasso (courtesy Consorzio Tutela Vini d'Abruzzo) and the summit of Corno alle Scale in Emilia Romagna (Open Library Emilia Romagna, photo by Giovanni M.), Palazzo De Rossi in Sasso Marconi (courtesy ADSI) and Castello Banfi in Montalcino (courtesy Banfi). Facing page, from top, the Abetone Ski Resort (courtesy multipassabetone.it), Ricci Foundation in Barga (courtesy ADSI) and another image of the lifts in Abetone (courtesy multipassabetone.it)



yards and olive groves, the imposing building conveys an atmosphere of timeless peace and beauty: an excellent place to take refuge and savour the art of Tuscan living.

SARNANO AND THE CASTELLO DI ROCCA D'AJELLO

In the Marche region, the Sarnano ski area extends between Monte Sassotetto, the Fonte Lardina resort and the Santa Maria Maddalena Pass, about 15 km from town. The slopes vary in elevation from 1289 to 1582 metres and have a particular characteristic that makes them among the most popular in the region. In fact, the Sibillini Mountains are only 50 km from the Adriatic coast and, when the sky is clear, it is possible to see beyond the rolling hills to the blue expanse of the Adriatic. The Rocca d'Ajello is an ancient fortress built between 1260 and 1450 by the ducal family of Varano, who ruled Camerino between the 13th and 16th centuries. It stands on a wooded hill, surrounded by an unspoilt rolling landscape in which seemingly endless fields and vineyards compose motifs of ever-changing colours in the different seasons. Rich in stories and legends, this extraordinarily dreamlike building offers a fascinating journey through time, its interiors evoking the era of nobles and knights.

CAMPO FELICE AND PALAZZO SIPARI

Along the central Apennines, in the Velino-Sirente chain and within the Natural Park of the same name, Campo Felice is a gem for families and beginners, offering over 30 km of wide and sunny slopes. With Campo Imperatore, Ovindoli and Monte Magnola, it is part of the Tre Nevi ski area where the peaks reach more than 2,000 metres in altitude. From the summit of Monte Rotondo, visitors can admire the extraordinary massif of the Gran Sasso, the Sirente, the Velino, the Maiella and the Duchessa: a scene that is nothing short of incredible. Palazzo Sipari is a refined example of late Renaissance architecture



softened by elegant classical forms (evidence of noble architecture from the 18th and 19th centuries) in the historic centre of Pescasseroli, built at the behest of Pierantonio Sipari, grandfather of the philosopher Benedetto Croce and the Honourable Erminio Sipari, Member of Parliament of the Kingdom of Italy and founder of the Abruzzo National Park.

ROCCARASO AND THE GRANCIA DEI CELESTINI

Situated in the mountains of the Majella National Park, Roccaraso is one of Abruzzo's most renowned ski resorts, the largest in the central Apennines: a gem with 130 km of slopes connecting the towns of Rivisondoli, Pescocostanzo and Pescasseroli, with 32 ski lifts. In addition, the village and its surroundings, lively and rich in history, have genuine trattorias, ancient biscuit factories and visitor farmhouses in the countryside. The Grancia dei Celestini, an ancient monastery dating back to the 13th century, offers an atmosphere of tranquillity and spirituality in its comfortable rooms—the ideal place for meditation and contemplation. Its austere yet fascinating architecture is surrounded by the spectacular nature of Sulmona, the undisputed capital of sugared almonds known in Italian as “confetti.”

VIGGIANO AND THE ANTICO SOGNO GUEST HOUSE

The Montagna Grande ski resort in Viggiano is located in the Lucanian Apennines, on the eastern ridge of the upper Val d'Agri, with almost a kilometre of slopes at an altitude between 1,400 and 1,500 metres. Standing out amidst the beech vegetation, the highest peak (1723 m) is an elongated rocky massif that is approx. 11 km from town. In nearby Tramutola there is the Antico Sogno Guest House. At this enchanting refuge, traditional architecture blends with modern comfort and every detail has been seen to with loving care. The cozy welcoming ambience invites guests to relax and enjoy the beauty of the mountain surroundings.

LORICA AND THE TENUTA CIMINATA GRECO

On the shores of Lake Arvo in the region of Calabria, the Lorica ski resort (6 km of slopes), hailed as the “pearl of the Sila,” stands out for its extraordinary natural setting. The silence of the dense larch forests makes the atmosphere of this corner of the Sila particularly “Nordic.” The view sweeps from the plateau of the mountain range down to the Ionian and Tyrrhenian seas, with the Sicilian coast lying below. A few minutes' drive from the centre of Rossano, immersed in unspoilt nature, there stands amidst centuries-old olive groves and lush citrus orchards the Tenuta Ciminata Greco, a historic residence dating back to the 18th century. The original stone arches, the ceilings with exposed wooden beams, the imposing stone millstones of the old oil mill, the historic library with over 5,000 texts, and the small private church are just some of the elements you may admire during your stay.



From the top, the Gran Sasso district (courtesy ilgransasso.it), the Laga mountains (courtesy Consorzio Tutela Vini d'Abruzzo), Rocca D'Ajello in the Marche region (courtesy dimorestoricheitaliane.it) and Palazzo Sipari (courtesy ADSI). Facing page, from top, Ciminata Greco Estate (courtesy ADSI), L'Antico Sogno (courtesy ADSI), Grancia dei Celestini (courtesy ADSI)





Castel Savoia in Gressoney (courtesy Garden Route Italia)

GARDENS OF THE ALPINE ARC

Four jewels of our historical green heritage, selected in Piedmont, Valle d'Aosta, Trentino Alto Adige and Veneto by the Garden Route Italia portal, the result of the work of APGI, the Italian Parks and Gardens Association

BY ANDREA GUOLO

When covered in snow and frost, these green areas enter a sort of seasonal hibernation, a necessary and historic phase for their subsequent springtime explosion. Then much will depend on the intensity of the winter, which in recent years has become gentler, even at challenging altitudes. These are the gardens of the Alpine Arc, selected by the “**Garden Route Italia**” portal, the official guide to Italian gardens, the focus of a developmental project by APGI, the **Italian Parks and Gardens Association**, implemented in agreement with the **Ministry of Culture** and with the support of ALES S.p.A. This valuable tool has been fully operational since 2021, and currently presents more than two-hundred gardens and roughly thirty itineraries – in English as well – along with all the information necessary to organise a trip to admire parks and gardens along the Italian Boot, including the four we have selected for you on the slopes of Italy’s highest peaks. The project meets the challenge of restoring centrality to the country’s green heritage, long called the “Garden of Europe” thanks to the beauty of its landscapes punctuated with mansions, castles and gardens. “Our parks constitute a *trait d’union* between architecture and landscape, nature and culture, monumental heritage and productive vocations. They are therefore fundamental assets for developmental initiatives on a territorial scale, in accordance with the provisions of the strategic tourism plan,” says APGI president **Ludovico Ortona**. So let’s set off to discover these green gems of national excellence.

MOUNTAIN GARDENS

Established in mountain areas for the cultivation of Alpine flora species, these green oases are true botanical gardens. Some are dedicated primarily to the autochthonous flora of the mountain areas in which they were established, while others have introduced species from other mountain ranges as well. One of their main functions is the protection of rare and



disappearing species, a mission that goes hand-in-hand with informational and educational activities. In Italy, mountain gardens have been recognised as such since the late 1800s, first in the Alps, then on Mount Etna and in the Apennines. The Chanousia Alpine Botanical Garden was founded on the Petit St Bernard Pass in 1897 thanks to the passion and expertise of Abbot Pierre Chanoux, an extraordinary scientist and mountaineer who dedicated his entire life to the study and cultivation of the flora of that area. Other gardens were to be influenced or connected in various ways to Chanousia, following its tradition: from the Viote di Monte Bondone (1938) to Paradisia (1955). Few gardens can boast continuity since their foundation; many have been abandoned or destroyed over time due to various events, including war. Recently, more attention has been paid to this heritage with the development of existing gardens, the restoration of abandoned ones and the proliferation of new Edens where, among rock beds, ponds and streams, precious botanical rarities find a home.

SAVOY CASTLE IN GRESSONEY

Located in Belvedere, Gressoney, this villa is now owned by the region. Designed by architect Emilio Stramucci in an eclectic style, it was built starting in 1899 for visits to Gressoney by Queen Margherita, who previously would stay at the residence of Baron Beck-Peccoz. It therefore proved to be the last gift of a king, Umberto I, to his bride: one year after work began, the sovereign was assassinated. At an altitude of 1,350 metres, the castle is surrounded by an extensive park area, within which there is also a small Alpine garden of only 1,000 square metres. The Alpine garden fulfils a predominantly decorative function within the vast expanse of the Villa Savoia park, yet it offers a pleasing selection of Alpine flora and mountain flora in general. Compared to other Alpine gardens in the region, it stands out because it mixes native plants, exotics, hybrids and cultivars, selected for their ornamental function as well. Some of the indigenous plants come from the Monte Rosa Massif, which has been the destination of excursions since the foundation of the royal residence.

THE BOTANICAL GARDEN OF OROPA

Near the Sanctuary of Oropa, a Unesco World Heritage Site in the municipality of Biella, there is a botanical garden that is part of the WWF Italy oasis system. Conceived as far back as the 1930s, the Oropa Botanical Garden was founded in 1990, promoted by the Garden Club of Biella and designed in collaboration with the Natural Science Museum of Turin. Intended to welcome the public while raising awareness of biodiversity, particularly mountain biodiversity, it is divided into several sections. In the beech forest area, the largest, there is spontaneous flora such as Solomon's seal, *Maianthemum bifolium*, luzula and martagon lilies. There are also areas dedicated to high-altitude flora (able to live in frost and wind), to megaphorbia (grasses that generally grow on northern-facing slopes, sometimes used to produce liqueurs), to mosses and sphagnum mosses, to ferns and to wetlands (around the natural pond). In some parts of the garden there are specimens of

exotic ornamental flora from Tibet and the Himalayas. Some educational trails are dedicated to food plants; others are conceived specifically for children (Giardin Giocando), focusing especially on fauna typical of the Oropa Reserve.

TRENTO, THE VIOTE ALPINE BOTANICAL GARDEN

This garden is located on Mount Bondone, the closest ski destination for those living in Trento. Covering ten hectares of land on the edge of the forest area at an altitude of 1,500 metres, it was established in 1938 on the initiative of Lino Bonomi, director of the Natural History Museum of Venezia Tridentina, and the botanist Giuseppe Dalla Fior. The setting is a particular landscape, namely a plain with flowering meadows facing south. This exposure allows the botanical garden to withstand even the coldest winter temperatures, thanks to the rays of the sun. Approximately two thousand high-altitude plants are included in the garden, many of which are listed as endangered species. In the botanical garden there are ponds, wetlands, flower borders, a medicinal garden, poisonous plants and others used for dyeing fabric, a mountain garden, fields dedicated to cereals and ancient varieties cultivated in the Alps, a shrub collection and arboretum dedicated to the priority habitats of the Alps and the world's forests, as well as a lichen trail. Vittorio Marchesoni, the botanist who, more than others, dedicated himself to the garden and helped shape its current layout, wrote in 1959 that the garden should contribute to "hosting and therefore protecting the regional flora so rich in rarities and endemic species" and to "encouraging an awareness of nature, an indispensable prerequisite for the care and conservation of our natural heritage." The garden is managed by MUSE, Trento's Museum of Natural Science.

THE LORENZONI GARDEN AT PIAN DEL CANSIGLIO

The plain called Pian del Cansiglio in the Venetian Pre-Alps between the provinces of Treviso, Belluno and Pordenone, has always been of extraordinary importance to the Venetian Republic. Like Montello, it constituted the "*Bosco da reme*" (oar forest) of the Serenissima, i.e., the place reserved for forestry for the wood used to make oars for navigation. Today, Cansiglio is home to the Giangio Lorenzoni Alpine Botanical Garden, managed by the regional agency Veneto Agricoltura. It was created in 1972 by Giovanni Giorgio Lorenzoni, a lecturer at the University of Padua to whose memory it is dedicated, and by Giovanni Zanardo, inspector of the State Forestry Corps. It occupies a limestone-rich area of about two hectares at an altitude of one thousand metres, and it is divided into several levels with flower beds, meadows, pastures and wooded areas. Nearly 1,000 species of plants are collected in the garden, belonging exclusively to the area of the centuries-old forest on the Cansiglio's karst plateau, an extraordinary unicum of this territory, and the Col Nudo-Cavallo mountain massif. Alpine environments, the vegetation of wetlands, beech, spruce and fir woods, officinal and arid-environment plants as well as numerous threatened species are all present here.



Top three photos, from left, the Oropa Botanical Garden (courtesy Oropa Botanical Garden Archive), the teaching gardens at the Alpine Botanical Garden in Trento (courtesy Muse) and the panorama of the Botanical Garden at Pian del Cansiglio (courtesy Veneto Agricoltura). Above, in the small photo, summit environments at Cansiglio (courtesy Veneto Agricoltura). Facing page, from above, the Botanical Garden from the terrace of Castel Savoia (courtesy Garden Route Italia), Oropa (courtesy Giardino Botanico Oropa archive) and a panorama of the Viote Alpine Botanical Garden (courtesy Muse)



Piazza Walther in Bolzano (courtesy Mercatinodinatalebz.it)

DECEMBER IS BOLZANO'S MONTH

A plunge into the markets and Christmas atmosphere, exploring the history of one of northern Italy's most fascinating cities, visiting its historical houses and enchanting surroundings

BY EUGENIA TORELLI

The decorations, the lights that soften and warm the winter atmosphere, Christmas music in the background and the smell of scrumptious, inviting delights under the arcades and along the alleyways. That special time of year has arrived and Bolzano, displaying festive garb, is painted in the colours of Christmas. Every sign in town welcomes visitors, while the Christmas market – the famous *Christkindlmarkt* – awaits curious enthusiasts, its stalls providing handicrafts, gastronomic specialities and entertainment.

Now is the perfect opportunity to visit the city centre and the surrounding area, feast your eyes, taste the festive sweets and discover, little by little, the hybrid identity of this city of transit and mercantile commerce, a connecting point between the south and the north of Europe, hence its dual nature encompassing both the Mediterranean and the Alpine.

CITY WITH A PLURAL SOUL

Located in a basin where the Adige, Sarentino and Isarco Valleys meet, Bolzano has always been a place of passage, ever since its foundation as a Roman military *statio* in 15 B.C.E. under the name of *Pons Drusi*. Part of the Hapsburg domain from the 14th to the 19th century, in 1806 it passed, together with the Tyrol, under the Kingdom of Bavaria, before returning to Austria a few years afterward and being annexed a century later to Italy in 1919. One domination after another throughout history, the city has never lost its role as a mercantile and transit centre between the Mediterranean and the northern lands, enabling the passage of people and goods alike.

“Bilingualism in Bolzano has a very long and beautiful history. Ethnic tensions, if they exist at all, are an invention of modern times,” explains **Wolfgang von Klebelsberg**, president of the Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol section of the Italian Historic Houses Association. “There has always been a meeting of cultural worlds in this area and it is still the



same today. We have German tourists who come here because they feel they are abroad but can speak their own language; at the same time we have Italian tourists who are in Italy even though they feel they are abroad. There's a sense of exoticism, which is a mixed blessing in this area."

A STOPOVER AT CASÒN HIRSCHPRUNN

Replete with apple orchards and vineyards, the Adige Valley makes its way through the mountains as you travel north towards Bolzano. Before Egna there is the village of Magré (Margreid), where the southernmost historic residence in the South Tyrolean province offers a good reason to break up the journey. **Casòn Hirschprunn** is owned by the Lageder family, one of the most famous names in Italian wine. It is surrounded by the biodynamic vineyards of the estate at the foot of Mount Favogna. Founded as an agricultural farmhouse around the 13th century, the building was expanded in the 17th century and transformed by the Prunner family into an elegant Renaissance residence, traces of which can still be spotted in the inner rooms or while strolling through the park and large courtyard. A later extension, commissioned by the Kager family in the 19th century, led to the construction of the cellars that today house the Vineria Paradeis. Here guests enjoy a cuisine that combines Mediterranean and mountain flavours, made from seasonal and local ingredients, paired with the estate's wines. A stopover that nourishes all the senses and a gateway to begin a journey to the city of Bolzano.

IN THE CITY, A MULTICULTURAL PAST AND CHRISTMAS IN THE AIR

Once you've reached the city, choosing among the many attractions and possible itineraries will be a delightful challenge, so it's good idea to come prepared. The local tourist office is an excellent place to start. Their website is helpful for planning a stay in or around the city and keeping up-to-date on upcoming events, including cultural happenings, music, activities for children and families, and much more. Like every Yuletide season, the *Christkindlmarkt* attracts thousands of visitors to Bolzano. This year, from 28 November to 6 January, it enlivens the area of Piazza Walther and the Christmas Park with more than seventy stalls offering local handicrafts plus food and wine specialities. Wood carvings, gifts, accessories, clothing and handmade jewellery, and also honey, cold meats, sweets, cheese... Here you'll find the perfect gifts to put under the tree. After a hot glass of *glühwein*, you may roam around, pleasantly losing yourself in the narrow streets, admiring the different architectural styles and colours of the buildings. A stone's throw from the lovely Via dei Portici, be sure to treat yourself to a visit to the Mercantile Museum in the Bolzano Chamber of Commerce building. Here you can touch the soul of the gateway city between the north and south. In addition to the Archaeological Museum



– where the famous Ötzi mummy is kept – another noteworthy place to visit is the Civic Museum, home to a permanent exhibition on Bolzano's history and traditions.

MARECCIO, A CASTLE IN THE CENTRE

You needn't go far from the centre to reach **Castel Mareccio** (Schloss Maretsch), one of the best-known castles in Bolzano. Dating back to the 13th century, the building was profoundly transformed into a Renaissance residence in the 16th century when it belonged to the Römer family. After several changes of ownership, it also became an armoury and State archive until the City of Bolzano bought it in the 1970s and turned it into a conference and events centre. Today, Castel Mareccio is managed by the Bolzano Castles Foundation and is used as a venue for events. On days when there are no events, it may be visited according to a pre-established calendar. The castle provides an interesting glimpse into the city's history, just a hop, skip and a jump from the centre of town.

SCHLOSS ENGLAR AND ITS WINE

As we mentioned, you'll want to visit more of Bolzano than the centre alone. Heading out of town, you can explore a different face of the local culture, namely, its agriculture and wine. Wine in Bolzano has deep roots indeed. Discovery of ancient seeds in the Bressanone area has led researchers to understand that grapevines were cultivated by the local people of the Rhaetians at least as far back as 500 B.C.E., only to be perfected by the Romans a few centuries later, undergoing an important period of development in the Middle Ages, thanks above all to the industriousness of the monasteries. Today, wine is fundamental to the identity of the area. Vineyards extend from the Adige Valley to the Isarco Valley. For a wonderful adventure, set off from the centre of Bolzano and travel southwest along the Strada del Vino towards Eppan, where **Castel Englar** (Schloss Englar) is located. Dating back to the Middle Ages, this historic residence has undergone a series of extensions over the course of time, which today conceal the ancient stronghold, now encompassed by other later structures. For centuries, Schloss Englar has belonged to the Khuen-Belasi family, which opens it yearly from spring to autumn as an accommodation facility with refined sobriety, beloved by guests wishing to stay within historic walls. The castle also owns an estate with 10 hectares of vineyards from which a dozen labels are produced. The perfect place for a dive into the history of the Bolzano area through its wines. Guided tours may be arranged by appointment, to understand in greater depth the beauty of the vineyards and the castle.

Bottom, the Lageder family's Vineria Paradeis (courtesy Alois Lageder); facing page, from top, the winter landscape in Bolzano (courtesy Azienda Soggiorno e Turismo) and Castel Mareccio in Bolzano (courtesy maretsch.info)





Harvest on the Acton Estate in Leporano

HISTORIC HOMES OF EXTRA VIRGIN

The cultivation of olives, which became a culture throughout the Mediterranean area, is intertwined with the history of the great noble estates and is nowadays exalted among the historic residences, boosting the oil-tourism experience

BY GIAMBATTISTA MARCHETTO

*E*laion, oleum, oil, olej. Spread by the Phoenicians across the Mediterranean basin, the culture of (olive) oil speaks to us with an ancestral call dating back to its semantic root, which remained largely intact as it expanded throughout Europe. For the civilisations of Mesopotamia, Greece and North Africa, and then for the entire world ruled by the Roman Empire, oil signified a precious commodity often tied in with the sacred.

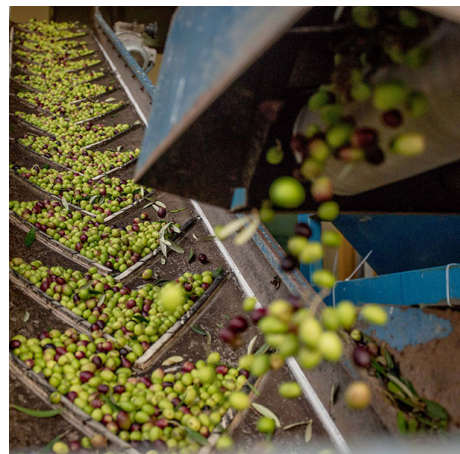
While Pliny the Elder described it as “absolutely necessary” for humankind, Biblical tradition reveals that oil was used many centuries earlier to anoint (and thus consecrate) kings, priests and prophets. And in Roman times it was used to cure and medicate the body, to fuel lamps, to season food.

Since olive cultivation has its roots in the deepest layers of Mediterranean history, it is not surprising that the Italian peninsula – stretched out in the middle of the *Mare Nostrum* and studded with islands – has developed it into a culture that permeates almost every territory, resculpted by human endeavour and otherwise. And from the past comes the agricultural heritage according to which multi-crop farms today still encompass olive groves on their estates. It is easy to explain, then, the presence of olive trees in the lands that once belonged to noble, if not royal, families, given that the production of oil was considered inevitable in the management of the agricultural economy. Among the historic residences dotting Italy – including those associated with ADSI – there is no shortage of structures that keep this tradition intact. On the contrary, hospitality facilities integrated with the production of what was once called “green gold” give rise to excellent oil tourism experiences.

DISCOVERING CULTIVARS

Certain families have centuries of olive oil tradition behind them. One example is the Colonna family, descendants of the Counts of Tuscolo, who, according to legend, derived from

Below, three images of production at the Marina Colonna estate (courtesy marinacolonna.it)



the Gens Julia and were named after the *Colonna Traiana*, that is, Trajan's Column. Pietro Colonna, born in 1078, was the owner of the Castello della Colonna near Rome; today descendants of this noble family welcome guests to a rural residence that stands out between the sea, hills and archaeological sites. The **Masseria Bosco Pontoni** in the Molise region of Campobasso embodies a classic-style agricultural villa. Over the years, the 165 hectares of the estate have undergone transformations whereby tobacco plantations, silk production and cattle breeding have given way to cereal and leguminous crops. The protagonist, however, is the olive tree, which characterises the landscape and history of this land, and Marina Colonna produces her own extra virgin, citrus and infused oils (www.marinacolonna.it). The olive grove with 18,000 trees occupies 55 hectares with different cultivars, ranging from the prized varieties in the Molise PDO specification (Gentile di Larino and Leccino) to Peranzana, which produces the best oil, passing through Ascolana, Frantoio, Coratina, Itrana, Nocellara del Belice and Cima di Melfi.

FROM BOLOGNA TO CHIANTI

Further north, nestled among the Bolognese hills, the 18th-century **Palazzo di Varignana** dominates an estate that now covers 650 hectares and has been home to olive trees for



Palazzo di Varignana and its landscape with olive groves (courtesy Palazzo di Varignana)

centuries. Thanks to the restoration of ancient native varieties on 260 hectares, the farm (established in 2015) boasts the production of an award-winning extra virgin olive oil. In addition to recovering Emilia-Romagna's most representative cultivars such as Ghiacciola and Nostrana, other varieties also present include Frantoio and Leccino, Maurino and Leccio del Corno. Today, 170 hectares of new olive groves shape the profile of the hills surrounding the Resort, plus 72 hectares between Romagna and Marche, for a total of 130,000 trees from which a collection of extra virgin olive oils with five monocultivars and two blends are produced (www.palazzodivarignana.com). Varignana's extra virgin olive oil has been awarded the DCO (Denominazione Comunale d'Origine) by the Municipality of Bologna.

Moving on to Tuscany, the **Badia a Coltibuono** Wine Resort & Spa in the heart of Chianti embodies the contemporary image of the path that has led generation after generation of the Stucchi Prinetti family to guard and cultivate the land, producing excellent organic oils and wines. Through study and experimentation on traditional cultivars, the estate produces three oil labels that it dedicates to the resort's guests and to passionate consumers in search of excellence (www.coltibuono.com).

THE INTENSITY OF SICILIAN OIL

Seen from the provincial road between Ragusa and Santa Croce Camerina, the horizon embraces everything from the Gulf of Gela to Malta. The light is strong and in springtime the green of the countryside stretches as far as the eye can see. In this corner of the world, the

A guest room in the Acton Estate in Leporano (courtesy Acton di Leporano)

Tenuta Cammarana estate is centred around an ancient 18th-century mansion that is now an adults-only boutique hotel offering warm Sicilian hospitality in a relaxing atmosphere. Cammarana is the ideal place for those who love nature and silence as well as oil. At an altitude of 360 metres, olive groves of Tonda Iblea, Biancolilla and Moresca include centuries-old trees and new plantings with an average age of 15 years. Manual harvesting here leads to cold-pressed oil without filtration (www.tenutacammarana.it).

The history of the **Fegotto** estate in Chiaramonte Gulfi in the area of Ragusa has also been intertwined with oil production since the early 19th century. With a cultivation area of more than 1,200 hectares, the entire complex was built around the oil mill, originally equipped with two stone millstones and a large wooden press, which were replaced by machinery in the mid-20th century. The historic oil mill, located with the old storage room on the ground floor of the manor house, is still perfectly preserved and complete with its equipment, offering a vivid and eloquent illustration of the central role oil has always played in the life of the farm. In the special area of the Monti Iblei, which has been awarded a specific PDO, the prevalent variety is the Tonda Iblea along with its pollinators Biancolilla, Calatina, Zaituna and Oleastro. Oil produced here boasts outstanding organoleptic qualities.

THE GREEN GOLD OF CALABRIA

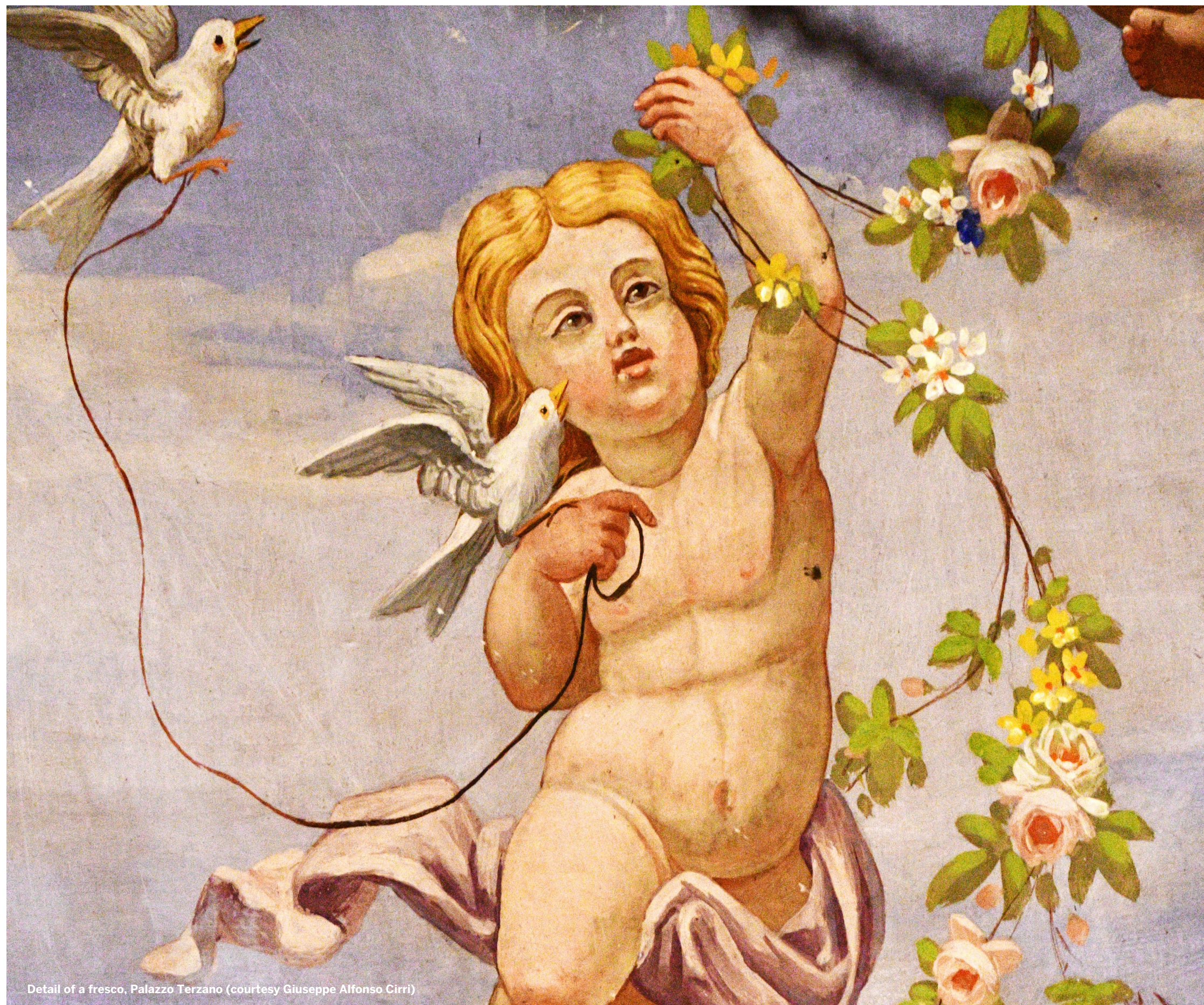
Oil is the green gold of Calabria, a land dedicated by vocation to the cultivation of olives. Knotty olive trees occupy the approximately 300 hectares of the **Acton** estate in Leporano, where hospitality meets oil as an omnipresent experience. The farm is the last remnant of an old fiefdom of some forty-thousand hectares, which crossed the Aspromonte from Gioia Tauro on the Tyrrhenian Sea all the way to Gioiosa on the Ionian coast. The Cannavà estate came to the Acton family at the beginning of the 1990s, and today it is devoted to hospitality and cultivation. In the eighteenth-century hamlet, guests can immerse themselves in the atmosphere of country life and then wander among the centuries-old olive trees, planted at



From above, Casina Carbone (courtesy aziendacandida.it), olive groves at Acton di Leporano (courtesy Acton di Leporano) and the oil mills of Fegotto (courtesy Fegotto)

such a distance that their foliage covers an area of up to 400 square metres, rising more than twenty metres above the ground. Oil production is geared towards single varieties: Carolea, Leccino, Ottobratica, Roggianella and the very local Cannavà are processed separately to preserve the uniqueness of the flavours and aromas (www.actondileporano.com). Casina Carbone, a historic house in the Locride area, is now the hub of activity at the **Candida** estate, founded in the 17th century by Antonino Candida. Here, too, oil tourism is an integral part of unique experiences to discover the area. With the aim of enhancing the history, culture and traditions of the area, the farm has focused on traditional crops such as citrus and almonds, yet oil is the true hero (www.aziendacandida.it). In the olive groves on a plateau a few kilometres from the sea, with trees mostly over 100 years old, the cultivars are local stars, namely Grossa di Gerace and Carolea, but there are also some white olive trees (Leucolea), the oil of which was used in ancient times as an ointment for religious ceremonies. Early harvesting and immediate pressing in the farm's own mill preserve the polyphenols and the quality of the oil.





Detail of a fresco, Palazzo Terzano (courtesy Giuseppe Alfonso Cirri)

ONE OF VALENZA'S JEWELS

Palazzo Terzano stands in the heart of Alessandria-province goldsmithing, where tradition and vision come together in a spirit of hospitality. And it is the city's first ADSI residence

BY BARBARA RODESCHINI

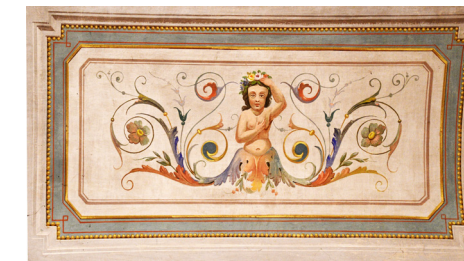
The birth of jewellery-making in Valenza dates back to the mid-19th century. Due to its geographical nature, the town in the province of Alessandria has been an object of conquest for centuries, yet it is precisely this characteristic that has allowed different influences and traditions to arrive here, only to be reflected then in the manufacture of elegant objects that meet the high expectations of local and international clients alike. The heart of the Piedmontese jewellery district, which has the highest density of goldsmiths in Italy with over 30 tonnes of gold worked each year, Valenza still maintains its leadership on the international scene, so much so that Bulgari in 2017 and Cartier from 2024 onwards have chosen to expand their production centres here. Overlooking the right side of the Po on the border between Piedmont and Lombardy, Valenza has another characteristic that sets it apart in the panorama of Italian municipalities, namely, its extraordinary ability to make visitors feel welcome.

A MULTI-PURPOSE SPACE IN THE HISTORIC CENTRE

Hospitable in its size, which today verges on 50 square kilometres, Valenza is made up of a maze of streets, each with its own history, such as the crossroads between Via Carducci, Via IX Febbraio and Via San Massimo, which commemorates the patron saint and was once the main artery of the city. Here, a stone's throw from the new Exhibition Centre of Valenza's Goldsmithing Art, stands **Palazzo Terzano**. Built in the 17th century, the U-shaped Palazzo bears witness to the development of the city, first in the hands of a noble Genoese family and then, from the 1930s through to the present day, as property of the Terzano-Cirri family.

A family residence, it has opened to the world thanks to the careful guidance of the third and fourth generations, becoming a multi-purpose space where a vision of the future meets the poetry of the past. Blending myth and reality, there is an evocative air in the

In the photos, interior and exterior of the palazzo in Valenza, in the heart of the world's most important jewellery district; below, the Cirri family and the post-restoration inauguration with the mayor of Valenza (courtesy Giuseppe Alfonso Cirri)

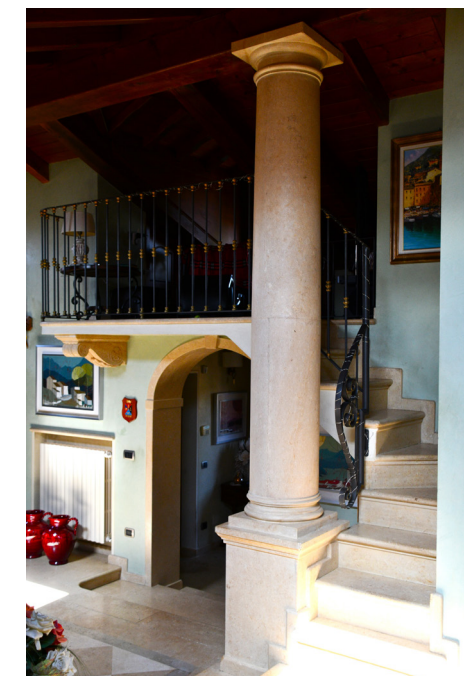


palace. Just think that the Sala dell'Abate, today the meeting room, is said to have housed a member of the Convent of St. Dominic, who was so well liked that he continued to appear in the portico long after his mortal departure in the 18th century. "We have never seen him ourselves, but we like to think that he protects Palazzo Terzano and those who live in it. After all, it has always had a social vocation. The Bishop's Hall—the Sala del Vescovo—and the Senator's Apartment have hosted many illustrious people such as St John Bosco, who lived here in 1870 when he was overseeing the opening of the Salesian houses in Mirabello and Borgo San Martino," explains **Giuseppe Alfonso Cirri**, who together with his wife Claudia and son Giulio looks after the Palazzo. "During the Fascist era, my grandfather Alfonso never hesitated for a moment to open the doors of the Palazzo to help others. We know that during the round-ups, a little girl named Serafina was left without a family and to save her, my grandfather Alfonso Terzano, a jeweller, Knight of Vittorio Veneto and founding member of the Valenza Goldsmiths' Association, wasted no time before taking her in. However, the palace was right in front of the Fascist headquarters. To avoid reprisals, he resorted to a ploy: Serafina, in fact, was the same age as my mother Claudia and so they passed her off as a lady-in-waiting and she lived in safety until the Liberation. And that's not all. Since the proximity of the Iron Bridge on the border between Piedmont and Lombardy exposed the neighbourhood known as Sorte Monasso to the risk of bombing, every time the siren sounded, the doors of the underground cellars were transformed into air-raid shelters. My family kept them stocked with blankets and basic necessities, so that they were welcoming. Had the building itself ever been damaged, the possibility of eventual escape was guaranteed by several exits." This close bond with the city is now reflected in the new use of space within the residence.

SPACES OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY

After two years of restoration, which also returned the pictorial decorations on the facades to their former splendour, Palazzo Terzano reopened its spaces to the community in 2005. While the main floor houses Studio Cirri, the territorial reference point of the Italian Public Relations Federation (FERPI), the internal rooms, including the Bishop's Hall and the Senator's Apartment as well as the two outdoor courtyards are available for the organisation of events such as Valenza Jewel Week, which held its first staging here. "We carried out extensive work to ensure that the spaces retained their charm while being enriched with all the facilities that the contemporary age provides," Cirri continues. "The two large outdoor courtyards and the garden with century-old trees are the ideal place for special events, while the indoor rooms become spaces for conferences and for business or cultural appointments. In a way, we have continued a family tradition, creating a lounge, a meeting point for the city, just as it was after the war. In the Sala Azzurra, in fact, Claudia

Terzano, who was a pianist, used to meet the intelligentsia of the period, organising small classical music concerts attended by, among others, personalities such as the submarine commander Mario Borra and the cellist Nini Gervino." Not only that, in the post-war period, Palazzo Terzano saw the birth of Valenza's modern economy, first the footwear industry, with the Accatino Shoe Factory, which began its adventure in the mansion's former stables; then the goldsmithing industry, with various companies that started up here and that still echo in the courtyards. In this context, as of July 2024, Palazzo Terzano is rightfully and proudly included in the list of ADSI, the Italian Historic Houses Association.



PORTUGAL: 2,000 HISTORIC HOUSES TO PROTECT AND TO VISIT

António Maria de Mello, president of the Associação Portuguesa das Casas Históricas, accompanies us to discover his country through the individual properties the Association represents, introducing us to “the Portuguese people, their sense of aesthetics and their history”

BY ANDREA GUOLO



Portugal is one of the countries best-loved by visitors for the beauty of its cities (Porto and Lisbon first of all, but also Coimbra, Guimarães, Setúbal and the cities of the Algarve such as

Faro and Albufeira), for its mild climate in winter and moderate heat in summer, for its great history as a colonial power, for its beaches overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, for its food and wine, for the increased level of its hospitality facilities and also for a quality/price ratio that is still among the best in Europe. A holiday in Portugal creates not only excellent memories but also the desire to return to this nation which, though not huge in size, deserves a significant amount of time (at least two weeks) to deepen a visitor's knowledge of Lusitanian art, culture and history. One of the most evocative itineraries is linked to Portugal's historic houses, two hundred of which are now part of the **Associação Portuguesa das Casas Históricas**, founded in 1978, devoted to the central goal of safeguarding the residences and their surroundings. We talked about this with the association's president, **António Maria de Mello**.

How many Portuguese historic houses are there?

In Portugal, there are an estimated 2,000 residences that may be classified as historic. Most of them are essentially abandoned, because their conservation and maintenance is so difficult that the owners end up leaving them. Certainly notable exceptions exist, demonstrating the creative capability, the know-how and the “rugged joy” of some Portuguese owners; others, however, mostly live with the anguish that comes from the lack of resources to ensure the maintenance of their dwellings, because there is no State aid for conservation and no access to European

funds earmarked for public organisations. Furthermore, there are no real tax incentives to preserve and conserve these historic homes as may be found in other European countries. Finally, our legislation does not address the need to protect the nobility of the mansions, neither is there the necessary legislative infrastructure. The protection of existing historical heritage should be a priority over new construction, but this is not the case. Sadly, policy makers often prefer to build from scratch without valuing the existing historical heritage or incentivising restoration.

Please tell us more about these exceptions. What idea do they give of the greatness of the past?

A historical house is a reflection of the collective personality of the Portuguese people, their sense of aesthetics and the history of our nation. Unfortunately, when the central role of the residence itself as the seat of the local aristocracy disappeared, a



Opening photo, Porto, the city as seen from the Douro (courtesy Andrea Guolo); above, António Maria de Mello with Pope Francis (courtesy António Maria de Mello) and the Convento de Santa Ana da Ordem do Carmo (credits Daniel Kempner Thorne)

process of decline began and properties were divided up among family members. Initiatives aimed at achieving self-sustainability do not find support from the State. Even though local authorities emphasise the importance of these mansions for the preservation of the character and history of their territories, they prefer to promote other projects. Nevertheless, even in Portugal, owners open their mansions to the public, thus transforming them into a vehicle for transmitting local and national history and architecture to posterity while also developing activities that generate the income necessary to cover maintenance. These activities are becoming increasingly successful and are helping to bring mansions back to the centre of public interest, through a deeper knowledge of their great history and perhaps even more of local history.

Which houses are the most important and the most well-known?

Starting in Lisbon, we find **Palácio Fronteira**, one of the most important monuments of the 1600s, which contains the largest collection of *azulejos* [Portuguese majolica, ed.] preserved on site. **Palácio dos Condes de Anadia** is located in the inland district of Aveiro and is one of the most outstanding examples of the Portuguese Baroque style, dating back to the 1700s. **Casa de Mateus** in Vila Real, inland from Porto, was built in the first half of the 1700s, designed by Nicolau Nasoni and surrounded by lovely gardens within a vast estate. **Palácio da Brejoeira** in Pinheiros in the north of Portugal, not far from the Miño valley and the Spanish border, is a grandiose neoclassical building with an adjoining wine cellar. The **Convento de São Paulo** in the inland region of Alentejo dates back to the end of the 12th century and is now used as a hotel, with perfectly preserved spaces amid fountains, terracotta and *azulejos*. Returning to northern Portugal, **Casa de Bertandos** is located in Ponte de Lima, in the Limia Valley, and constitutes one of the most remarkable and representative examples of stately architecture in our country, with a 16th-century tower articulating two independent architectural bodies. On the slopes surrounding the Lima River in northern Portugal is **Paço de Calheiros**, a castle that has always been owned by the family of the Counts of Calheiros, surrounded by gardens classified as historic and the vineyards of the Loureiro grape from which the famous Vinho Verde is made. **Palácio Ficalho** in the Baixo Alentejo dates back to the second half of the 1600s and is incorporated in the medieval walls surrounding the historical centre of Serpa; the family project to open it to the public began in 2021. **Palácio de Xabregas** in Lisbon is famous for its monumental quality, the orthogonal rigour of its architecture and the majolica tiles covering the rooms on the main floor. Finally, there is **Palácio Sabugosa**, the historical residence that belongs to my family, located in Alcântara within the municipality of Lisbon.

Can you suggest an itinerary to visit Portugal and its “must-see” historic houses?

We are currently in the process of defining a strategy for the Portuguese Historic Houses Association, which includes the creation of routes to the houses, links between the houses,



tourism in the towns where the houses are located, and other aspects yet to be defined. Upon request, the association will provide support in creating itineraries on the basis of individual requests.

Could you please describe your historical home?

Palácio Sabugosa, also known as the Palace of the Counts of São Lourenço or of the Caesars, was built in the early 1500s. In the 18th century, during the lifetime of Vasco César de Menezes – Viceroy of India and Brazil, who received the title of Count of Sabugosa in 1729 – the building underwent major improvements, and during the renovation works in the 1800s, the old palace courtyard was closed off and converted into a library. From the end of the 18th century until the beginning of the following century, there was a famous dining room with oil paintings on stucco, with strong similarities to the well-known room in the Palácio do Ramalhão, and another with decorations imitating the forest in the palace of the Marquises of Olhão in Lisbon.

Is your house open to the public?

We rarely open our house to the public, because it is still a family home where we all live. Sometimes, we organise special concerts and lectures, and we have hosted dinners and events for historic houses.

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

We want to start digitising our family archive, so that historians can consult documents that we believe are important for understanding the history of our country. And we also want to have a better understanding of this historical house from the 1500s onwards.

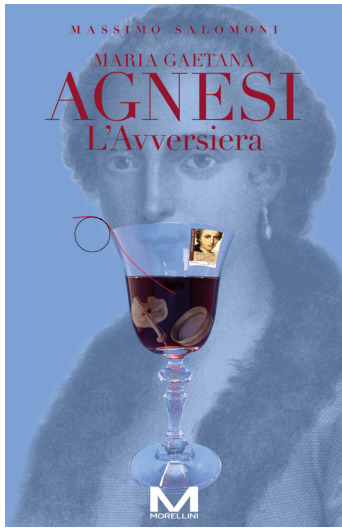
What advice would you give to Italian owners of historic houses, who are increasingly looking to open their property to the public?

It is a beautiful thing that the owners are eager to open their homes to other people. Owners have the right understanding and sensitivity needed to tell stories about the dwelling. If we lose this opportunity, we lose this intangible asset, which would be bad for our own history.

Which historic house in Italy is closest to your heart?

Palazzo Colonna in Rome.

From the top, Paço de Calheiros (courtesy Paço de Calheiros); grand staircase, Palácio Anadia (courtesy Palácio Anadia); cellars of the historic house Quinta D. Maria (credits Júlio Tassara de Bastos); event space at Casa da Cerca (courtesy Casa da Cerca Sociedade Agrícola); Convent of S. Paulo (credits Simão Penas)



MARIA GAETANA AGNESI - L'AVVERSIERA

MASSIMO SALOMONI
Morellini Editore – 2024

Maria Gaetana Agnesi, philosopher and mathematician, and Giuseppe Parini, reluctant abbot and poet in a state of decline. This bizarre couple came together in Lombardy when, at the end of the 1700s, Agnesi invited the abbot to her country house in Montevicchia to write one last work together. The narrative unfolds between the difficult drafting of their opus and tales of 18th-century Milanese life. Aristocratic salons and the streets of the poor intertwine with the people

they met over the course of their lives, from Mozart to Cagliostro, from Maria Theresa of Austria to Ugo Foscolo. *L'Avversiera* bears intimate and delicate witness to the life of an extraordinary woman. Massimo Salomoni started out as a copywriter, then became an agency television producer, creative director and expert in digital communication and social media. Today he is a content creator, trainer and lecturer for the strategic use of social media.



L'ARTIGLIO DELLA MANGUSTA

GIANCARLO MELE
Meravigli – 2024

Following *Il Rapace*, Giancarlo Mele returns to the historical novel dedicated to the saga of the Sforza family, the dynasty that made Milan great. *The Claw of the Mongoose*, a cunning animal not afraid of snakes and their venom, is set against the backdrop of Italy in the early 1400s, criss-crossed by bands of ferocious mercenaries in the pay of various lords. Here moves the figure of Francesco Sforza, a condottiere different from others in social extraction and political farsightedness.

Nothing seems to be out of reach to this man who built his own destiny by trusting in the sword alone. Opposite Francesco is the dark and enigmatic figure of Filippo Maria, the last Visconti, whose natural daughter, Bianca Maria, Francesco would marry. But numerous other female figures flank or contrast Sforza in his inexorable ascent to the ducal throne, among them the ambiguous Tigri, who hates him because he rejected her.



LA SIGNORINA IN DOLCE E I SEGRETI DEL CIOCCOLATO

TIZIANA DI MASI
Buk Buk – 2024

Little Elisa, the world's first pastry detective, grabs her fuchsia magnifying glass and sets off on a new mission to discover the secrets of the food of the gods. An unexpected trip to Paris, which enchants Elisa with its most famous and delicious pastry and chocolate shops, will be the stage for her second investigation, a sequel to "La Signorina in Dolce" set in Milan and New York. And in the French capital, the sweets return to speak to her and warn her that something tragic is

about to happen at the Galerie Dior where her inseparable Aunt Giuseppa hopes to fulfil her dream of seeing all the masterpieces of the French master designer. And indeed a famous Dior dress is stolen. Elisa will have to interrogate the sweets – especially the chocolate – to discover out who stole the dress and killed Monsieur Jacques.



ITALIAN HISTORIC HOUSES

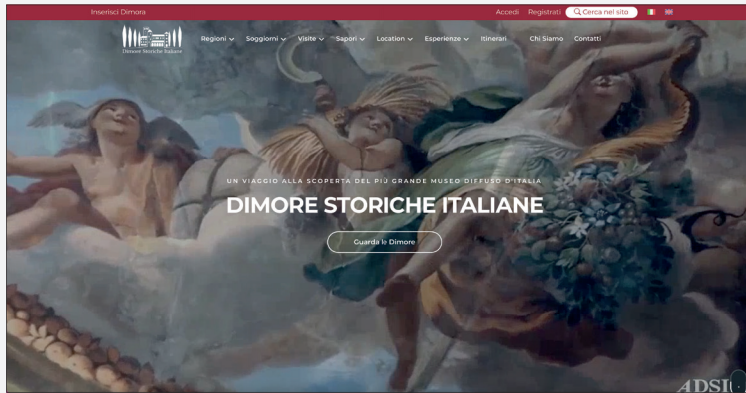
A journey to discover the most broadly spread out museum in Italy

"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.



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ANDREA CUOMO

A Roman who moved to Milan ten years ago, Andrea has written for *Il Giornale* since 1998, also collaborating with the *Gambero Rosso* and *Identità Golose* restaurant guides and with *The Good Life* and *Civiltà del Bere*. Sommelier and coffee expert, he has written several books on food and wine.



GIAMBATTISTA MARCHETTO

After digressions into Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, Giambattista returned to Epicurus. As a journalist, he writes about wine, flavours and spirits, travel, theatre and dance. A Venetian globetrotter, he collaborates with *Il Sole 24Ore*, *Il Gazzettino*, *Pambianco*, *Food & Wine Italia*, *Falstaff Italia*, *Linkiesta Gastronomika*, *Italia a Tavola* and other periodicals. He directs *VinoNews24* and supports the editorial staff of *ItalianWineTour.info*.



EMANUELE A. GOBBI

Writer, critic and expert taster with a degree in International and Diplomatic Sciences and a Master's in NPOs, Emanuele writes about food and wine for various trade magazines and is a consultant for marketing and communication agencies. He loves skiing and basketball, the mountains (the Alps) and contemporary art.



CAMILLA ROCCA

Camilla collaborates with *Forbes*, *Style Corriere*, *Elle*, *Capital*, *Food & Travel*, *Gentleman*. 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.



EUGENIA TORELLI

Tuscan roots, Venetian by adoption. Eugenia has kept 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).



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, writing for *Vogue Italia*, *Milano Finanza* and many other Italian and foreign publications. A theatre author and essayist ever driven by a passion for new projects, he is the director of *ItalianBeach.club* and *ItalianWineTour.info*.



BARBARA RODESCHINI

A freelance writer perpetually hunting down new stories to tell, Barbara speaks with a legendary soft "r", which is why she loves writing more than talking. Her territory is fashion, cosmetics and design. An unwavering optimist, she looks at life through the sharp-sighted lens of humour.

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

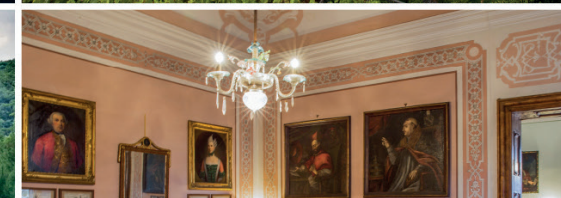
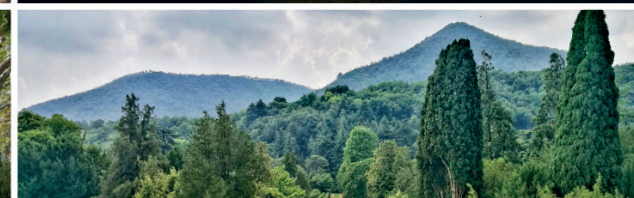
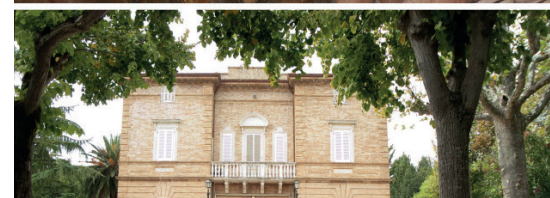
committed, together with the European Historic Houses Association (EHH), to promoting the protection and enhancement of historic homes.

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



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