

MILAN AND ITS PROVINCE



HERONS 'ROUND MILAN

A TOURIST GUIDEBOOK

Abbiategrasso, Magenta,
Canals and Parks



Provincia
di Milano

ABBIATEGRASSO MAGENTA AREA

-  Highways
-  Main roads
-  Important roads
-  Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino
-  Parco Agricolo Sud Milano
-  Places mentioned in the guidebook



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Provincia
di Milano



Provincia di Milano

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Foreword



The areas around Abbiategrasso and Magenta make up a very vital world of which most residents of Milan may be unaware.

It is a world that is very courteous, polite, respectful and often friendly. It has its Navigli (long and narrow, suitable for water transport and provided with cycle paths), its *cascine* (lots of them: once upon a time, they were the only houses around...), its churches (some of which are, frankly, extraordinary, others only centuries old and memorable), its museums (few: a pity), its fields (endless paddy-fields), its villas (many, but few open to visitors: another pity), its cuisine (a surprise), its outlets (another surprise: stockings, fabrics, Italian design) and its castles (mainly of the Visconti era).

The world of Abbiategrasso and Magenta starts on the outskirts of Milan and continues as far as the woods along the Ticino, between Lombardy and Piedmont. It is between the line of infrastructures that link the site of the new Fiera with Malpensa airport (in the north) and the indiscernible rural boundary with the Pavia area (in the south). It has important friends close by, like Vigevano or Pavia itself, pleasant local populations (including herons and farm workers) and a potential future enemy: hoards of drivers on weekend trips out of the city.

This guide is ambitious. It would like tomorrow's potential enemies to turn into friends of today. The conditions? Lots of conditions: cycle paths (increasing, though they are already common), railways (which has now made it much easier to travel with bicycles on trains), canal boats (they are starting to appear, thanks to Navigli Lombardi), local road signs (that could be improved, here and there), holiday farms that serve good meals (they do exist: addresses available in the guide), holiday farms that provide overnight accommodation in the silence of the fields (some belong to the Terre d'Acqua consortium, others are being set up), a desire to get away from everyday troubles (rather common in the city) and a graciousness on the part of guests equalling that of the hosts.

Tip: if you happen to have a football with you and are standing in a nice meadow, please check whether it is not, in fact, a paddy-field. The consequences could be a reduction of the local agricultural output and a hasty retreat followed by infuriated farmers.

Another tip: use this guide, tell your friends about it, ask yourself why it is free (for now: there's no guarantee it will be free for ever also because we would like to use any money earned from it to promote this area and make it better known), write angry letters to the Head of Tourism, Province of Milan, if it contains any information that is incorrect or missing, keep it handy for planning weekend trips, consult local government websites – the guide gives the addresses – for updated lists of feast days, fairs and markets that are (often) organized in the Abbiategrasso and Magenta areas.

The herons of Milan await you. Welcome!

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The farms and holiday farms mentioned in this
guidebook were recommended by:



Coldiretti, Federazione
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Coldiretti di Milano e Lodi,
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20136 Milano.
Phone: 025829871,
www.coldiretti.it



Confagricoltura, Confagricoltura
- Unione Provinciale Agricoltori
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Ripamonti 35, 20136 Milano.
Phone: 025820701,
www.upamilanolodi.it



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Agricoltori,
Turismo Verde,
viale Coni Zugna 58,
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Phone : 0258111829,
www.turismoverdelombardia.it
turismoverde.lombardia@cia.it



Terre d'Acqua, Consorzio
Agrituristico Terre d'Acqua,
via Pontida 36,
20081 Abbiategrasso.
Phone : 029422133.

Introduction

Over 8 million people 'visit' Milan and its surrounding area every year. 'Visit' in inverted commas, because in actual fact, and according to well-known statistics, these visitors arrive but do not discover, see or taste anything of our area. They come for the Fiera, for fashion and on business, for which Milan is a significant international centre.



*Executive councilor
for Tourism*

However, there is more.

According to a sample of mid-to-high-range hotels surveyed in the first months of 2007, these millions of visits are constantly getting shorter: from an average of 2.2 days a few years ago (already very low in comparison to other European capitals) to 1.8 days now.

It is obviously becoming more and more difficult to persuade tourists to stay longer and discover the artistic, cultural, environmental

and gastronomic delights of our area, particularly when you consider that even Milan's residents are often unaware of the heritage that surrounds them.

The reason is that government bodies have for many years been otherwise engaged and tourism has been largely left to its own devices. Our heritage has so far not been promoted or communicated properly. A study we commissioned from the IULM [University Institute for Modern Languages] provided a statistic that is almost alarming: information is only provided on 24% of our history, architecture, parks and agricultural and gastronomic traditions.



My task is not to make things up. We have plenty that is worth visiting; we simply need to make it available to our residents and visitors. Eight million visitors a year is a significant number; it puts us up there with large cities such as Paris and Barcelona. We have to waylay these 8 million people, welcome them and let them know that as well as the Fiera, La Scala, the shopping and fashion week, we also have the Navigli canals, abbeys, farmhouses, parks and the delicious produce of our soil. Our region, which has always been considered industrial, also excels in the agricultural sector.

Using an expression that is dear to my heart, when the lights of the Fiera are switched off (ie in the evenings, at weekends and in the summer), **we must project light on to the city and its wonderful surroundings**, which can and should become a tourist destination in the widest sense rather than simply a provider of hotel rooms.

This guide is the result of a bet that was made after looking at a satellite photo of the Province of Milan. Pictures of our area from a great height show the density of the city and the relative density of the industry-lined highways leading to Novara and Bergamo. To the south and west, however, around the Navigli canals and as far as the Ticino river, is open land; a large green space that acts as a huge lung and allows our city to breathe.

Milan's lung, the home of real live herons, is vital to us.

It can continue to play this vital role if, maybe as a result of this guidebook, the Province of Milan's agriculture is sustained by tourism, conservation policies benefit from the profits made by the area's tourist industry and the city receives all the visitors, both domestic and international, that it deserves. And – another challenge – if we are capable of making the effort needed to recover these benefits on a daily basis.

Abbiategrasso and its Canals



Above, portrait of Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351-1402), first duke of Milan. Below, portrait of Ludovico Sforza, known as the Moor (1452-1508), seventh duke of Milan, brother of Galeazzo Maria Sforza.



The most important area south-west of Milan for history, monuments and sights is situated at the junction between two large canals running through lower Lombardy. They are the Naviglio Grande, fed by waters from the Ticino river which it carries towards Milan and the Naviglio di Bereguardo which branches off towards Pavia on reaching Abbiategrasso.

These are names that evoke memories of a golden period for the Milan area, that of the autonomous commune and the **Duchy of the Visconti and Sforza** families between nine and five centuries ago.

So the area is of interest especially for its historical and artistic features. It is full of imposing buildings, Renaissance frescoes, ancient roads and patrician villas as well as



so many excellent restaurants and cake shops and opportunities to buy local foods directly from farmers that Abbiategrasso is one of the “Cittaslow” included, since 2002, in the new International Network of **“cities where living is easy”**.

But it is actually the Navigli or navigable canals flowing through lower Lombardy that provide the real setting with its natural features as well as its history, art and opportunities to spend wisely. Here, the landscape is not entirely free of pollution since we are talking about the heart of one of Europe’s most heavily industrialized zones, yet it is welcoming and well preserved. In short, it is a man-made landscape but **natural nevertheless** and more importantly, for those who have never seen it, it is full of surprises.

In fact, Abbiategrasso is one of the one of the municipalities that make up the Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino.

The Visconti Castle in Abbiategrasso, its palaces and the towpaths of the Naviglio Grande, now cycle paths, are in all good guide books for Lombardy. Today, the restored church of the Annunciata shows more clearly how the town traces its roots back to ducal times.



Abbiategrasso

City Council website: www.comune.abbiategrasso.mi.it
Information: Pro Loco. Piazza Marconi 3
E-mail: info@prolocoabbiategrasso.com
Website: www.prolocoabbiategrasso.org
kms 24.6 from Milan. Map: D 3-4



How to reach Abbiategrasso and its Canals



For an area concerned with preserving the quality of life, the obvious advice is to use public transport.

TRAINS

- the State Railways



Although Abbiategrasso was formally recognized as a town only in 1932, the reliability and resourcefulness of its inhabitants – in a word, their civilization – date from much father back in time.

The municipal **coat of arms** (a gold lion on a blue background) was created in the 15th century, after the community was authorized, in 1373, to administer justice. And the ancient burgh which we find today under the name of Abbiategrasso – with somewhat well-known, efficient industries and services – has always stood in a fertile **countryside**, dotted with smaller rural burghs that were founded in Celtic prehistory, and later thrived under the Romans and Longobards.



The Visconti Castle

The most important building in Abbiategrasso is the Visconti Castle, situated close to the railway station, and which – if you absolutely have to drive here from Milan (but where would you park?) – can be found just beyond the level crossing.

The history of the Castle goes back almost one thousand years. In 1034, the will of Archbishop Ariberto d'Intimiano of Milan mentions a castrum (castle) which stood alongside the burgus (burgh) of Abbiategrasso. And it is known that this castrum too was seized and destroyed by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa



in 1167, during the wars he waged against the autonomous communes in North Italy.

In documents of the age of the seigniories there is mention of a rocca nuova in 1218, or a stronghold built by Azzone Visconti in the first half of the 1300's, and a castle being built at the request of Gian Galeazzo Visconti in 1381. The latter building certainly corresponds to the one standing today, even if part of the present structure dates back to before the 1300's. The design was probably square with four towers and a drawbridge.

In 1438, Filippo Maria Visconti ordered that it should be restored and improved with the

run an efficient, frequent service between Abbiategrasso and Porta Genova station in Milan. The journey takes half an hour on the Milano-Mortara line which allows the transportation of bicycles. There are also good links with Alessandria, Pavia and Vigevano. For information phone 848888088 or visit the trenitalia.it website.

BUSES

- **Autoservizi Atinom**, run a service both to Magenta, where the company has its head



▼ office, and the Milan Underground station Bisceglie. The Autoservizi Atinom also carry passengers to other places recommended in this guide like Cassinetta di Lugagnano, Robecco sul Naviglio and Albairate. For further information phone 02972384 or visit the www.atinom.it website.

• **ATM**

(Milan Public Transport company) runs a service from the Milan Underground station Romolo. The route follows the axis of the Naviglio Grande, stopping in other localities worth a visit like Trezzano sul Naviglio, Gaggiano and Albairate.

For information, call toll-free 800016857 or visit the www.atm-mi.it website.



painting of frescoes and the opening of mul-
lioned windows. But already in 1535, with the
end of the Sforza seignior in Lombardy, also
the castle in Abbiategrasso began to deterio-
rate. In 1568, the Governor of Milan feared be-
ing defeated by the French who had occupied

More

A funny name

The formula *Abiate qui dicitur Grassus* is found for the first time in the will of Ariberto d'Intimiano, dated 1034. The word *Habiate* comes from the adjective *Aviat*, probably changed by Roman nobles into *Avius*.

The name Abbiate remained in use until the 10th century, when it was linked with the epithet *Grasso* ("Fat"), commonly used in other localities too, probably as a reference to the fertility of the soil.

Vigevano, and ordered the dismantling of both the castle and the fortifications in the burgh. The defenceless population sought refuge in the countryside. In 1672, the deterioration was



Castello Visconteo, Abbiategrasso.



Public Library, Abbiategrasso.

so advanced that the building could simply be converted into a “nobleman’s home”.

Until the end of the 1800’s, when the first railway tracks reached Milan, a 16th century rampart remained standing in front of the castle. However, in the meantime, from 1865, the building had become public property once again and was used as a school.

Over the last few years, the Visconti Castle has been restored in order to house the “Romeo Brambilla” Public Library, run by the local Department for Culture and the Foundation for the Promotion of the Abbiategrasso area.

In the library courtyard, visitors can admire the remains of important frescoes with architectonic-geometric patterns that hark back to Visconti style frequently found in the Milan area.

The Santa Maria quarter

Alongside the Castle, the original late-Medieval *burgus* of Abbiategrasso had extended into the area between Via Santa Maria, Via Angelo Teotti, Piazza V Giornate and Corso San Martino: what is now the Santa Maria quarter.

The ex-church of **Santa Maria Vecchia** – which can be reached following Via Santa Maria – definitely has a medieval



▼ **BOAT TRIPS** along the canal organized by:

- **Navigli Lombardi**, a consortium with offices in Milan, Via Copernico 42, phone 026679131. Information at www.naviglilombardi.it

- **Amici dei Navigli**, with offices in Milan, Via Rasori 12, phone 0248018230.



Canal boats are back along the Navigli.

Information at www.amicideinavigli.org and at www.naviganavigli.it

BICYCLES

can be hired in Abbiategrasso from Franco Peretti, Via Novara 31, phone 0294967604, as well as some holiday farms (*agriturismo*) in the area

Those who cannot do without their **CARS** can follow the directions to Abbiategrasso

- from the highway A4, Milano-Torino, exit Boffalora
- from State Road 526 from Pavia,

linking to the highway A7, Milano-Genova,

- from State Road 494 which runs off the Tangenziale Ovest (western by-pass) around Milan at exit 5

Lorenteggio in the direction of Vigevano,

- from Provincial Road 114, Milano Baggio-Abbiategrasso, entering from Viale Parri (near the Milan Underground station Bisceglie) in the direction of Cusago.

From Milan, it is also possible to follow Provincial Road 59 which runs along

the Naviglio Grande. But by car, this is decidedly the slowest route.



Santa Maria Vecchia, Abbiategrasso.

look. It had already been standing for three centuries when, around the middle of the 1400's, it started being used also by the nuns from the Benedictine convent of **Santa Maria della Rosa**, founded around that time a

short distance away, which did not have a church of its own. Towards the end of the 1500's, so the nuns would no longer be forced to break the rules every day, a decision was made to turn

the church around, switching the apse with the façade thus allowing them to enter directly from the cloister.

The convent was later closed down at the end of the 1700 under the Emperor Josef II. If Santa Maria



Casa Orsini di Roma, Head Office of the Banca Agricola Mantovana, Abbiategrasso.

Vecchia is once again in use today, it is thanks to the restoration work carried out in the early 1970's. The modern glass gateway reveals, besides some of the 15th and 16th century frescoes, a ballet school.

Along the Via Angelo Teotti there is the series of eye-catching façades – in Medieval or 18th century style – of the palace known as **Casa Orsini di Roma**, and which today houses the Head Office of the Banca Agricola Mantovana. The Orsini family of Milan had started to purchase and standardize these buildings, of Medieval origin, in 1661.

The heart of the historic centre

The Shrine to St. Charles



To the side of the Castle the other side of the street,



Palazzo Cattaneo, Abbiategrasso

Between the Visconti Castle and Abbiategrasso's main square, the shortest route takes you along Corso Matteotti. At number 41 of the Corso, there is the 18th century **Palazzo Cattaneo**, created by the restructuring of two late-17th century houses. Under the porch, to one side, there is a 16th century fresco of the Virgin and Child.

At the end of Corso Matteotti, the brick façade of **Casa Pianca Albini** overlooks Piazza Golgi. First built in the 1400's, it has un-

in tree-lined Piazza Garibaldi, a corner shrine protects the frescoed image of St. Charles Borromeo. The iconography reproduces, even though it is not immediately recognizable, the episode of the attempt on his life which Cardinal Borromeo suffered in 1569, when a friar of the Order of the Humiliati tried to kill him with an arquebus.



Palazzo Pretorio, Town Hall, Abbiategrasso.

Leave your car behind

Rightly, nearly all public parking bays in the centre of Abbiategrasso are regulated by disk indicated parking times



or parking metres.

However, visiting the town takes longer than the hour or so allowed.

One solution could be the use of the pay-to-park area at the railway station. Another, more drastic solution would be doing without your car.

dergone extensive restoration work to revive its Medieval appearance.

Facing Casa Pianca is the **Pia Casa degli Incurabili**, which today – in memory of the Nobel Prize winner Camillo Golgi – is called the **Golgi Institute** and is an important geriatric hospital. The group of buildings has gradually been extended over the centuries starting with the San Martino monastery, the oldest in the burgh, probably founded by the Cistercians from Morimondo Abbey and already mentioned in a document of 1218. The Home for the Incurables was converted into an institute for the disabled following the wishes of the Hapsburg emperor Josef II and extended in the late 1700's fol-



Golgi Institute, Abbiategrasso.

lowing plans by the eminent architect Leopold Pollack (who also designed the Villa Reale in Milan). It was then greatly extended in 1854 by Lorenzo Carmagnola and in 1873 under the guidance of Giuseppe Balzaretti (another architect well known in Milan for his planning of the Giardini Pubblici). One wing of the Golgi Institute which is even newer was added in recent times.

Inside the Golgi Institute, there are still traces of the **Santa Chiara** convent chapel which replaced the San Martino monastery in the 15th century. On the first floor of the building, on the east side, the wing of the cloister with 15 columns in greenstone and part of the cross-vault can

Camillo Golgi

Camillo Golgi who was born in 1843 in Corteno (a village in Valcamonica in the province of Brescia) and graduated in medicine at the University of Pavia in 1865, took an early interest in the study of mental illnesses in collaboration with Cesare Lombroso, and in 1872, began working as



This is what the cake shop looked like in 1900.

More

“Pagnotta di Fràa” and Chocolate Tools

Under the arcade in Abbiategrasso's main square, the cake-shop Besuschio stylishly displays its ranges of baked goods and chocolates as it has been doing for over 150 years.

Bismarck biscuits and Lunetta short-bread for breakfast, classical sponge fingers, vanilla biscuits and finger biscuits, dark chocolate coated gingerbread with anise

seeds, soft buns and plum cakes sit alongside the traditional Abbiategrasso cake called “Pagnotta di Fràa” made from corn meal and figs and other specialities from the Milan area: Panettone, naturally, but also Pan meino made from wheat flour and corn meal together and the so-called “dead man's bones” (traditionally eaten around All Souls' Day at the beginning of November). The Tegola di San Bernardo (St. Bernard's Tile) is made from corn meal, al-

monds, hazelnuts butter and rum. Besuschio's pralines vary according to the season, but all

year round they are made from the highest quality cocoa. Moreover, a very unusual speciality is always on sale: chocolate tools.



The so-called Besuschino is made not only with coffee but also top-of-the-milk, cream and pure chocolate. It is served with an original little tool which is also edible.

▼
a surgeon at the Pia Casa degli Incurabili in Abbiategrasso.

It was here, in the kitchen of the apartment assigned to him, that he set up a small histology laboratory where he invented the innovative technique of colouring nervous tissue, later named the "black reaction", which allowed neurons to be seen clearly for the first time. Although its importance was not immediately recognized, the result he achieved in Abbiategrasso marked the start of Golgi's brilliant academic career during which he collaborated with the finest international researchers.



Camillo Golgi.

For his studies on the structure of nervous tissue, which represented an enormous contribution to advances in knowledge of this field, the young surgeon from the Home for the Incurables would, in 1906, share with Santiago Ramón y Cajal the Nobel Prize for medicine.

be seen. Preserved here are a painting by Camillo Procaccini and an interesting fragment (a Virgin with Child) from the chapel of the Annunciation that Galeazzo Maria Sforza had decorated around 1470, which are among the most interesting artistic remains in the town.

The real barycentre of Abbiategrasso, and the heart of the community, is **Piazza Marconi**. The historical site of the agricultural and crafts market, already extended maybe half a millennium ago, in 1491, on orders from the two Abbiategrasso Community Councils, is still the focal point of the streets where the



Palazzo Pretorio, Town Hall, Abbiategrasso.

most fashionable shops are located. In Piazza Marconi there is a charming covered arcade though the arches are not all the same since they were built in different eras. The oldest section, in 14th century style, is the one opposite Via Costantino Cantù.

Naturally, the main square in Abbiategrasso is overlooked by the façade of the **Town Hall** or



Casa Pianca Albini, Abbiategrasso.



Church of San Bernardino, Abbiategrasso.

Palazzo Pretorio, still used for the same purpose, with a small arcade that dates back mainly to the 1600's. Skilfully crafted are the doorway leading to the main staircase and the balcony of the upper floor carved in stone with a baroque entablature. In the tower, the municipal bell dates back to 1716. The alterations carried out on the palace around 1750 are presumed to have been the work of Francesco Croce, the carver of the principal spire on the Duomo (cathedral) in Milan.

Under the arch of the Town Hall, a classical blue enamel Touring Club Italiano plaque shows Abbiategrasso's altitude above sea level, and implicitly recalls the debt that tourism in Italy has accumulated towards the TCI.

On the corner of Piazza Marconi, an example of a 15th century **Lombard house** is to be found at 2, Via Borsani.

Cigars and history

The tobacconist's at 7, Via Borsani has been run uninterruptedly since



1934 by the Colombo family. On entering, you can see the original



plaque on display above the counter, but you cannot help noticing immediately the glass cases containing multi-coloured boxes of pipe tobacco and the special



cabinets used for storing high quality cigars. Curiously, Paulino Colombo, the third-generation owner of tobacco licence n. 2 in Abbiategrasso, does not smoke. The fact is that he gradually developed a passion for normally hard-to-find special tobaccos and now, connoisseurs come from all over Italy looking for them. For further information, phone 0294966277.

Feast days in Abbiategrasso

Agricultural and cattle fair

Third Sunday
in October.
It has been held
over 500 times,
the last of which
focussed strongly
on teaching about
nature and agriculture.

St. Joseph's Fair

The weekend nearest
19th March.

International Fair of Mime, Pantomime and Urban Theatre



Between May and July.



Towards Santa Maria Nuova

On Via Borsani, just off Piazza Marconi, the church of **San Bernardino** is a good – if not excellent – 17th century building, on the site of a earlier house of worship which, as documents show, was still standing in 1567. The design and construction of the church, in use since 1633, are by Francesco Maria Ricchino who built the Ca' Granda in Milan and was one of the most prominent Italian baroque architects. However, the façade, from original designs, was built around 1740. Inside, on the high altar, there is an important statue of Our Lady of the Rosary by Grazioso Rusca who carried out sculptures for the Duomo in Milan.

Between Via Borsani and Via Confalonieri there is the most important historical-artistic construction in Abbiategrasso, the Basilica of **Santa Maria Nuova**, founded in 1365 thanks to the Beata Vergine School. In 1388, the church was named after Maria Nascente – just like the Duomo in Milan – as a tribute to the birth of Giovanni Maria Visconti, the son of Gian Galeazzo, which had taken place in the town a short time earlier.



Basilica of Santa Maria Nuova, Abbiategrasso.



*Giovanni Mauro Della Rovere, Il Fiammenghino:
Marriage of the Virgin.
Basilica of Santa Maria Nuova, Abbiategrosso.*

The irregular **four-sided portico** decorated with terracotta statues and busts in front of the basilica, making it all the more striking, probably dates back to the early 15th century. Even more remarkable is the **pronaos**, attached to the façade to protect a fresco of Our Lady brought here at the end of the 1500's – it is not known from



Abbiategusto Gastronomic Fair.

where – because it was miraculous. From the 1700's onwards, the design of the pronaos had been attributed to Donato Bramante as his last work in northern Italy before devoting himself to St. Peter's in Rome. However, it is actually a work produced between 1595 and 1602 by the Roman architect Tolomeo Rinaldi.

The interior of Santa Maria Nuova changed its appearance around 1740 with the work on the roofing carried out by Francesco Croce, who

▼ **St. Peter's Feast and Palio**

A Sunday in June, usually near the end of the month. Historical costume procession and horse race with the colours of the six quarters. In the evening, festivities in the square.

"Vivere la nebbia"

November-December. Guided tours, events in libraries and open-air children's theatre in the square. Concerts, exhibitions, meetings with painters, charity and volunteer organizations' activities.

Abbiategusto

End of November. Gastronomic fair. High quality products from the area between the Ticino and the Navigli with stands, meetings and tastings set up by the best restaurants in the area.

For information on practically everything concerning Abbiategrosso – including guided tours of the town – contact the highly efficient **Pro Loco** (local tourist board), situated in

Piazza Marconi 3.
E-mail address: info@prolocoabbiategrosso.com;
website: www.prolocoabbiategrosso.org
Many of the activities are organized by the **Fondazione per la promozione dell'Abbatense** with offices in the Visconti Castle, ph. 0294692458, website: www.fondazioneabbatense.it

The Fossa Viscontea or Visconti Moat



The lay-out of the walls and moat that protected the burgh of Abbiategrasso is easily recognizable, with its rectangular shape, on the maps of the town.

What remains of it on the surface, between the Castle, Via Felice Cavallotti, Via Alessandro Manzoni



and Via Serafino dell'Uomo, has been turned into a park called Fossa Viscontea.

Church of San Pietro, Abbiategrasso.

raised the middle aisle, eliminating the old wooden ceiling. The chapels were created during restoration work in the 17th and 18th centuries. The 18th century adjustments also produced the numerous altars and altar-pieces by Andrea Montalto and Antonio Cucchi, as well as the Pietà in the votive chapel to Our Lady of Sorrows. Most of the pictorial decoration was carried out in the 1800's by Giovanni Valtorta. However, there are also 15th century frescoes, graffiti and an imposing late-Mannerist altar in the first chapel on the left, paintings by the Fiammenghini and, in particular, the large altar-piece showing Our Lady handing the priest's girdle to St. Francis at the end of the left aisle. This work was commissioned around 1595 from Giovanni Battista Crespi known as Cerano, one of the most important Lombard painters between the 16th and 17th centuries, by the confraternity of the Franciscans for their chapel in the church attached to the convent of the Friars Minor Observers of the Annunciation.

A detailed visit to Santa Maria Nuova, which was restored in 2003, is made possible by the small, legible panels next to each altar.

Borgo San Pietro

From the main square in Abbiategrasso you can take Corso Italia which leads to **Corso San Pietro**. Strolling along Corso San Pietro, you unwittingly enter the burgh that must have been, ten centuries ago, the very first settlement of what was to become Abbiategrasso, and which, in a certain way, preserves its unique identity. The heart of Borgo San Pietro and the reason for its name



Palazzo Annoni, Abbiategrasso.

lie in the ancient church of **St. Peter**, the local chapel in the Longobard era, though it has been restored since then. The whole church was rebuilt – except for the bell-tower which stayed in place – in the mid-18th century by Francesco Croce. The interior, with its Greek cross shape (with arms of equal length), boasts an exceptional Neoclassic high altar built in 1805 to a design by Luigi Cagnola, an organ constructed by Bergamo craftsmen in 1821, and 17th century paintings by Giovanni Battista Discepoli (called Zoppo da Lugano).

The other palazzi

The most interesting of the noble palaces situated within the historic town is probably **Palazzo Annoni**, at 28, Via Annoni near Vicolo Cortazza. Recorded in documents from 1648 onwards, it was used as a summer residence. The elegance of its design suggests it was the work of an architect of the school of Francesco Maria Ricchino. The porticoed courtyard opposite the main residence is probably an 18th century addition. At the rear, there is a large garden.

Palazzo Pionnio, situated at 26, Via Ticino,

The New Mill

Situated in a fairly central, inhabited quarter, (Via del Mulino) is the Mulino Nuovo, still in full working order. It dates back to the end of the 1400's though it has preserved intact its original structural features.

There, in today's urban Abbiategrasso, it stands out as a curious, yet valued, anachronism.



The Mulino Nuovo, Abbiategrasso.

The restoration of the Annunciata

The cycle of frescoes discovered during restoration work carried out between 2004 and 2006 was the biggest, most exciting



surprise in the salvaging of this imposing building dedicated to Our Lady of the Annunciation. These frescoes, which cover all the walls of the apse of the church, depict themes dear to the Observant Order: scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary.



was recorded in Maria Theresa of Austria's land registry as "Palazzo della Principessa" but is known to the inhabitants of Abbiategrasso as Palazziett. Its architecture is somewhat modest, though certain details suggest a past splendour.

On Viale Cattaneo, not far from the hospital, at number 2 stands **Villa Sanchioli**, which was definitely owned in the past by the Rosea family. In Maria Theresa's land registry of 1722, the building had not yet been registered. Consisting of a main building and two perpendicular wings, it was recently restored for use as Town Hall offices.

In a less central position, between Via Fratelli Bandiera and Via Goffredo Mameli, **Palazzo Arconati** is an imposing residential complex with an elegantly frescoed interior, a large garden, a chapel (now converted into living quarters) and several outhouses. The building is privately owned and is due to undergo restructuring.

The Convent of the Annunciata

The great historical-artistic acquisition for Abbiategrasso in the third Millennium came with the recovery, to be completed by the end of



Convent of the Annunciata, Abbiategrasso.

2006, of the ex-Convent of the Annunciata, a little off the beaten track close to the by-pass leading to Magenta.

The monastery, entrusted to the Franciscan Observants, had been built by Galeazzo Maria Sforza in order to keep a vow. Having fallen victim of an ambush near Susa on his way back from France, he had prayed that his life be saved. Construction began in 1469 and was completed three years later, while the consecration of the church followed in 1477.

When the monastery closed down in 1810, the

▲
In particular, the back wall where the altar used to stand bears an image of the Assumption, while the cross-vault is decorated with portrayals of the four Evangelists and four Doctors of the Church. The triumphal arch leading to the apsidal chapel, already visible before the restoration, shows the scene



Fresco at the Annunciata, Abbiategrasso.

buildings were turned into the male section of the Home for the Incurables – with ugly wooden partitions creating wards – and, later, into apartments in a continuous downward spiral interrupted only by the decision to intervene taken by the municipal authorities, the Province of Milan, the Lombardy Region and the State University of Milan, which allowed it to be turned into a prestigious, new conference centre.

The greatest surprise during restructuring work came in the discovery, both in the refectory and the church, of far more Renaissance era frescoes than anyone thought or hoped to find. In the apse, a whole series with the Stories of the Holy Virgin, came to light revealing, among oth-

of the Annunciation after which the church was named. Other frescoes depict the Rest during the flight into Egypt and the Adoration of the Three Kings. As far as pictorial representation is concerned, this frescoed building introduces the ground-breaking concepts of scenes in perspective and the Renaissance-style portrayal of figures in a late-Gothic Lombard architectural setting.

Restaurants in Abbiategrasso



The farms run restaurants or provide facilities for direct sales.



La Crivella
Cascina Crivella



Phone: 029461497



**Azienda Agricola
Cascina Costa di Rognoni**

Direct sale of meats,
sausages and cheeses
Phone: 0294967257



**Azienda Agricola
Fratelli Rognoni**
Cascina Costa



er things, the actual signature of the painter *Nicola Mangone di Caravaggio*, 1519 which greatly aided the compiling of the history of painting in the Milan area in the early 16th century.

Castelletto

It is the first neighbourhood in Abbiategrasso that you come to on arriving from Milan along the Naviglio Grande: a built-up area

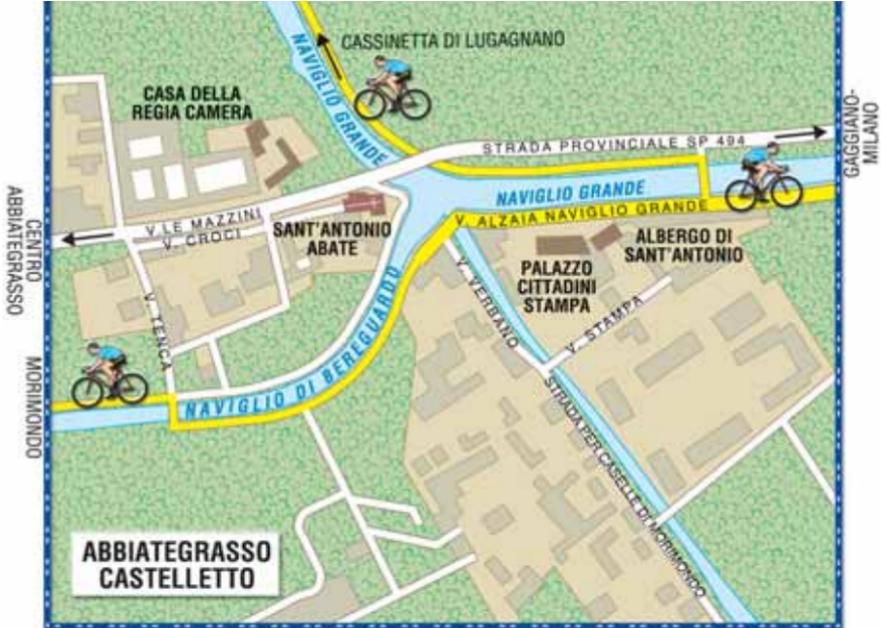


*The Naviglio di Bereguardo (left),
and the Naviglio Grande.*

created towards the beginning of the 13th century after the canal was dug to connect the provincial capital of Lombardy with the Ticino river. It owes its name to a small castle that the municipality of Milan built in order to take advantage of its strategic position.

It is at Castelletto that the Naviglio forks off in the direction of Pavia, taking the name **Naviglio di Bereguardo**.

Standing out on the right bank is the elegant **Palazzo Cittadini Stampa**, that used to belong to the noble Milanese family, Cittadini, who owned property in this area from



the end of the 1400's. The first mention of this particular palace dates back to 1697. But by 1751, the Cittadini family's fortune had dwindled so much that they had no choice but to sell off part of the set of buildings, and by 1792, they no longer owned any of the property.

In 1803, Giuliano Baronio, the husband of one of the Visconti's, purchased the palace and the garden. In 1835, Baronio's daughter married Gaspare Stampa, and from then on, the noble dwelling was named after the patriot who lived in it until his death.

The manor-house is a large construction three storeys high and has in the centre a medieval tower from the period of the autonomous communes. It is rectangular in shape, over 30 metres wide and more than 12 metres deep. Its interior still boasts a large cycle of frescoes painted in the second half of the 17th century by a group of classicist Milanese artists.

Fresh raw milk from a vending machine
Phone: 0294966861



Palazzo Cittadini Stampa, Castelletto, Abbiategrasso.



Adami Alessandro

Direct sale of honey
and hive products
Via Ungaretti 5
Phone: 0294960659

Guardian of the Waters

On the bank of the Naviglio Grande opposite Sant'Antonio Abate sits, beside the road bridge, the **Casa della Regia Camera** (or of the **Guardian of the Waters**), the residence of the Land Warden of the Naviglio inhabited by the Administrator, the Commissioner for Waters and the other authorities responsible for periodically inspecting the canal. The project for its restoration, sponsored by the Region, Province, Municipality and Milan State University, includes the setting up of a laboratory for environmental research on the water and the territory.



*Casa della Regia Camera
(or of the Guardian
of the Waters), Abbiategrasso.*

The palace - which is badly in need of repair - is going to be converted into offices for local government, the Foundation to promote reading-South West Milan Libraries and the promotion of local tourism. Restoration work will be carried out by the Province of Milan.

Next to the Palazzo Cittadini Stampa stands the Bettola or **Albergo di Sant'Antonio** di Castelletto dating back to at least the 15th century. It used to be a favourite haunt of boatmen and passengers who travelled along the Naviglio. From the Palazzo Cittadini Stampa, by crossing the small foot-



Church of Sant'Antonio Abate, Castelletto.

bridge over the Naviglio di Bereguardo, you can reach the church of **Sant'Antonio Abate**. Built around 1610 on the ruins of an older one, already present in 1471, its interior boasts a painting of Our lady of the Assumption by Camillo Procaccini and a Gothic-fourteenth century marble statue of the Virgin and Child which is the oldest of its kind in the town.

Viale Mazzini

Between Castelletto and the centre of Abbiategrasso, Viale Mazzini follows one arm of the Naviglio which, up to the 1930's, ran as far as the Visconti Castle before it was covered over. Along the waters of this "Naviglietto di Abbiategrasso" – as opposed to the asphalt of today – there was a series of 16th-18th century villas.

At numbers 97 and 95 in Viale Mazzini there is the elegant **Palazzo Corio**, which is somewhat run down today. Mentioned in records starting from 1565, it was bought in 1767 by Duke Pompeo Litta Visconti.

Palazzo Citterio Sala Cocini, at number 83 Viale Mazzini, is used as an oratory. Beyond the gate, the main three-storey building can be seen with its ionic portico holding up the terrace. It is mentioned in Maria Theresa's land registry and in a 1798 document; at the back it had a large, Italian garden.

Near the railway station, **Palazzo Sacchei** at number 25 Viale Mazzini, incorporates into its façade the small Oratory of San Rocchino, in memory of the 1507 plague. Mentioned in 1601 as belonging to the Tarantola brothers, the building was decorated with frescoes: the only one remaining is the La Madonna del Latte which can just be seen through the window of a boutique.

San Rocco

In Viale Mazzini – if it had a number it would be 33 – stands the church of San Rocco,



built in 1630 on orders from the Council of the Twenty-four in the hope of keeping the plague at bay: it is the one at the heart of Alessandro Manzoni's "The Betrothed".



Palazzo Corio, Abbiategrasso.

The Navigli, a civilization

In a rectangle marked out in the north by Lake Maggiore, Lake Lugano and Lake Como, and on the other three sides by the rivers Ticino, Po and Adda, the land around Milan is naturally water-bound. The Navigli – whose very name indicates they are navigable – are a sort of extension or ramification of the lakes and rivers in the middle of which nature has placed us over time.

One of the elements that facilitated the development of factories and traffic was the unique network of canals, the Navigli, which the clever, hard-working Milanese built in a territory with no rivers.

However, here, “Natural” is not the right word. Even though they blend into nature, the Navigli are entirely man-made. Building them required digging **150 kilometers** of artificial beds, favoured by the fact the land was nearly all flat, initially used over time for the



irrigation of farm land and defence of the territory, then, for navigation and transport. **Their creation** in the course of history, starting from 1179 when the idea of connecting the internal moat of Milan with the Ticino emerged and the Naviglio Grande came into existence, is the clear sign of a plan for a respectful exchange between Man and nature. Making use of the water in a harmonious, fair manner, fully aware of how important and useful it is.

The main arms of the system depend on the Ticino, from which the **Naviglio Grande** flows and to which the Naviglio Pavese returns from Milan (the latter being more recent and almost a substitute for the Naviglio di Bereguardo which it brings back from Abbiategrasso, without reaching it, in the direction of Pavia), and on the Adda,



Farm-holiday "Terre d'Acqua" Consortium

Founded by the CIA, a Confederation of Farmers of Milan and Lodi, the **Consorzio Terre d'Acqua** is made up of eleven farms and farm-holiday cascine in the province of Milan, which have joined forces to provide, as a mutually-supportive group, a range of recreational, catering, cultural and educational services, linked to the agricultural world.



from which the Naviglio della Martesana reaches Milan, and which the Naviglio di Paderno allows it to flow along an inaccessible stretch that is not navigable.

The very nature of the Navigli goes against the idea of their being easily navigable. They are canals that are never too wide and designed for a past era before the engine had been invented and barges **were towed by horses walking along the towpath**, or simply left to be carried along by the current, whose banks are not too solid having been built without the widescale use of stones which, in only slightly different conditions, the Venetian Republic used to hold back the water.

Despite this, or rather in consideration of all this, navigation of the Navigli has recently re-started also – and why not? – to encourage tourism. Indeed,

But even in the 50's, the Navigli played a key role in the post-war reconstruction, during the boom years.



the route from Milan to Abbiategrasso

was chosen for the first trip, starting from the **Darsena** (dock) in Porta Ticinese, against the current along the Naviglio Grande passing under the Scodellino bridge, alongside the **Vicolo dei Lavandai**, admiring the church of **St. Christopher**, noting the “decorated openings” to let out water for irrigation, passing the ex-Factory of Richard Ginori, discovering, in Buccinasco, the first farmhouse, encountering, beyond Corsico, the **Guardia di Sopra farmhouses** which still have their Visconti coat of arms, and **Guardia di Sotto**.

Before Abbiategrasso, the most spectacular stopping place is Gaggiano, with the austere beauty of **Villa Marino**, the multicoloured façades and Palazzo Venini Uboldi and the church of **St. Invenzio** facing each other. North of Abbiategrasso, the towns of **Cassinetta** and **Robecco** are a delight to be seen.

Today the Navigli, which have moved from the “industry & transport” sector to the tourist sector, are enjoying a new lease of life, offering unusual sights and relaxing evenings to those who want to discover their romantic side.



Cassinetta di Lugagnano

Information: Pro Loco di Cassinetta, via Trento 9/11. Phone: 3489211856
City Council website: www.comune.cassinettadilugagnano.mi.it
kms 26.6 from Milan. Map: C 3

Charming villas, old farmhouses, the parish church and little else, around the Naviglio Grande between the Ticino and Abbiategrasso. It is a modest historic centre, almost a toy – even though it is surrounded by some new settlements built by those seeking, today, the centuries-old village life enjoyed by the wealthier Milanese – that makes Cassinetta the gem it is, between peasant life and examples of prestigious architecture.

Its double name reveals that it started out as two separate burghs. It is a known fact that **Lugagnano**, farther west, developed around a castle while **Cassinetta** is linked to the history of a farmhouse, called Biraga, founded in the 15th century on the right bank of the canal by Maffiolo Birago, a master at the Milan court of the Visconti family. Birago also built the parish church and a windmill which is still nicknamed “crazy Birago’s”.

For a village dependent on its Naviglio the focal point is the bridge, with, alongside it, the statue of St. Charles Borromeo erected here in 1749

Feast days in Cassinetta

Pancake Festival

January. Serving of pancakes, mulled wine and hot chocolate as a tribute to St. Antonio Abate “St. Anthony the swineherd”.



Cycle path, Cassinetta di Lugagnano.



in memory of the visit made by the cardinal – a key figure in the history of Milan and its Diocese – almost two centuries earlier in 1568. Under the monument, three earthenware pots of wine and oil were buried so this product of nature “would mature into a balm over time” It is a simple yet concrete tradition linked to country-dwellers’ sense of time that is still kept alive today: every twenty-five years, the wine and oil, now turned into “balm”, are replaced. Overlooking the widening in the road is also **Palazzo Negri**, which is now the Town Hall.

If you look northwards from the Cassinetta bridge, where the waters of the Naviglio come



*Palazzo Negri,
Town Hall,
Cassinetta
di Lugagnano.*

Waiting for Summer

June. With shows, a market and risotto for everyone served in the square.

Frog Festival

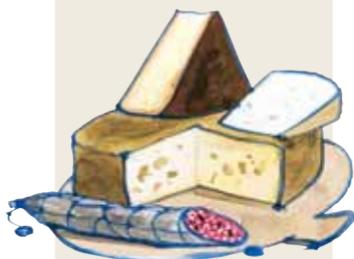
June. Music and frogs for all tastes. Guided tours.



Villa Visconti Maineri, Cassinetta di Lugagnano.

▼
**Rice, Wine
and Sausage Festival**

July. "Rice is born
in water and dies
in wine." Risotto
and other specialities.
Guided tours.



**Rediscovery
of Local Dishes**

Sundays, July
and August
in the park.

**Goose and Braised
Donkey Festival**

First weekend
in September.
Specialities.
Guided tours.

▶

from, standing out to your right is the three-storey **Villa Visconti Maineri**, looking not unlike it must have been around the middle of the 17th century when work on it was completed. To build it – on land that had belonged to the Visconti family since 1392 – an already existing building, maybe a farmhouse, was included. Indeed, the rather irregular H-shaped layout does not respect classical standards. The façade overlooking the canal is actually a side of the building, while the main façade overlooks the Italian garden which runs parallel to the Naviglio. The park, beyond the villa, is raised with respect to the garden and ends with an orchard.

At an angle to the street that starts at the canal and goes in the direction of Castellazzo dei Barzi and Corbetta, the 18th century chapel of Villa Visconti is made of two parts: one open to the



Cascina Bardena, Cassinetta di Lugagnano.

public, the other housing the altar. A small room with two grilles allowed the nobles not to mix with the peasants. Along the bend, there are the service buildings, which the inhabitants of Cassinetta called “casa da massaro” (house of he who works the land) and “casa da pigionante” (house of the tenant, probably of a shop).

At the beginning of the road to Castellazzo

▼
**Feast of the patron
saint Santa
Maria Assunta**

Second week in
September.
Shows, concerts,
exhibitions,
tastings, market,
greasy pole contest.



Towards Cassinetta di Lugagnano.

dei Barzi, which marks the left side of Villa Visconti Maineri, **Cascina Bardena** houses the 19th century master’s living quarters – which belonged to the Barzi family and the Pallavicinis of Persia – and an 18th century ruin in open-faced brickwork. The garden makes the most of the differences in height of the land as in an amphitheatre.

Running along the side of the tow-path beyond the road for Castellazzo and Corbetta is the enclosure wall of **Villa Krentzlin**. In the 1700’s, it served as the country home of the Beolchi family, while from the beginning of the following century, it belonged to the Krentzlin, high-rank-

**Black Truffle
and Boar Festival**

Fourth weekend
in September.
Serving of dishes made
from truffle and boar
from Monte Penice.

Roast Chestnut Festival

1st November.
Distribution of roast
chestnuts
and mulled wine.



Villa Krentzlin, Cassinetta di Lugagnano.

Oratory of San Giuseppe

Close to Villa Nai, you see its apsidal oratory of San Giuseppe. It is a construction



Villa Nai, Cassinetta di Lugagnano.

not of secondary importance, with the façade clearly separated in two parts and framed with double pilaster strips.

the cottages are is the current entrance. In Cassinetta, the right bank of the Naviglio Grande has always been “the noble one”: opposite the parish church and the village itself. Going upstream from the bridge, in the direction of Robecco, after the Visconti Maineri and Krentzlin villas you come to **Villa Nai**, built around the middle of the 18th century. Beyond the gates, you can catch sight of the main façade, the only one that is covered while the others are in open-faced brickwork. The building is also called Villa Castiglioni, because it was its inhabitant, Carlo Federico Castiglioni, who designed and built in 1742 its Oratory of San Giuseppe.

Via Roma, the axis of the village, starts next to the bridge over the Naviglio at the site of the parish church dedicated to **Sant’Antonio Abate**. The church was originally built in



Oratory of San Giuseppe, Cassinetta di Lugagnano.



Villa Mörlin Visconti, Cassinetta di Lugagnano.

1435 by the Maffiolo Birago who can be considered the founder Cassinetta, but it was rebuilt in 1731. The street crossing Via Roma that follows the artificial canal behind the apse of the church reaches the **Molino Gerli** known as “crazy Bi-



*Detail of Villa Eusebio,
Cassinetta di Lugagnano.*

raga's”, operated by a canal that Maffiolo Birago had diverted from the Naviglio in 1428. Recently restored, it is considered the oldest windmill still working in the whole lower Lombardy area served by the Navigli.

Along Via Roma, with the canal behind you, at number 74 you come across a building that barely stands out from the others, the neoclassic **Villa Mörlin Visconti**, built in 1825.

Beside Villa Mörlin, the gate at 78, Via Roma opens onto the large courtyard of **Villa Eusebio**, of which the important, central, three-storey building, built mid-18th century, has

“Punti parco” of the Parco Agricolo sud Milano

The “Punti Parco” are information centres for the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, strategically situated in areas that are easy to reach for visitors coming from Milan. They provide information, brochures and leaflets containing itineraries and useful facts concerning local produce and the cascine themselves. At present, bicycles for hire are available only at the Punto Parco situated in the Cascina Contina in Rosate.

Punto Parco Cascina Forestina

Cislano.
Phone: 0290389263
info@lafortestina.it

Punto Parco Cascina Contina

Rosate.
Phone: 0290849494
puntoparcosud@inwind.it



Villa Trivulzio, Cassinetta di Lugagnano.

Visiting the Navigli, villas and abbeys

A series of organized visits to the most interesting places on the Naviglio Grande around Abbiategrasso has been planned by the **Consortium of Municipalities on the Navigli**, set up in May 2000 by the municipal authorities of Albairate, Bernate Ticino, Besate,

framed windows and a small balcony on the first floor. The interior has been converted into smaller lodgings and has lost the perspective view of the rooms that it had originally. At 94, Via Roma there is one of the most important buildings in Cassinetta, **Villa Trivulzio**, built at the end of the 18th century. It is believed to have been designed either by Giuseppe Piermarini (the architect of the Scala Opera House and the Royal Palace in Milan) or Simone Cantoni (who designed Villa Serbelloni on the Cerchia dei Navigli also in Milan). The unusual L-shaped layout suggests that the residence was built over a pre-existing farmhouse.

More

Farmhouses in Cassinetta



Azienda Agricola Baroni Anna

Cascina dei Piatti. A cereal-growing farm run using ecologically compatible farming methods. Soon to be opened: accommodation and educational activities. Phone: 0294960528

The **Pro Loco in Cassinetta**, via Trento 9/11, phone: 3489211856, organizes guided tours and (reservations required) group lunches and dinners.



Near Villa Trivulzio, at 109, Via Diaz, is **Villa Clari Monzini**, which is believed to be a distant heir of the original castle in Lugagnano. The current building is, however, of 18th century origin, even though a series of interventions and alterations took place over the following centuries. Outside, in a little square, the oratory of St. Anna, built in 1721, is still standing.

If you follow the left bank of the Naviglio Grande from the bridge, you will reach the villa "I Platani", built in 1761, generally known as **Villa Negri** since it was purchased in 1875, together with the nearby Cascina Piatti, by the mayor of Milan at the time, Gaetano Negri. The building is situated more or less at the point where the Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino, which includes inter alia Abbiategrasso, Cassinetta and Robecco, makes way for the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano and, specifically, the municipality of Albairate.



Cassinetta di Lugagnano.



Boffalora sopra Ticino, Bubbiano, Busto Garolfo, Calvignasco, Cassinetta di Lugagnano, Casorate Primo, Cislano, Corbetta, Cusago, Marcallo con Casone, Mesero, Morimondo, Motta Visconti, Ozzero, Robecco sul Naviglio and Vittuone. Among the

goals of the association, besides offering environment-related services and other commendable projects like the development of refuse recycling, there is also the promotion of tourism in the area. Therefore visitors can contact the Consortium to take part in guided tours and trips around the area, with or without coaches carrying passengers from one place to another.

For schools, the Consortium organizes educational trips both based on topics related to the environment and to specific places, starting with the Museo Agricolo (Farming Museum) of Albairate in the **Cascina Salcano** where the organization has its offices. The updated programme of visits and trips is available on the Consortium's website.

Consorzio dei Comuni dei Navigli

Cascina Salcano
Via Cesare Battisti 2
20080 Albairate
Phone: 0294921163
turismo@consorzionavigli.it
www.consorzionavigli.it



Villa Negri, Cassinetta di Lugagnano.

Robecco sul Naviglio

City Council website: www.comune.robecosulnaviglio.mi.it
Informationi Pro Loco, in Villa Scotti.
Phone: 029470424. E-mail: info@proloco.robecco.org
Website: www.proloco.robecco.org
kms 28.3 from Milan. Map: C 3



5 kilometres from Abbiategrasso, 3 from Magenta and an even shorter distance – a stroll – from Cassinetta di Lugagnano, the very pretty burgh of Robecco is a sort of “older brother” of the latter. It has the same understated tone but also a sophistication of its own, the same style of aristocratic villas, the same

Naviglio Grande to sustain a sort of communication between the water and the surrounding atmosphere. (By the way, if anyone is thinking of driving along the Cassinetta-Robeco tow-path, they had better think again: only walking or cycling are permitted).

Robecco is an “older brother”, also because it sprang up from a much larger 15th century es-

Feast days in Robecco

Spring Feast



End of April.
At Villa Gaia.
With antiques market.

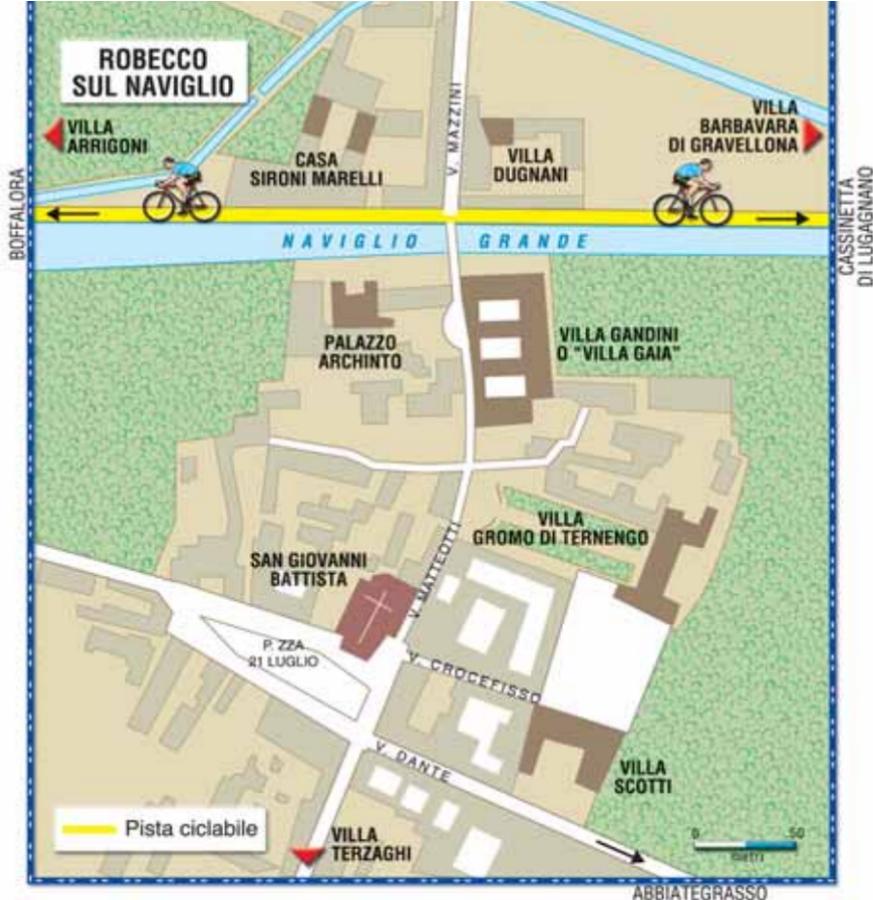
Feast of San Majolo

1st. May. Stalls
and exhibitions
in the streets
of the village.



Footbridge, Robecco.

tate which records show was the dowry of Beatrice di Pietrasanta on her marriage to Giovannolo da Casate, tutor to Filippo Maria Visconti. Also the number of villas is higher and they make up an exclusive community close to the water. The best way to see it is from the foot-



bridge “degli Scalini”, which has, only since the mid-19th century – thanks to money left by the Dugnani family – made it possible to cross the canal without using a boat.

Arriving from Cassinetta along the Naviglio – on the left bank, after Villa Nai – the first thing you encounter outside the built-up area of

▼ Villas open for visits and evenings shows.

Antiques market

At the end of the month
April-November



Villa Dugnani, Robecco.



Villa Gandini or "Villa Gaia", Robecco.

▼
**Feast of the patron
saint John
the Baptist**



First Sunday
in September.
Religious feast with
folkloristic events.

**Feast of
the "Sücia"**

End of September
on the day
of the lowering
of the water in the
Naviglio Grande.

▶

Robecco, is **Villa Barbavara di Gravellona** nicknamed "La Bassana", the historic residence of the Pallavicini di Persia and Lurani Cernuschi families. It is a late 17th century complex, with outstanding wrought iron work (the gate and the decorations on the main façade), a fine porticoed main building at the bottom of the garden, and in the drawing room, frescoes showing views of the Naviglio and its villas which are also an important historical record.



Casa Sironi Marelli, Robecco.

On Via Mazzini, on an axis with the bridge, the 17th century **Villa Dugnani** stands on the corner, somewhat hidden by the boundary wall and the cottages. It was built over another construction erected a couple of century earlier: two windows with terracotta frames overlook Via Mazzini.

At number 21 of the left bank of the Naviglio stands the unfinished 19th century **Casa Sironi**

Marelli, which Giacomo Bordini, administrator of the Litta family, is said to have wanted to build for himself by vastly extending an 18th century residence that had belonged to the Crivelli family. Due to a lack of sufficient funds, the planned revolution only got as far as the gardens, possibly designed by Giuseppe Balzaretto who created the Giardini Pubblici in Milan, and the stables curiously in a Moorish style.

On the right bank of the canal – where most of Robecco's historic built up area is to be found – opposite Villa Dugnani stands what is perhaps the most famous building in the village, **Villa Gandini** or "**Villa Gaia**", so called because already at the end of the 15th century, the Duke of the Milan Sforzas, Ludovic the Moor, used it as a place of relaxation and amusement. It is the oldest residence in Robecco, one of the first on the Naviglio Grande, and with its three courtyards, its layout is reminiscent of urban castles and palaces of the Renaissance. On the canal



Biking towards Cassinetta, Robecco.

▼ At Villa Gaia.
With antiques market.

**Feast of the
"Priàa"**

Beginning of October

For information
about feasts,
events and guided
tours contact
Pro Loco offices
in the Town Hall
(Villa Scotti)



Palazzo Archinto, Robecco.

▼
on Wednesdays
3pm-5.30pm
and 9pm-10.30pm.
Phone: 29470424,
info@prolocorobecco.org
www.prolocorobecco.org



Treats in Robecco



Agriturismo Bosco Delizia

In Casterno – the burgh
that once acted as father
to Robecco, farther



side, the villa, which had belonged to the Borromeo, Biglia and Confalonieri families, features an 18th century balcony and trompe-l'oeil mouldings. In the main courtyard, porticoed on three sides, restoration work has brought to light some 16th century frescoes. The interior, furnished with period pieces, boasts splendid wooden ceilings in the rooms overlooking the canal, the 1760 main staircase (originally it was fitted with a ramp for horses), the monochromatic decorations that are possibly a neo-classical work by Andrea Appiani and a study in late baroque style.

Robecco.

Opposite the main entrance of “Villa Gaia”, **Palazzo Archinto** is also known as “il Castello” because of its matching crenelated towers. It was due to be much larger than it currently appears, according to an ambitious project we know about today thanks to the engraving Marcantonio Dal Re produced in 1726. It was started between the 1600's and the 1700's following designs by the architect Carlo Federico Pietrasanta – who had been commissioned by Count Filippo Archinto – and was supposed to be a “complex consisting of four large palaces” with a central building five floors high and four



Villa Gromo di Ternengo, Robecco.



Church of St. John
the Baptist, Robecco.

wings of the same height, plus a semicircular building for carriages facing in the direction of the village and two landing-stages on the canal. The two towers visible today, restored between 2003 and

2004, are only the top part of one of the wings.

Half-way along Via Matteotti which is on an axis with the built-up area of Robecco – both sides of the Naviglio Grande – you will come to the semicircular square giving access to **Villa Gromo di Ternengo**, rebuilt in 1679 at the request of Danese and Ferdinando Casati possibly over a 16th century fortified building. Carefully tended along with its 16-hectare garden, (which can be hired for events), it has been known by this name since 1884 when Antonietta Negrotto Cambiaso, a descendent of the Casati family, married Emanuele Gromo Richelmy Count of Ternengo. The frescoed central entrance hall was used to reach the park with its “Sirenella” landing-stage pavilion on the Naviglio: it can be seen from the canal.

In the main square of Robecco at the end of Via Matteotti, stands the parish church of **St. John the Baptist** built in the late-18th century, though it was later extended and converted in 1901 (the façade dates back to that year) and restored again at the end of the 20th century. Inside, there are fine paintings by Camillo Procacini and Simone Peterzano.

From 21 Luglio Square, Via Dante leads to **Villa Scotti**, which now houses the Town Hall.



from the Naviglio Grande – l'Agriturismo Bosco Delizia serves specialities including risottos and beef from Piedmont. Via Foghere, Casterno. Phone: 029470169



Barcella al Mulino



New hotel/residence, nestling in the quiet of the Parco del Ticino. Phone: 029471586 labarcella@virgilio.it www.labarcella.it

La Barcella



Also in Casterno, a restaurant run by Natale and Massimo Oldani. Cascina Barcella, Casterno. Phone: 0294970555 www.campagnamica lombardia.it

Visiting the mill-wheels

The five historical working mills in this municipality are a unique feature of the area. The local authorities



Molino Pietrasanta, Robecco



Molino Marchesonia, Robecco



Villa Terzaghi, Robecco.

have suggested introducing a tour of them all.



Molino Albani, Robecco

Designed by a pupil of Giuseppe Piermarini, it was built in the early 1800's for a family from Robecco: so it was not a summer home but a permanent residence. The lay-out follows the typical U-shape used for neo-classical abodes.



Villa Scotti, Town Hall, Robecco.

At 41, Via San Giovanni, which runs from the main square, away from the Naviglio Grande in

the direction of Casterno – once, before the era of the villas, the biggest village in the area – stands **Villa Terzaghi**, a late-18th century construction and an excellent example of the Lombard late-baroque style. Because of the statues of dogs adorning it, the inhabitants of Robecco call it “ca’ di can” (dogs’ house). Today, Villa

Terzaghi belongs to the local authorities, who restored it and rented it to the public company that manages waterways in the Magenta area. On the tow-path between Robecco and Magenta – in Pontevecchio, which is part of the municipality of Magenta – **Villa Arrigoni “la Per-alza”** is, today, incorporated in a sports club.

Albairate

City Council website: www.comune.albairate.mi.it
kms 23.4 from Milan. Map: C 4



The stretch of the Naviglio Grande flowing from Abbiategrasso in the direction of Milan immediately touches – before crossing a corner of Vermezzo and heading for Gaggiano – the municipality of Albairate. It is a community that is actually just a short distance from Cassinetta too and is a typical example of a lower Lombardy rural village with rows of buildings with enclosed courtyards and a central tree-lined square. With its abundance of canals and springs, Albairate may have been a precursor in the area, since just a couple of kilometres north-east of the village, near the Scamozzina, a Bronze Age cemetery was discovered in the early 1900's, while the remains of a Ro-

Feast days in Albairate

Feast of St. George

End of April. Display of local farm produce. Guided tours.

Gastronomic cycle ride

Mid-June. Cycling along the Naviglio Grande, with stops to taste local specialities and guided tours in collaboration with the Pro Loco (tourist boards) of Abbiategrasso, Cassinetta, Corbetta and Santo Stefano Ticino.



The Agricultural Museum, Albairate.

▼
Autumn in Albairate

September-October.
Programme of cultural,
sports, recreational
and gastronomic events.
Palio delle Contrade
horse-race.

**Farmhouses
in Albairate**



**Azienda Agricola
Rivolta Isidoro**

Cascina Santa Maria in
Campo. Direct sale
of raw milk, every day
8.30am-7.30pm.

Phone: 0294967219,
isodororivolta@tiscalinet.it



**Azienda Agricola
Lovati Renata**

Cascina Isola Maria.
A grain and livestock
farm with dairy
cattle for the
production
of Gorgonzola cheese.
Rooms available.



*The Agricultural
Museum, Albairate.
To the right,
a grain-winning
machine.*

man cemetery appeared at the Cascina Faustina. The Faustina oratory dates back to the Carolingians, Albairate was mentioned for the first time in records back in 1054, when it was under the authority of the San Vittore monastery in Milan.

Today, historical memories and the most important features are all in the 18th century **Cascina Salcano**, which can be reached on foot from the main square, Piazza



Garibaldi, following Via del Parco and Via Marconi. The group of buildings which was once owned by the Fatebenefratelli hospital

Phone: 029406922,
info@isolamaria.com
www.isolamaria.com

More

Museo Agricolo "Angelo Masperi"

Via Cesare Battisti 2,
20080 Albairate.
Open to the public
the 1st and 3rd Sunday
of every month:
2.00pm-5.30pm
November- March;
2.30pm-6.00pm
April-October;
closed in August.

For groups and school parties,
every day by appointment.



Contact:
phone: 0294981329
fax: 0294981329
albamuseo@tiscali.it
Admission:
Adults 2 euros
Children (under 12)
1 euro.

in Milan, underwent extensive restructuring work before housing the Town Hall, Public Library, Consortium of the Municipalities on the Navigli and especially – as one can imagine from the well-preserved collection of



San Bernardo's Oratory, Albairate.



Azienda Agricola Massetti Carlo



Cascina Palazzina.
A family-run grain farm
with poplar nursery.
Accommodation soon
to be available.
Riding school.
Phone: 3470589855



Società Agricola Azienda La Grassina

Cascina Grassina. A
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Soon to be opened
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Phone: 3482604313



**Agriturismo Cascina
Riazzolo**



Cascina Riazzolo.
Restaurant (reservations
required) (risottos,
fish and meat dishes)
from Thursday
to Sunday. Riding school.
Phone: 029406603



Angelo Ranzani

Cascina Rosio. Farmhouse
with accommodation
and restaurant.
Phone 0294920659

carts, tools and tractors in the courtyard – an interesting **Agricultural Museum**. Among other things on display are a “Casera” (a dairy for the preparation of milk) and one of the last remaining historic “Giassere” (ice-houses) commonly found in the countryside (a partially buried construction in which foodstuffs were stored throughout summer in natural ice collected during the winter).

San Bernardo’s oratory close to the cemetery, not far from the Agricultural Museum, dates back to 1641. It is attributed to the great architect Francesco Maria Ricchino.

Another interesting thing to see are the six waterwheels set in motion by the Visconta artificial canal which can be reached near the Naviglio Grande by following Via dei Mulini from the cemetery.



Villa Albani, Albairate.

The ex-**Villa Albani** at the Cascina Rosio (not far from the Cascina Isola Maria, marked on road signs) is a perfect example of the 16th century switch from military building styles to residential ones.

The Soncina artificial canal runs across the entire municipality and in the burgh of **Riazzolo** – the locality that lent its name to the vastest wooded area of the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano – it provides interesting views.

Gaggiano

City Council website: www.comune.gaggiano.mi.it
kms 15.3 from Milan. Map: D 5-6

Practically half-way between Abbiategrasso and Milano, with a delightful historic centre around the Naviglio Grande and Provincial Road 59 that runs alongside it, Gaggiano has preserved its village look, with low, historic buildings reflected in the water and amazingly, since it is so close to the spreading city, its quaint village atmosphere with its cobbled streets and ancient walls.

Besides the main seat – Gaggiano itself – the municipality also includes the smaller village of **Bonirola**, along the Naviglio in the direction of Milan, the two farming villages, **San Vito** and **Fagnano**, north of the canal, **Barate** among the fields in the south, and a short distance from Barate, **Vigano Certosino**, the latter being rather important and to a certain extent self-sufficient. Other Gaggiano localities along the Naviglio marked on road signs are Cascina Rosa, which stands



Feast days in Gaggiano

**Feast of the patron
saint in Gaggiano**

Whit Sunday.

**Feast of the patron
saint in Bonirola**

Last Sunday
in May.



Historic buildings reflected in the water, Gaggiano.

▼
**Feast of the patron
saint in San Vito**

Third Sunday
in June.

**Feast of the patron
saint in Vigano
Certosino**

Second Sunday
in September.

Harvest festival
October.



**Christmas events
"Natale tra Noi"
(Christmas among us)**

December.

**Straight
from Gaggiano**



Fratelli Monti

Cascina Guzzafame.

Holiday farmhouse with
recreation. Fresh raw milk
from a vending machine.

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Camisani Fabio

Cascina Molino Grande.

Direct sale of rice
and rice pasta.

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▶

between Bonirola and the historic centre, and Bettolina, in the direction of Abbiategrasso. Moreover, Gaggiano is quite a large municipality compared with the average in provincial areas around Milan. It has always been this important and indeed in the 12th century, the Naviglio Grande was called *Navigium da Gazano*. It is here that the canal makes a slight detour, a bend at an obtuse angle between the straight stretch that comes from Abbiategrasso and the one flowing towards Milan.

Today, the village is no longer on the main road between Abbiategrasso and Milan. That is now State Road 494 Nuova Vigevanese, which cuts out Gaggiano. However, that is no bad thing since too much traffic would stifle its pleasant, relaxed atmosphere.

Next to the bridge over the Naviglio Grande – forcing the road to make a double right angle – a large church courtyard overlooking the water creates a space in front of the baroque façade of the parish church of **Sant’Invenzio**,



A canal boat heading toward Gaggiano.



Church of Sant'Invenzio, Gaggiano.

a charming sight on the left bank of the canal against the backdrop of the sky. The two colours of the plaster highlight the borders, door and window frames, the plaster strips that outline the façade, the triangular tympanum



Galimberti Luigi e Francesco

Cascina Montano.
Direct sale of rice.
Phone: 029086009



Church of Sant'Invenzio, detail, Gaggiano.

num that surmounts them all, and the jambs of the bell tower making the statues and stuccos stand out. All of this dates back – with the exception of minor renovations and plastering – to the series of works the building underwent around 1620. But the origin of the church is older, as records from 1100 onwards show,



Azienda Agricola Fratelli Dominoni

Cascina Cattabrega.
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By bicycle from Gaggiano to San Pietro Cusico



One of the cycle paths on the “**Camminando sull’acqua**” (Walking on water) itinerary set up by the authorities of Gaggiano, Lacchiarella, Zibido San Giacomo, Basiglio and Buccinasco allows you to explore – with no harm to the environment – a stretch of the Milan plain that would



Our Lady's altar, Church of Sant'Invenzio, Gaggiano.

while a certain amount of extension work was carried out later, in 1758.

The interior boasts 19th century frescoes. Above Our Lady's altar, to the left of the en-



Palazzo Venini Uboldi, Gaggiano.

otherwise be missed travelling by car or motorbike. Cyclists pedal among canals, farmhouses, dirt tracks, lakes and quarries. The route meanders from the historic center of Gaggiano, starting from Provincial Road 59 Vecchia Vigevanese, following streets through

trance, the fresco of Our Lady of Grace dates back to before the 17th century alterations. Next to the bridge in Gaggiano, opposite the parish church, **Palazzo Venini Uboldi** is an impressive 18th century building with high windows and a typically neoclassic U-shaped layout.

The historical homes on the left bank of the Naviglio, in certain places below water level, have been carefully restructured and repainted

for reasons that certainly have to do with the trend developed by a lot of Milanese who do not necessarily want to spend their whole life in town. The line of these houses is broken to allow a view, father from the canal, of the front of **Villa Marino**, a late-16th century abode that belonged to Massimiliano Stampa. The name of the building is rooted in tradition: it

the built-up area and then, on reaching **Cascina Baitana**, along a cycle path as far as the Madonna del Dosso. From there, it follows an unmade-up country road as far as **Cascina Cantalupo**, where a



Villa Marino, Gaggiano.

appears it was the summer home of the Genoese financier Tomaso Marino, more famous in Milan for having built for himself what is now the Town Hall.

In Fagnano, about 3 kilometres as the crow flies from the historic center of Gaggiano, an eye-catching feature is the imposing, square-shaped Villa Borromeo d'Adda, a 16th century residence with three small towers on the avant-corps.

At a short distance from Villa Borromeo, Cascina Di Donato del Conte houses a Lady Chapel completed in 1482, with frescoes of the time. Pretty little San Vito, linked to nearby Fagnano by a pleasant path across the fields, is supported by the church of San Vito, of 13th century origin, decently restored in recent times.

made-up road takes you into the Lago Boscaccio property. On reaching **Cascina Boscaccio**, using the private road across the property, the route follows the edge of the quarry area as far as the beginning of the territory belonging to Zibido San Giacomo. On this stretch, you skirt an interesting nature reserve which people would like to turn into a canebrake. A gravel-surfaced country road leads to **Cascina Mirabello**, beyond which there is a number of artificial canals lined with thick vegetation that flow across the route: a series of small bridges takes you over them. Estate roads in good

The Naviglio Grande in the direction of Milan

▼
condition, adapted to become suitable for cycling, take you towards the country road that links Cascina Torre to the village of **San Pietro Cusico**, where you can enter and from which you can continue along other itineraries of the “Camminando sull’acqua” programme: or towards Buccinasco via Gudo Gambaredo and



A cycle path close to Rozzano.

Buccinasco Castello, or in the direction of the Naviglio Pavese across the territory of Zibido, as far as Badile and at Moirago, head towards Milan. Along the way, you can follow improvement or alternative routes described and mapped out 1:20000 in a special “Camminando sull’acqua” publication.

Wight, the Dik Dik and Via della Musica

▶
In **Buccinasco** – in a part of the village fairly far from the Naviglio Grande – the

Flowing towards Milan – which it will reach via the villages of **Trezzano sul Naviglio** and **Corsico**, with their small historic centres not devoid of interesting features despite their being so near to the metropolis – the Naviglio Grande leaves Buccinasco to its right. Here, the burgh of **Buccinasco Castello**, which lent its name to the whole municipality, deserves a mention because of its countrylike atmosphere and cycle paths that link it to other localities named in this guide.

Buccinasco Castello is situated along the route which, in Roman times, linked Mediolanum (today’s Milano) to Pavia. Today, it is a little out of the way and best reached – if you want to fully enjoy its atmosphere – by bicycle, yet it is too near the Tangenziale (ring road) to be described as a charming, secluded place.

The so-called Castello is in actuality a palace, with an impressive portico consisting of arched spans and, on the upper floor, pillars. It was probably built during the 14th



Trezzano sul Naviglio, Town Hall.



The "Isola di Wight" cycle path 3.5 kms long known as the "Via della Musica". In the photo on the right, one of the many boards, dedicated to Mina.



century as an aristocratic hunting lodge and was extended and altered in the second half of the 15th century at the request of Ludovic the Moor to turn it into a stronghold for the defence of the provincial capital from the south. Although it gradually lost its impor-



Buccinasco Castello.

tance, it has always been privately owned. It currently belongs to the Brivio Sforza family and is part of the Cossa farm, with its one thousand head of dairy cattle grazing in its meadows.

restaurant **L'Isola di Wight** is owned by the Dik Dik, a group which left its mark on the pop music scene in Italy in the second half of the 20th century. Their fame, besides their having mixed with a cult figure in the music world

like Lucio Battisti, is linked in many peoples' memory, to the Italian version of California Dreamin' by the Mamas and Papas. Today, the dishes served in their restaurant include many that are part of the traditional Milanese cuisine. Inspired by the presence of the restaurant founded by the Dik Dik, the authorities in Buccinasco built a cycle path along a tree-lined carriage road next to the eatery, now named **Via della Musica**. A series of sign panels shows the key performers in the history of Italian pop music from 1955 to 1985. They are listed from A to Z, from Adriano Celentano to Zucchero. Each panel provides a photo, a biography, reviews, titles of records and pictures of some of the most important record sleeves. There are 45 panels (two of which are a presentation) in honour of the 45 rpm, the most popular type of record throughout those decades, placed along a one kilometre stretch of the path.

Abbeys and farmhouses in Lower Lombardy

An itinerary which, from Abbiategrasso goes south in the direction of Pavia, on the axis of State Road 526 east of the Ticino, more or less follows the route of the ancient Strata Mercatorum along the upper terracing of the river. It takes in a strip of the Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino, passes **the important and charming Abbey of Morimondo** and heads towards Besate and Motta Visconti, the most southerly spot in the Province of Milan on the border with that of Pavia.

The abbeys on the plain around Milan bear witness, often through their important works of art, to the civilization that colonized, irrigated and brought lower Lombardy to life almost a thousand years ago.

Along this stretch, the most dominant features are the woods and the sloping of the land down towards the Ticino and the monastic atmosphere in Morimondo, but



most of all, the high number of *cascine*, or farmhouses, the most common basis for settlements in lower Lombardy. There are **historic and traditional farmhouses**, like those in Fallavecchia, or modern ones run on ecological and recreational lines that take in tourists – some even have spas – as can be found in Caremma between Besate and the river.

The very vast expanse of lower Lombardy farthest east of the Ticino, as far as the outskirts of Milan, is also full of **farmhouses and acres of countryside**. Obviously, there's no lack of interesting landmarks, some of which are particularly charming like the Carthusian House in Vigano and the parish church in San Giacomo, while in Noviglio you'll find one of the most up-to-date beacons of Lombard pro-

The Lombard *cascina* is the most typical settlement in lower Lombardy: both a farm and a community, sometimes it is a real village unto itself.



←

The Parco Agricolo
Sud Milano
has an excellent
website
that also provides
technical-
environmental
details
at the address
www.provincia.milano.it/parcosud

ductivity: a leader in the field of **Italian design** like Kartell and its museum. However, the basic character of the area is still linked to agriculture: paddy fields, arable land, meadows and springs, to explore, if possible, by bicycle along the network of paths – from farmhouse to farmhouse and from abbey to abbey, right up to the Milanese monasteries in Mirasole, Chiaravalle and Viboldone – for which some municipalities in the area have formed a consortium to guarantee their upkeep.

In the city, often too proud and self-centred, not many people realize it, but since 1990, protecting this sector of lower Lombardy between the Ticino and Milan, there has been one of the “best kept secrets” as far as Milanese town dwellers are concerned. This “secret” is Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, an area – and a series of proj-



Information

Information on Parco Ticino

www.parcoticino.it



L'Altra Libreria

Via Aldo Annoni 32, Abbiategrasso

Phone: 0294969983

Libreria Il Gabbiano

Via San Carlo 21, Abbiategrasso

Phone: 0294608378

Cascina Caremma

Besate. Phone: 029050020,

info@caremma.com

www.caremma.com



ects for the study, protection and manage-
ment of the territory involving the provincial
authorities and 61 municipalities – as unac-
knowledged as it is long-sighted, interest-
ing and necessary.



Abbiategrasso and the Ticino

Colonia Enrichetta

A few hundred yards before reaching the Ticino, the Strada della Chiappana comes



Colonia Enrichetta.

to the ex-municipal heliotherapy colony of Abbiategrasso hidden away in a large forest. In the past, generations of young citizens were lovingly treated there but today, Colonia Enrichetta houses the Permanent Centre for Environmental Education of the **Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino**, with guest quarters, meeting and projection room, educational laboratories, canteen and kitchen. Passing close by is the E1 long distance trail: the colony may be used as a base by people going on excursions. Phone: 02972101

In the Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino, the countryside around Abbiategrasso in the direction of the river is crossed by the **Strada Prabalò**, which can be reached from Via Goffredo Mameli and Via Fratelli Bandiera. The Ticino is under 5 kms away and the trip takes you past a number of farmhouses large and small, where the people of Abbiategrasso work – or until a few decades ago worked – in agriculture. Along a route that has been in use for at least a millennium, the **Strada di Cassolnovo** starts at Via Cesare Correnti in Abbiategrasso and ends on the Ticino close to a historic, Austrian Customs building. The destination is the Dazio del Falcone (Toll-House of the Falcon), which stands on what was, up to the mid-19th century, the border between Lombardy and Veneto under Hapsburg rule and the Piedmontese domains of the House of Savoy.



Cascina Remondata, Abbiategrasso.

The **Strada della Chiappana** starts at Via Ticino in Abbiategrasso and reaches the river around 6 kilometres away. The waterways the route crosses have centuries of history behind them. Cascina Remondata, at the end of a long, straight road, is one of the oldest in the area.

Ozzero

City Council website: www.comune.ozzero.mi.it
kms 27.5 from Milan. Map: E 4

Between Abbiategrasso and Morimondo, sitting on a terraced, alluvial bank of the Ticino, little Ozzero is a very old settlement.

The atmosphere in the village is quiet but non sleepy. Next to the parish church, the low building housing the Town Hall has been restructured in a very neat, orderly manner, and that is a good sign. The series of courtyards, the neoclassical pillars, the abundance of greenery, the importance attached to details and the local doctor's office all make it look like a place with a practical attitude that does not look down on farming traditions but, at the same time, knows how to be modern. A good balance, completed, in the surrounding countryside by a series of farmhouses.

The skyline of Ozzero is marked by the many-sided, white tower of **Villa Bianchi Calvi** called the Castle. The building, today mostly 18th century, stands on the structure of what must have been the local, fortified residence, already mentioned in 1034, in Archbishop Arib-



Villa Bianchi Calvi, Ozzero.

Nature and gastronomy in Ozzero



Agriturismo La Calcaterra

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Typical Milanese dishes
(pre-ordering required)
from Thursdays to
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Agriturismo La Calcaterra, Ozzero.



Palazzo Cagnola Town Hall, Ozzero.



**Azienda Agricola
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Opening soon
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**Allevamento
Ittico Ticino**

Cascina Clara.
Phone: 3475026369

erto d'Intimiano's will. In the small square, Town Hall offices are housed in **Palazzo Cagnola**. This is a building where the Cagnola family took up residence in the 1600's, long before the Marquis Luigi (1762-1833) earned himself a place in the history of architecture with his civic buildings in Milan and in Vienna.

The parish church of **San Siro** is ancient, almost a thousand years old, even though its present appearance dates back to the time of Cardinal Charles Borromeo. Inside, it is decorated with 15th century frescoes and a Da Vinci-style Mother and Child, a copy of Our Lady with St. Anna now on display in the Louvre. The bell tower was designed by Luigi Cagnola.



Palazzo Barzizza, Ozzero.

On the highest point in the village, stands, with its charm of a 16th century ruin, **Palazzo dei Centurioni**, which is difficult to reach surrounded as it is by greenery. It is a solid, square-shaped building, half-way between a fortress and a villa, not unlike Villa Borromeo d'Adda in

Fagnano, close to Gaggiano. Among the streets in the middle of the village, going in the direction of the Ticino, **Palazzo Barzizza** is a building that was erected during the Renaissance and reconstructed in the 1600's, used for centuries as the residence of one of the most important families in Ozzero's history.

More

The swimming pool and the frescoes

Guests of the Bed & Breakfast in **Palazzo Barzizza** can enjoy both the pool and the frescoes that recent restoration work brought to light.

Via Roma 13, Ozzero.
Phone: 029407436,
palazzo.barzizza@tele2.it



Remarkable frescoes are to be found in the Oratory of **San Francesco**, in the hamlet named **Bugo** next to State Road 526. There are also 15th century frescoes in the church of **Sant'Alberto** in **Caselle**.



Frescoes in the church of Sant'Alberto, Ozzero.

Feast days in Ozzero

St. Anthony's bonfire

17th January.
At Cascina Calcaterra.



Spring Meeting

First Sunday in May.
Walk through the woods, meadows and farmhouses. Stalls selling gastronomic specialties.

Maggiochiamatutti

Second Sunday in May.
Stalls selling gastronomic specialties. Sports competitions for children, games for everyone.

Dog show

June. With refreshments.

Ballroom dancing

Every Saturday in August.

Feast of the patron Saint Our Lady of the Girdle



First Sunday in September.
Dancing, shows for children, antiques exhibition and fireworks.

Rice Feast

End of September / beginning of October.
Dinner and dancing.

Morimondo

Pro Loco Morimondo: telefono 02945239
E-mail: prolocomorimondo@tiscalinet.it
City Council website: www.comune.morimondo.mi.it
kms 27.5 from Milan. Map: E 4



The village you go through, when you turn off State Road 526 following the directions for Morimondo Abbey, seems, at first sight, not very different from the others in lower Lombardy. The miracle happens immediately afterwards when you arrive at the monastery. The houses give way to meadows, and you feel as if you've gone eight or ten centuries back in time.



Church of Santa Maria Nascente, Morimondo.

Farms in Morimondo



Agriturismo Didattico Cascina Fiorentina

Guided tours
(reservations required)
of the historic buildings
(dairy, mill) available
for kindergartens
and elementary
and middle schools.
Phone: 0294961970

Morimondo Abbey was founded in 1136 by Cistercian monks who came from the French abbey in Morimond, north of Dijon. From its first few decades, the monastery became – like others in lower Lombardy – a trailblazer in setting up farms and reclaiming land, accumulating a considerable amount of property.

However, from mid-15th century, Morimondo began to lose some of its importance so in 1561, St. Charles Borromeo and Pope Pius IV rechannelled a lot of its assets into the hospital called Ospedale Maggiore in Milan. In 1799, under Napoleon, the Abbey was closed down. Only since 1952 has it been inhabited,



Cloister, Morimondo.

once again, by monks. Two large arches lead into the courtyard dominated by one side of the church belonging to the abbey named after **Santa Maria Nascente**, built between 1182 and 1292. Its style could be described as an adaptation of Burgundy gothic to suit Lombard tastes. The sloping-roofed façade has a vaulting cell (higher, that is, than the main roof giving the charming impression of opening up skywards). The lay-out is three-aisled basilica, with ceilings supported by pointed arches that rest on cylindrical pillars. On the transept there is a small, octagonal lantern.

Among the works inside, the most remarkable are the 14th century holy water stoup on the first pillar, the Our Lady with Child and Santi Benedetto e Bernardo by Bernardino Luini in the fourth span (it is a torn fresco: not originally painted here) and, above all, the wooden choir stand, with 70 stalls in walnut inlaid by Francesco Giramo, from Abbiategrasso, between 1490 and 1522. Of the cloister, rebuilt between the 15th and 16th century, only one wing is original. The two-aisled chapter house is typically Cistercian in appearance. A short distance from Morimondo Abbey, in the direction of the Ticino, is **Casci-**

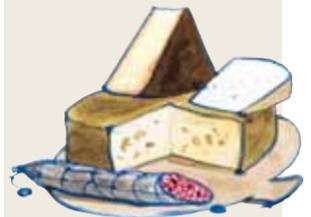


Agriturismo Cascina Lasso



*Cascina Lasso,
Morimondo.*

Sausages, risottos, meats, desserts, jams served and for direct sale at the weekend. Facilities for stabling horses. Courses. Phone: 02945215, agrit.cascinalasso@libero.it



The Cistercians

The order of the Cistercians was founded in 1098 in Citeaux, Burgundy (in Latin Cistercium, hence the name of the order), when Robert de Molesme decided to return the Benedictine rule to its original simplicity. Four mother houses inspired the foundation of a number of monasteries all over Europe, from Portugal to Romania: Ferté, Pontigny, Clairvaux and Morimond. Thanks to St. Bernard, the founder and abbot of Clairvaux from 1115 and leading promoter of the order, the Cistercians built two of their most important



Holy water stoup, Morimondo.

na Fiorentina, that dates back to the monks from Settimo Fiorentino who arrived here at the end of the 15th century.



Fallavecchia

It is hard to say whether Fallavecchia is a large farm or a small village.

abbeys in the Milan area: Morimondo and Chiaravalle. Cistercian architecture is based on the so-called "pilot project" of St. Bernard's.

Precise mathematical rules ensure a modular type of structure which rigidly establishes the proportions of the church and the lay-out of the other buildings in the group. The purism of Cistercian architecture comes from a moral standpoint. Their vow of poverty deprived them of the possibility of adding decorative features, in open contrast with the wealth flaunted by the Benedictines in Cluny.

Technically, it's the former: the settlement is itself a farm, as is typical with a cascina in Lombardy. But speaking from the heart it is a small-big community, which until the 19th century used to stand as an independent municipality. The road between Morimondo and Besate bends sharply to skirt it, leaving out one of the two churches (the smaller and prettier one: the other, dedicated to St. George the Martyr and Our Lady of the Assumption, is inside the farmhouse-village).

Beyond the entrance, frescoed with an Annunciation, the airy, generously-sized yards are tidily laid out around the tree-lined drive and among the farmhouses, the stalls, the barns, the well, the mill and the bakery. At the entrance, the trattoria.

Besate

City Council website: www.comune.besate.mi.it
kms 28.7 from Milan. Map: F 4

The small farming community of Besate is made up of a series of low buildings, some with courtyards, with a chessboard lay-out reminiscent of Ancient Roman ones. The village is next to State Road 526 and spreads out from the square overlooked by the parish church and the grand residence of the Visconti di Modrone family, historically the most important one in the area. The parish church of **San Michele Arcangelo** is an important 17th century building, erected to replace the previous church that Cardinal Federico Borromeo had found in bad condition during one of his pastoral visits. Well worth noting inside are an Our Lady and Child attributed to the painter of the Da Vinci school, Marco d'Oggiono (but it is a copy: the original is now in the Diocesan



Fresco in the church
of San Michele
Arcangelo, Besate.

Feast days in Besate



Marcia di Primavera

End of April.

Non-competitive march in the Parco del Ticino, over distances of 7, 15 and 21 kilometres.

Festa dello Zerbo

Second Sunday in May.

The only chance throughout the year to visit the Oratorio dello Zerbo and the park of the villa next door.



Church of San Michele Arcangelo, Besate.

Night March

Early June.
Non-competitive march
in the Parco del Ticino.

Feston da Besà

Early September.
Feast in honour of
patron Saint Innocence.

The Caremma



**Azienda Agricola
Gabriele Corti**
Cascina Caremma.



Azienda agricola Gabriele Corti (La Caremma), Besate.

A grain and cattle
farm run on organic
farming lines.

Meals, overnight
accommodation
and educational activities
available. Fitness centre.
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Museum in Milan) and a painting of St. Andrew embracing the Cross, an 18th century work by Sebastiano Conca.

Among trees and coats of arms bearing the characteristic snake, **Villa Visconti di Modrone** is the summer residence of a minor branch of the ex-ducal dynasty of Milan which succeeded in owning around 500 hectares of land in the village of Besate. It stands on the site of previous fortifications of the Longobard and, later, Commune eras where, during the Middle Ages, the Da Besate nobles, feudatories of the area, are thought to have lived. At the topographical centre of the village, along the State road, a little square gets its name from the Oratory of **Santa Eurosia**, a

Spanish martyr, protector from storms, commemorated in a painting inside the building.

Near the Ticino, in the place where a hospice for the plague-ridden was built in 1630, the **Oratorio dello Zerbo** houses a painting of Our Lady that is said to have miraculous powers. Between Besate and the Ticino, close by and clearly marked on the road signs, stands the large **Cascina Caremma**, a real forerunner of the agritourism culture in Italy. Today, aiming for an increasingly élite, but now numerous, clientele, it completes its role with clear, educational panels attached to the doors.

Motta Visconti

Pro Loco: at Dell'Osa optician's at 14, Via Gigi Borgomaneri.
Phone: 0290001315. E-mail: prolocomottavisconti@katamail.com
City Council website: www.comune.mottavisconti.mi.it
kms 28.3 from Milan. Map: F-G 5

Also in other European languages besides Italian, the Celtic word from which the name of the village is derived means “mound of earth”, and it specifically indicates a small, artificial hill built as a means of defence. The rank Visconti (viscounts) is centuries old, dating back to at least 1426 when a minor branch of the family of the dukes of Milan set up a fiefdom here. But the land and its woods also had an older name which remained in use until the 14th: Campese.

In the square, the church of San Rocco is a late 16th century building erected by the Confraternity of **San Rocco**. The façade is neo-classical, more recent. Inside, worthy of note are a 16th century painting of Our Lady with Child and the high altar built in the following century.

In a room next to San Rocco, Ada Negri, who was later to be known as the “poetess of Italy”, began teaching in 1888 when she was 18 years

Motta stories

Towards the end of the 19th century, two facts indelibly marked Motta Visconti and are still remembered by the population today. The young anarchist, **Sante Caserio**, who stabbed the French president, Sadi Carnot, to death in 1894 was from Motta Visconti. (They were decades that saw merciless fighting: six years later, after the army had used its canons against the citizens of Milan, the king of Italy, Umberto I, would be killed in Monza by the anarchist Gaetano Bresci.) Less dramatically, in 1892, the people and the woods of Motta Visconti



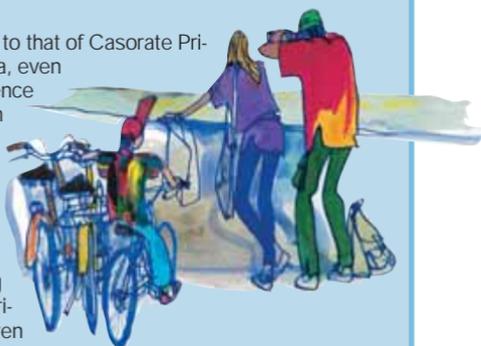
Church of San Rocco, Motta Visconti.

More

Cycling in the Pavia area

The territory of Motta Visconti is adjacent to that of Casorate Primo – which is part of the province of Pavia, even though it has always been under the influence of Milan and still observes the Ambrosian Rite – in an area where the tow-path of the Naviglio di Bereguardo has been converted into a cycle path, partly paved with environment-friendly asphalt and partly loose earth.

It is possible to ride northwards along the canal as far as Abbiategrasso, passing through the territories of Besate and Morimondo. Towards the south, of the eleven locks along the Naviglio di Bereguardo, the double one known as Inferno (Hell) between Motta and Zelata is particularly interesting.



inspired the first opera by **Ada Negri**, one of the most prominent Italian poetesses, who had worked in the village for two years as an elementary school teacher. Even the more recent history of Motta saw tragic times in 1945, with the deaths of Giovanni Tacconi and the partisan leader Gigi Borgomaneri. The main street in the village is named after the latter.



Monument to Ada Negri,
Motta Visconti.

old. This is now a small Museum of documentation related to her. The parish church of **San Giovanni Battista**, in memory of the patron Saint of Motta, is located in Via Soriani, a central cross-street of Via Gigi Borgomaneri. The



Church of San Giovanni Battista, Motta Visconti.

widening where these two streets cross is marked by a statue of St. John the Baptist dating back to 1696. The church was rebuilt in 1782 over a previous, early 15th century one built at the request of the Viscounts of Cislago, and is decorated with 17th century paintings including a Birth of the Virgin by Giovanni Maria Ar-

duino. The organ is a fine mid-19th century instrument made in Magenta. The villa in Via Soriani, near the parish church, belonged at various times to the Bolognini and Della Porta families and the Countess d'Incisa di Santo Stefano Belbo Properzj. Mentioned in a 1776 map, it is an elegant building in late baroque style with a garden. Still standing next door to it is a hunting lodge of 14th century origin. A wine press dating back to the early 17th century but which remained in use until the Second World War is preserved in a building in Via Annoni.



Oratory of San Rocco Vecchio, Motta Visconti.

A fresco from 1583 showing Our Lady with Child is visible on the outside wall of the so-called Ca' ad

Nurin, in Via Pizzo.

In Via Gigi Borgomaneri, at the end of the street coming from Besate, the **Oratory of San Rocco Vecchio** or San Rocchino, also called "of Our Lady of Sorrows", is a small, brick building that was the first house of the Confraternity of San Rocco. Its history is linked to that of the 1524 plague.



A bend on the Ticino, Motta Visconti.

Semplici brand honey



San Rocchino di Alberto Semplici



Direct sale of honey and hive products.
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Feast days in Motta

Spring Holiday

1st May.
Flowers, plants, garden furniture and furnishings.

Cherry Festival

2nd June.

Feast of the patron Saint John the Baptist

25th June.

Mushroom Festival

End of September.

For further information, contact Pro Loco which works out of the optician's shop Dell'Osa in via Gigi Borgomaneri 14.
Phone: 0290001315,
prolocomottavisconti@katamail.com

Bubbiano

kms 25.2 from Milan. Map: F 5

The Golf Club in Bubbiano

An 18th century palace and a small church mark the Cascina Bertacca, known today mainly



Golf Club Ambrosiano, Bubbiano.

by golf players because of the club there. It is an 18-hole course designed by the American landscape gardener David Silva, and is considered rather difficult. Twelve of the holes involve water, the greens are large and somewhat uneven and there are numerous bunkers.

Golf Club Ambrosiano

Cascina Bertacca,
Bubbiano

Closed Tuesdays.

Reservations
recommended.

Phone: 0290840820

gcambros@tin.it

www.golfclub

ambrosiano.com

behind it, as a farming community determined to govern itself. The parish church of **Sant' Ambrogio**, built in the 16th century, shows signs of the many alterations over the centuries. The last extension, with the construction of a new apse, dates back to the 1940's.



Church of Sant' Ambrogio, Bubbiano.

Calvignasco

City Council website: www.comune.calvignasco.mi.it
kms 23.8 from Milan. Map: E-F 6

A small municipality bordering on the Pavia area, right next to Bubbiano, with the waters of the artificial canals Ticinello, Bergonza and Tolentina running across its territory. For centuries, its history has been so closely linked to that of Binasco, that it is not easy to find relevant documents that refer to it as a separate locality and the same is true of the hamlets, Bettola, where the Town Hall is, and Ponte.

The parish church of **San Michele** (which, from the ecclesiastic point of view, is under Casorate Primo, while Bettola answers to Rosate) is a building of ancient ori-



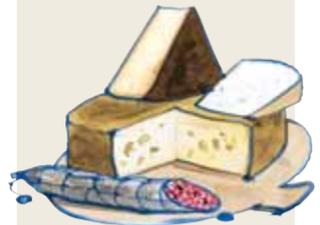
Church of San Michele, Calvignasco.

Sausages and salami from Calvignasco



Enrico Belloni

Hamlet: Ponte.
Direct sale
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Cardinal Federico Borromeo.

gin which was already dedicated to the archangel in 1300. Its current appearance depends on reconstruction work started in 1605, after Cardinal Federico Borromeo had visited it and found it too small.

Vernate

City Council website: www.comune.vernate.mi.it
kms 22.1 from Milan. Map: F 6



Vernate itself is located along Provincial Road 163, the minor of the two that link Motta Visconti to Binasco. However, the municipality – which is home to just over two thousand people – includes the other three villages of **Moncucco**, **Coazzano** and **Pasturago**, plus the few houses in Merlate with their almost thousand-year-old oratory of St. Martin.



Chiesa del Mulino Vecchio, Vernate.

Ticinello and strategy

The Ticinello Canal which characterizes the environment around Bubbiano, Calvignasco and Vernate actually comes from a source farther north, the Naviglio Grande in Abbiategrasso, and follows on towards Binasco and beyond Lacchiarella before



The territory, farm-land since time immemorial, was settled in ancient times. The local capital is located on the land of an Ancient Roman farmer of tithes.

In the countryside around Moncucco, the most westerly and out-of-the-way hamlet, the road to Pavia leads to the **Chiesa del Mulino Vecchio** (church of the Old Mill). Built at the end of the 16th century to protect a miraculous painting, today, it is restored and plastered in bright colours. However, the New Windmill in the village of Moncucco is

dilapidated and its wheel is overgrown with branches.

Cycling or driving along Provincial Road 163 between Moncucco and the local capital you

flowing on into the river Lambro. The Milanese had originally dug it in the 12th century, starting on the left bank of the

More

The Fontanile

A man-made feature in a rural area, the *fontanile* is a spring consisting of a **head** and a **boom** channelling the water into a course to be used for irrigation purposes. It was built by digging to a depth of a few yards into a terrain with a water bed a short distance from the



surface, making the water flow naturally onto the bottom of the canal head. This spring-meadow combination was, until the recent past, an almost unique feature of Milanese mid-plain farm land.

come to the **Fontanile di Vernate** (Vernate Spring), an emblematic case of a friendly presence. It is described on an information board put up by the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano authorities.

Ticino, as a sort of moat to defend their territory from invasions by imperial armies and the people of Pavia.

In Vernate, besides the Town Hall, there is still the large farm building of the **Corte Palazzo**, currently being converted into living quarters, and the small church of **Sant'Eufemia**. The latter, which has appeared in records since the 11th century and became a parish church in the 1600's, has, however, lost the frescoes that used to adorn its interior.



Church of Sant'Eufemia, Vernate.

In **Pasturago**, along



Rural Castle, Coazzano.

Binasco Castle

The village of Binasco revolves around an important Visconti Castle, built in the 14th century, and the nearby church of Santi Stefano e Giovanni completed in 1783.

The Castle, with its solid, quadrangular lay-out, now houses the Town Hall.

Provincial Road 163 between the local capital and Binasco, the Oasi Naturale Zona Umida association organizes guided tours of a wetland area of naturalist interest managed by the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano. Along Provincial Road 30, the larger of the two roads between Motta Visconti and Binasco, Coazzano still boasts a rural Visconti castle built in the first half of the 14th century, later converted into a convent for the Poor Clares of Pavia, and used today as a farm. A short distance away is the Oratory of the Holy Cross, built at the request of Bianca di Savoia in 1357 when she was given the surrounding land by her husband Galeazzo II Visconti.



Castello Visconteo, Binasco.

Zibido San Giacomo

City Council website: www.comune.zibidosangiaco.comune.mi.it
kms 17.4 from Milan. Map: E 7

From its name, it sounds like a “double” village, made up – as indeed it is – of the two separate communities of Zibido and San Giacomo. In actuality, it is at least quadruple, because within the vast territory of this municipality, two other



San Pietro Cusico, Zibido San Giacomo.

localities are worth a visit: the smaller San Pietro Cusico, to the north, and Moirago, along the Naviglio Pavese. But counting all the farms, including the cascine dotted around the countryside like the one in Femegro, the final total is around ten.

Linking the scattered villages is Provincial Road 139, that runs between Binasco and Trezzano. The highway A7 for Genoa cuts across the territory. A network of cycle paths kept up by the inter-municipal consortium “Camminando sull’acqua” links the most interesting places taking visitors to areas where



Zibido for you



Azienda Agricola Cascina Pioltino

Restaurant (reservations required) (typical local dishes, risottos, meats from home-raised herds, home-made sausages). Play area. Parking for camper-caravans (phone: 3403247883).



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[cascina-pioltino@
cascina-pioltino.it](mailto:cascina-pioltino@cascina-pioltino.it)
www.cascina-pioltino.it



**Azienda
Agricola Zipo**

Cattle and grain farm:
the animals are fed
natural foods.
Direct sale of
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home-made sausages,
beef and pork,
every day
8.00am-9.00pm
via San Giacomo 15
Phone: 02 5751,
marco.pozzi@zipo.it
hwww.zipo.it

cars are forbidden. Among the most southerly buildings in Zibido, a sign for cyclists put up by “Camminando sull’acqua” marks the path for San Pietro Cusico immediately in front of the so-called **Castelletto**. It comprises two, fairly well preserved buildings at least six centuries old, which the popular name suggests were built on a medieval fortification.

The parish church in Zibido is a pretty 15th century building, dedicated to the **Assumption**. Its interior is decorated with 18th century frescoes.



*Azienda
Agricola
Zipo, Zibido
San Giacomo*



Azienda Agricola Brambilla

Cascina Femegro.
Fresh, raw milk
from vending machine.
Phone: 3388417392

Next to the roundabout between Zibido and San Giacomo, on the land of a farm that borders onto the road, the **Palazzina Pusterla Busca Pozzi** known as **Ca' Granda** stands out. It is an elegant construction dating back to the 1400's that was probably



Ca' Granda, Zibido San Giacomo.

built as a hunting lodge. Inside, there are 16th century frescoes showing hunting scenes and Pusterla family coats of arms.

In San Giacomo, in Piazza del Municipio, the parish church of **San Giacomo** is certainly the most interesting building in the area from both the architectural and artistic points of view. A pre-existing church was already here in the XII century, but the present building is the work of a Renaissance architect who remains unknown despite his talent. The interior is generously decorated with frescoes.

Along the road between Zibido and Noviglio, the **Cascina Femegro** of 15th century origin is located on a site



Castelletto, Zibido San Giacomo

where there was probably already a fortified building in the XII century. Four turrets mark the corners of the courtyard. An engraving bears the date 1426.

In San Pietro Cusico, one of the best-known historic communities in the Zibido area, the attractive, country-style square is overlooked by



Cooperativa Santa Marta

Cascina Santa Marta.
Direct sale of rice.
Phone: 0290002390



*Church of
San Giacomo.*



Azienda Agricola Antonio e Maurizio Garbelli

Cascina San Francesco.
Direct sale
of rice every day.
Phone: 3355632727

San Giacomo, pottery and coins

Devotion to the Apostle James is very deep-rooted in the Zibido area as can be seen repeatedly in records. In the square in San Giacomo there is a granite sarcophagus dated between the II and IX century, which, according to tradition, holds the saint's body: while moving the remains of the Three Wise Men from Constantinople to Milan, St. Eustorgio is said to have brought



Cascina-Villa Salterio, Moirago.



St. James' body with him too. Other revelations showing how much history is to be found in the area came from the discovery, during the restoration of the parish church, of over 150 fragments of pottery (jars, drinking vessels and bottles... some dating back five centuries) and a small cache of coins, some of which were minted in the mid-14th century and others between the 16th and 17th century.



Lock on the Naviglio Pavese, Moirago.

the parish church of **San Pietro** with its 18th century portal. In Moirago, opposite the fourth lock of the Naviglio Pavese, the **Cascina-Villa Salterio** is an excellent example of a typical lower Lombardy settlement. Originally a 14th century convent, it features a wide front entrance and a garden at the rear.

The village of Moirago sprang up around the small church of **Santi Vincenzo e**



Church of Santi Vincenzo e Bernardo, Moirago.

Bernardo, situated a very short distance from the Naviglio. Built in the early 17th century, its interior is attractively frescoed. An inscription recalling the restoration carried out in 1829 mentions, among the benefactors the Salterio, Melzi d'Eril and Visconti di Modrone families. In Badile, along the Naviglio Pavese between Moirago and Binasco, the parish church of the **Natività**, built in 1553, holds a Holy Family of the Botticelli school.



More

Other Abbeys in the Milan area

In the stretch of lower Lombardy east of Zibido, three famous abbeys complete the panorama of monastic life in medieval Milan which we first met in Morimondo. All of them are close to today's Tangenziale Ovest (Western By-Pass).

Mirazole Abbey, visible from the Tangenziale near State Road 412 Vigentina,



was a typical grange belonging to the Order of the Humiliati founded in the first half of the 13th century. Still standing are both the church of Santa Maria Assunta with its frescoes and 12th century bell tower, the 15th century cloister and the farm buildings.

Chiaravalle Abbey, situated in today's municipality of Milan (it can be reached from on city bus 77 from Porta Romana), is recognizable also from a distance thanks to the elegant outline of its bell tower rising above the T-shaped plan of the church. Founded by Cistercian monks in 1135, it holds numerous works of art – including an Our Lady with Child by Bernardino Luini – and its central aisle, presbytery and transepts are decorated



with 17th century frescoes by the Della Rovere brothers known as the Fiammenghini. There is still also part of the 13th century Gothic cloister and the chapter house decorated with graffiti and other frescoes.

Viboldone Abbey, founded by the Order of the Humiliati in 1176, stands today close to the access roads between the Western By-Pass and Highway A1 leading to Rome. The abbey is outstanding thanks also to the 14th century frescoes by pupils of the Giotto school which are preserved in the church. Also the bell tower is original while little or nothing remains of the monastery.



Noviglio

City Council website: www.comune.noviglio.mi.it
kms 21.2 from Milan. Map: E 6

Plastic, design and style

The Kartellmuseo is a foundation whose mission is to spread knowledge of industrial



design and its aesthetic-productive processes. Many Kartell products are on display here, in an exhibition showing, in chronological order, objects of various types:



Besides Mairano, where the Town Hall is situated, and Noviglio itself, a number of other small towns spread over lower Lombardy south-west of Milan jointly make up the municipality of Noviglio, which covers a considerable area. Its axis is Provincial Road 203 between the toll booths at Binasco – along Highway A7 to Pavia and Genoa – and the village of Rosate.

The reason why Noviglio is well-known lies mainly in the **Kartell** company factory, operating since 1949 moulding plastics, now famous all over the world for its contribution to the image and turnover of the Italian industrial design sector. At the factory, which is in itself an important piece of 1960-1970's architecture designed by Ignazio Gardella in collaboration

*Museum's
entrance, Noviglio.*



Cascina Conigo, Noviglio.



The Oratory of Santa Maria Nascente, Noviglio.

with the owner of the company, Anna Castelli Ferrieri, you can visit the **Kartellmuseo** showing the company's history. It can be reached driving under Provincial Road 30 Bi-

nasco-Vermezzo next to the **Santa Corinna** fly-over that crosses Highway A7 Milan-Genoa.



Church of San Michele Arcangelo, Moirago, Noviglio.

Cascina Conigo, near Santa Corinna, is one of the largest in lower Lombardy, with five courtyards and an entrance

flanked by oculi decorated with bulls' heads. Inside, the Oratory of Santa Maria Nascente, consecrated in 1490, is in Lombard Renaissance style with late-Gothic details.

In Mairano, along Provincial Road 203 between the villages of Santa Corinna and Noviglio, are the fine church of **San Michele Arcangelo** (next to the Town Hall), the building in a poor state of repair that took the place of the local Castle and the Segrona mill, one of the many that have survived in Noviglio.

▼ automotive accessories, household goods, lamps, laboratory equipment, furniture and furnishings. On the walls, a synoptic table suggests possible viewpoints for interpreting exhibitions, designs, technology and communication. At the museum and on its website, you can consult a catalogue showing products, technologies, materials and designers from 1949 to the present. In the archives, Kartell products, designs, photographs, prints and product catalogues are stored.

Kartellmuseo

Via delle Industrie 3, Noviglio
2.00pm-6.00pm, closed Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays.
Phone: 0290012269
info@museokartell.it
www.kartell.it

Straight from Noviglio



Azienda Agricola Fratelli Conti

Cascina Rovina. Direct sale of rice, corn meal, honey, chamomile, dried legumes and grains, every day 8.00am-8.00pm.
Phone: 029006051



Azienda Agricola Fratelli Rossi

Cascina Tavernasco. Direct sale of rice and rice flour every day 8.00am-8.00pm.
Phone: 029006096, rossi_gef@libero.it

Vigano Certosino

kms 14.4 from Milan. Map: D 5



The countryside between Noviglio and Gaggiano still holds the memory of when Gian Galeazzo Visconti gave the monks who had founded the Charterhouse of Pavia in the late 1300's the land in Vigano so they could use the profits from it. The Carthusians set up a house here and settled into what used to be the small, local castle. For this reason, Vigano, which is now a hamlet under the jurisdiction of Gaggiano, is called Vigano Certosino.

The conversion of the ancient local fortification into a **Carthusian House** produced a charming, well laid-out group of farm build-



Carthusian House, Vigano Certosino.

ings around a porticoed courtyard, with the large 16th century frescoes in the Oratory of Sant'Ippolito painted by Aurelio Luigi, and the chapter-house with a decorated ceiling supported by granite pillars. The scrolls with the words GraCar, "Gratiarum Carthusia",



Frescos in the Oratory of Sant'Appolito, Vigano Certosino.

bear witness to the fact it once depended on the Charterhouse of Pavia, which was, as is known, closed down in the 18th century and later faced a troubled, interrupted religious life which was relaunched on a permanent basis only in 1968. Their House in Vigano became private property. In recent years, it has been restored.

Opposite the Carthusian House is the church of **Santi Eugenio e Maria**, with its frescoes and a 16th century Lombard school Crucifixion. In the square, the column is topped with a statue of St. Bruno dated 1716.

Mambre

The ex-Carthusian complex in Vigano and its vast garden are now run by a group of families who, with a generous sense of civic duty, offer hospitality for a certain period, to other families that are going through a difficult time, helping them to reintegrate into a normal way of life.

Associazione Mambre



Piazza San Brunone 18,
Vigano Certosino
Gaggiano.
Phone: 0290843202,
info@mambre.it
www.mambre.it



Church of Santi Eugenio e Maria, Vigano Certosino.

Rosate

City Council website: www.comune.rosate.mi.it
kms 21.2 from Milan. Map: E 5

Stockings, underwear & prices

A historic brand of underwear known not only in Lombardy but all over Italy, Cagi has been "a reliable, expert friend... providing quality next to the skin" since 1925. Cagi outlets are located in

Provincial Road 30 Binasco-Vermezzo skirts without entering a series of four villages – Rosate, Gudo, Zelo Surrigone and Vermezzo – parallel to the course of the Ticinello Canal. The four villages are, however, linked by the old route of the road, now municipal property, that is much more circuitous since it respects fields and canals and which is closed to traffic at the weekends in



Church of Santo Stefano, Rosate.

the area both in Rosate and at company head quarters in Motta Visconti.

Via Silvio Pellico 10,
Rosate

9.15am-12.30pm and
2.30pm-6.50pm, closed
Sundays and Mondays.
Phone: 0290848748

Piazza Giuseppe Garibaldi 2,
Motta Visconti

9.30am-12.30pm and
2.30pm-6.50pm, closed
Sundays and Mondays.
Phone: 0290578975

summer to be used as a cycle path. Rosate, a community of ancient origin, still with its row of terraced houses along the main street, is the farthest south of these four villages.

All that remains today of Rosate Castle, which used to belong to the Avogadro family, are the ruins lying on public land.

The parish church of **Santo Stefano**, which is in a neo-classical style of 1840, is the "heir" of a very important original church which supervised up to forty parishes during the Middle Ages.

The 16th century church of **San**



Period painting inside the church of San Giuseppe, Rosate.

Giuseppe contains paintings from that time.

Along the old route of the road between Rosate and Gudo stands all alone in the fields not far from Cascina Gaggianese, the shrine to **Our Lady of Peace**. Historically known also as Sant'Ambrogio or Santi Maria e Ambrogio, it was originally built in the 15th century and enlarged in the 1600's.



Shrine to Our Lady of Peace, Rosate.

Rosate: everything from Malpaga



Azienda Agricola Fermo e Giancarlo Cattoni



Cascina Malpaga.
Fresh raw milk from a vending machine.
Phone: 0290870390



Francesca Zacchetti



Cascina Malpaga.
Direct sale of honey and hive products.
Phone: 0290840551



Zacchetti e Crepaldi



Cascina Malpaga.
Direct sale of rice.
Phone: 0290870673

Gudo Visconti

City Council website: www.gudo.it
kms 20.7 from Milan. Map: D-E 5

Farmhouses at Gudo Visconti



Azienda Agricola Luigi Gilardi

Cascina Cassinetta.
Direct sale of rice, honey,
jams and vegetables.
Phone: 0294961803



Agriturismo Il Visconte



Cascina Longoli.
Restaurant
open Wednesdays
and Sundays
for lunch
(Risotto del Visconte,
La Viscontina dessert).
Courses.
Fishing lake.
Direct sale of rice
in the evenings
(except Wednesdays),
Sundays also
at lunchtime.
Phone: 0294940266,
info@ilvisconte.it
www.ilvisconte.it



Several artificial canals stemming from the Naviglio Grande flow through the territory of the ancient Gudo Antibiago, situated half-way between Rosate and Zelo Surrigone, and as far as the population goes, is one of the smallest municipalities belonging to the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano. The name Visconti comes from the vast estates owned in the area by the family of the ex-Duke of Milan, until 1498. The parish church of **Santi Quirico e Giulitta**, of 15th century origin, underwent alterations in the course of the following centuries. It is said that the façade was designed by the great 16th century architect Pellegrino Tibaldi. Next to it, a frescoed, popular type of sacred image bears the date 1668.

The restaurant opposite the Town Hall is where the Gudo Castle once stood.



Church of Santi Quirico
e Giulitta, Gudo Visconti.

Zelo Surrigone

City Council website: www.comune.zelosurrigone.mi.it
kms 22.7 from Milan. Map: D 5

In lower Lombardy between Gudo Visconti and Vermezzo, the small community of Zelo belonged for centuries to important patrician Milanese families, and some of their residences are still standing. During the migration season, vast crops of maize and rice in the surrounding area attract a large number of birds – like blue herons – which make for a spectacular sight.

On the site of a castle that had belonged to the Avogadro family from Rosate there is now, in the central Piazza Roma, the 18th century **Palazzo Confalonieri-Semira**, converted in the course of the next century. This was once the home of Federico Confalonieri, leader of the Italian Risorgimento, incarcerated by the Austrians in the Spielberg fortress.

Near Villa Confalonieri, the parish church of **Santa Giuliana** has a rustic appearance after undergoing a reconstruction in 1897 that was never properly completed. However, the original church was ancient: it was already mentioned in documents around the year 1000.

San Galdino

Along the old route of the road from Gudo, where it crosses



*Palazzo Confalonieri-Semira,
Zelo Surrigone.*

via Vittorio Emanuele, the Oratory of San Galdino boasts a ceiling covered in late 15th century Gothic frescoes.



Vermezzo

City Council website: www.comune.vermezzo.mi.it
kms 21.9 from Milan. Map: D 4-5

The bees of Vermezzo



Apicoltura Melissa

Direct sale of honey,
royal jelly and propolis,
5.00pm-7.00pm,
Saturdays 3.00pm-
7.00pm; closed Sundays
and holidays.
Via Pascoli 9.
Phone: 029449187,
s.brizio@libero.it

The Cascina Grande

The village spreads out south of the Naviglio Grande – just before Abbiategrasso, for people coming from Milan – on a line with a flyover popularly known as Ponte di Vermezzo. Artificial canals (Mischia, Longona, Beretta and Avogadro) flow through the farm land providing a large quantity of water.

Palazzo Pozzobonelli Panigarola, in the tree-lined Piazza Comunale, has a typical U-shaped lay-out with two wings extending beyond the main body of the building. Most likely built over what was the local castle, it originally belonged to the Pozzobonellis, an important family of Milanese notables. At the end of the 15th century, it was purchased by Gottardo Panigarola, col-



The Cascina Grande , Vermezzo.

In the countryside in the direction of the Ticinello Canal, the Cascina Grande is a sort of curious miniature version of the Sforza Castle in Milan, built in the 1920's.

laborator and administrator of Ludovic the Moor, who had it renovated with decorations in the style of Leonardo and Bramante. When it returned to the original family in the 18th century, the palace was chosen as a summer residence



Palazzo Pozzobonelli Panigarola, Vermezzo.



Cascina Rognoni

The ruins of medieval fortifications line Via Carmine Ponti. Inside them, the Cascina Rognoni, with its simple architecture, is reminiscent of medieval country castles.

for Cardinal Giuseppe Pozzobonelli, Archbishop of Milan. Today, it belongs to the Lattuada family who have had it restored.

Next to Palazzo Pozzobonelli stands the parish church of **San Zenone**, an ancient subsidiary of the parish of Rosate, now decorated in 17th/18th century style. Inside, there are still some late-medieval frescoes.



Church of San Zenone, Vernate.

Villas and springs around the Ticino

Magenta is a sort of local capital of the northern Abbiategrasso-Magenta area in a territory full of canals and historic residences.

A few kilometres north of Abbiategrasso – beyond delightful Cassinetta and Robecco – the other principal community in the south-west of the Milan area is **Magenta**, famous for the battle during the Second War of Independence in the mid-19th century and the home of the latest person from the Milan area to be made a saint.

The hamlet **Pontevecchio** is like an arm extending into the greenery and woods of the Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino. Cycle paths run along the towpath of the Naviglio Grande towards pretty Boffalora and Bernate.

From Magenta to Milan, State Road 11 Padana Superiore runs through a territory in which the number of factories is increasing gradually but relentlessly. The protection af-



forded by the **Parco Agricolo Sud Milano** is increased by the presence of important natural areas like the Parco del Rocolo and the WWF reserve in Vanzago, but to find a real expanse of greenery alongside the road, you have to leave State Road 11 and turn south into the area around **Cusago**, on the outskirts of the city.

You can still have a sense of space if, when coming from Milan, you turn off towards Magenta and Abbiategrasso keeping south of State Road 11: through the farms of Cisliano and the villas of **Corbetta**.

Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino

Over 90,000 hectares along the course of the Ticino and its valley, from Lake Maggiore as far as the Po, have been protected since 1974 by a consortium made up of 47 municipalities in the provinces of Milan,

The spring in Bareggio, protected as a natural, biological reserve, is typical of the historical features that characterize the Lombardy plain.



The Ticino, almost 250 kms long, flowing between Switzerland and Italy is the richest in water of the tributaries of the Po.

Pavia and Varese. It is one of Italy's most important nature reserves for size, good management and success in protecting the environment. The portion of it situated in Lombardy faces a section in Piedmont called the **Parco Naturale della Valle del Ticino** on the opposite bank of the river.

Over half of the protected area is still used for farming. The rest is split into almost equal parts between urbanized zones (approx. 21,000 hectares) and others kept as nature reserves (22,000 hectares) on what is left of the forest that covered nearly all of the Po Valley a couple of millenniums ago.

To tourists and nature lovers, the Park offers charming landscapes, peaceful areas and opportunities for refreshment and recreation – described in this chapter but also in the previous one on **Abbeys and**



Farmhouses in lower Lombardy – as well as a comprehensive network of un-made-up roads, paths and cycle paths, information about which is available on the website www.parcoticino.it

The consortium's offices are located in Villa Castiglioni, Pontevecchio di Magenta. For information phone 0331662911.

A useful aid for hikers or cyclists is the **detailed map Parco del Ticino Lombardo** published by Mowgli under the copyright of the Consorzio Lombardo Parco Ticino. It can be found in specialized bookshops and at the Park's Information Centres.

The addresses of the Park's Information Centres for the area between Abbiategrasso and Motta Visconti are to be found in the box.

Information

Azienda agricola Salazzara

Strada Valle 9,
Pontevecchio di Magenta.
Phone: 029790934

Cascina Bullona

Strada Valle 32,
Pontevecchio di Magenta.
Phone: 0297292091,
bullona@agriturismobullona.it
www.agriturismobullona.it

Cartolibreria Laura Longoni

Piazza San Martino 7,
Inveruno.
Phone: 029786557



Magenta

City Council website: www.comunedimagenta.it
Pro Loco: via IV Giugno 80. Phone: 0297291515
E-mail: info@prolocomagenta.org
Website: www.prolocomagenta.org
kms 28.3 from Milan. Map: B-C 3



Of Roman origin, fortified since at least the 14th century and now a bustling, productive town, Magenta went down in history for the 1859 battle (Piedmontese and French on one side, Austro-Hungarians on the other) which sealed Lombardy's fate linking it to that of Italy which was still being formed at the time.

The most important incidents during the fighting are illustrated on boards dotted around town with maps and descriptions in several languages as a sign of peace and cooperation.

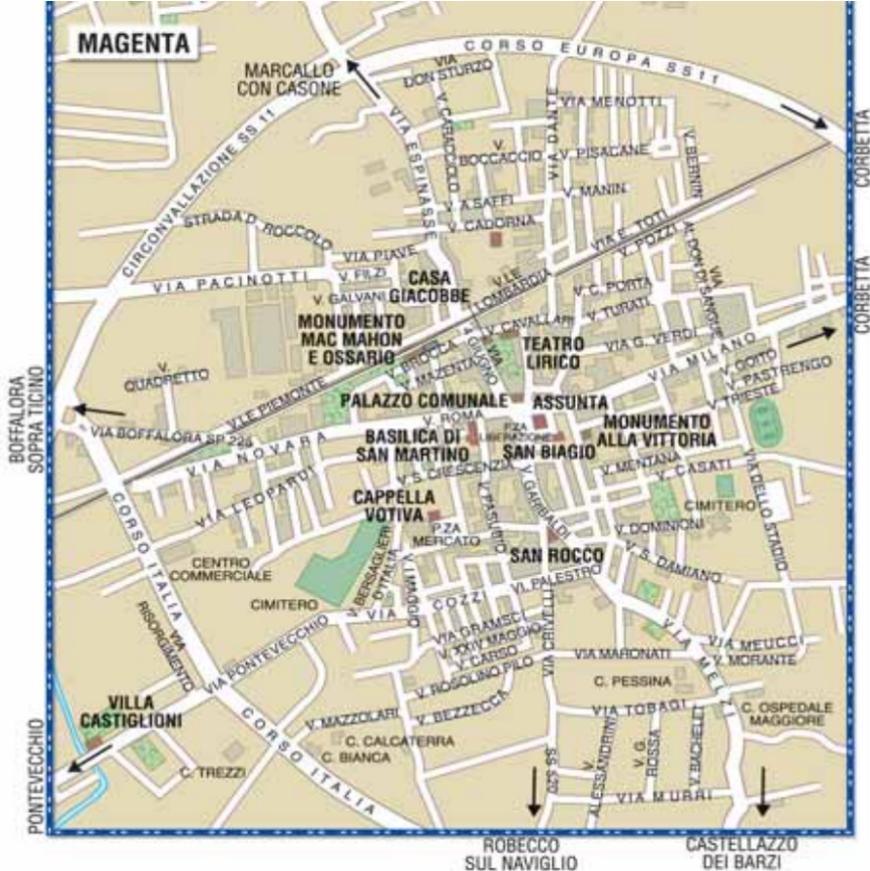
Reaching Magenta

By **TRAIN**, the **State Railways** line is the Milan-Turin. From the Milan stations Centrale or Garibaldi the journey lasts half an hour. For information, phone 848888088 or consult website trenitalia.it



Basilica of San Martino, Magenta.

Along the centrally-located Via Roma, the Battle of Magenta is evoked by the Basilica dedicated to **San Martino** erected in 1903 to replace a previous parish church dedicated to the same saint. At the request of the rector, Father Cesare Tragella, the building costs were covered by the nations that had waged war: Italy, France and Austria. The church is in the style of the period



– that is to say it looks like a 16th century building – and contains a Virgin and Child with a Da Vinci touch. The outstanding organ made in 1860 by the local firm Prestinari was already in use in the original parish church.

In the heart of Magenta, Via Roma and Via Mazzini, opposite, meet in the spacious, charming **Piazza della Liberazione**, along the old route of State Road 11 linking Milan and Novara.

Near the centrally-located square, in Via Mazzini there is the church of the **Assunta** which is of Romanesque origin, though it has been radically re-modernized several times over the centuries. Inside, there are two

By **BUS**:

- the transport company Atinom, based in Magenta, runs services both to Milan and to localities in the Magenta area. For further information phone 029723841 or consult website www.atinom.it



Piazza della Liberazione, Magenta.



- services run by ATM (Milan public transport company). For information phone toll-free 800016857 or consult website www.atm-mi.it
- the Milan-Magenta Stie coach service. For information 7.00am-7.00pm in piazzale Cadorna, Milan on the corner of Via Paleocapa, phone: 0286450614.

By **CAR** take Highway A4 exiting at Boffalora sopra Ticino, or State Road 11 which runs through the territory around Magenta.



recently restored Renaissance altarpieces in the third chapel on the left (Jesus at the pillar, Ecce Homo), by Ambrogio da Fossano known as Bergognone, and a painting (Imprisonment of St. Biagio) by Giovanni Maria Arduino.



Monument to Victory, Magenta.

Via Mazzini continues from the church of the Assumption widening out into the small Piazza Vittorio Veneto, with the **Monument to Victory** created, in 1925, by Giannino Castiglioni.

In Via San Biagio, adjacent to Piazza Vittorio Veneto, the Convent of the Canossian Mothers has incorporated, since 1884, the ancient Oratory of **San Biagio**, which has a 16-17th century appearance but was the original parish church in Magenta on a site where traces of a Gallic-Roman necropolis were found. The small building, open only on the feast of St. Biagio, holds



Painting (Imprisonment of St. Biagio) by Giovanni Maria Arduino, Magenta.

More

The Battle of 1859 and its historical re-enactment

Magenta played a key role in one of the most important episodes in the history of the Unity of Italy: the battle fought on 4th June 1859 opened the door to the liberation of Milan and the unification of the country.

For some years now, the local authorities have organized a re-enactment of the battle which reaches its climax on the



caused it (freedom, love of one's country, brotherhood and camaraderie) and the intense spirit of collaboration and unity that link the people of today with those who, in far off 1859, fought each other, but now walk side

by side aiding the building of a Europe of Nations.

During the 4th June celebrations, Ma-

The first Sunday after 4th June the local authorities organize the re-enactment of the historical battle of Magenta.



first Sunday after 4th June with the participation of groups in Risorgimento era costumes carrying weapons used at the time. This is an important event that lasts several days and each year, it is enriched with new activities that provide more information on the town's history.

The goal is, naturally, not to commend the fighting but rather the values that

genta is visited by thousands of people, many of whom come from abroad, together with the representatives and Consuls of France, Austria and Hungary and a large number of members of Italian institutions who all come together as witnesses of the peace, brotherhood and collaboration that unite nations that were once separated by war.

two 17th century paintings by Giovanni Maria Arduino. Along Via Garibaldi, which starts at the square in the centre of town and goes in the direction of Robecco, at number 76 you'll find **Palazzo Morandi**, built in the second half of the 18th century, and at number 84, **Casa Crivelli**, dating back to the 15th century.

From Piazza della Liberazione towards the railway station, Via 4 Giugno – the date of the battle – takes you to the 18th century **Casa Giacobbe**, the historic residence of an impor-

Fairs in Magenta

Trade Fair

June, originally in memory of the battle of 1859. In the specially- equipped premises in Via Crivelli.

St. Biagio's Fair

3rd February. Traditional goods and cattle fair, with farm machinery, stalls,



Casa Giacobbe, Magenta

▼
local fare (“pulentà e
pess”, “busecca”) and
“kissing the relic” to ward
off illnesses of the throat.

St. Rocco Fair

16th August. Sale
of farmyard animals,
stalls, local fare all over
the historic centre.

tant family from Magenta, which still has bullet holes in its façade. The porch is decorated with late 19th century frescoes by Giacomo Campi.

Via Brocca, near the station and parallel to the tracks, leads to the **Monument** erected in 1895 as a tribute to the victor in the battle of Magenta, the French general Patrice Mac Mahon. Farther on, amid the greenery, stands an Obelisk-osuary dated 1872.

More

Magenta, a town for music lovers

The Teatro Lirico, which has been a leading venue in the town since 1904, has simply reinforced a deep-rooted vocation. As Giuseppe Fornaroli wrote at the beginning of the 20th century, “The people of Magenta are reputed to be good musicians not only by local communities but also elsewhere, since Magenta has, for a great many years, been home to philharmonic orchestras that travel to Switzerland, Germany and even far-away St. Petersburg to play series of concerts.” Magenta-born opera singers like Antonio Valisi, Emilio Colombo and Lucia Fornaroli became very famous on the international scene in the 20th century. Besides the theatre – whose building was handsomely decorated by the painter Giacomo Campi – Magenta still boasts three excellent bands founded between 1800 and 1900. A particularly active role



is played by the Associazione culturale Totem, with premises in the theatre which acts as organiser, manager and artistic secretariat to the “Città di Magenta” Orchestra and the City Choir. The Associazione organizes musical events each season and is particularly proud of its training and promotion of young musicians.

The Teatro Lirico, the restoration of which was completed in 2003, is now the venue for the Theatre Season (from January to May, with companies and shows of national importance), the Symphonic Season of the “Città di Magenta” Orchestra (from January to May) and the Jazz Festival (November); a situation that is unique throughout the province of Milan.

Totem

Via Cavallari 2, Magenta
Phone: 0297003255
www.totemagenta.org

Pontevecchio

City Council website: www.comunedimagenta.it
Pro Loco: via 4 Giugno 80. Phone: 0297291515
E-mail: info@prolocomagenta.org
Website: www.prolocomagenta.org
kms 30 from Milan. Map: C 3

Part of Magenta – but separate, and with a very different atmosphere, being nearer to the Ticino – lies the hamlet of **Pontevecchio** or, as it was more commonly written, Ponte Vecchio. From there, you can take off into the woods bordering



The bridge over the Naviglio, Pontevecchio.

the river, maybe renting a bicycle from a local cycle shop or directly from the Cascina Bullona.

Next to the bridge on the **Naviglio Grande**, rebuilt after 1859 in the same place as the previ-

At Pontevecchio and Magenta



Specialized Nature Reserve "La Fagiana"
Pontevecchio di Magenta.
Phone: 0331662911
www.parcoticino.it



Villa Castiglioni, Pontevecchio.



**Azienda Agricola
Cascina Bullona**



Cattle and grain farm run on organic lines. Restaurant, stabling for horses, educational courses, bicycles for rent.

Information centre of Parco Ticino and direct sales Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Sundays 9.00am-7.00pm, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays 9.00am-3.00pm and 7.00pm-midnight, closed Mondays.
Strada Valle 32,
Pontevecchio di Magenta.
Phone: 0297292091,
bullona@agriturismo
bullona.it
www.agriturismobullona.it



**Cooperativa Agricola
San Rocco**



Cascina Pietrasanta,

ous one erected in 1612, the offices of the Parco Lombardo of the Ticino Valley are housed in **Villa Castiglioni**, originally owned by the Crivelli family, and, since 1637, the country residence of the Archbishop of Milan and his curia.

From Pontevecchio, the road that slopes down towards the **Ticino** runs through the countryside as far as Bullona – which is as far as motor vehicles can go – and the entrance of the **Specialized Nature Reserve**

“La Fagiana”, maybe the place that best identifies the enjoyable character of the Parco del Ticino. The area, now the site of most of the organization’s activities, well equipped to receive tourists and let them wander along the paths and introduce them to its magic, was originally set out as a game preserve. In the middle of the 19th century, it covered 1,574 hectares of a strip of land over ten kilometres long between Casate and Robecco. The villa in the centre of the reserve was frequented by kings and noblemen, before being destroyed in 1945 during an Allied bombing raid that was meant to destroy the bridge crossing the Ticino at Boffalora.



The Specialized Nature Reserve “La Fagiana”, Pontevecchio.



Observing nature.

The Park acquired most of the reserve in 1984, gradually adapting it for visits and with the aim of extending it. The places visited most often are the museum-laboratory set up under the guidance of the Natural Science Museum in Milan, the Samar Hall dedicated to its twin-ships with protected areas in Central America and the small Museo del Bracconaggio (Museum of Poach-



By bike through the Nature Reserve, Pontevecchio.

ing) set up along one of the open-air walks. The reserve is also used for the reintroduction of animal and vegetable species – one of the reasons why dogs are not admitted.

The specialized reserve “La Fagiana” includes a Centre for the Rescue of Wild Fauna set up in 1998 by Lipu (Italian League for the Protection of Birds) and the Park and it is open to visitors at weekends and on holidays.

▼
Pontevecchio di Magenta.
Farm open to visitors with restaurant, recreation and direct sales. Phone: 029794740



Apicoltura Nomade di Caviglioli

Direct sales of honey and hive products
Corso Europa 104, Magenta.
Phone: 029794523



Giuseppe e Giancarlo Rossi
Cascina Calderara.

Fresh raw milk from a vending machine.
Strada Ossona, Magenta.
Phone: 029794962



Giuseppe e Michele Porta

Cascina Calderara.
Direct sales of sausages, cheeses and yoghurt.
Strada Ossona, Magenta.
Phone: 029794962

Boffalora sopra Ticino

City Council website: www.boffaloranet.it
kms 31.7 from Milan. Map: B 2



Next to Magenta, Boffalora is a small gem of a village built around its bridge on the **Naviglio Grande** and definitely one of the most fascinating places in the south-west Milan area.

Everything revolves around the bridge: the homes along the banks, the towpaths with their cycle paths closed to motor vehicles in the direction of Robecco and of Bernate, the monument in memory of the battle of Magenta, the portico with the plaque commemorating the donation of the fiefdom to the Carthusians of Pavia – by Gi-

The “Barchett” and the Duomo

Using the realistic tones of the Scapigliatura – the literary movement that was fashionable in Milan in the second half of the 19th century – **Cletto**

Arrighi dedicated a comedy in dialect that he wrote in 1870 to *El Barchett de Boffalora*. The play was warmly received, and is still well-known:

Arrighi drew an accurate picture of Milan life at the time.

Long before the Barchett ran a regular service - together with many others along the Naviglio Grande - barges carrying raw materials for the building site of Milan's Duomo had passed through Boffalora.



The bridge over the Naviglio Grande, Boffalora sopra Ticino.

an Galeazzo Visconti in 1396 – and the memorial stone for the partisan Ernesto Trezzi. But actually, despite its peaceful atmosphere today, throughout history, Boffalora has paid the price for being in a strategic position close to the Ticino and on the Naviglio several times.

The **Bridge** over the Naviglio, a solid, two-span construction in stone built in 1603, gives on to Piazza 4 Giugno, where the Town Hall is situated, and the historical landing stage for the barge – the Barchett, in dialect – which shuttled back and forth to

the Darsena in Milan covering a distance of around 40 kilometres. A few steps above the eastern bank of the Naviglio – you go up from the porch, with capitals similar to those on the Charterhouse in Pavia – stands the parish church of **Santa Maria della Neve**. Inside, there are paintings of Stories of St. Francis by the Fiammenghini brothers.

For centuries, they had brought to Milan the special pink marble that can be found only in the quarries in Candoglia on Lake Maggiore.



Villa Calderari, Boffalora sopra Ticino.

In the higher part of the village, the old, residential traditions of Boffalora can be found in the 18-19th century **Villa Calderari**, donated to the parish in 1938 and currently the premises of a kindergarten and some oratories. A deodar cedar in its park is registered as one of Italy's monumental trees. On the west bank of the Naviglio, the built-up area gradually thins out into a natural landscape lead-



Church of Santa Maria della Neve, Boffalora sopra Ticino.

ing to the Ticino. Here, on a low hill, stands **Villa Giulini**, originally built in the 18th century but now reconstructed. Along with its park, it belongs to the municipality which plans to turn it back into a cultural centre.

Feast days in Boffalora

Boffalora Bio

End of April and end of May. Local organic produce fair.

Concert for the Republic



Beginning of June. In Villa Giulini.

Feast of the Sùcia

Beginning of September, coinciding with the lowering of the water in the Naviglio Grande. Exhibitions, concerts, tournaments and local fare.

Bernate Ticino

Information: Biblioteca Civica, via Roma 32

Phone: 029754456

kms 33.4 from Milan. Map: B 2

Feast days in Bernate

Festival of the Ticino

April-May. Shows
and concerts
in the Canons' House.

Sagra del Michelac



May. Dedicated
to a local cake
and the re-discovery
of traditional fare.

Just as in nearby Boffalora, a bridge over the Naviglio is of vital importance to Bernate. The meadow opens out on the right bank - while most of the village is on the left bank - to reveal, like a backdrop, the medieval-cum-renaissance style outline of the Canons' House with its palace and parish church.

The original village of Brinate, where Ancient Roman artefacts have been found in the subsoil, was first mentioned in documents written in 1045 and 1099, in terms that give the impression it had a fortified river-ferry port. Involved in the 13th century disputes between the Visconti and Torriani families for the role of leading authority in the Milan area and later an established part of the duchy and the states that followed it, its most prominent inhabitants were the Crivelli family who were large landowners.

The group of buildings of historical and architectural interest in Bernate started with the Canons' House built following the issue of the



Palazzo Visconti, Bernate Ticino.



Church of San Giorgio Martire, Bernate Ticino.

Papal Bull of 1186 with which Urban III Crivelli authorized the Augustinian canons of Crescen-zago to settle here. The Canons' House, expanded and altered over the centuries, has its residential wing in the Visconti Palace.

The **Visconti Palace**, of 15th century origin, is a large, elegant building structured in such a way as to satisfy both defensive and residential requirements. On the façade, below the first floor open gallery, traces of earlier building work can clearly be seen.

The handsome parish church of **San Giorgio Martire**, altered in the 18th century, was designed around 1582 by Martino Bassi, the architect who set out the project for the rebuilding of the church of St. Lorenzo in Milan.

Within the municipal boundaries lies the **Landca di Bernate**, the destination of one of the itineraries recommended by the Parco Lombardo della Valle del Ticino. After being used for game hunting for many years, it is now an important bird sanctuary which was completely renovated in 1997 thanks to a sum donated by Agip as compensation for the permission to lay a section of pipeline. To allow for visits, the old hunters' path has been restored. The sanctuary is managed by Lipu (The Italian League for Bird Protection).



Bernatestate



June. Shows at weekends.

Settembre bernatese

First half of September. Regatta on the Naviglio, procession of barges, displays with goods for sale, dance in the evening.

Guided tours of the Canons' House, **hikes** to the Lanca and **meals** in the Canons' House can be booked Tuesday-Thursday 4.00-6.00pm, Friday 2.00-6.00pm, Saturday 8.30am-12.30pm at the Biblioteca Civica (Public Library) in via Roma 32, phone: 029754456.

Marcallo con Casone

City Council website: www.marcallo.it
kms 27.9 from Milan. Map: B 3



Immediately north of Magenta, from the bypass (a stretch of State Road 11) you can find directions to reach **Marcallo**, with its square and the villas along Via Roma.

Beyond the lanes of the A4 Milan-Turin Highway, lies the smaller **Casone**, joined to Marcallo under the same local government in 1870, just a few years after the area had been one of the theatres of the battle of Magenta.

An interesting building in Marcallo is the



Villa Ghiotti, Town Hall, Marcallo con Casone.

Cycle paths in Marcallo

Even though they are for now, and quite rightly, intended mainly for use by residents, the cycle paths set out by the authorities in Marcallo con Casone are a clear indication of their awareness of the problems in the area.

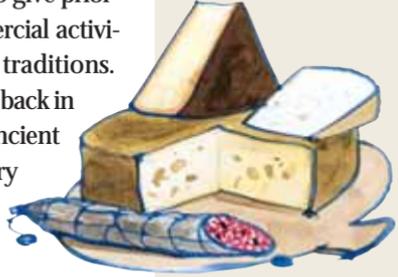
18th century-style **Villa Ghiotti**, historically the residence of the local ruling family, with frescoed ceilings and a park. Since 2001 it has been used as the Town Hall, and during restoration work, evidence came to light showing that it was built in different stages. In the parish church of Santi Nazзарo e Celso there is a magnificent 19th century organ built by craftsmen from the Prestinari family in Magenta. In the Barco quarter of Casone, restoration work has recently been completed on the ancient chapel of **San Michele**.

Mesero

City Council website: www.comunemesero.it
kms 29.6 from Milan. Map: B 2-3

North of the A4 Milan-Turin Highway, in an area through which a branch of the Villoresi Canal runs, today, the village tends to give priority to its manufacturing and commercial activities rather than follow its farming traditions. Proof that it was founded a long way back in history – its origin was probably Ancient Roman if not Celtic – is a 1st century altar that can be seen in the entrance of the Town Hall. St. Gianna Beretta Molla, who lived and worked as a doctor in the village, is buried in Mesero. In the middle of the small historic centre, overlooking Piazza Santa Gianna Beretta Molla is the **old parish church** of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, recorded in 13th century documents as Santa Maria and rebuilt in the 17th century. It was decided it should be converted into a Family Shrine dedicated to St. Gianna Beretta Molla. Where the road from Magenta in-

Feast days in Mesero



Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also called the feast of Santa Maria

First Sunday
in February.
With craftwork
and local produce fair.



The old parish church of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, Mesero.



Shrine to Madonna Addolorata e San Bernardo, Mesero.

▼
**Feast of patron
St. Bernard**

Last Sunday in August.
With traditional
Fair-market.

tersects the one for Casorezzo and Ossona, the shrine to **Madonna Addolorata e San Bernardo** is a baroque 17th century building standing on the site of an earlier church. The church has always been municipal property: it belongs to the local government instead of the parish.

More

An angel at my table

A series of information boards in Magenta – starting at the church of St. Martin, where Giovanna Francesca Beretta was baptized and, in 1955, married Pietro Molla – and the cemetery in Mesero, where she has lain in the family vault since 1962, summarize the story of the person most venerated in the Magenta area today, canonized by the Catholic Church on 16th May 2004 and now known as St. Gianna Beretta Molla.

Always known as much for the calmness of her character as for the intensity of her devotion to her religion, remembered by everyone for her kindness and altruism, Giovanna Beretta, a paediatrician, discovered while expecting her fourth child that a uterine fibroid risked causing her serious problems if she did not terminate the pregnancy. These problems did indeed arise, and shortly after the success-



ful birth of little Gianna Emanuela, blood-poisoning dramatically ended a life devoted to God and to others.

In the sermon he delivered at her canonization, Pope John Paul II observed that “Gianna Beretta Molla was a simple yet decidedly significant messenger of Divine Love. A few days before her marriage, she wrote in a letter to her future husband: ‘Love is the most beautiful sentiment that the Lord has placed in men’s hearts’. Following the example of Christ, who ‘having loved

his own... He loved them to the end’ (John 13,1), this holy wife and mother remained heroically faithful to the commitment she undertook on her wedding day. The extreme sacrifice that sealed her life shows how only those who have the courage to give themselves completely to God and to their fellow beings make the most of themselves.”

Inveruno

City Council website: www.comuneinveruno.it
kms 30.2 from Milan. Map: A 2-3

Immediately north of Mesero, next to Casorezzo, the village is the locality known in the Middle Ages as Euruno that belonged to the Chapter of St. Ambrose of Milan, and which would become the fiefdom of the Arconati fami-



Villa Tanzi Mira, Town Hall, Inveruno.

ly in 1518. It was certainly founded in ancient times as confirmed by the discovery, during digging work in Via Varese, of a necropolis dating back to the time of the Roman Empire. The parish church of **San Martino** must be almost a thousand years old since it was mentioned in 1177 as a canon's house.

The Town Hall and public library are located not far from the square – in Via Senatore Giovanni Marcora – housed in the 18-19th century **Villa Tanzi Mira**, which was the home of the mayor Gaetano Tanzi Mira in the early 20th century and has now been handsomely restored. The courtyard can be visited, the large 1759 wine-press is interesting and the park is open to the public.



St. Martin in Inveruno

Regularly commemorated for the last four centuries, the Protector of Inveruno has now lent his name to a modern farming and livestock Fair with exhibitors from all over the region and beyond. It is held every year in November, and covers an area of 30 thousand square metres.



Church of San Martino, Inveruno.

Busto Garolfo

City Council website: www.comune.bustogarolfo.mi.it
kms 30.6 from Milan. Map: A 3

Feast days in Busto Garolfo

Spring Fair



First weekend in March and following Monday. Established for goods and cattle at the time of the podestas. Historical costume procession, flag throwing and exhibitions.

North of the Villoresi Canal, which runs through municipal property, Busto Garolfo is a compact little town made up of two or three-storey buildings with courtyards, historical villas and rural settlements. Traditional agricultural activities, especially vineyards and mulberry growing, gradually dropped off.

In the Middle Ages, the village was owned by the Milanese canons and stood on the border between the territories of Milan and Seprio, and an area where the Order of the Humiliati was very active. Overlooking Piazza Lombardia in the middle of town is the parish church of **Santi Salvatore e Margherita**, with a façade dated 1961 that does not do it justice. It was built during the 16th century on the site of a church that was already standing in the 13th century and

More.

The Villoresi Canal

Created not for navigation but for irrigating the land – the Villoresi Canal links the Ticino and the Adda, flowing for 86 kms across the land around Milan, solving the periodical problems caused by a lack of water that would otherwise badly affect the area. It was named after its main advocate, Eugenio Villoresi, an engineer from Monza who had started promoting the project in 1863. He put forward the plan for it in 1868 but did not live long enough to see the

first section inaugurated in 1884. Today, the canal supplies an impressive system of trenches branching out over approx. 1,400 kms and controlled by 24 pumping plants.

Long stretches of the tow-path are suitable for bicycles, thanks to works financed by the Province of Milan. A classical itinerary is the one from Garbagnate Milanese to Parabiago, where the Parco del Roccio takes in nearby Arluno, Busto Garolfo, Canegrate, Casorezzo and Nerviano.





Villa Villoresi Rescalli, Busto Garolfo.

contains paintings by Giovanni Crespi known as Il Cerano and wooden choir-stalls dated 1642. On one side of Piazza Lombardia, the tree-lined approach leading to **Villa Villoresi Rescalli** is no longer in use. Both the elegant drive and the porticoed portion of the residence, now municipal property, date back to



Villa Comunale, Busto Garolfo.

the 17th century. At 25, Via Magenta, which is just off the square, the **Villa Comunale** is a group of buildings with a park – open to the public – the 18th century main body of which has, over time, been the residence of the Brentano, Litta Modignani and, later, the Ron-danini families. Leaving the square by way of Via Cadorna, you can reach the church of **St. Remigio**, restored in the 20th century.

At the end of Via Vincenzo Monti, on the corner with Viale dei Tigli which leads to the Provincial Road for Casorezzo, stands the now rebuilt **Oratory of Our Lady of Snows** original-ly founded in mid-17th century.

Folk festivity

In Olcella.
With fireworks.

Feast of the patron Our Lady of the Rosary

First Sunday
in October.

Autumn fair

Second Monday
after 11th November
(St. Martin's Day).

Feast of the patron St. Gertrude

In Olcella. First
Sunday of Advent
(Ambrosian Rite).
As old as
the Spring Fair.

Live from Busto



Millefrutti

Organically grown forest
fruits (picking by visitors).
Via per Busto Arsizio
Phone: 3388615607



Andrea Ghidini

Cascina San Francesco.
Holiday farm house with
horse riding
and direct sales.
Phone: 0331567408



Agriturismo Cultural Didattico Murnee

In the Parco del Roccolo,
a family-run grain
and cattle farm. Guided
tours of the museum
full of farm equipment
available plus
educational activities.
Via Villoresi 40.
Phone: 0331567428,
ziogino@murnee.it

Casorezzo

City Council website: www.comune.casorezzo.mi.it
kms 27.3 from Milan. Map: A 3

The Parco del Roccolo

A green lung comprising approximately 15 km² of level, cultivated land plus **woods**, meadows, irrigation canals and **wetlands**, the Parco del Roccolo is shared among the municipalities of Arluno, Busto Garolfo, Canegrate, Casorezzo, Nerviano and Parabiago. It is not a totally protected area, but a territory where natural environments are safeguarded and improved whilst preserving and promoting **agriculture**. The name of the park is the word used in the past for a special set-up – an oval clearing, a small tower, a hedge, two parallel rows of trees, a thicket pruned on the slant and a net – terribly effective for snaring birds using a method that has now been banned for years. The idea for the Parco del Roccolo came up



Parco del Roccolo, Casorezzo.

Situated between the municipalities of Busto Garolfo and Arluno, the village is possibly the successor of an ancient Domus Retius (House of the Nets), later mentioned in me-



Oratory of San Salvatore, Casorezzo

dieval records as Casobrecio, Caxoritio, Cosorezo or similar names. Its roots are at least Ancient Roman seeing that urns, amphoras, tear-bottles and a Flavian Age coin were found here in 1920. A peaceful little avenue, originally a stretch of

country road in the direction of Busto Garolfo, puts into perspective the most tangible evidence of how old Casorezzo is. In the Oratory of **San Salvatore** there are still some important 11th century frescoes, half-way between the Ottonian and Romanesque eras. Other frescoes date back to the 16th century.

In the middle of the village, the parish church of **San Giorgio**

More

Fashion etc., for spending or learning

North of the Magenta-Milan route there are several places worth visiting that have nothing to do with Nature but are, nevertheless, interesting for different reasons.

In Casorezzo, home to the Zucchi textile industry, there is an absolutely unique collection of **hand blocks** for printed fabrics. Around 56,000 blocks in the most fascinating shapes, corresponding to 12,000 drawings, witness the evolution of European taste in fabrics between 1785 and 1935. Next door is the less historical factory outlet. In Marcallo, the more modest Borsettificio (handbag factory) sells sample collections and shoes, bags and belts seconds, including designer labels.

In Arluno, at Mila Schön's outlet, articles by one of Italy's top designers are on sale.

• Zucchi Collection Museum

Via Ossona 22, Casorezzo.
Phone: 0290255230

infocollection@zucchicollection.org

www.zucchicollection.org

Visits by appointment

• Zucchi Factory Outlet

Via per Ossona 22, Casorezzo.

Phone: 0290255503

9.30am-6.30pm, Mondays 2.30pm-6.30pm, Saturdays 9.00am-12.30pm and 2.30pm-6.30pm, closed Sundays

• Borsettificio di Marcallo

Via Clerici 19, Marcallo con Casone.

Phone: 029761141

2.30pm-7.00pm,
Saturdays 9.30am-12.30pm
and 2.30pm-7.00pm, closed Sundays

• Mila Schön Factory Outlet

Via Guido Rossa 1, Arluno.

Phone: 0290119004

10.30am-7.30pm,
Saturdays 9.30am-7.30pm,
closed Sundays and Mondays

Martire has inherited the name of the castle with its own chapel that is no longer standing, but not its position: the present building was erected in 1913. In the municipality of Casorezzo, on the road to Ossona, stands the factory belonging to the **Zucchi** textiles group



Church of San Giorgio Martire, Casorezzo.

which was founded in Milan in 1920 and houses an extraordinary, historical collection of blocks for hand-printing fabric. A small number of these tools are on display in the Zucchi shop at 4, Via Ugo Foscolo, Milan.

▼
in the early 1990's and in 1994, it was recognized by the Lombardy Region as a Local Park of Multi-municipality Interest. The administrative offices, with an Information Point, are in Casorezzo. The entrances are clearly signposted on the surrounding Provincial Roads. Some of the possible itineraries are described on the park's website.

Parco del Roccolo

Head office

Via Umberto I 11,
Casorezzo

8.30am-12.30pm
and 2.00pm-6.00pm,
Thursdays 8.30am-

12.30pm; closed
Saturdays,
Sundays and feast days.

Phone: 0290381002

www.parcodelroccolo.it

Ossona

City Council website: www.comunediossona.it
kms 26.6 from Milan. Map: A-B 3



This large, agricultural and industrial centre a short distance from Magenta, boasts – like nearby Casorezzo – Ancient Roman roots. Archaeological artefacts discovered in the area are to be found in the Guido Sutermeister Museum in Legnano. In the centre of the village, under an imposing early 20th century



Oratory of San Bartolomeo, Ossona.

Honey from Ossona



Massimo Mereghetti

Direct sale of honey,
propolis, beeswax, pollen
and royal jelly,
8.00am-8.00pm;
closed on Sundays.
Via Kennedy 6.
Phone: 0290380707,
massimomereghetti@virgilio.it

tower, the square takes its name from the 16-17th century **Villa Litta Modignani**, a magnificent building that used to belong to the local rulers and is now the Town Hall. Next to the villa you can see the neo-classical façade of the Oratory of **San Bartolomeo**, a small building which is actually much older, since it was erected in the 12th century. A little to one side, stands the grand baroque parish church of **San Cristoforo**, already mentioned in 12th century records.

Santo Stefano Ticino

City Council website: www.comune.santostefanoticino.it
kms 24 from Milan. Map: B 4

As the southern point of a triangle of villages that includes Ossona and Arluno, modest Santo Stefano, an ancient right-of-way belonging to the parish of Parabiago, is today a quiet farming village that no longer has any of the palaces built by the local rulers of old, the Lampugnani family.

The most interesting building from a historical point of view is the small church of **Santo Stefano al Lazzaretto**, with its 16th century style and its frescoes.



Fresco in the church of Santo Stefano,
Santo Stefano Ticino.

Mulberries in Santo Stefano



Il Gelso

Farm open to visitors
with restaurant and
recreational activities.
Via Leopardi 18.
Phone: 0297271877



Church of Santo Stefano, Santo Stefano Ticino.

Arluno

City Council website: www.comune.arluno.mi.it
kms 23.6 from Milan. Map: A-B 4

The wwf Regional Reserve Woodland in Vanzago

The environment of the Riserva Naturale Regionale Bosco WWF di Vanzago – of which the WWF owns over 143 hectares – is the one typically found in so-called “dry upland”, with expanses of water of different depths covering a total of 12 hectares, surrounded by a landscape full of permanent meadows, hedges, rows of trees and tree-lined paths. The **woodland** is full of centuries-old oaks, English oaks, elms, field maples, hornbeams, lime trees, wild cherry and chestnut trees. Lily-of-the-valley and periwinkle stand out in the undergrowth. During the migration season and in winter, the expanses of water are populated by cormorants, moorhens, teals, pochards, mallards, blue herons, night herons and little grebes. The woodland (Bosco) is home to various species including the green woodpecker and the red woodpecker, the golden oriole, the tawny owl, the common owl, the sparrowhawk and the goshawk; among the mammals you can find the weasel, the beech marten, the otter,

Although it is situated in a territory intersected by the A4 Highway and the Milan-Turin railway line and close to industrialized areas, Arluno has a charming historic centre and plays an important role in the conservation of the environment. The green areas surrounding it – included in the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano –

More.

Riserva Naturale Regionale Bosco wwf di Vanzago



Guided tours only, approx. two hours long, accessible also to the disabled, all year round except August. Educational activities for schools. Preparation and serving of produce to the public.
Phone: 029341761, boscovanzago@wwf.it
www.wwf.it/oasi





Palazzo Pozzobonelli Scala, Arluno.

form a sort of ecological corridor linking the northern and southern agricultural areas in the province of Milan.

In the square, a stone balustrade encloses the cobblestoned area in front of the parish church of **Santi Pietro e Paolo**, built between 1762 and 1769 by Giulio Galliori, the future supervisor of the Duomo's Veneranda Fabbrica in Milan. It was commissioned by Cardinal Giuseppe Pozzobonelli, Archbishop of Milan and a member of the family to which the small town owes a great deal of its history.

Opposite the parish church is the 18th century **Palazzo Pozzobonelli Scala**, with a classical U-shaped lay-out. In Piazza Europa, in the direction of Vittuone, stands the larger **Palazzo Pozzobonelli Lambertenghi Dell'Acqua**, built by the Pozzobonelli family at the end of the 18th century.

The **College of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart** is a mid-19th century construction with a porticoed colonnade where St. Francesca Cabrini developed her religious vocation. Around 200 hectares of land belonging to the municipalities of Arluno, Pogliano Milanese and Vanzago – once the woodlands where the Visconti and Sforza families hunted – have been protected since 1979 as the **Riserva Naturale Regionale Bosco WWF di Vanzago**.

▼
the dormouse, the European hare and a large number of goats who are left one of the four mowings of organically-grown hay. The Nature Reserve directly manages around 50 hectares of arable land used for organic farming which produces rye, corn for polenta, corn for feed, rice, oats, fodder and



honey. In the Visitors' Centre area there is a **Wild Animal Rescue Centre** (mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians) and a Local Experiments Station. The wood can be reached by car following directions for Vanzago from the Rho exit of the A4 Milan-Turin Highway, by bicycle or on foot from the local station of the Pregnana-Vanzago Passante Ferroviario (rail loop).

Vittuone

City Council website: www.comune.vittuone.mi.it
kms 20.9 from Milan. Map: B 4

Horses and bulls in Vittuone



**Azienda Agricola
Sebastiano Canavesio**



Cascina Resta,
Trails for horse riding,

Situated between Arluno and State Road 11, this small town is known in the Milan area especially for the penchant for industry it has shown ever since the 1920's: the most famous companies with factories there are Tosi, Tecnomasio Italiano Brown Boveri (now ABB) and Uniroyal. In actual fact, Vittuone has solid roots in the agricultural sector: in the 19th century, it produced grains, fodder, silkworms and grapes. And the countryside farthest from State Road 11 is all farms and woods with numerous springs.

In medieval documents, the name of the village was recorded as Vitudone, Vicotudone, Victuono or Victudone, and it is men-



Church of the Annunziata, Vittuone.

stabling for horses,
equestrian therapy.
Guided tours for schools.
Phone: 0290260580,
s.canavesio@tin.it

tioned in the records of the Duomo's Veneranda Fabbrica in Milan which owned property there between 1347 and 1486. In centrally located Piazza Italia, the parish



Villa Sormani Annoni Resta, Vittuone.



Villa Sormani (detail), Vittuone.

church of the **Annunciazione** is a 19th century building designed by Giacomo Moraglia. A short distance from the parish church, a street with houses on either side off the small Piazza Resta leads to the 17th century **Villa Sormani Annoni Resta**, possibly designed by Francesco Maria Ricchino.

In Piazza Venini, **Villa Venini** looks like a 19th century building today, but it was actually erected at least two centuries earlier and was probably once a monastery run by the Benedictine Order.



Cascinetta di Enrico Porta

Cascina Cascinetta. Livestock raising farm with heifers and bulls, pigs, chickens and rabbits. Restaurant and sale of pork products, poultry, milk and eggs. Via Cascinetta 1. Phone: 029024340



Sedriano

City Council website: www.comune.sedriano.mi.it
kms 19.7 from Milan. Map: B 4

In Roveda

A hamlet slightly to the south, linked by a cycle



path, – the church of Our Lady of Sorrows was built in 1775 on the ruins of a pilgrims' hostel founded by the Humiliati Order in 1270.



Villa Colombo, Sedriano.

While the built-up area more or less forms a rectangle linking Vittuone, the A4 Highway, Bareggio and State Road 11, the agricultural part of Sedriano – south of the 11 – is open countryside, with springs and mills around the Cascina Legoratta.

Its roots date back to at least the late-Middle Ages, as confirmed by the discovery of Longobard artefacts, whilst at the end of the Modern Age it was a summer retreat for the noble families of Milan.

Villa Colombo, an elegant 18th century residence with a small park, now faces rows of modern homes around Piazza del Seminatore.

Piazza Cavour is the site of the Oratory of **San Bernardino**, a small 16th century building with a frescoed interior (one of the frescoes is attributed to Aurelio Luini) The 15th century bell tower belonged to an earlier church.



The Oratory of San Bernardino, Sedriano.

Bareggio

City Council website: www.comune.bareggio.mi.it
Pro Loco: piazza Cavour 46/1. Phone: 0290364434
Website: www.prolocobareggio.it
kms 19.7 from Milan. Map: B 5

Considerably extended in the second half of the 20th century, especially south of State Road 11, with new housing typical of the area surrounding Milan, Bareggio is today's name for medieval Baradiglum or Baradeglum (possibly from the Celtic word *barros* meaning bush or bramble) which was ruled directly by the bishops in Milan.

Set in the countryside in the direction of Sedriano, nearby **Bareggino** is the locality that has, throughout history, been preferred by Milanese nobles as a summer retreat. Here, near the springs Laghetto and Barona, you can find the 17th century villas of the Sormani Fumagalli Marietti family and Gallina Radice Fossati. Slightly farther south stands the 19th century Villa Vittadini. In the main square, the most interesting historic building in the village is **Palazzo Visconti di Modrone Radice Fossati**, built in 1647, purchased by the local government in 1977 and now used as the Town Hall.

From producer to consumer



Gaetano Vismara

via Don Severino
Fracassi, Bareggio
Direct sale of meats.
Phone: 0290361535



Palazzo Visconti di Modrone Radice Fossati, Bareggio.

A route guide

A joint effort by the local tourist boards in Bareggio, Cornaredo, Cusago and Pregnana Milanese produced the Guida ai percorsi a ovest di Milano (Guide to routes west of Milan), a publication suggesting itineraries – of artistic interest or focussing on courtyards, cascine, windmills or springs – through villages and the countryside in the area.

More

In the south, in the direction of Cislano and Cusago, the land belonging to Bareggio includes one of the most important nature reserves making up the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano. The **Riserva Naturale Parziale Biologica Fontanile Nuovo**, created in 1984, protects around 40 hectares with its typical lower Lombardy spring. Guided tours (mornings only), best from October to December and February to mid-April, can be booked phoning 0277403461.



Cusago

City Council website: www.comune.cusago.mi.it
kms 14.4 from Milan. Map: C 5

Feast days in Cusago

Antiques fair and market

Second Sunday
of each month,
except January,
July and August.

St. Anthony's bonfire

17th January.

Ambrosian Rite Carnival

The Saturday before
Ash Wednesday.

With street performers,
puppeteers and make-up
artists from Venice.

Feast of St. Vincent

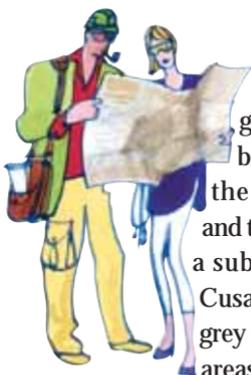
First Sunday in May.
Stalls, games, dancing in
the evening, musical and
literary events, closing
procession.

Inter-quarter Palio and medieval days

Early June.



With medieval market,
procession in costumes,
flag throwers, falconry,
target striking
competitions with lances,
javelin throwing and the
Joust of the Saracen.



An integral part of the city of Milan geographically speaking (it can be reached straight from the Milano Baggio quarter and tourist guides describe it as a suburb of the metropolis) Cusago has anything but the grey look of so many suburban areas. In the centre of the village, **Piazza Soncino**, a very green and spacious square with a country air about it, is surrounded by the Castle, the parish church and a few fairly unobtrusive modern blocks of flats.

The **Castello Visconteo**, which overlooks the square, is a typical example of a building on the decline. It really has seen better days – closed up as it is, with the first floor gallery filled in to stop it collapsing – but those days were important. With its rectangular lay-out, one centrally-positioned tower and a portcullis, though it has no moat, the building is considered one of the best examples of castle-architecture in the re-



Church of Santi Fermo e Rustico, Cusago.



Castello Visconteo, Cusago.

gion. Originally erected in 1370 as a country residence for Bernabò Visconti in a wooded area particularly suitable for hunting, today, it bears the style imposed on it during the Sforza era by Ludovic the Moor when it underwent a radical conversion that turned it into a palace. Filippo Maria Visconti had had it linked to Milan by a canal – navigable at the time – that flowed into the Naviglio Grande in the vicinity of Gaggiano. Opposite the castle stands the parish church of **Santi Fermo e Rustico**, built in the 17th century but started at least two centuries earlier. Its ceiling and some of the artworks – paintings, a wooden carving and the ex-voto – are worthy of mention.

On the road to Milan, at the top of Via De Gasperi which leads to Monzoro, stands the ex-church of **Santa Maria la Rossa di Monzoro**, which along with the buildings beside it, is all that remains of an Olivetan monastery founded in 1359. The church was rebuilt in the 15th century, again in Gothic style, and contains a fresco of Christ and the Evangelists. Another fresco which used to grace the exterior is now in the museum of the Sforza Castle in Milan. Today, the building is a private residence. The wood known as the **Bosco di Cusago**, part of the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, is a very rare example of the environment that used to be – both for flora and fauna – typical of the Po Valley.

▼
Grape Festival
Early September.



Feast of Santa Maria Bambina
In Monzoro.
Mid-September.

Halloween
31st. October. Country festival with witches, games and puppeteers.

Christmas market
Second Sunday in December.

Advent calendar
December.
Christmas pictures uncovered day by day. Plus Santa's Sleigh the second Sunday, display of mini-cribs, concerts.

For further details consult the Town Hall's website www.comune.cusago.mi.it

Cisliano

City Council website: www.comune.cisliano.mi.it
kms 18.4 from Milan. Map: C 5

Farmhouses in Cisliano



Azienda Agricola Chiara Dufour

Cascina Scanna. Rice-growing and nurseries of trees for high quality wood. Direct sale of rice and corn meal, with the possibility of home delivery in Milan (town only). Available soon: bed & breakfast, accommodation and cultural and educational activities. Phone: 3880602003, chiara.dufour@libero.it



Agriturismo Cascina Forestina

Restaurant (risottos, boiled meats, tripe and organic vegetables, closed Sunday evenings and Mondays) and overnight accommodation available on a grain farm surrounded by the Bosco di Riazzolo. Courses. Educational visits. Direct sale of vegetables and honey on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings. Phone: 0290389263, info@laforestina.it, www.laforestina.it



Half-way between Cusago and Albairate – along an old road to Abbiategrasso some little way from the Naviglio Grande – Cisliano is a small village which was owned for a few decades (from 1750 to 1782) by the Charterhouse in Pavia. It is certainly of ancient origin as



Church of San Giovanni Battista, Cisliano.

proved, in 1903, with the discovery of a Roman Age necropolis and medieval fortifications. The closely-woven system of springs has greatly favoured the development of agricultural activities and around the territory, there are still typical settlements like the Cascina Scanna, of 16th century origin, with the frescoed Oratory of San Bernardo and the Cascina San Giacomo, with its 14th century chapel.

In the village, the parish church of **San Giovanni Battista** is the result of the late-18th century renovation of a much older place of worship, later extended in 1903. Inside, there is a painting by Camillo Procaccini.

On Provincial Road 226 in the direction of Corbetta stands the neo-medieval **Cascina Manzola**, known today as the Torre dei Gelsi (Mulberry Tower), built around a group of ancient buildings.

Corbetta

City Council website: www.comune.corbetta.mi.it
Pro Loco: piazza XXV Aprile 4. Phone: 3925755486
E-mail: prolococorbetta@libero.it
kms 24.8 from Milan. Map: B 3-4

A short distance from Magenta, immediately south of State Road 11, the high number of villas with parks – the favourite residences of Milanese nobles of old – makes Corbetta a well-known and extremely pleasant tourist attraction.

Today's lively little town is the descendant of the ancient Curia Picta of the Longobard era and the medieval Castrum Sancti Ambrosii, leading communities in the parish and a strategic outpost for the Archbishop of Milan.



Collegiata di San Vittore, Corbetta.

However, its origins may date back to Celtic times.

In Piazza del Popolo, where several streets meet, one's attention is drawn to the 19th century neo-classical columned façade of the collegiate church of **San Vittore**, built at the end of the 18th century over the ruins of older places of worship. Fragments of Roman and medieval sculptures are set into the outside walls.

Feast days in Corbetta

Antiques market

First Sunday of every month in Piazza Borsellino.

Carnival

Saturday before Ash Wednesday.

Feast of St. Joseph

In Castellazzo.
19th March.

Feast of Pardon

First Thursday after Easter.

Feast of the Apparition or of the First Miracle

17th April.

Environment-friendly development festival

The week after Easter, from Thursday to Sunday.

Feast of the Associations

1st May.



Villa Borri Manzoli, Corbetta.

▼
**A walk among
the villas**



First Sunday in May.

**Feast of St. Victor
the Martyr**
8th May.

Feast of St. Bernard
In Soriano. First Sunday
after Ferragosto
(mid-August holiday).

Feast of St. Vincent
In Cerello.
Last Sunday in August.

**Festa delle Leve
(Flags show)**
In September
every four years.

Beside the square, a wide wrought iron gate stands in front of **Villa Borri Manzoli**, started at the beginning of the 18th century by an important local family using materials salvaged from the demolition of the castle. The façade looking towards the square, in baroque open-face brickwork, contrasts with the more imposing, neo-classical one overlooking the Italian garden. In the rooms, there are still frescoes, reliefs and stucco work.

Alongside the collegiate church, a boundary



Villa Frisiani Mereghetti, Corbetta.

wall and blind gates tend to hide the park and buildings of **Villa Frisiani Mereghetti**, with a main body designed in 1653 by Francesco Maria Ricchino. Inside, where there are magnificent frescoes by Giovanni Stefano Danedi known as Il Montalto, Carlo Francesco Nu-

volone and Federico Zuccari, the grand staircase is joined to an older wing which was originally part of the castle.

At 2, Via San Vittore – actually in Piazza Corbas, where the street widens slightly near Piazza del Popolo dedicated to the French town twinned with Corbetta – **Casa Corbellini** or Castelletto is the result of a series of interventions by Piero Portaluppi, one of Italy's most important 20th century architects. A building erected on the castle ruins was first restored (between 1941 and 1942), then, on two occasions (in 1951 and again between 1959 and 1963) extended.

At 25, Via Cattaneo – between Piazza Corbas the centrally located Corso Garibaldi – the local Administration of Corbetta has its offices in the grandiose **Villa Frisiani Olivares Ferrario**, built in the 18th century on the ruins of a medieval monastery belonging to the Order of the Humiliati. Waters from the Madonna Spring run through the English garden at the rear. Next door, at N. 27, what used to be the

Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows

In the Isola quarter.
Second Sunday
in September.



*Casa Corbellini,
Corbetta.*

For further information contact the **Pro Loco** (local tourist board), Piazza XXV Aprile 4, open Tuesdays 9.00pm-11.00pm and Saturdays 10.00am-12 noon. Phone: 3925755486. prolococorbetta@libero.it



Villa Frisiani Olivares Ferrario, Corbetta.

Pardon in Corbetta

It is 17th April 1555, the first Thursday after Easter. The children are playing bowls in front of the small church of San Nicolao where there is a fresco of the Virgin and Child. One of them, Giovanni Angelo Novello, was born a mute, but he blurted out his first words in amazement when he saw the Baby Jesus from the fresco, followed by his Mother, materialize and approach him in a friendly manner.

Seven years later, with the "Bull of Pardon", Pope Pius IV recognized the apparition and granted a plenary indulgence every year on 17th April.

This is the reason for Corbetta's best known feast day and its Shrine.

guest-quarters have become the independent Villa Zari Mereghetti, with illusionist paintings on the front.

At 11, Via Madonna – which intersects Corso Garibaldi – stands **Villa Carones Massari Pisani Dossi**, the design of which was recently attributed to Francesco Croce. Painted on the hearth inside are the insignia of the Count of Giulay, the Austro-Hungarian commanding officer defeated in Magenta in 1859.

Behind the façade built by Luigi Moretti in 1883, the Shrine to the **Madonna dei Miracoli** is, in a certain sense, made up of two churches. The older, 12th

century one was the San Nicolao linked to the Perdono di Corbetta, while the upper church is an addition started in 1744 by Donnino Riccardi

with the help of Francesco Croce. The fresco showing the miracle, painted in 1475 by Gregorio Zavattari, is now inside, like the paintings by Montalto, Melchiorre Gherardini, Zoppo da Lugano, Carlo Francesco Nuvolone and Giulio Cesare Procaccini.

At 38, Via Francesco Mussi – which intersects Corso Garibaldi – **Villa Pisani Dossi** is a late 19th century reinvention of the 15th century Lombard style. It still houses the library and art collection of Carlo Alberto Pisani Dossi, journalist, archaeologist, writer, diplomat and supporter of the Scapigliatura



The Shrine to the Madonna dei Miracoli, Corbetta.



Villa Pisani Dossi, Corbetta.



Palazzo Brentano Carones , Corbetta.

Movement. Many of the archeological artefacts come from digs he carried out personally in Albairate and Cisliano. To organize a visit, contact the Gruppo Archeologico Milanese, Via Bagutta 12, Milan, phone: 02796372.

To one side of Via Mussi, fragments of historic buildings have been partially salvaged in the small public park in **Largo Cellere**.



The small public park in Largo Cellere, Corbetta.

Today, in Via San Sebastiano, the Istituto San Girolamo Emiliani is housed in **Palazzo Brentano Carones**, built by Francesco Croce between 1732 and 1738. Inside, there are still frescoes and mythological paintings by Giovanni Angelo Borroni, Mattia Bortoloni, Giuseppe Pellegrini, Ferdinando Porta, Giovanni Battista Sassi and Giovanni Antonio Cucchi.

Good shopping in Corbetta



Emilia Pastori
Cascina Lucini.



Direct sale of sausages and meats.

Phone: 029779664



Aldo Parini
Cascina Carlotta.
Direct sales of meats.
Via Giuseppe Parini 75.
Phone: 0297271786

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MILAN AND ITS PROVINCE

