

MILAN AND ITS PROVINCE

EXPLORING DA VINCI'S COUNTRYSIDE

From Trezzo to San Colombano
River Adda, Martesana Canal



Provincia
di Milano



Provincia di Milano

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Foreword



It is well known that Milan is a *brand* famous for international tourism.

Milan is a *brand* - to use a term borrowed from the language of communications - known all around the world for design, Italian fashion, the immense Gothic cathedral with its six thousand statues, the unequalled opera at La Scala, the gigantic cartoon by Raffaello in the Ambrosiana Library, Michelangelo's moving Rondonani Pieta in the Sforza Castle and the Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci.

All this is already familiar. It is even frequently underrated.

On the other hand, it is a pity that Milan is not famous - or at least not yet famous - for its countryside which is made up of exceptionally fertile farmland, reclaimed and put to use ten centuries ago with the painstaking (and crucial for its future role on a national scale) work of thousands of monks belonging to various religious orders.

This Milanese countryside is fertile and productive thanks to water: water that flows down from the Alps, is channelled into the Navigli, supplies historical hydroelectric plants that rise like cathedrals, that stops and re-starts its flow in the locks along the canals, that makes for pleasant landscapes and spectacular views, runs through the Bassa, or Lower Po valley, and reflects the boats and mirrors the bicycles along the towpaths.

It is a pity, and in a certain way strange, because the history of this countryside intertwined, and often continues to intertwine with the roots of Milan as a brand.

The industrial design produced in our provinces stems from a very old manufacturing tradition which has, for over a century, been supplied with its essential driving force by the hydroelectric plants mentioned above. The fashion industry, which regularly attracts swarms of journalists and vast amounts of foreign currency, has its roots in the textile mills along the Adda, the most important river flowing through the Milanese countryside. The marble used in the building of the Duomo was brought to the city via the Navigli. And it was on the banks of the Adda that even a world-famous icon in the history of Western art like the *Last Supper* may have been envisaged while he was staying in the country as a guest of the Melzi family in their villa on the Adda.

The story of da Vinci himself - born out of wedlock, a brilliant outsider with no benefactors, an immigrant to Milan looking for work - is an excellent indicator of the timeless ability this Lombard metropolis has always shown and taught: the ability to welcome, help settle and offer space and opportunity to anyone, provided they are willing to work. This happened to generations of migrants, first from other regions of Italy, then from abroad. It happened to dozens of designers and creators of fashion in the city's recent past. It is only right to remember that five centuries ago, with the free spirit that was typical of the Lombardy countryside, this opportunity to be welcomed and appreciated was taken up also by a nobody like a certain Leonardo. A Leonardo who, not having a surname, was simply called by the name of the place he came from: Vinci.

Welcome to Milan, dear Leonardo, and don't worry. Rest assured that we will always recognize the full extent of your talent.

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Guida Sapori di Provincia - Settore Agricoltura
Elenco provinciale degli agriturismi

Introduction

For almost twenty years, from 1482 to 1500, our land was home to one of the greatest geniuses in the history of mankind: Leonardo da Vinci who, while at the court of Ludovic the Moor, produced many of his most famous works, from the Virgin of the Rocks to the Last



*Executive Councillor
for Tourism*
Antonio Oliverio

Supper, from literary compositions to his contributions to the Duomo and the Sforza Castle.

A great deal of da Vinci's exceptional talent was expressed precisely in the part of the territory described in this guide. In fact, the Tuscan artist spent a lot of his time at Villa Melzi, very close to the Adda river and the Martesana Canal (which had been diverted from the Adda a few years earlier to import materials from the Bergamo area), studying its locks, designing bridges and ferries (which were to turn this river into an important route for carrying iron

from Lecco), inspiring some of his works (like for example the background for his Virgins of the Rocks), writing and leaving copies of his famous notes on culture and technology known today as the Atlantic Codex.

A Leonardo da Vinci in close contact with nature and its waterways; a friendly nature that lent itself to the commercial requirements of the time, that had already turned Milan into the European capital of industry, trade and technological progress.



Five hundred years later, Milan is still an international financial capital, but it is forgetting its own territory. It seems that the same territory, with which Leonardo da Vinci had entered into symbiosis, choosing to spend the longest period of his life, no longer has the same significance in the third millennium.

Indeed, over time the ecological and tourism value of this vast green area to the east of Milan has been neglected. The purpose of this guide and this series of “Luoghi da Vivere” is that of rediscovering the magnificent territory around us.

We began with the Abbiategrasso-Magenta area which became the first Tourist System of the Province of Milan. Our next goal is to extend the System and take in the rest of the territory making up the Province, starting with the Adda-Martesana area.

A real self-contained region to the east of the metropolis, with its own historical-geographical identity, a great hydro-agricultural tradition (attested by the presence of the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano), marked by a specific protected area of environmental value.

On the edge of this territory, in the Province of Bergamo, stands the historic Villaggio Crespi, a company town founded in the 19th century and included in the Unesco in the World Heritage List in 1995.

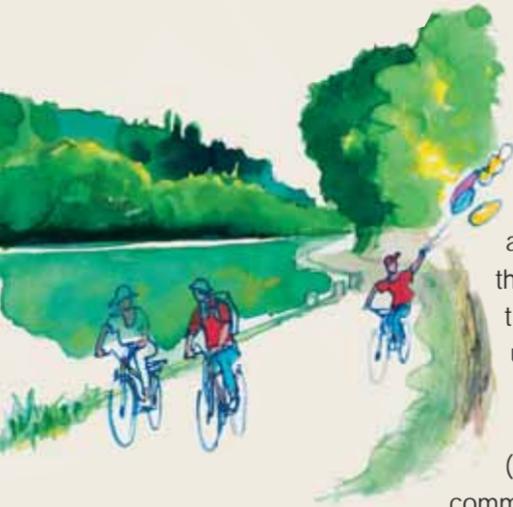
Few are aware that the Province of Milan is all this and more.

Executive Councillor for Tourism
Antonio Oliverio

Trezzo, the Adda river and Da Vinci's canals

Over the last few centuries, the image of too many Lombardy rivers has been reduced to that of just a waterway to be driven over on ring roads and motorways. However, the **Adda** is still seen as a source of vitality and marked individuality.

Today – without wanting to offend any of the great rivers in the region – the name **Brembo** conjures up a picture of the advanced technology used in the car brakes manufacturing sector and the name **Serio** calls to mind the airport at Orio, the third (after Linate and Malpensa) in the communications network for the Milan area, and obviously the first for Bergamo.



The **Lambro**, which in the mid-1900s saw the launch of a great motor vehicle like the Lambretta, is now, here and there, just a ghost of its former self when it flows through Milan. On the other side of the metropolis, near the new Exhibition Centre at Rho-Pero, two of the three branches into which the **Olona** flows are artificial.

The Lombardy Plain is intersected by the left-hand tributaries of the river Po. The **Oglio** and the **Mincio** flow farther east, the latter already almost part of the Veneto region and an "offspring" of Lake Garda. To the west, the **Ticino** flows down from Switzerland marking the boundary between Lombardy and Piedmont.

On a regional scale, only the Ticino has a volume of water, natural environment, vitality and evocative powers comparable to those of the Adda. Moreover, the Adda is the longest of the tributaries of the Po and the fourth longest river in Italy. To use a

Along Lombardy's canals

The old Navigli, or canals, of the area around Milan are now once again open to water-borne traffic, nine centuries after the very first such canals were built. This important step forward has been made possible thanks to the work of **Navigli Lombardi s.c.a.r.l.**, a consortium set up by the Lombardy regional authorities, provincial governments of Milan and Pavia and relative Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Handicraft, the Est Ticino-Villoresi consortium and 47 out of the 51 municipalities through which the canals pass, including the capital cities of Milan and Pavia. Along the **Adda** navigation has always



been more problematic, especially for the three largest towns on the river – Trezzo, Vaprio and Cassano – which are among the members of the consortium. The scheme devised by Navigli Lombardi is aimed at improving conditions so that navigation may in the future be possible, particularly between Paderno and Robbiate: it also involves environmental enhancements, bike paths, restoration of old farmhouses and mills, development of cultural and tourism initiatives.

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term expressing “local pride”, if one can when referring to rivers, the Adda is an entirely Lombard waterway.

However, it was not also so. When – five or six centuries ago, but even up to 1796 – the Duchy of Milan was adjacent to the Republic of Venice, the Adda was a **border** river. The feudal state of the Visconti and Sforza families, later the Spanish dominion and lastly the Habsburg Empire in Italy, considered the course of the Adda as its political border with the Most Serene Republic of Venice. Indeed, it is due to this centuries-old role as a boundary that we owe the existence and endurance of the impressive castles in **Trezzo** and **Cassano**.

Besides Trezzo and Cassano, the trio of riverside towns along the Adda in Milanese territory includes **Vaprio**, more or less half-way between the other two. It

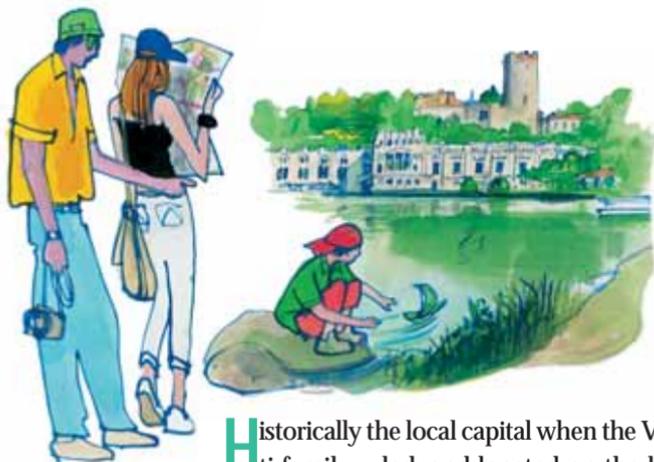


was here that at the time of the Sforza family's dominion, between the 1400s and 1500s, **Leonardo da Vinci** spend a good deal of his time in the service of the Duke of Milan as a guest of his pupil, Francesco Melzi, in the large family villa with a terraced garden sloping down to the river. If anyone is wondering which canalized river locks and ferries Da Vinci studied during that period, which crags he copied for the backgrounds of his *Virgins of the Rocks* or what happened to his notes – a basis of western artistic and technical culture – known today as the Atlantic Codex, the answer is visible to all. Here, on the Adda.



Trezzo sull'Adda

Information: ProLoco Trezzo sull'Adda, via Biffi 4 - info@prolocotrezzo.191.it
www.prolocotrezzo.com Phone 02-9092569 Fax 02-9092569
City Council website: www.comune.trezzosulladda.mi.it
km 34,7 from Milan. Map: C 7



How to reach Trezzo and Adda

Trezzo is situated about 33 kilometres to the east of Milan and can be reached by public transport: line 2 of the Metro (MM) as far as the stations at Gessate or Cologno Nord, and from there by public bus service run by ATM the Milan Public Transport Company. For information, call toll-free number 800016857 or

Historically the local capital when the Visconti family ruled, and located on the border with the Veneto region, the small town of Trezzo is a sight not to be missed for the tens of thousands of people who cross the Adda every day while driving along the highway between Milan and Bergamo. From the six-lane bridge that passes over the river, you can see the imposing square-based great tower of **Trezzo Castle** – floodlit at night – and, opposite, on the Bergamo side, both the built-up area of Capriate San Gervasio and, father south, the tall buildings of the extraordinary company town of **Crespi d'Adda**. Naturally, it is not advis-





able to drive and admire the views at the same time, but at least the passengers should consider for a few seconds that what they can see from the bridge, among the crags of the Adda, is steeped in history and nature.

For those who enjoy browsing and refuse to be hurried, Trezzo has quite a lot to offer visitors. It is not big (the population is around 12,000) but it is full of things to see and pleasant walks. Though a half-day exploration may be enough for a first visit, you will probably feel you want to return maybe hiring a bicycle and peddling along the peaceful banks of the Adda closed to motor vehicles, as far as the spectacular views around the Paderno Canal and beyond.

Near the road bridge crossing the Adda – and leading to Capriate San Gervasio, coming out of the province of Milan and entering that of



▼ visit the website www.atm-mi.it
 Other ATM lines link Trezzo to the Railway Stations in Sesto San Giovanni and Monza.
 Autostradale bus company link leaving from the Porta Garibaldi Railway Station in Milan.
 For further information phone 02637901 or visit the website www.autostradale.it
 By car, take the A4

▼ Milan-Venice highway
and exit at Trezzo
sull'Adda.
As for the main roads,
Trezzo is situated



just to the north
of the Padana Superiore
road, which you
can take in Milan, in the
Viale Palmanova
or San Raffaele Hospital
areas going in the
direction of Vimodrone (it
is the same route
as for the Martesana
Canal and Gorgonzola
areas). Follow
directions for Bergamo
as far as Vaprio,
veering northwards for
the last three or four
kilometres.

Bergamo – at 17, Via Sala you will find the **Hotel Trezzo**, which has a less formal entrance along the pretty Via Valverde. The first documents concerning this building date back to 1721, when it was registered as a “patrician residence with garden”. After it had changed hands several times and adjacent buildings were annexed to it from the second



Hotel Trezzo, the building dates back to 1721.

half of the 18th century, it had already been converted into a hotel-restaurant when it was purchased in 1889 by Enrico Redaelli, an engineer from Mezzago. The current refurbishment, with a spirited re-launching of the business, dates back to a few years ago. Worthy of



The Visconti Castle and the river Adda, Trezzo sull'Adda.

More

Longobards on the Adda

For the last thirty years or so, the legend that it was Teodolinda herself who called for the building of the first castle in Trezzo has been based on reality, following a rather exceptional archaeological find.

Between 1976 and 1978, five Longobard tombs of the VII century came to light near the Cascina San Martino – the only discovery of its kind in a closed, unprofaned area. It was imme-

diately clear that they were the graves of important men from their clothing and the objects buried with them: defensive and offensive weapons, delicately crafted gold ornaments, shreds of richly embroidered fabrics and magnificent seal-rings.

Twenty-five other, similar tombs, though not intact, were discovered a short distance away in the early 1990s. A reconstruction of a Longobard burial can be seen at the Visconti Castle.



note are the view of the roofs in the historical centre, the courtyard leading to the reception area and the wine bar.

Via Valverde slopes gently down to the gates of the park around the **Visconti Castle**, the most prestigious building in Trezzo and historically the greatest installation for military defence on the eastern border of the Duchy of Milan. Indeed, its position overlooking the river has made it strategically important ever since the Longobard era, while the first fortification of the rock would appear to date back to the VII century, and is traditionally considered to have been ordered by Queen Teodolinda as a defence against raids carried out by the Orobi tribe.

In 1158, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa ordered the building of the first three towers of the castle and a series of wooden bridges across the Adda: this work was de-

The original situla

The best-known proof of Trezzo's ancient roots lies in a situla of Celtic origin, that is to say a copper vase with a cover and thin handle, discovered here in the mid-1800s and datable between the IV-III century BC. Today, it is on display in the Civic Archaeological Collections in Milan. More prominent remains like pottery shards, fragments of bricks, sarcophagus lids and coins from the imperial age provide an image of Trezzo during the Roman era. Even the layout of the historical quarter, square, in the Roman style and with the Santa Marta gate still standing, seems to date back a couple of thousand years.

Guided tours around Trezzo

For information on practically everything concerning Trezzo – including guided tours for groups by appointment – contact the efficient, dynamic Pro Loco (local tourist board), with offices in



a roomy ex-shrine with a porch and hall at 4, Via Carlo Biffi.
Phone and fax number: 029092569, e-mail address: info@prolocotrezzo.191.it, website: www.prolocotrezzo.com
The local Council has a dedicated website for tourists to the town: www.trezzoturismo.it, which also provides information on the middle course of the Adda.



Castle's tower, Trezzo sull'Adda.

destroyed by the Milanese in 1167 when Barbarossa was defeated. Under Bernabò Visconti, around mid-14th century, the fortress reacquired its strategic importance: along with the new towers and a series of underground passages which, according to the experts, lead to the castles in Brivio and Cassano, a multi-level fortified bridge was built. Its sole span over the river was 72 metres wide and at its highest point



Remains of a bridge over the Adda destroyed in 1416, Trezzo sull'Adda.

stood 25 metres above the surface of the water. Bernabò himself was to meet his end in the very same underground dungeons he had had built and where his nephew Gian Galeazzo had imprisoned him. Following a relatively quiet period, conflicts between the Viscontis and the local noble families started again. The bridge was to be destroyed forever in 1416 by a group of Milanese under the Count of Carmagnola in clashes with some of the Colleoni family who had seized the castle. Under the Sforza family, the river defence system was completed in preparation for possible at-

Events

For several years Trezzo has been hosting some important cultural events in summer, including



"Adda Danza", a national and international dance festival, and "Musica oltre il fiume".



Visitors to the castle; right, 15th-century stone well, Trezzo sull'Adda.

tacks on the part of Venice. The invention of firearms and the revolution of the art of making war, followed by the dominance of the Spanish and the Habsburgs, caused the building to lose its strategic role and it was converted into a military depot before being completely abandoned. During the first half of the 1800s, the facing was removed and sold off (some stones were re-used in the construction of the Arena in



Electricity was on the way

The number of early-20th century power plants you meet along the Adda near Trezzo is really high. Trezzo itself is the site of the Taccani plant, while



Taccani hydroelectric power plant.

Milan). Today, after remodelling, you can now see the ruins, the underground passages, the 42 metre great tower and the well in 15th century stone. Also open are the Sala Bernabò and a villa where educational information is available. For some years now, the castle has been the venue for important cultural events especially during the summer.

A park with its entrance in Via Dante protects the **Villa Comunale**, an imposing late-Renaissance style building purchased by the Trezzo town council in 1966. Besides the offices of the Cultural Sector, it houses the “Alessandro Manzoni” public library and displays recently restored works of art like one on the Oedipus myth by Giuseppe Bossi



Esterle hydroelectric power plant.



Bertini hydroelectric power plant.

Cornate d'Adda is home to the Esterle and Bertini plants, lower down the valley stands the Rusca



Villa Visconti, now home of the municipal library.



*Taccani hydroelectric power plant in 1906
and Visconteo Castle on the Adda, Trezzo sull'Adda.*

and “Magdalene and Andromedus” by Agostino Comerio. The villa, which belonged to the Visconti Rho family and later to the Marquises Crivelli, was converted into a hospital during the cholera epidemic in 1855. The best façade is the one at the back, with the room with a veranda on the ground floor and the wrought iron balconies that adorn the windows on the second floor. From the park, which slopes down towards the Adda, there is a fine view of the river and the Taccani power plant.

The bend in the Adda below the rock of the Visconti Castle has, since 1906, been the site of the **Taccani Power Plant**, commissioned from the architect Gaetano Moretti – with hydraulic plans drawn up by Adolfo Covi – by the textile factory owner Cristoforo Benigno Crespi. It is, without doubt, the most interesting power plant in the whole of Lombardy both from the architectural point of view (it is a spectacular, modernist design that manages to fit in with the surrounding environment) and the technological one (the turbine chamber connects to the dam outfall, thus eliminating the

▼
in Cassano and on the Bergamo side the Crespi d'Adda plant looms large. Above all of them sits the Semenza plant in Calusco. Just under a century since they were built, these cyclopic constructions amaze observers with their elegance and the care taken in shaping them as much as with the imposing air of their generators and turbines that were essential in providing energy for the first Milanese industrial revolution. They were not built by public bodies, as happens today, but by private businessmen often capable of understanding even the aesthetic side of technology. For the last few decades, the energy produced by these plants has proved insufficient, as clearly

▼
shown in Cassano by the looming presence of the much more powerful and newer Enel thermoelectric plant near the Adda, alongside the railway. However, nearly all the older plants are still working – a reminder of an age that was heroic in its own way – that of

need for a penstock). Further, specific canalization has provided an approx. 400 metres long waterway ending with an 8 metre high lock that allows for navigation. The buildings, faced with Adda conglomerate, feature battlements that evoke the offensive tactics of the castle above and Art Nouveau style wrought iron lamps. The original dam made of wooden boarding has been replaced with safer metal sluice-gates: the course of the river is blocked

More



Trezzo, start of the bike path.

Cycling around the Adda

The hiring of bicycles – perfect for excursions along the towpaths

of the Adda, closed to motor vehicles – is organized in Trezzo by the Cooperativa Il Castello.



while the water flows sideways towards the turbines through twelve manifolds. This plant, still used for the production of power, is open to visitors on the first Sunday of every month except January and August.

The main church in Trezzo is the prevostal church of **Santi Gervasio e Protasio**, overlooking Piazza Nazionale at the start of the road to Vimercate. It has been mentioned in documents since 1414. Enlarged between the 16th

▼
heavy electro-mechanics – whose other surviving shrines are the large urban railway stations and, in Milan, the model 1500 electric trams with wooden seats that also seem absolutely indestructible over 80 years after they were first introduced.



Bike path in the vicinity of Robbiate.



Cycling along the banks of the Adda, towards Brivio.

For information on times and cost,
phone 029090664 or 3471609408,

or write an e-mail to
coopcastello@libero.it



Top, parish church of Santi Gervasio e Protasio; above, a painting in the chapel of the Crucifix, Trezzo sull'Adda.

and 17th centuries, today, its appearance is due to the Neo-Romantic renovation work carried out in 1922 under the guidance of Gaetano Moretti who built the Taccani Power Plant. Its pinnacles and windows are modern in shape. During the renovation, a new 75-metre bell tower was built to replace the old one which had become somewhat unstable. The polygonal apse is all that is left of the 15 /16th century construction. The interior, with its basilican lay out featuring three naves leading to individual chapels, still boasts Giottesque frescoes and others by Bernardino Campi, a wooden Saint Benedict probably dating back to the 13th century and a marble Madonna with Child of the Bonino da Campione school.

In Piazza Libertà, which is the geometric centre of the historical quarter of Trezzo, stands the oratory of **San Rocco**, probably built following the plague epidem-

ic in 1576. In the 18th century, the building, comprising one room with a rectangular presbytery, was enlarged with the addition of a pillared porch and a large wooden altar that covered the fresco of Saints Rocco, Sebastian and Ambrose on the far wall which was brought to light only during a restoration carried out in the 1980s.



Oratory of Saint Rocco



Lower, on this page, the Oratory of Saint Rocco, above and to the left, the gilded wood altar and the altar-piece portraying the Virgin and Child between Saints Rocco and Sebastian, set in an elegant frame.



Villa Gina

Probably erected on the ruins of a fortified mansion, this residence was enlarged to its current size in the mid-1800s at the request of the Mayor of Milan Paolo Bassi, taken over by Silvio Crespi in 1915 and later by the Opera Nazionale Balilla of Bergamo which turned it



Sanctuary of Divina Maternità, Concesa.

into a technical school for war orphans. Following the Second World War, Villa Gina became a rehab centre called Casa del Sole and, lastly, was purchased by Trezzo Town Council. Today, it is the headquarters of the



some manor houses, the church of Our Lady of the Assumption and an oratory dedicated to a Saint Nazario. Both religious buildings fell into ruin and were replaced, in 1520, by a newly-



The small, deconsecrated church of Beata Vergine Maria e Lazzaro, Concesa.

built church. In front of a wall of the latter, beneath a painting of Our Lady, according to popular belief a spring capable of extraordinary cures welled forth.

The renown of Concesa's miraculous water led to the construction, in 1611, of a small chapel on the banks of the Adda.

However, the large number of pilgrims soon persuaded Cardinal Cesare Monti, archbishop of Milan, to order the building, alongside the mouth of the Martesana Canal, of the much larger **Santuario della Divina Maternità**, which some sources claim was designed by two great 17th century Milanese architects like Francesco Maria Ricchino and Carlo Buzzzi. In 1641, the painting of Our Lady was brought into the newly-completed shrine next to which, five years later, a convent of the Discalced Carmelites was built. Even though it was closed down in Napoleonic times, and later converted into a mill, the group of buildings was finally purchased by an order of friars. In the sacristy corridor, there is the so-called Madonna of the Boatman, a 15th century fresco removed from the house of the guardian of the Martesana Canal when it was demolished to make room for new inlets of water. The "heir" to the 16th century church in Concesa has been, since 1910, the parish church of **Beata Vergine Maria Assunta** in neo-gothic style. On a spur overlooking the Adda and the Shrine to the Divine Maternity, **Villa Gina** in Concesa is surrounded by a public park that gradually slopes down to the mouth of the Martesana Canal.



Villa Gina, a detail of the Renaissance wing, Concesa.

▼
Parco Adda Nord. It has pointed arch windows and its interior features a walnut staircase, a slate fireplace and coffered ceilings.



Villa Gina, Concesa.

Vaprio d'Adda

City Council website: www.comune.vapriodadda.mi.it
km 31,9 from Milan. Map: C 7



Lying about four kilometres to the south of Trezzo, Vaprio too is obviously on the Adda and it is linked to the other main roads by an unmade towpath closed to motor vehicles, of great ecological significance, which runs between the Martesana Canal and the river. If possible, Vaprio is even

prettier, although the sudden drop in altitude of its streets may trigger an impression of being in a closed-in area compared with the open spaces. This is particularly true if you look at it from Canonica d'Adda, the twinned town on the other side of the river, in the province of Bergamo.

The bridge linking Vaprio to Canonica is in a narrow pass of the Adda Valley where it is believed a passage already existed at the time of the Celts and later, the Romans. Proof of this is also the ancient name of the place, Vadulum, which means low water or ford. Just like Trezzo, already in the Longobard era, Vaprio had a front line of for-



tifications along the river and was later the object of clashes between the Visconti and Torriani families. The narrow pass and bridge are overshadowed by the imposing **Villa Melzi**



The concrete bridge over the river Adda, built in the 1950s. In the foreground, the Martesana canal.



Villa Melzi d'Eril,
Vaprio d'Adda.

use of the ruins of a castle that previously stood on the site. As indicated by a stone plaque on the boundary wall – towards Piazza Leonardo da Vinci, where the land entrance is situated – the villa was home to **Da Vinci** between 1506 and 1507 and again between 1510 and 1513. Among the numerous documents and works proving the genius' presence, the best known is the so-called Madonnone on the top floor of the building: a large fresco depicting a Madonna and Child. It was completed in 1510 by Francesco Melzi, the son of Giovanni and host to Da Vinci who almost certainly also worked on the fresco.

More

Francesco Melzi and the Atlantic Codex

The man who gave hospitality to Leonardo da Vinci in Vaprio, welcoming him into his family villa, was a member of a high-ranking family. Born in Milan around 1491, he died in Vaprio probably between 1568 and 1570 and belonged to a dynasty which, over the next few centuries, was to include among its members Grandees of Spain, Dukes of Lodi, Counts of Magenta, statesmen and exponents of the cultural world. Francesco himself was a highly educated person, very close to da Vinci – indeed a pupil of his from 1506 – and a gifted painter in his own right. He accompanied the maestro on his journey to Rome in 1513, and followed him to France in his final years starting from 1517. Francesco Melzi was also da Vinci's heir in both a material and literary sense: it was he who drew up the so-called Treatise on

Francesco Melzi d'Eril
(Andrea Appiani) Milano,
collezione Melzi d'Eril.



Painting generally attributed to da Vinci himself, collecting various notes of the *maestro's* in a codex currently to be

found in the Vatican Library. These and many other hand-written notes of da Vinci's were left in the villa in Vaprio, including the ones which, when later bound in a format known at the time as Atlantic, were to be purchased in the mid-1600s by the Ambrosiana Library in Milan, and still make up the greatest collection of writings by da Vinci to be found anywhere in the world.





Villa Simonetta Archinto, now the Town Hall. Below: close-up of remains of frescoes, Vaprio d'Adda.

However, the large amount of restoration carried out on it makes an accurate evaluation difficult. The building is privately owned.

The Town Hall and public library in Vaprio are housed in the 18th century **Villa Simonetta Archinto** in Piazza Cavour. Built in rococo style and recently restored, it features interesting remains of frescoes. From Piazza Cavour overlooking the river stands **Villa Visconti di Modrone**, appearing today in its eclectic 19th century style, though it

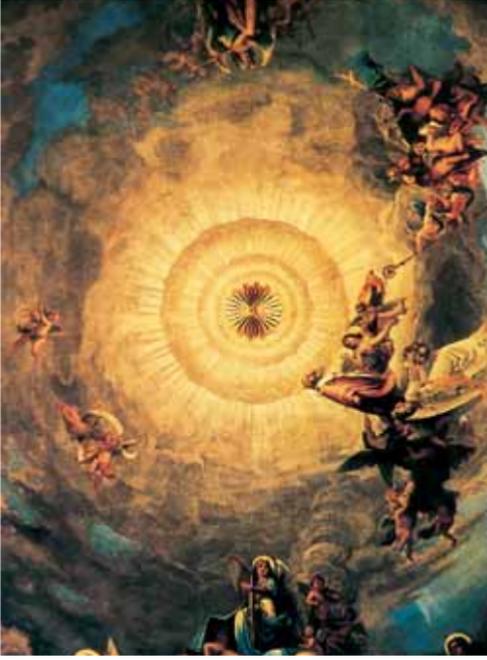


Carnival in Vaprio

The most important festive event in Vaprio takes place in winter: it consists of a series of carnival activities that last about a month. It is an unambiguously folksy experience, actively involving the inhabitants of Vaprio and the nearby villages in a whirl of merry-making and fun. On the most important day, a multi-coloured line of revellers winds its way through the streets dancing and making music.



Villa Visconti di Modrone, Vaprio d'Adda.



*Detail of the fresco
in the church of San Nicolò,
Vaprio d'Adda.*

was certainly built prior to the mid-1700s. Its terraced garden faces the river which, in this stretch, flows very close to the Martesana Canal; from the square, a flight of stone steps leads to the canal and its wash-house. In the grounds of Villa Visconti, a marker shows the outline – rediscovered and brought to light – of what were once a 12th century oratory and the adjacent private chapel of Giovanni Melzi, dedicated to Saint Bernardino. In the town centre, the parish church

of **San Nicolò** appears in its Neo-Classical style of 1817, possibly designed by Luigi Cagnola. The aisleless interior is decorated with late-19th century frescoes by the local painter Natale Riva, a pupil of Francesco Hayez, and there



Parish church of San Nicolò, Vaprio d'Adda.

is a 3600-pipe organ. The bell tower built in 1833 is visible from everywhere in the town. The church was completely restored between 1984 and 1992.

Much older than the parish church in Vaprio is the romanesque **San Colombano** dating back to the XI-XII century, which can be reached practically at the entrance to the town's hospital. Even if you were to find it closed, it is worth



*13th-century Romanesque church of San Colombano, Vaprio d'Adda.
At the side, right: ornamental details on the capitals.*



Frescoed apse of the 13th-century Romanesque church of San Colombano, Vaprio d'Adda.



The Sottrici Binda Paper Mill

The modern factory as seen today has actually nothing to do with the historical paper mill, the first section of which dated back to 1774.

The place on which it stands is, however, the same spot on which it was originally founded in an area to the north-east of the town, between the Martesana Canal and the Adda, one which offered the best guarantees due to the abundance of water which was essential for

taking a look at the late-medieval reliefs on the façade and sides, not unlike the ones on the capitals inside.

Proof of the tradition of textile manufacturing along the Adda comes, more clearly than from any other factory, from the great **Vellutificio Visconti di Modrone** in the southern quarters of Vaprio. Founded in 1839 for the spinning and throwing of cotton by the firm Sioli Dell'Acqua & Co., in 1858, the factory was taken over by the Archinto family and then bought, seven years later, by the Visconti di Modrone. It was they who created the brand **Velvis** (Velluti Visconti) which today continues to symbolize high quality in men's corduroy trousers even



the manufacturing process. «The mechanized paper mill in Vaprio is continuously increasing production, with two machines making paper uninterruptedly...»: back in 1857, Cesare Cantù used these terms to describe the factory, founded by Count Paolo Melzi.

*Visconti di Modrone velvet factory,
19th century, Vaprio d'Adda.*

though the fabrics are now produced elsewhere. The Viscontis introduced technical improvements that were revolutionary for the time, starting with their steam power plant. Still impressive – though the factory is no longer in use – is the design of the four-storey building with its crenellated tower, corner turrets and medieval-style noble air. The tower concealed a vertical driving shaft that distributed power to

More



Castelbarco and its antique fairs

In Monasterolo, situated on the main road between Vaprio and Trezzo, a huge park overlooking the Martesana Canal surrounds the **Villa Castelbarco Albani**, known for the last few decades mainly as the venue of exhibitions and celebrations, especially those concerning antiques. The building was most likely erected in 1100 as a monastery, and the villa as it stands today includes several additions built around it. It was the summer residence of the Simonetta family, and, in the

1800s of the Castelbarco Albani. Mostly under the latter, it underwent a series of extensions in Neo-Classical style like the reception halls, the small theatre on the terrace esplanade and galleries overlooking the Naviglio. Along the canal, you can still find the metal wheel that drove the irrigation pump.

Villa Castelbarco

Via Concesa 4

Vaprio d'Adda

phone 0290965254

www.villacastelbarco.com

all the floors of the building. North of the centre of Vaprio, the Martesana Canal and the Adda isolate the vast area of the **Binda Paper Mill**, a true monument to local industrial archaeology. Over a hundred years old, it was owned by the Melzi family, then from 1868 by the Maglia-Pigna company and from 1920, by the Milanese Binda family, who improved and modernized it. The last owners, who decided in 2007 to close down the mill, were Swedish.



*Binda paper-mill, today,
Vaprio d'Adda.*

Gropello d'Adda

(Frazione di Cassano d'Adda)



The first houses of Gropello, along the Martesana.



Between Vaprio and Cassano, on an almost indiscernible knoll (from which it probably got its name: *grop* means hump) lies the tiny settlement of Gropello, a hamlet of Cassano. It is not known exactly when this rural burgh was founded, although it is certain that from 1160, the



The Ruoton, 11 m in diameter, at Gropello d'Adda.

proctor of the archbishops of Milan owned a villa here. Originally, the settlement was on the right bank of the Adda. When the Martesana Canal was dug, the community moved until the use of the bridge over the canal began to encourage, between the 1600s and the 1700s, a link between the two banks.



Between the Adda and the Martesana Canals lies the **Archbishop's Villa**, the construction of which was started by Cardinal Federigo Borromeo after his predecessor, Charles Borromeo, had demolished a building that had stood on that site for at least six centuries. With its three storeys and a vast garden surrounding it, its lay-out is horse-shoe-shaped. The so-called **Ruoton** or large, eight-paddled wheel 11 metres in diameter that stands out along the canal is a 1989 replica of the original one which was installed here in 1618 for the irrigation of the

Sansona bridge

On April 27, 1799 the countryside around Cassano became a battlefield when French and Austro-Russian troops clashed there. The fleeing French used Sansona bridge (not far from the Martesana canal between Gropello and Cassano) as a makeshift trench.



Entrance to the Villa Arcivescovile, Gropello d'Adda.

gardens and to provide the kitchens in the villa with water. The bridge, in Adda conglomerate, was built in 1573.

The Archbishop's Villa includes the oratory named after **St. Anthony** founded by Cardinal Monti. In 1638, Giovan Mauro della Rovere, known as Fiammenghino, frescoed the interior with stories of St. Anthony of Padua.



Cassano d'Adda

Information: ProLoco Cassano d'Adda, piazza Lega Lombarda 8
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Phone 0363/61998

City Council website: www.comune.cassanodadda.mi.it
km 29,1 from Milan. Map: D 7



The views of Cassano – the most southern after Trezzo and Vaprio, and the largest of the three Milanese towns along the Adda – take in gardens and the countryside around the river and the canals. We are now al-



Villa Borromeo, Cassano d'Adda.



most on the plain, among houses built less close together. The differences of level are no longer so marked.

This locality, first mentioned in written documents in 887, evidently grew up around the castle guarding the Adda, but over the centuries the character of the urban area has gradually improved, thanks to the villas built by Milanese nobles. For over a century and a half, the local railway station has stood practically half-way between those of Milan and Bergamo.

When reaching Cassano via the road coming from the west – from the city – visitors may be surprised by the sudden appearance to one side of the imposing **Villa Borromeo**, which can barely be seen from the road. Started in the mid 1700s, when the **d'Adda** family wanted a residence in an important riverside holiday resort well linked to Milan, the villa was originally designed by Francesco Croce who was succeeded, from 1781, by Giuseppe Piermarini. Of the

A very modern fate

“Meetings, conferences, wedding receptions, commercials and photographic sessions, fashion shows, company galas and special events” are the occasions for which Villa Borromeo can be rented today. Actually, it is only fair that the investment of those who bought it, restored it and brought it back into use yield a reasonable profit.

Villa Borromeo
Via Vittorio Veneto 58,
Cassano d'Adda
phone 036360904
www.villaborromeo.it

More

The Borromeos

Of major importance in matters concerning Cassano and Gropello, but of greater magnitude in forming the character of Milan and the surrounding area, the Borromeo family was one of the most prominent dynasties ever to have featured in the history of Lombardy and possibly second only to that of the Visconti. Their family home is in the centre of Milan, a short distance from Piazza Cordusio, opposite the church of Santa Maria Podone adorned – with an expression that has rightly become part of Milanese lore – the very simple motto *Humilitas*, humility.

The two most important people that this lineage produced were the **cardinals**, who were cousins, Charles and Federigo, leading figures in 16 /17th century Lombardy and sponsors of the unyielding resistance the townsfolk put up against the recurrent scourge of the plague.

Charles (1538-1584), later proclaimed a saint and Doctor of the Catholic Church, interpreted the Counter-Reformation in a somewhat unorthodox manner, openly siding with the people,



their needs and feelings. At the same time, he was strenuously battling against Protestantism, funding among other things the building of the Collegio Elvetico (currently the State Archives) for the training of priests who were fighting for Roman Catholicism in

the Grisons, Switzerland and having a dozen people burned at the stake following trials for witchcraft in Switzerland.

Federigo (1564-1631), equally determined though more interested in his studies, linked his name in particular to the establishment in 1609 of the Ambrosiana Library and, later, the Art Gallery of the same name. The figure of Cardinal Federigo lives on in the unforgettable historical-literary portrait that Alessandro Manzoni drew of him in his work "The Betrothed".

The penchant for pragmatism and open-mindedness that Charles and Federigo left on the Milanese mentality – in a way following the footsteps of St. Ambrose, the 4th century bishop and protector of Milan, – is still palpable in the 20th century metropolis and at the start of the third millennium.



Home of the Borromeo family, in the centre of Milan.

former (who designed the highest spire of the Duomo) the building basically still has the rear façade, while the latter (who built the Scala and the Royal Palace) was responsible for the addition of the wings around the front courtyard, the enlargement of the main house, the full and empty volumes on the façade, the wrought iron gate and, in general, the innovative, Neo-Classical style. The interior of the villa is adorned with frescoes and decorations and contains a room with stucco work and rustic paintings, medallions, gilding, and at the rear, there is a park with centuries-old trees. The villa was inherited by



Panoramic view of Cassano d'Adda and the Muzza canal.

the Borromeo family at the end of the 1800s, occupied by the Germans during WWII and ended up being converted into apartments. It was brought back to life, in the 1980s, when it was privately purchased.

On Via Vittorio Veneto, you can find the **Parish church** of Cassano, built in 1897. The only part remaining of the older church erected on this site in the 13th century at the request of Regina della Scala, the wife of Bernabò Visconti, is the bell tower. On the other hand, the church underwent reconstruction at the end of



Parish church in Via Vittorio Veneto, Cassano d'Adda.



Panoramic view of the Muzza irrigation canal.

The Muzza

Branching off from the right bank of the Adda, the Muzza Canal starts in Cassano slightly upstream from Castello Borromeo and returns to the river in the municipality of Castiglione d'Adda, in the province of Lodi. Flowing for forty kilometres, it is considered the largest irrigation canal in Europe and is still an important



the 18th century. Inside, there is a un polyptych by Bernardino Fasolo dated 1516.

The axis of historical Cassano corresponds to today's **Via Verdi**, which can be reached from Piazza Garibaldi, in the town centre, or via cross-streets and courtyards opposite Villa Borromeo. Between Via Verdi and the Muzza Canal, stands **Villa Rosales Pallavicini Brambilla**, built in the 1600s as a bulwark and converted into a patrician residence by Giuseppe Pezzoli between 1770 and 1790. The large garden, which features a circular fountain with marble puttos, is made up of five embank-



Fountain at Villa Rosales Pallavicini Brambilla, Cassano d'Adda.

ments with balustrades intersected by a flight of steps leading down to the canal. Inside the building, the ballroom is decorated with frescoes by the Galliari brothers, the first set designers for the Scala at the time of Maria Theresa.

A widening of Via Verdi – which offers views of the garden of Villa Brambilla and the adjacent, modern public park which also slopes down to the Muzza Canal – reveals the main façade of **Palazzo Berva**, a handsome 18th century building recently restored. It once belonged to the Bonfani family, and later to the Berva, while today it houses local government offices, the Pro Loco (local tourist board) of Cassano and the National Alpine Soldiers' Associa-

▼
resource for Lombardy farming. Originating from a dead branch of the river which was already, in Roman times, used to irrigate the fields, it was improved and lengthened from 1220 onwards when Emperor Frederick II granted the people



Palazzo Berva, Cassano d'Adda.



Oratory of San Dionigi, Cassano d'Adda.

tion. From the courtyard, you can reach the parish church. At the far end of Via Verdi, where there is a slight dip, the ancient church of **San Dionigi** stands on the spot which was the start of the earliest road to Milan. Originally built in the 13th century, it now has the appearance it was given during restructuring work in the late 16th century. The interior is well worth visiting

of Lodi permission to use the water. It appears that it was the founder of the ducal dynasty of Milan, Ottone Visconti, who charted its course close to the castle, probably as a means of defence.

The founder of the "Alpini"

A monument in front of the castle and the name of the square are reminders that Cassano was the birthplace of the Italian Army Captain Giuseppe Perrucchetti who, in 1872, founded the mountain infantry corps: the "Alpini".



*Piazza Castello
(Piazza Perrucchetti),
Cassano d'Adda.*

thanks to the two pictorial cycles by the Fiammenghini brothers that were recently restored: on the walls, there are Stories of Saint Dionigi; in the apse, a Coronation and a Trinity with prophets and music-making angels.

Practically opposite San Dionigi, formerly included in the view of the garden of Villa Benzi, stands the oratory of **Saints Acquilino e Carlo**, built in 1699 at the request of Cristoforo Benzi. Near the altar, there is a Madonna and Child by Legnanino.

The L-shaped lay-out of the squares in the centre of Cassano – Garibaldi, Cavour and Perrucchetti – leads to the **Castle Borromeo d'Adda** which, with its history of over a thousand years, stands on the bank of the Muzza Canal. Famous since 887, when a fortress

here welcomed the arrival of the Emperor, it was later a source of conflict between the Torriani and Visconti families. It fell into Venetian hands in 1446 and was reconquered by Francesco Sforza who, between 1451 and 1474, assigned the task of restructuring its defensive features to the architect Bartolomeo



Borromeo d'Adda Castle, on the banks of the Muzza, Cassano d'Adda.

Gadio. Dating from that time are the imposing buttress walls overlooking the Adda, the crenellations and arrow slits on the battlements, the flooding of the Muzza Canal as a defensive measure and the new façade which is still in place. In 1705, it was converted into a military prison and at the end of that century it risked being demolished to make room for a palace for Prince Ferdinand, the son of Maria Theresa: but all that was lost was the main gate of the walled complex that protected the village. In the 1800s, the castle was used as a prefecture, a prison, a barracks and, in the right wing, as a mill; during the last century, it has also become a warehouse and a dis-cotheque. Restoration work carried out in recent times brought to light frescoes of the Giotto school, probably commissioned by Ottone Visconti, showing the castle was also used as a residence. Sitting between the Muzza Canal and the course of the Adda, the 10 hectares of the **Isola Borromeo** are home to numerous animal and vegetable species recently relocated, and a multi-purpose centre run by the Cassano authorities. It can easily be reached on foot from the castle by taking the bridge over the canal. The whole north-eastern sector of Cassano is defined by the presence of the **Linificio Canapificio Nazionale**. The National Linen and Hemp Mill is a huge, historical factory that grew out of a spinning mill built around 1842 by the Società Battaglia & C. After it was taken over in 1873 by the owners of a similar

Cascina dell'Isola Borromeo



Built around the 1950s, the *Cascina* was recently restored as part of a European project. Today, the building houses a centre for



Cascina dell'Isola Borromeo, Cassano d'Adda.

environmental education belonging to the Parco Adda Nord, an information desk, the local canoe club and a cycle tourism association. There is also an organization for people in need and a small restaurant. For further information visit the website www.infoadda.it

The Basilica and the Adda in Fara



The antiquity of Fara can be seen in the ruins of the Basilica Autarena which is situated in Piazza Roma and partially incorporated into the

factory in Fara Gera d'Adda, on the Bergamo side of the river, new departments for the weaving and bleaching of linen and hemp were added. On the road that runs alongside the building, you can see the clear-cut outline of the Convitto Operaio, built in 1907 to house some of the workers, while others lived in the terraced houses overlooking the set of buildings from a nearby hill. The factory closed down in 1994.

Alongside the Linen mill, the course of the Muzza Canal is overshadowed by the huge **Rusca Power Plant** built in 1927 to run it. The plant, designed in 1918 by the engineer Pietro Rusca, is now part of the Eneco group and is in full working order.



The Linificio Canapificio Nazionale, 1870, Cassano d'Adda.

oratory of Saint Felicity.

Of the ancient church, built in the VI century at the request of the Longobard king Autari and originally dedicated to Saint Alexander, all that remains are the apse with a brick wall set with angular pilaster strips and small, arched windows. It is very pleasant to

Fara Gera d'Adda (Province of Bergamo)

The main town on the Bergamo side between Cassano and Vaprio is Fara Gera d'Adda, of ancient Longobard origin.

This is the site of one of the largest textile mills in the history of industry in Lombardy, another **Linificio Canapificio Nazionale** built in 1870 by the lawyer and businessman Andrea Ponti. You can reach it coming from Piazza Roma, turning into the nearby Via Ponti. Fac-

ing it there is now a building which is a residential complex but that once served as lodgings for the employees. Indeed most of the town – including the Town Hall – was built thanks to a development project launched by Ponti. However, for decades, the Linen Mill has been on a downward path and the buildings making up the **Villaggio Operaio**, split up and sold off to the residents in 1971, were demolished in 1989. The mill itself is going out of business.

▼
stroll along the Adda which flows towards the west just a few yards from the parish church.

The river and the canal of the Linen Mill are crossed by a quaint, late 19th century wrought iron bridge leading to Gropello. Between the left and right banks, there are wooded areas still rich in flora and

Canonica d'Adda

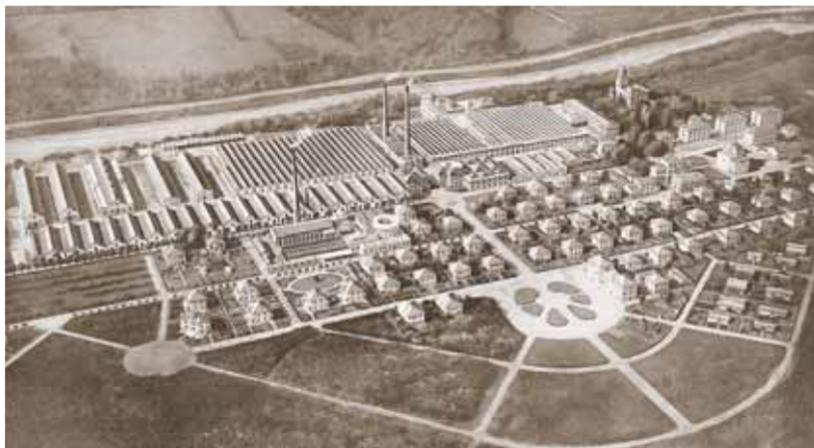
(Province of Bergamo)

On the other bank of the river facing Vaprio – therefore on the Bergamo side – Canonica's largest historical building is the parish church of **San Giovanni Evangelista** which replaced that of Pontirolo mentioned in records since 1155. It served thirty-six communities, from Trezzo to Treviglio until 1577, when the abuses the parish apparently committed convinced Charles Borromeo to move its seat to Milan. After being abandoned, the church began to fall into ruin and in 1755, it was entirely rebuilt. Recent reconstruction work on the adjacent oratory of Saint Louis brought to light parts of the original church.



*Parish church
of San Giovanni
Evangelista,
Canonica d'Adda.*

fauna that are typical of the fluvial and protected areas of the Parco Regionale dell'Adda Nord which includes the municipality of Fara.



Aerial view of Crespi Workers Village, 1927, Crespi d'Adda.

World Heritage Site

Crespi workers' village was founded in the 19th century and is unique in Italy for its size and historic significance.

Since 1995 it has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



UNESCO is an international organization set up in 1945 as part of the United Nations. It encourages international peace and universal respect by promoting collaboration among nations. Conducts studies, facilitates knowledge sharing, and develops standards.

Crespi d'Adda

(Province of Bergamo)

Today, Crespi is a quiet little village on the left bank of the Adda – in the province of Bergamo, almost facing Trezzo – isolated in the vast triangle of lowlands formed by the convergence of the Brembo. It can be reached only via the short road from **Capriate San Gervasio** (the main town in the municipality, served by an exit of the A4 motorway), and this has made it possible to preserve the lay-out and character of the locality very well.

The founding of the **Crespi Company Town** is relatively recent. It was built thanks to the desire of the industrialist Cristoforo Benigno Crespi (1833-1920) to offer decent living conditions to the workers in his mills on the Adda – inaugurated on 25th July 1878 – and their families. However, it was thanks to the idea of Silvio Benigno Crespi (1868-1944), the founder's eldest son, to convert the original three buildings, hotel and canteen into a proper village for workers (or company town, along the lines of the English model) and the task of carrying out the conversion was assigned to the architect Ernesto Pirovano and the engineer Pietro Brunati.

They produced around fifty workers' houses, each with a garden, in a rectangular grid (1855-1919), a Neo-Renaissance church (1891-93, inspired by the Bramantesque Santa Maria del Soccorso in Busto Arsizio where the Crespi originally came from), and, next to the church, a school with a theatre, public baths with showers, tubs and a covered swimming pool – because at first, the workers' homes had no bathrooms – and, in the 1920s, the villas for office workers and managers in Art Nouveau style and a working men's club with *bocce* courts, a library and meeting rooms.



Cristoforo Crespi



Today's entrance to the company town, still known as "cancelli rossi" [red gates], Crespi d'Adda.

These buildings form a regular urban centre, outside of which are the houses of the doctor and chaplain, responsible for physical and spiritual well-being, the company owners' villa (the so-called Castle in Neo-Medieval style between the village and the river, 1893-94), the actual factory with its own hydroelectric power plant (designed, like the Taccani plant in Trezzo, by Gaetano Moretti) and, towards the south, the cemetery (1906-7), designed by Moretti, in which a pyramid-shaped construction stands out: it is the Crespi family mausoleum.



Silvio Crespi

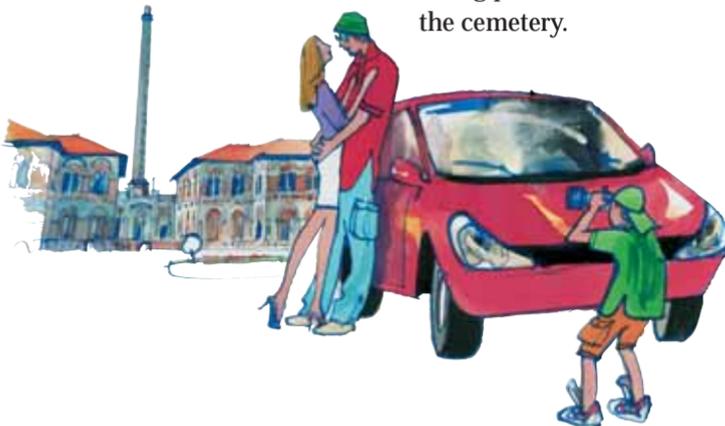


Workers' houses with their flower and vegetable patches, neatly arranged in rows parallel to the factory, Crespi d'Adda.

Exploring Crespi

Today, there are two local organizations that work to keep Crespi welcoming towards visitors as well as promoting it as a tourist destination, upholding its cultural activities and endorsing it as a topic for study and research. They also organize guided tours.

Silvio Benigno's project did not have the socialistic aspirations that seemed to have inspired some of the previously-built towns in Britain, like the 18/19th century New Lanark devised by Robert Owen. The Italian approach was concerned with providing a healthy, safe environment for an entire life seen as a productive life. The clock in full view measured the time of both work and rest, the innovative (the first in Italy) street lighting ensured safety and transparency, the road between the mill and the village – where there was never a public square, a typically Italian meeting place – led to the exit or the cemetery.



More

The workers' houses

The most important type of home in the company town – the key element in the analysis of living conditions offered by the Crespi experiment – is the workers' houses.

These simply-designed but pleasant buildings were considered an ultra-modern form of accommodation at that time (and even today, over a century later, they continue to impress visitors).

Clearly inspired by Anglo-Saxon housing, they have no balconies and are surrounded by a low fence – found in all the houses – which encloses a garden and a vegetable patch and precisely marks out the area assigned to each family.

Square-shaped with two storeys – plus attic and cellar – they each contain eight large rooms, four per floor, and have two different types of

entrance: one door if the house is for one family only and double if it is for two.

Outside, there was a toilet together with a wood shed and henhouse (in-door bathrooms, in the form of lean-to's adjoining the homes, were built in 1940).

The houses, now owned by their occupiers, were rented only to the employees of the factory and the amount owed was deducted from their pay packets.



Semi-detached houses, Crespi d'Adda.

Due to the very serious economic crisis that involved the entire western world at the end of the 1920s, the Crespi family was unable to repay the bank loans it has just taken out in order to improve the mill and the village. It was, therefore, forced to sell up. During the Fascist period, the village was re-named Tessalia by the regime. The mill, which closed down some years ago, has fallen into disuse.



▼
Associazione Culturale
Villaggio Crespi
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Veneto 1, Crespi
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Associazione Culturale
Nema
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The Colleoni family

The Castle in Solza used to belong to the Colleoni, a powerful, noble family from Bergamo. It is believed to be the birthplace, around 1395, of Bartolomeo Colleoni, a great condottiere, whose considerable military skills were sought by both the Viscontis of Milan and



the Republic of Venice. He is remembered here with a plaque, in Bergamo with his splendid Renaissance funeral chapel attached to the church of Santa Maria Nuova, and in



Bartolomeo Colleoni

Solza (Province of Bergamo)

Situated around ten kilometres to the north of Crespino – in the Bergamo area, along the provincial road 170 – Solza is mentioned in written documents from 1068, but it is probably much older. In 1928, it lost its independent status and remained, until 1970, together with nearby Medolago, part of the municipality of Riviera d'Adda.

Above, Colleoni Castle; below, castle tower, Solza.

In the historical centre of Solza, **Colleoni Castle** stands on a slight slope overlooking the river. Documents prove its existence from at least 1404, during the final stages of the battles between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines. A four-



sided stronghold, defended by a moat which was later filled in, it stands out from the rest of the burgh thanks also to its tower and the boundary wall which still boasts a disguised crenellation. Over time, the castle has lost its defensive role to become a place of work and a

peasant dwelling. A sloping ramp leads to the entrance where the slits for the drawbridge chains are still visible. The courtyard is enclosed by a large hayloft. After a long period of neglect, the historical residence of the Colleoni family in Solza has been radically renovated. Today, it houses municipal meeting rooms, information centres, a library, an information desk for the Parco Adda Nord and a bar. (Castello Colleoni: Phone 0354948138 www.castellocolleoni.it)



▼ Venice with an equestrian statue by Andrea Verrocchio in Campo San Giovanni e Paolo. Bartolomeo died in 1475 in Malpaga, a fortified residence nearer to Bergamo.

Ornithologists in Villa

In Villa d'Adda, in the southern part of the San Martino Valley, Alberone, a 150 metre footbridge runs over the marshy area



Villa d'Adda (Province of Bergamo)

The only historical ferry still crossing the Adda is the one in Imbersago, which is said to have been designed by da Vinci. In this stretch of the river, neither of the banks belong to Milanese territory, since Imbersago is in the province of Lecco while the built-up area opposite, pretty Villa d'Adda protected by the slopes of Monte dei Frati, is in the province of Bergamo. Here, the mooring for the **Ferry** has recently been renovated. The paths along the river lead to small, grassy inlets suitable for picnics.



"Da Vinci's Ferry" crosses the river Adda.

of the river through a canebroke full of water lilies.

At the end of it, there is a hut for observers of nesting species – grey herons, marsh hawks, grebes and cormorants – which populate the river. The Lecco mountains in the distance give this Ornithological observatory an evocative, wild air. From the footbridge, which handicapped people can use too, you can follow paths along the river as far as the da Vinci ferry.



Panoramic view of Brivio.

Brig

For excursions and guided tours along the middle course of the Adda (but also around Lecco) you can contact an efficient local organization which has been providing services for around ten years.
Brig. Brianza Guide
Via Castelbarco 34,
Imbersago
Phone 0399920041
www.brig.it

Brivio (Province of Lecco)

The most important town on the Lecco stretch of the Adda and its surrounding area is quiet little Brivio, set in a landscape between the foothills and the plain. The early 20th century bridge, which links it to the province of Bergamo, seems to be the only modern touch along a timeless **riverside** in the country. The name of the locality is of Celtic origin (briva = crossing or ford).

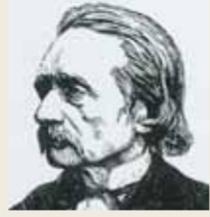
The tree-lined quay – with its fishermen, boats and aquatic birds – is not the only interesting feature. Going upstream, you come to the **Castle** in Piazza Carlo Frigerio, well-known since 968 and owned in turn by the Earls of Lecco, Bishops of Bergamo, the Visconti family from Milan and in the 15th century, by the Most Serene Republic of Venice. At the time of the Industrial Revolution, Cesare Cantù had one wing of it converted into a spinning mill. The apartments facing the Adda were, be-



16th-century church of Santi Sisinio, Martirio e Alessandro, Brivio.

tween 1835 and 1856, municipal prisons. Going downstream, just beyond the bridge you can see the imposing outline of the Felolo-Mejani (or Carozzi) Spinning Mill, built in 1776 and enlarged in 1830. Today, is once again residential property. A little farther on, what now looks like a farmhouse was once the Molinazzo **Spinning Mill**, originally an 18th century flour mill. A few hundred metres from here, along the river,

Cesare Cantù



Cesare Cantù.



Castle, Brivio.

stands the tall **Toffo Spinning Mill** which was also originally an 18th century flour mill and has now been converted into apartments. In the village, a little farther from the Adda, you can find the 16th century parish church of **Saints Sisinio, Martirio e Alessandro**,

decorated with two 17th century paintings attributed to Antonio Cifrondi, the 18th century style oratory of **San Leonardo**, with a fresco by the da Vinci school and the **Municipal Art Gallery** displaying works by local artists.



Filanda Molinazzo, Brivio.

The historian and man of letters, Cesare Cantù (1804-1895) was born in Brivio. He was one of the leading figures in the Italian Risorgimento,

▼ famous as an essayist and writer and the founder of the *Archivio Storico Lombardo* (Historical Archives of Lombardy). His most popular work is still *Margherita Pusterla*, but what he is most famous



Romanesque church of Santi Colombano e Gottardo, Arlate.

for are his intellectual texts from *La Lombardia nel secolo XVII* (Lombardy in the XVII century) to *Gli eretici d'Italia* (The Heretics of Italy), from *Il Sacro Macello di Valtellina* (The Holy Bloodbath in Valtellina) to the *Edifizi di Milano* (The Buildings in Milan), and his more epic works like a *History of Italian literature* and fifty-two volumes on the *History of the World*.



A commemorative wall-plate on a house in Brivio, marking the birthplace of Cesare Cantù.

Arlate (Province of Lecco)

On the west bank of the Adda between Brivio and Imbersago, it is worthwhile visiting tiny Arlate – a hamlet of Calco, in the province of Lecco – to see the Romanic church of **Saints Colombano e Gottardo**, standing on a small hill in Beolco. This fine example of the building

skills of local workers dates back to 1100 and once belonged to the Order of Cluniac Benedictines. Behind the church, the view ranges from the hills of Villa d'Adda to the mountains above Lecco.

Imbersago (Province of Lecco)

A sketch by Leonardo da Vinci, later included in the Atlantic Codex, is behind the fame enjoyed by Imbersago, a pleasant little town on the Adda between Brivio and Paderno, in the province of Lecco. The public **Ferry** which still links the small river ports of Imbersago and Villa d'Adda is, though rebuilt several times – the last one, made from oak, larch, glass fibre and plastic in 1994 – absolutely identical to the one in the drawing by da Vinci.

However, this is not, as many claim, a da Vinci



Ferry linking Imbersago with Villa d'Adda.

How "Da Vinci's Ferry" works

The workings of the Imbersago ferry are both clever and ecological. Stretching between the two banks, there is a steel cable to which the boat is attached by a strap with a loop at the end. When the boatman pushes off, the ferry, caught up by the current trying to drag it downstream, is turned sideways with

invention. There is no proof that da Vinci simply reproduced, with his exceptional artistic skills, something he had seen. But that was enough. The unique ingeniousness of the ferry is worthy of da Vinci's brilliant mind.

The road between Arlate and Imbersago runs close to the **Santuario della Madonna del Bosco** (Madonna of the Woods), easily recognized by its steep holy stairway with 392 steps. Built between 1641 and 1646 by Carlo Buzzi, it commemorates a series of apparitions of Our Lady which began in 1617. This place was dear to Pope John XXIII who was born not far away in Sotto il Monte.



the help of the rudder: sliding along the cable, the loop pulls the boat towards the other bank taking advantage of the force of the water, like a sailboat drifting against the wind.

Paderno d'Adda

(Province of Lecco)

The local trains running between Bergamo and Lecco (or Milan) slow down considerably when they cross the Adda via the bridge



Iron bridge at Paderno.

Fact Sheet:

Contract signed:

Jan 22nd 1887

Inaugurated in 1889

Length 226 m height 85 m

Materials and quantities
used:

- 5,000 cu. m. Moltrasio stone
- 1,200 cu. m. Baveno granite
- 1,800 cu. m. Bavaria spruce for the scaffolding
- 1,320 metric tons of iron for the span
- 254 metric tons of iron for the pillars
- 950 metric tons of iron for the bridge floor
- 100,000 bolts

in Paderno, providing commuters with one of the best river views the Italian railways can offer. You are looking straight down onto the **Forra di Paderno** (Paterno Gorge), with its broadleaf woods, bushes and irregular boulders rising from the river bed, shaped by the shrinking of the glacier and later eroded by the water. The rocks form little depressions which, turn into wild rapids during flooding. Built between 1887 and 1889 to the design of the Swiss engineer Jules R othlisberger, then head of the Officine di Savigliano technical department, the **railway bridge** in Paderno is very similar to the Viaduc de Garbarit built in France four years earlier by Gustav Eiffel. Standing 85 metre high, 226 metres long and with a 150-metre span, it is a symbol of indus-



Paderno's bridge, built on two levels to carry road and rail traffic, a symbol of Lombardy's industrial archaeology.

The canal of Maria Theresa

Though considered essential to allow navigation – in other words, transport – between the Alps and the plain from the 16th

trial archaeology in Lombardy. The construction is a technical masterpiece with all its joints held together by nails rather than soldering.

A short distance below the railway bridge, the **Paderno Canal** flows off the Adda to the right with its 2605 metres of canalization, interrupted by eight steps covering a total drop of 27



A lock on the Paderno canal, along the bike path.

metres. Today, the Canal is no longer completely navigable. Indeed, some stretches of it have been abandoned, but if you follow it along the towpaths, either on foot or by bicycle, you'll be rewarded with unforgettable views. You will come across its locks and be able to go up the flight of steps leading to the late 14th century **Shrine of the Madonna della Rocchetta**. Once a sanctuary for Augustinian friars, at the beginning of the 16th century,

▼ century onwards, the Paderno Canal was actually completed only between 1773 and 1779 by Pietro Nosetti from Como who was assigned the task by Count Firmian, plenipotentiary for Lombardy-Veneto of the Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa.

More

Da Vinci Ecomuseum on the Adda

Fourteen stations and forty-seven stretches along the middle course of the Adda – defined as a natural monument by the Regione Lombardia and included in the Parco Adda Nord – make up the naturalistic-cultural route around the Da Vinci Ecomuseum on the Adda. Locks and power plants alternate with wild landscapes. On a level with the Conca Grande (Great basin) stands the Stallazzo, once a resting place for horses that towed against the current, now the offices of the ecomuseum and a restaurant. Reachable on foot or by bicycle from Imbersago, Villa d'Adda, Paderno or Trezzo.

Ecomuseo Adda di Leonardo

Phone 029091229

www.addadileonardo.it



Bikers arrive at an eating-place and the Ecomuseo Adda di Leonardo.



Inside the Ecomuseo Adda di Leonardo.



River Adda, rapids created by rocky boulders.

Da Vinci and the rocks

The area of irregular rocks known as the “Tre Corni” (Three Horns) must have fascinated Leonardo da Vinci. In fact, it is easily recognizable in the background of his *Virgin of the Rocks* painted between 1483 and 1486, now hanging in the Louvre in Paris.

it was converted into a fort by Filippo Maria Sforza. From the top, there is a view of the river flowing smoothly once again, after the stretch with the gorge.

On the Bergamo side of the Paderno Canal, above the railway bridge stands the **Guido Semenza hydro-electric power plant**, in operation since 1917. Faced in Adda conglomerate and well- positioned from an environmental point of view, it still belongs to Edison.



Guido Semenza hydroelectric power plant, Paderno.

Porto d'Adda (Cornate d'Adda)

Between Paderno and Trezzo, anyone walking or cycling along the Canal crosses the invisible border between the provinces of Lecco and Milan when they reach Porto d'Adda – now a hamlet of Cornate – the site of a famous ford from



An extension both to the north and the south is currently being studied.

More

The Parco Adda Nord

Established in 1983 along the middle course of the Adda river and its valley, the Parco Adda Nord protects approx. 50 kilometres between Lecco and Truccazzano, also safeguarding the lakes Garlate and Olginate and the wetlands around Brivio. With its 7,400 hectares, it includes thirty-two municipalities of the provinces of Lecco,



A panoramic view of the Parco Adda Nord, along the river Adda.

Bergamo and Milan. Wooded areas and man-made environments alternate in a setting that is important also from the archaeological and monumental point of view. Abundant aquatic, flying and land species make the park a peaceful place that is ideal for week-end cycling excursions or long walks.

Parco Adda Nord

Villa Gina
Via Padre Benigno Calvi 3
Concesa, Trezzo sull'Adda
Phone 029091229
www.parcoaddanord.it

Angelo Bertini hydro-electric power plant

A steep, cobblestoned path links the ruins of Cascina Ricevitoria to the Angelo Bertini hydro-electric power plant, which the Edison company had built between 1895 and 1898. When it went into operation, it was one of the most powerful in Europe (13500 Volts) and certainly the one with the longest power offtake line (32 kilometres, as far as Milan). The building is in Neo-Classical style.



Angelo Bertini hydroelectric power plant.

time immemorial and a pleasant spot with its cultivated land dotted with farmsteads.

Today, only the ruins of **Cascina Ricevitoria** remain.

From 1428, it marked the border between the Duchy of Milan and the Republic of Venice, then during the Habsburg era, it became a toll-house for the

goods being taken into the village after being unloaded at the Cascina del Barchetto a short distance below.

From 1914, the Bertini plant had a rival - the **Carlo Esterle hydro-electric power plant** built in Resega, along the towpath in



Carlo Esterle hydroelectric power plant.

The feeder canal comes from the Paderno Canal at Conchetta. Modernized and, even more productive today, it is still run by Edison.

the direction of Trezzo. Its design is eclectic, with Sforza-style touches.

The feeder canal was dug five kilometres up-river. In the Esterle plant, still owned by Edison, the original generators and turbines are still in use.



Cornate d'Adda

Information: ProLoco di Cornate d'Adda, via Volta 29
proloco@cornatedadda.eu - www.cornatedadda.eu
Phone: 349 6226178 Fax: 396 926165
City Council website: www.comune.cornatedadda.mi.it
km 33,3 from Milan. Map: B 6



Villa Paradiso, Cornate d'Adda.

Along the river immediately to the north of Trezzo – reachable on foot, but by bicycle is better – Cornate is old enough to identify with the place mentioned by the Longobard historian, Paolo Diacono, when he wrote of the “area of which the name is Coronate”.

Situated in the district of Bagna and overlooking the Adda river, **Villa Paradiso** was built in the 16th century by the Jesuits and occupied by them until 1773, when Emperor Joseph II abolished the order. Now, the villa looks like a carefully tended farmstead, with an honour courtyard, a panoramic tower and a terraced garden sloping down to the river. Today, it is a restaurant. Nearby, there is a golf club.



18 holes at the Jesuits'

The golf course in Cornate, designed by Franco Piras, is an 18-hole, 6,606 metre one with five lakes. There is also a driving range.
Golf Club Villa Paradiso
Via Villa Paradiso 1,
Cornate d'Adda
Phone 0396887124
www.golfvillaparadiso.com

“Martesana”, much more than a canal

The Milanese of today undeniably associate the word “Martesana” with the **Naviglio Martesana**: a canal linking the city with the river Adda, and vitally important not only for irrigating farmland but also for communication. Looking back through the centuries, however, Martesana was and is not simply the name of a canal but refers to a whole geographical region, situated to the **east** of Milan.

In medieval times – reportedly as early as the 10th or 11th century – the Martesana area was commonly regarded as a **contado**, called “Comitatus Martexana”; its name may well have derived from the fortified settlement of Castelmarte, close to Como and its lake. A 13th-century document differen-



tiates between "Martesana de supra", directly north of the area we refer to here, and "Martesana prosciugada", the zone between Milan and the town of Trezzo sull'Adda. Nowadays, other distinctive features of the Martesana area, besides its canal, are seen in the landscape conservation initiatives organized by Lombardy's regional authorities and in the **Polo della Martesana**, a broad-spectrum cultural organization set up by the provincial authorities as part of the Metropoli project: it involves the municipi-

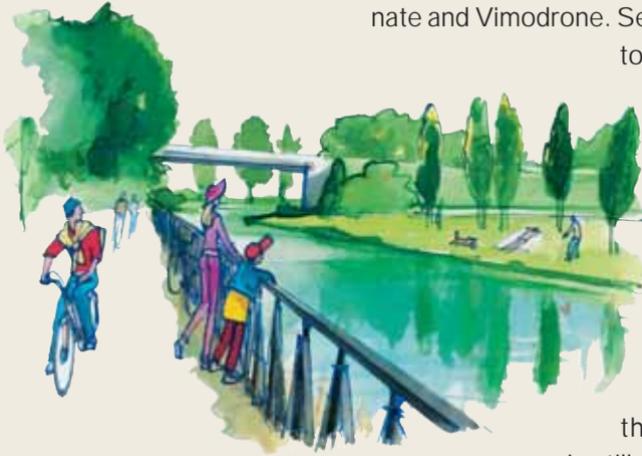


palities of Bussero, Carugate, Cassano, Cassina de' Pecchi, Cernusco, Gorgonzola, Liscate, Melzo, Pioltello, Rodano, Vignate and Vimodrone. Several of these small

towns also participate

each September in **Martesana in Piazza**, festivities centred on performances by street artists.

This part of the province of Milan, bordering on the Naviglio Martesana, is still a world apart, as endorsed in certain respects by the readership of the local paper. The weekly *Gazzetta della Martesana* is available in print from newsstands but also with a website.



Information

The Martesana Canal and how to get there

The waterway – known to the locals as Naviglio della Martesana – stretches for a distance of about 38 km, its width varying between 9 and 18 m. It was created as an offshoot of the Adda river between 1457 and 1465, when **Francesco Sforza** was Duke of Milan.

The route followed by this canal has been a popular one for the past five or six centuries, with the bustling markets of Gorgonzola and Melzo among its attractions. By boat from Milan – across the farmed countryside – came foodstuffs and merchandise, building materials for use in and around Bergamo, and in later years iron mined in Alto Lario.

Now much of the land along the Naviglio Martesana is heavily built up. A prominent landmark – some way north of the canal –

are the six lanes of a stretch of the **A4 Turin-Venice motorway**. The other main arteries in the area are

- **Padana Superiore** (provincial road 11, part of the former state-maintained road of the same name)
- **Rivoltana** (provincial road 14, between Milan and Rivolta d’Adda)
- **Cassanese** (provincial road 103, between Milan and Cassano d’Adda) and, by rail, the State Railways line between Milan and Treviglio.

The early 1960s saw the introduction of a service that ran practically parallel to the canal, known as the **Linee Celeri dell’Adda**: this **overland transit system** was later integrated into the second (“green”) line of Milan’s metro network, the “**Metropolitana Milanese**” (MM). On this line there are now frequent, comfortable trains linking Milan and Gessate.



Milan

City Council website: www.comune.milano.it
Informazione e Accoglienza Turistica: IAT della Provincia di Milano
Piazza Duomo 19/a - phone: 0277404343. Fax 0277404333
e-mail iat.info@provincia.milano.it
Stazione Centrale desk: phone 02 77404318 - 4319 Map: E 3



Our story starts in the Lombard capital itself, in the tombone (no relation to tomb, in Milanese it simply means a “place where water stops”) beside the age-old church of San Marco in the Brera district, not far from the famous Parini highschool.

Cycling along the towpaths

It is still not possible to cover the whole length of the Martesana between

Milan and Trezzo peacefully by bike.

Some stretches have not yet been made separate from other traffic and thus safe: cyclists have to return to roads also used by motorized vehicles, presenting risks. The municipal authorities of the Martesana area have nonetheless reached agreement on making the cycle track continuous.



The Martesana canal in Milan's Gorla district.

We refer here to the **Tumbun de San Marc**, a one-time harbour. Here – when Milan's Cerchia dei Navigli was a network of working canals that followed the ring of medieval walls, and not a mere name as today – the Naviglio Martesana flowed into the urban canals, bringing its water from the Adda.

The Martesana canal in 1928 before it was covered over. Left, a glimpse of some water remaining in the so-called Tumbun; to the right, the façade of the church of San Marco.



More

Gobba and the “Eastern front”

Line 2 of the Metropolitana Milanese (“MM”) leaves the city at Cascina Gobba, now an important hub with a vast car park for commuters. On Saturdays, when commuters don't travel into the city, the space void of cars provides the setting for a gathering of Bulgarians, Rumanians, Ukrainians, Russians, Bela-

ussians who travel to and fro' between their homeland and adopted country: informed by word of mouth, they come here in their hundreds in vans and with market stalls. For the Milanese too it offers an intriguing and colourful place to buy ethnic foods, cheap goods not normally imported and craft items from Eastern Europe.

Away from the Tombon, close to Via Melchiorre Gioia, is the starting point of a **cycle path** which flanks the Martesana canal for many kilometres, across Milan and out of the city. It is probably the best bike path in Milan, and definitely the most pleasant to ride on, along the canal and with frequent evocative sights to enjoy.

▼ Meanwhile the BiciPlan project will be displaying existing sections online, also showing connections with railway and “MM” stations, parks and shopping centres.

Vimodrone

Information: ProLoco di Vimodrone, via S. Remigio 7
City Council website: www.comune.vimodrone.mi.it
km 10,7 from Milan. Map: D 4



The closest town to Milan along the Martesana canal – on the Padana Superiore road you come to it by continuing from Viale Palmanova – has an abbreviated

modern name. It was once called Vico Modrone, words that will remind anyone from Milan of a celebrated branch of the noble Visconti household.

Vimodrone's most important historic and artistic site is the chapel of the **Beata Vergine**, built in the 15th century and attributed to Gian Giacomo Dolcebuono, against the façade of the 16th-century oratory of **Santa Maria Nuova**. The interior of the oratory boasts frescoes of the school of Bernardino Luini. There are tourist signs along the Padana Superiore indicating the way. The

name of the locality, Pilastrello, evokes the sixth milestone on the Roman road out of Milan. In nearby Gaggiolo stands **Villa Cazzaniga**, an interesting building with a stone balustrade and a landing stage on the canal.

Luchino Visconti

One of Italy's best-known film directors, Luchino Visconti, was a member of this family, aristocrats who lived here from 1648 onwards.



The 15th-century chapel of the Beata Vergine, now adjoining the 16th-century oratory of Santa Maria Nuova, Vimodrone.

Segrate

City Council website: www.comune.segrate.mi.it
km 10,8 from Milan. Map: D-E 4

Segrate had a long history as a farming centre and there are still occasional fields and green corners to enjoy, for instance around the ponds at Redecesio. But lifestyles have changed significantly in the town, now one of the foremost residential areas and business centres of the Milan suburbs. Architecture his-



Town Hall designed by Aldo Rossi, Segrate.

tory books mention the headquarters of the **Mondadori** publishing house, built in Segrate between 1968 and 1975 by the outstanding Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer. The Italian head-office of **IBM**, built between 1974 and 1977, was the work of Marco Zanuso.

The **Municipio** (town hall) in Piazza XXV Aprile was designed in 1965 by architect Aldo Rossi. Also of significance are the residential quarters of Milano San Felice (to designs by Luigi Caccia Dominioni, Vico Magistretti and Giorgio Pedroni) and Milano 2, financed and built by the Fininvest group which, with its Mediaset TV network, still operates in Segrate.

Idroscalo

Milan's "port" for flying planes was excavated in the 1920s and its waters came from springs and from the Martesana canal. Nowadays its original function has been taken over by the runways of "Enrico Forlanini" Airport at **Linate**, very close by. The Idroscalo's huge lake and surrounding park are used for recreative pursuits: it is a very popular place, above in summer – practically becoming Milan's beach – thanks also to the many events organized here. It is open every day, even in winter.



The Idroscalo, a popular venue for sports events.

Idropark
Via Circonvallazione
Idroscalo
Segrate
Phone 0270200902
provincia.milano.it/idropark

Cernusco sul Naviglio

City Council website: www.comune.cernuscosulnaviglio.mi.it
km 15,1 from Milan. Map: D 4

Meat and vegetables from Cernusco

Azienda Agricola
Corbari Antonio
Via Cascina
Imperiale 2
Phone 029230653
az.corbari@tiscali.it
Direct sale of
vegetables, fruit,
ornamental plants



Villa Alari Visconti dating from the 1700s, Cernusco sul Naviglio.



Azienda Agricola Fraternità

Cascina Nibai
Phone 029249433
www.nibai.it
Direct sale of meat,
pork, vegetables, poultry,
rice, salami/sausages
etc.



With its historic patrician villas – and the green banks of the Martesana canal a designated park for several kilometres, boasting meadows, walkways and bike path – Cernusco presents the image of a tranquil town that has special links with water. Many Milanese have moved here in search of quieter surroundings, following in the footsteps of more aristocratic, well-to-do predecessors.

The town has truly ancient origins: originally called Cixinusculum, until the 1800s it was known as Cernusco Asinario, after a local citizen of the Roman era, Caio Asinio. Comprised within Cernusco's centrally located public park is the garden of the imposing **Villa Alari Visconti**, built in the early 1700s to designs by Giovanni Ruggeri. The town's first town hall, **Villa Biancani Greppi**, dates to the same period. **Villa Uboldo**, built at the start of the 19th century and subsequently part of the local hospital, still has a well-known collection of arms.

Pioltello

Information: ProLoco di Pioltello, via Aldo Moro 19 proloco.pioltello@email.it
www.prolocopioltello.it Phone: 02/92148133 Fax: 02/92148133
 City Council website: www.comune.pioltello.mi.it
 km 13,5 from Milan. Map: D 5

The fact that Pioltello is about to have a new railway station, a “gateway” to the city as important as Rogoredo and Rho-Pero, may seem of almost trivial importance to anyone who lives elsewhere. Instead, it says a lot about this town which since the mid-1800s – when the railway first arrived here – has been closely involved with ‘metropolitan Milan’ while never losing agricultural roots centred on cereals, fodder and mulberry trees. The first factories to open here produced textiles and furniture, later came mechanical plants. Nowadays Pioltello effectively embodies the typically Milanese aptitude for welcoming individuals who arrive from afar in search of work and stability.

The records of the parish church of **Sant’Andrea** date back to 1564, but the building is believed to have originated in the 13th century. It underwent alteration in the 16th century and was not completed till even later: the façade was designed by leading 18th-century architect Carlo Giuseppe Merlo.

Happy in San Felice

Pioltello shares with Segrate and Peschiera Borromeo one of the very first upmarket suburban residential quarters in the green belt, Milano San Felice,



designed and built between 1967 and 1975. The ground-breaking idea was to offer the city's middle-to-upper class a quiet place in which to live, protected from the drawbacks of life in the metropolis but without losing contact with it.



Parish church of Sant’Andrea, Pioltello.

Carugate

City Council website: www.comune.carugate.mi.it
km 17,4 from Milan. Map: D 5



Villa Gallerana, Carugate.

The "Non-places"

Carugate is well-known in and around Milan for its constantly crowded shopping outlets: some are Italian businesses; others – significantly – are European chains.

In a few cases the underlying philosophy seems to be to offer families a full-service day out, theme-park style.

It's an interesting phenomenon: one we all indulge in and sociologists and anthropologists earnestly study. To describe such places the

French scholar Marc Augé coined the term "non-places", meaning they have no historical or clearly defined identity.

Why they exercise such a strong pull on us has yet to be explained.....

Despite having to cohabit with one of Europe's most important shopping centres as well as with the constant flow of traffic on the nearby Tangenziale ring road, Carugate still has characteristics typical of a small town protected by farmland and by nature reserves it shares with other local municipalities: the Parco del Molgora and Parco delle Cave.

Historically, the village grew up around the country residence of the noble Gallerani family, who moved from Siena to Milan as long ago as the 1400s, and around many farmhouses (Cascina Graziosa and Cascina Valera are two that survive today).



Villa Somaglia, now the Town Hall, Carugate.

The castle-like architecture of **Villa Gallerana**, built after 1450, still makes it an eye-catching site. The town hall is housed in **Villa Somaglia**, restored a few years ago. Just outside the town, the **oratory** at Cascina Graziosa, once owned by the Gallerani family, was built in the 18th century by Carlo Federico Pietrasanta.

Bussero

Information: ProLoco di Bussero, via S. Francesco, 4 proloco.bussero@gmail.com
 prolocobussero.altervista.org Phone: 02-95038808 Fax: 02-95038808
 City Council website: www.comune.bussero.mi.it
 km 19,2 from Milan. Map: D 5

Restoration work in the centre of Bussero has brought back the former layout of this small rural community: narrow, winding streets lined with long, low dwellings whose entrance doors open onto old courtyards. Its origins date back to antiquity, in fact a Roman

Fresh raw milk in Bussero

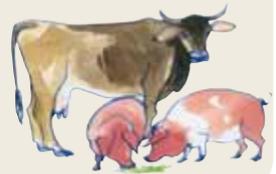
Azienda Agricola
 Fratelli Manzoni
 Cascina Rosa
 Phone 0295038100



Villa Sioli Legnani, Bussero.

sarcophagus containing a woman's remains was found here about a hundred years ago. The name of the town derives from bosso, evergreen boxwood; a common Lombard surname has this same origin. Bussero appeared on maps of the plains east of Milan as early as 852; about 300 years later Bussero gave its name to a prominent household which founded the hospital of San Barnaba in Milan (with Goffredo da Bussero, in 1145); Pagano, podestà in 1212 was also a member of this family. In his "Liber Notitiæ Sanctorum Mediolani" Goffredo da Bussero left us precious information about 13th-century life in the environs of Milan. **Villa Sioli Legnani** was built in the 18th century but attractively refurbished in the mid-1800s. The origins of **Villa Tamassia Redaelli**, with its garden and adjoining "rustic" oratory, go back to the 17th century.

Azienda Agricola
 Fratelli Fossati
 Via Barzago 9

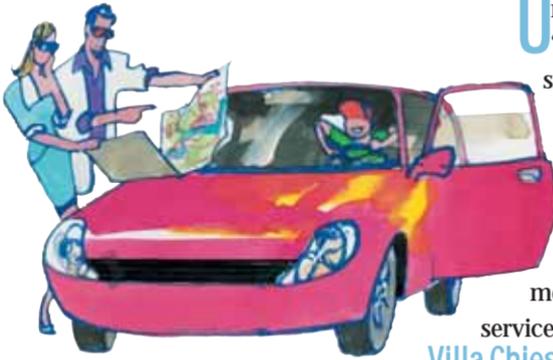


*Villa Tamassia Redaelli,
 Bussero.*



Cassina de' Pecchi

City Council website: www.comune.cassinadepecchi.mi.it
km 16,9 from Milan. Map: D 5



Until a few decades ago “Cascina dei Pecchi” was simply a long double row of low rural buildings. Nowadays it is one of Milan’s most sought-after residential satellites, a fact for which it owes thanks mostly to the suburban transit service provided by “MM” line 2.

Villa Chiesa Bentivoglio, dated mid-1700s, holds some architectural interest. It is situated on the Padana Superiore road, the main



Peace and quiet
in Cassina de'
Pecchi

Church of Sant'Agata, Cassina de' Pecchi.

Borgonovo Lara
Cascina Fogliana
Phone 029513652
Accommodation
for 16 guests

artery running through Cassina, parallel to the canal and the MM line.

Located in the outlying frazioni of Sant'Agata and Camporicco are **Villa Cusani** and the church of **Sant'Agata** built to designs by Pellegrino Tibaldi.

Vignate

Information: ProLoco di Vignate, via G. Deledda - c/o Scuola Elementare
 City Council website: www.comune.vignate.mi.it
 km 16,7 from Milan. Map: D-E 5



Parish church of Sant' Ambrogio, Vignate.

Vignate – about 15 km from Milan – was once little more than a stop on the railway line to Treviglio and Bergamo; although industry has now taken over most of its territory, agriculture used to be its mainstay. Long ago Vineate (from the Latin “vinea”, meaning vineyard) was involved in the complex events regarding possession and transfer of the feud of Melzo and Gorgonzola, of which it was part. At one time under the ownership of Lucia Marliani (1475), favourite of duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza, it remained the property of the Trivulzio family (1533-1678) until the redemption of feudal rights in 1691. One of the most interesting of its historic buildings is the 13th-century parish church of **Sant' Ambrogio**, renovated at the end of the 1500s. Still decorating its interior are fourteen large canvases of the 18th-century Lombard school, depicting the Via Crucis. The church of **San Biagio** is mentioned in documents from 1170: it contains two remarkable frescoes, recovered from the demolished oratory of Cascina Bianca and attributed to the school of Bernardino Luini.

“El pret de Retenà”

Don Giuseppe Gervasini (1867-1941) came from Retenate, a frazione of Vignate, where he was a priest from 1897 to 1901; as a popular healer and performer of miracles, he became known – in local dialect – as “el pret de Retenà”. He was not well liked by the Diocese of Milan which eventually suspended him a divinis, albeit not definitively.



Oratory of San Biagio, Vignate.

Melzo

Information: ProLoco di Melzo, p.zza Garibaldi 10
prolocomelzo@prolocoitalia.org Phone: 02 95710801 Fax: 02 95710801
City Council website: www.comune.melzo.mi.it
km 20,5 from Milan. Map: D 6

This good-sized, lively town in the countryside south of Gorgonzola – and with only a short distance between the two along provincial road 13 – has always been a centre of trade. Its historic centre was encompassed by walls (a



16th-century Civic Tower with the Town Hall on the left, Melzo.

Parish church dedicated to
Santi Alessandro e Margherita,
Melzo.



more extensive 17th-century ring, but the older one at least medieval) and its street plan remains a sunburst pattern around the central squares. A prominent feature, at the very centre, is the 16th century **Torre Civica**, intended as the bell tower of the never-completed church of Sant'Ambrogio. The church dedicated to **Santi Alessandro e Margherita**, originally erected on this site in the 11th/12th century, was almost totally rebuilt in the mid-1800s. In the third chapel is a detached fresco of the Dead Christ, attributed to Giovanni Battista Crespi also



16th-century Palazzo Trivulzio, Melzo.

known as Il Cerano. A neoclassical façade is now the most distinctive feature of **Palazzo Trivulzio**, built in the 16th century over a pre-existing medieval castle. The only visible remains of the castle are its square tower and part of the courtyard.

The elegant baroque oratory of **Sant'Antonio**, octagonal in shape, is almost a pantheon of the Trivulzio household which held sway in this area between 1531 and 1679. The church of Sant'Andrea, from the 1300s, was renovated in the following century.

Melzo, land of milk and honey

Azienda Agricola Biondi Cugini



Cascina Rogolone
Phone 029551390

Direct sale of
honey and fresh
raw milk

Azienda Agricola
Ceriani Renato
Cascina Banfa 1
Phone
0295711405
Direct sale of
fresh raw milk



Church of Sant'Andrea, Melzo.

Gorgonzola

Information: ProLoco Gorgonzola, Vicolo Fabio Filzi 3
segreteria@prolocogorgonzola.191.it
www.prolocogorgonzola.191.it Phone: 02 95301238 Fax: 02 95301238
City Council website: www.comune.gorgonzola.mi.it
km 21,3 from Milan. Map: D 5-6

Agri-culture and agri-relaxation in Gorgonzola

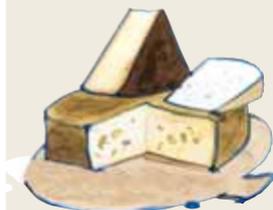
Borgonovo Giuseppe
e Andrea
Cascina Mirabello
Phone 0295110077
Accommodation
for 30 guests

This is the most important town between Milan and the river Adda. Traditionally traders who passed through used either the Martesana canal – which often offers evocative views as it flows through the built-up central area – or the Padana Superiore road, following a route that has existed since Roman times.



Parish church of Santi Gervasio e Protasio, Gorgonzola.

Azienda Agricola
Colombo



Cascina Vergani
Phone 029515663
Direct sale of cheese

While Gorgonzola was once the feud of the Marliani and Trivulzio households, in more recent centuries the noble **Serbelloni** family has often played a role in its history. The family tombs are to be found in the centrally located parish church of **Santi Gervasio e Protasio**, designed by Ticino architect Simone Cantoni (1736-1818), one of the finest exponents of Lombard neoclassicism. Opposite the church, in a picturesque setting beside the canal, the **Casa Parrocchiale** has been tastefully restored.

The Serbelloni family also owned the imposing



Villa Busca, Gorgonzola.

16th-century **Villa Sola Busca**; its now-public garden faces the canal and several of its rooms are set aside for cultural initiatives organized by the municipal authorities. The local **hospital** (1848-50) is also named after the Serbellonis; its chapel, dedicated to San Giuseppe, is the work of Giacomo Moraglia. Entering from Via Piave 12, you catch an intriguing glimpse of the **Corte dei Chiostri**, a late-medieval cloister once part of a 15th-century monastery.

There are several bridges crossing the Martesana canal. On the one furthest towards Milan there is a stone **pillar** erected to commemorate the Black Death.

▼
**Azienda Agricola
 Invernizzi Francesco
 e Giuseppe**
 Cascina Mugnaga 7
 tel. 029514248
 Direct sale of fresh raw milk

A Fair dedicated to Santa Caterina

The Fair dedicated to Saint Catherine is the biggest local festivity and it continues to attract huge crowds to Gorgonzola's old centre every year on **November 25th and 26th**. Nowadays it offers other appealing events besides its market stalls, but it has been a popular shopping opportunity for centuries. In fact it has reportedly been held regularly since the 1700s. For further information on the Fair, as well as on events celebrating the local cheese and on Gorgonzola in general, contact the **Pro Loco** at Vicolo Fabio Filzi 3, Phone 0295301238, www.prolocogorgonzola.191.it

More

Gorgonzola cheese

It goes without saying that the town of Gorgonzola is regarded as the original home – according to some sources since the end of the 10th century – of the characteristic **blue cheese** that is one of Italy's most distinctive and best-loved. It is made from pasteurized cow's milk from local farms, to which starter cultures and selected moulds are added to provide the



streaks of blue veining. Mild gorgonzola is ripened for about two months, the natural (sharp-tasting) variety for more than three. Gorgonzola now has now obtained official designation – Denomination of Protected Origin (“DOP” in Italian) – from the EU. Each cheese, weighing about 12 kg, has the mark of origin stamped on both faces and is wrapped in aluminium sheets with the DOP mark.

Pessano con Bornago

City Council website: www.comune.pessanoconbornago.mi.it
km 20,1 from Milan. Map: C-D 5



Meat in Pessano & Bornago

Azienda Agricola
Ambrosoni
di Burni Lucia
Via Neuroni
Phone 029504118
enzoambrosoni@alice.it
Direct sale of meat, pork,
salami/sausages etc.

The double name of this municipality is self-explanatory: here – immediately north of Gorgonzola, amid cultivated fields – there are two small towns that came into being and developed separately, neither more important than the other. But the gradual merge of Pessano's urban fabric with Bornago's means the two now form practically a single entity. In this part of the Lombardy plain, as elsewhere, the agricultural activities evident from the many cascine (farms) in part gave way to the industrialization typical of the post-war years; later there was extensive housing development in the area, to meet the demands of commuters travelling daily to Milan and Monza. This place had long been chosen for the country residences of the aristocracy, and a number of them still remain: **Villa Longhi** (18th century), Villa Prinetti (early 1800s, its grounds now open as a public park) and **Villa Negroni Prati Morosini** (used as a community centre). Although Bornago's church is of medieval origin, its present exterior dates to the 17th century.



18th-century Villa Longhi, Pessano con Bornago.

Caponago

City Council website: www.comune.caponago.mi.it
km 21,4 from Milan. Map: C 5



Villa Prata Galbiati Simonetta, Town Hall, Caponago.

While, during the Middle Ages, the main activity of this very old settlement was farming, from the early 19th century onwards industry began to make its mark, with small



*Parish church
of Santa Giuliana, Caponago.*



Country food in Caponago

Grazioli Giuseppe
Cascina San Giuseppe
Phone 0295345038
Restaurant catering
for 70 clients



and medium-sized enterprises. The municipality extends over an area of flat countryside crossed by the river **Molgora**; part of Molgora Park is in its territory.

Flanking several streets in the town centre are a number of rural courtyards, two of them adjoining an imposing residence, surrounded by gardens: **Villa Prata Galbiati Simonetta**, built in the early 1800s over a 16th-century monastery, is now used as the town hall. Another interest-



The river Molgora as it flows through Caponago.

More

Oaks and birches in the Parco del Molgora

The Molgora park and nature reserve, established in 1985, stretches across a vast area, since its founding municipalities – Vimercate, Burago di Molgora and Agrate – were later joined by Carnate, Usmate-Velate, Caponago, Pesano con Bornago, Bussero and Carugate. The park is part of the even larger expanse of protected areas set up under the auspices of Lombardy's regional government

On the northern fringe of the reserve –

which has 80 hectares of woodland along the banks of rivers and streams – there are still oaks and birches that have always grown in the valley of the Molgora. In pre-Roman times forests of these trees covered the land. Now, subsequent to clearance for farming and the introduction of other species in later periods, few of them remain.

Parco del Molgora

Via Roma 5, Burago di Molgora

Phone 0396612944

www.parcamolgora.it

ing building is the large parish church of **Santa Giuliana**. Built by Carlo Giuseppe Merlo in 1730, its central space has an elliptical plan but its overall appearance totally changed in the 19th century when the façade was brought forward.

Cambiago

City Council website: www.comune.cambiago.mi.it
km 25,1 from Milan. Map: C 6

Nowadays known to some for the toll booth and exit from the Milan-Venice motorway it shares with Cavemago, the town is situated on the Lombard plain between the rivers Adda and Molgora, just north of the Villoresi canal. Like many other places in the Milan area, the “ago” suffix of its name reveals a Celtic origin, although there is no other documentary evidence to prove it.



Bikes and cycle frames made in Cambiago

A major contribution to the town's more recent history has been made by a company that started up and developed here: Colnago cycles are now known and appreciated in Italy and worldwide. Colnago Ernesto e C. Viale Brianza 7/9, Cambiago
Phone 0295308082
www.colnago.com



Parish church of San Zenone, Cambiago.

The small church of Beata Vergine del Rosario, Cambiago.

This is basically a country town that has grown up around its church. However, more interesting than the parish church of **San Zenone** built in 1900 on the site of the old place of worship (and containing an 1848 organ) is the chapel of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary, with its stained-glass windows and mosaics, in the hamlet of **Torrazza dei Mandelli**.



Gessate

City Council website: www.comune.gessate.mi.it
km 25,6 from Milan. Map: D 6



Farm shops in Gessate

Azienda Agricola
Fossati

Via Monza 100,
Cascinello

Phone 0295384132

Meat, cheese, vegetables,
fruit, eggs,
salami/sausages etc.,
fresh raw milk



Azienda Agricola
La Casara

di Nava M. Grazia

Via Monza 80

phone 0295382340

Meat,
salami/sausages etc.



Parish church of Santi Pietro e Paolo, Gessate.

Vurrently the terminus of the overland section of "MM" Line 2 (green). First mentions of historic Glaxiate are to be found in two parchments referring to money matters, dated 848 and 870 respectively, and a third from 957. It is nonetheless highly likely that the settlement had even more remote origins.

Its prosperity as a farming community (above all, for cereals and wine) dates at least from the 17th century. Although this parish church is not even a century old, **Santi Pietro e Paolo** contains two important 16th-century works by Bernardino Campi ("Doubting Thomas") and his brother Antonio ("Pentacost"). Situated in **Villa Fornaci**, part of which is a frazione of Gessate and part a frazione of Bellinzago Lombardo, is the noteworthy **Villa Salazar**.

Bellinzago Lombardo

Information: ProLoco, via Roma 46 Phone: 02 95780096
City Council website: www.comune.bellinzagolombardo.mi.it
km 24,1 from Milan. Map: D 6

The town is situated along the Martesana canal some 20 km east of Milan, separated from Gessate by the Padana Superiore road. It probably owes its name to a family that can lay claim to some celebrated figures: for instance, Isabella Bellinzago Lomazzi who in the late 16th/early 17th-century cooperated with Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, or Giulio Bellinzago, who founded a bank of the same name in Milan in the 19th century and became mayor of the city.

The town's foremost historic building is the parish church of **San Michele**, of medieval origin (13th century).

Bellinzago shares with Gessate the frazione of **Villa Fornaci**, where the main road is lined with a series of stately residential buildings of some interest. Perhaps the most prominent are **Villa Moioli**, dating back to the 1500s but extensively modified through the centuries, and neoclassical **Casa Carcano Arrigoni** in

Via Umberto I, with gardens overlooking the canal. Originally owned by the marquise of Maino di Bordoleno, it was eventually acquired by the Oggioni and later Arrigoni families. The land it was built on in the early 1800s was landscaped to create two large gardens: one Italianate, the other English-style. The building stands perpendicular to the road, with a courtyard on the entrance side. Several of its painted ceilings are well preserved.

Country food in Bellinzago



Sala Enrico e Figli
Cascina Donnino
Phone 0295781552
Restaurant catering
for 80 clients



Parish church of San Michele,
Bellinzago Lombardo.

Azienda Agricola
Mapelli Ferdinando
Via Cascina Misericordia
Phone 0295781388
Direct sale of fresh
raw milk

Azienda Agricola
Passoni e C.
Padana Superiore 50,
Villa Fornaci
Phone 0295781389
Direct sale of fresh
raw milk

Pozzuolo Martesana

City Council website: www.comune.pozzuolomartesana.mi.it
km 22,9 from Milan. Map: D 6



Pozzuolo is also located on the plain that extends towards the Adda, on the Cassanese provincial road, further on from Gorgonzola. Its name probably stems from the great many rivulets of natural and man-made (fontanili) spring water to be found in the surrounding

area. Each of the localities that in 1865 joined to form this municipality – Pozzuolo itself, Trecella and Bisentrato – have their own distinctive history and features.

Still standing in Pozzuolo is the impressive Gothic church of **San Francesco**, with frescoes dating from the 14th/15th century: work on its construction began in 1295 and the church is now all that remains of the Franciscan monastery founded in that period by the Milanese cardinal, Pietro Peregrino. At **Trecella** – legend has it that monks fleeing from the Goths found refuge in “three cells”



Church of San Francesco,
Pozzuolo Martesana.

here in the year 540 – three courtyards representing the historic heart of the villa can still be clearly identified. **Villa Resta Pallavicino**, on

the edge of the *frazione*, is a fine example of Lombard *barocchetto*, a toned-down style of Baroque.

At **Bisentrato**, a **water mill** – called “della Galanta” – owes its name to a nearby spring.

Honey from Pozzuolo Martesana

Azienda Agricola
Apicoltura
Paolo Matteo
Via IV Novembre 25
Phone 0295356150
ortopailoda@virgilio.it



Inzago

Information: ProLoco, via Facheris 12 prolocoinzago@alice.it
 Phone: 02 9547691
 City Council website: www.comune.inzago.mi.it
 km 26,6 from Milan. Map: D 6

Inzago is situated between Gorgonzola and Cassano d'Adda: nowadays the Padana Superiore road passes through the town but in the 15th century it overlooked the Martesana canal. It was once a popular place for noble Milanese families to spend the summer. Its very old origins are confirmed by documents written as early as 848 and 807 when its name was reported as Aniciaco or Anticiacum; in medieval times the settlement belonged to the abbot of the Milan church of Sant'Ambrogio. It has some interesting sites that testify to its past as a "resort" and recommend it as a tourist destination. Anyone using public transport can take the ATM 922 bus from Gessate "MM" station.

The best-known and most eye-catching of Inzago's patrician residences is **Villa Facheris**, in Piazza Maggiore. Although 16th-century in origin, its façade and main gates are 19th-century updates, in the latter case by Alessandro Mazzu-



Celebrating
since 1803

On the second Sunday in October, Inzago holds its Patron Saint's Day Festival, followed by the traditional livestock fair founded in 1803.



Chiesa di San Rocco e Sant'Ambrogio, Inzago.



Villa Facheris, Inzago.



Villa Brambilla, Inzago.

*Visitors at the entrance
to Villa Gneccchi, Inzago.*



cotelli. Also overlooking Piazza Maggiore is the small 16th/18th-century church of **San Rocco** containing valuable frescoes.

Along Via Cavour, a high wall hides **Villa Brambilla** from view; built in the 1700s, it was remodelled in a more modern vein in the early 19th century with the addition of a tower and a large garden. Just a few steps from the main square, **Villa Gneccchi** was once owned by the Franchetti di Ponte family:

in the 1700s they ran the postal service between Lombardy and Vienna. It consists of several buildings arranged around a U-shaped courtyard: they include outhouses, barns, stables and a chapel with a frescoed sacristy. At the rear, the garden forms two sides of Piazza Maggiore.

The interior has several large rooms with painted caisson ceilings.

Opposite Villa Gneccchi, Inzago's town hall is housed in **Palazzo Piola**, a mainly Baroque-style building. It is flanked by the parish church of **Santa Maria Assunta** built in the 7th century, enlarged in the 1500's and renovated at the beginning of the 19th century.

A distinctive feature of **Villa Aitelli Vitali** is the octagonal tower facing towards the Martesana Canal; its origins date back to the 1500s when this was the site of a monastery of the Humiliati order. Since then it has been extensively modified and enlarged. Along Via Marchese Secco d'Aragona is the entrance courtyard of **Villa Rej**, probably the oldest of Inzago's stately homes originally owned by the Secco d'Aragona family. In the garden overlooking the Canal, there is a balustrade with an opening leading to a landing-stage.

Along the towpath of the Martesana Canal, in the direction of Bellinzago Lombardo, stands



Villa Aitelli Vitali overlooking the canal, site of a 16th-century monastery, Inzago.

the “**Monasterolo**”, founded in 1489 by the Augustinian monks from the Incoronata Monastery in Milan. The church joined to it, dedicated to **Santa Maria delle Grazie**, is decorated with precious frescoes and is open to visitors on the feast of Our Lady's Birth (8th September). Also worth seeing is the adjacent irrigation tap which Ludovic the Moor donated to the Augustinian monastery in 1494.



The steps of Palazzo Piola, Town Hall, Inzago.

Horseriding in Inzago

Pozzi Angelo
Cascina Magana



Phone 029548403
Accommodation for 8 guests. Family-style restaurant for 20 clients
Riding stables for 30 horses

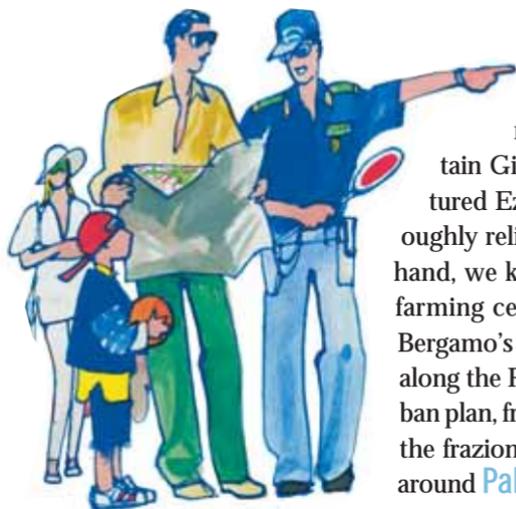
Fresh raw milk from Inzago

Azienda Agricola
Ronchi Marco e Giorgio
Cascina Pignone



Truccazzano

Information: ProLoco di Truccazzano, via Scotti 48 prolocot@yahoo.it
www.truccazzanopro.altervista.org Phone: 3345042274
City Council website: www.comune.truccazzano.mi.it
km 22,9 from Milan. Map: E 6



According to the historian Giorgio Giulini (1714-1780), Truccazzano was named after a 13th-century captain Giovanni da Trocavano who captured Ezzelino da Romano. From thoroughly reliable historic facts, on the other hand, we know the town has long been a farming centre, situated on the border of Bergamo's territory, close to the river Adda, along the Rivoltana road. Its interesting urban plan, from the Napoleonic era, includes the frazione **Albignano**, which developed around **Palazzo Anguissola**.

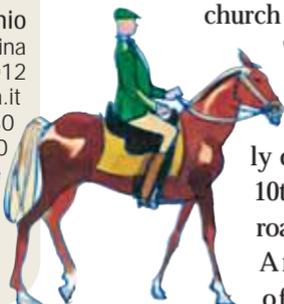


Truccazzano, main square.

Agriturismo in Truccazzano

Groppelli Antonio
Cascina Rosina
Phone 029583012
www.cascinarosina.it

Accommodation for 30
guests. Restaurant for 50
clients. Recreative
pursuits for 200 clients.
Riding stables
for 30 horses



Other important examples of local architecture are the late 16th-century parish church of **San Michele**, in Truccazzano itself, and the so-called **Torrettone** allegedly dating back to the 10th century, along the road to Rivolta d'Adda. Another frazione of Truccazzano is



16th-century parish church of San Michele, Truccazzano.

Corneliano Bertario, an attractive place with an old church, set in pleasant countryside not far from the Adda. The focal point of this little village with its medieval atmosphere is the **Borromeo Castle**, of 12th-century origin.

More

Corneliano's Palio

The traditional *Sagra del Latte* (milk festival) was recently revived in Corneliano Bertario by a group of local enthusiasts. With the support of the municipal and provincial authorities, an evocative palio

in medieval costume is now organized here each year in September.

Accademia medievale cornelianese
Phone 0295309444
www.corneliano.it



Borromeo Castle,
Corneliano Bertario.

▼
Invernizzi Mario
Cascina Cortenuova
Phone 0295838495
Recreative pursuits
for 150 clients

Farm shops in Truccazzano

**Azienda Agricola
Danelli Fratelli**
Cascina Francesca
Fresh raw milk



**Azienda Agricola
Cascina Cortenuova**
Strada Rivoltana, km 16
Phone 029583007
www.cortenuova.it
Cheese and
salami/sausages etc.

**Azienda Agricola
il Torrettone**
Strada Rivoltana, km 17.500
Phone 029583586
www.iltorrettone.it
Meat, salami/sausages
etc., fish

**Azienda Agricola
Cascina Rosina**
Via Cascina Rosina 1
Strada Prov.le Rivoltana
Phone 029583012
www.cascinarosina.it
Meat, cheese, eggs,
salami/sausages etc.,
fresh raw milk

Masate

City Council website: www.unione.basianomasate.mi.it
km 27,6 from Milan. Map: C 6

This small town is located on the banks of the Villoresi canal and on the edge of the Rio Vellone park; its setting is still rural, despite its location in an industrialized “strip” stretching from the suburbs of Milan to those of Bergamo. And it has in fact succeeded in retaining the appealing look of a place “tailored” to man’s needs. Its name came from that of the “de Maxate” family, who lived in Milan back in the 13th century and must have owned estates in this area. A settlement – initially of farmers and later of fabric makers – is believed to have

*The present parish church
of San Giovanni Evangelista,
dating from mid-1800s, Masate.*



More



Protecting Lombardy's upper plain

The Parco del Rio Vallone is a park and nature reserve that comprises a series of municipalities: Basiano, Bellusco, Cavenago di Brianza, Gessate, Masate, Ornago and, more recently, Aicurzio, Busnago, Cambiago, Mezzago, Sulbiate and Verderio Inferiore. Its terrain – with an intricate network of paths and unmade roads – is situated in a part of the upper Lombard plain where some of the countryside is still relatively intact, unlike other

areas now extensively built-up.

Within the region's system of protected areas the park provides an important ecological corridor: it is bordered to the west by the Parco del Molgora, to the south by the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, to the east by the Parco Adda Nord and to the north by the Parco di Montecchia e della Valle del Curone.



Parco del Rio Vallone
Cascina Sofia 1
Cavenago di Brianza
Phone
0295335235
www.parcoriovallone.it

existed here since around the year 1000.

The parish church of **San Giovanni Evangelista** is a Neo-Classical building erected in the first half of the 1800s.

In **Cascina San Nabore**, on the fringe of the town, the oratory of Santi Nabore e Felice originated even earlier than the 13th century.

Basiano

City Council website: www.unione.basianomasate.mi.it
km 28,4 from Milan. Map: C 6

Now the busy stretch of the A4 motorway between Cambiago and Trezzano Rosa flanks Basiano, but the place was first settled no later than the year 200 (a Roman sarcophagus was discovered here in 1979).



*Parish church of San Gregorio,
Basiano.*

Close by, in a locality still known as **Monastero**, imposing porticoes are the only visible remains of a medieval monastery that experienced its heyday in the 1500s; it was eventually shut down at the end of the 18th century. The parish church of **San Gregorio** is in 19th/20th-century neogothic style.

Basiano is part of the Rio Vallone park, and **Cascina Castellazzo** is in its territory. Tradition has it that the Longobard Queen Teodolinda once stayed here: she may have been connected with the origin of a chapel that is part of this farm's property, later dedicated to San Carlo.



Cascina Castellazzo, Basiano.

Trezzano Rosa

Information: ProLoco di Trezzano Rosa, via ai Campi 2
prolocotrezzanorosa@tiscali.it
City Council website: www.comune.trezzanorosa.mi.it
km 29,4 from Milan. Map: C 6



Parish church of San Gottardo, Trezzano Rosa.



This essentially agricultural town – on the upper Lombard plain, in an area crossed by the Milan-Venice motorway – is situated to the right of the Adda, in countryside sloping down towards terrain irrigated by the Martesana canal. In medieval times it was part of Trezzo; it is distinguished from Trezzano sul Naviglio by the “Rosa” suffix, after the Confraternity of the Rosary. During the wars between Milan and Venice, it provided support to soldiers and suffered the consequences. The town conserves its medieval urban plan.

The parish church in the town centre – dedicated to **San Gottardo** – has 15th-century origins.

A toast from Porta

There are no longer vineyards around Trezzano Rosa and Busnago but in some of his famous verses Milan's celebrated dialectal poet Carlo Porta (1775-1821) was in time to dedicate a toast to the local wine.

Pozzo d'Adda

City Council website: web.tiscali.it/comunepozzo/
km 30,2 from Milan. Map: C 6-7



Halfway between Milan and Bergamo, the municipal area of Pozzo d'Adda includes the *frazione* of **Bettola** – situated at the height of the 18th mile along the ancient Roman road to Bergamo – which is practically as important as Pozzo itself. Reportedly there was once an eating-place (“bettola”) here, used by travellers.



Parish church of Sant'Antonio Abate, Pozzo d'Adda.

Bettola

Approaching Bettola from Pozzo d'Adda, the visitor's gaze is immediately drawn to a long, curving structure, on two floors: this is Palazzo Dugnani, a 17th-century dwelling built



In Pozzo's main square, standing in splendid isolation, is the old parish church of **Sant'Antonio Abate** with its late 17th-century façade. Initially erected around 1554, the building was extensively altered and enlarged through the centuries: it fell into disuse after a new church with the same dedication was built in 1901. Subsequent to a very heavy snowfall in 1985 its roof collapsed.

Among the patrician households that settled



Villa Brizzolara, Pozzo d'Adda.

in Pozzo was the Brizzolara family: Cesare Brizzolara was in fact the town's mayor in the late 1800s. **Villa Brizzolara** in Via Colombo was recently sold to the Municipality, which has made a start on its refurbishment. Hidden from view behind its walls is a large garden; the former stables have provided premises for the new municipal library. An important legacy that has survived to the present-day is **Villa Montalto** (also known as Cascina Montalto). There are documents testifying to the fact that the Montalto family owned extensive lands here before the 1700s, including an abbey subject to the Curia of Milan. It was here that the present villa was later built.

▼
to a farmhouse-style plan, embellished by a round look-out tower in a corner overlooking the large inner courtyard. Today, besides several apartments, the building is occupied by the offices of a beekeeping business. Many rooms of the palazzo are in the throes of restoration.



Palazzo Dugnani, frazione Bettola.

Roncello

Information: ProLoco di Roncello
info@prolocoroncello.it - www.prolocoroncello.it
City Council website: www.comune.roncello.mi.it
km 30,4 from Milan. Map: C 6



Parish church of Santi Ambrogio e Carlo, Roncello.

A small town about 30 km from Milan, situated slightly north of the Milan-Venice motorway, between the exits for Cavenago Cambiagio and Trezzo sull'Ad-

da. In all likelihood its origins are Roman since – as in nearby Busnago, with which it has had close ties through the centuries – its land shows traces of centuriation.

Roncello's faithful in fact came under the parish of Busnago from 1566 to 1885. Part of Roncello is now used for manufacturing activities, while part of it is residential. Its terrain is on the very fringe of the **Parco del Rio Vallone**.

The present parish church of **Santi Ambrogio e Carlo** was built in the 19th century.



*Parco del Rio Vallone,
Roncello.*

Busnago

Information: ProLoco di Busnago - c/o Palazzo Municipale Busnago
 City Council website: www.comune.busnago.mi.it
 km 31 from Milan. Map: C 6

The original settlement here, towards the Adda, must have been a rearguard encampment, removed from the outposts on the river. The root of its name is attributed to the term 'buccina', a type of bugle used in war, and in this case serving to warn one-time inhabitants of present-day Busnago that they were under threat of invasion.

The **Torre dei Germani** (named after Germanin, founder of the Vimercati family) also had a military function: it was one of the four that, as early as the 12th century, served to stabilize the walls of the settlement: the tower is entered through a large doorway with a single light window, while other remains of fortifications have been incorporated into nearby buildings.

The town hall occupies the handsome 18th-century Palazzo Schiaffinati, built by the family (later Porro-Schiaffinati) which then played a key role in local affairs.

13th-century Torre dei Germani, Busnago.



Eating in Busnago

Gianni Massimo
 Via San Rocco 28
 Phone 0396956383
 Restaurant catering
 for 19 guests



Palazzo Schiaffinati, Town hall, Busnago.

Grezzago

City Council website: www.comune.grezzago.mi.it
km 30,1 from Milan. Map: C 6-7



Just a short distance from the right bank of the Adda, between Trezzo and Trezzano Rosa, the municipal area of Grezzago is crossed by the Milan-Venice motorway at a point closer to Bergamo than to Milan. Nevertheless, Grezzago's loyalties have always lain with the Lombard capital.

A village on this site has reportedly existed since the 9th/10th century but the first reliable information on its history are to be found in the 13th-

century "Liber Notitiae Sanctorum Mediolani" by Goffredo da Bussero; he mentions an "Ecclesia Sancti Martini" in Grezzago, of which the parish church of **San Martino**, now housed in a modern building, is the direct heir.

It is also known that in the 16th century the "fundus de Gratiago" was turned into a large agricultural estate, with



*Parish church
of San Martino, Grezzago.*



Palazzo Zoia, Grezzago.

More

"I Comuni per l'Adda"

This association was formed in July 2005, when it comprised the municipal authorities of Trezzo sull'Adda, Vaprio d'Adda, Cassano d'Adda and Truccazzano.

In September 2006 Grezzago and Pozzo d'Adda joined the group and then in January 2007, Inzago, Masate, Basiano and lastly, in June 2007, Trezzano Rosa.

These municipalities regard such an as-

sociation as the most appropriate way to initiate joint involvement in procedures regarding environmental policies, in particular conservation and enhancement of the river Adda and areas

pertaining to it.

On 25 October 2007 the General Meeting of the Members approved the decision to make the association a non-profit organization (*Onlus*).

Associazione
dei Comuni
per l'Adda

www.comuniperladda.it



a house occupied by the land's owner. This building, then the focal point of village life, corresponds to **Palazzo Zoia**: although it has much changed over the years a room with 17th-century frescoes has been preserved.

The countryside of the south, up to the Colle

A plain of fields and canals guard Milan on its southern edge. During the last century, its farmers were often urbanized, coming to work in the large companies established in the area south of Milan – from Tecnomasio electro-mechanics in Piazzale Lodi, to Richard Ginori ceramics or Bindi paper mill on the Navigli - while today, it is rather the

Milanese turning from the city to the country. Sometimes permanently, taking houses out of the city's fray, and sometimes just briefly, for a pleasurable weekend outing with the family.



The **directions** from Milan in this zone of the flatlands are numerous, but can be grouped into **four axes**. That in the direction of Magenta and Abbiategrasso, between the highway for Torino and the Naviglio Grande; that for Pavia and Genoa, stretching more or less along the Naviglio Pavese; that for Lodi, the Emilia and finally Rome (along the Autostrada del Sole) and that which runs past Linate airport and the Idroscalo towards the Ad-da river.

Almost all the **Bassa** - as, for inconvertible reasons of altitude, we call this the "Lower Plain" - is carefully protected for its value as well as its natural settings by the **Parco Agricolo Sud Milano**, an area (and a series of study initiatives, of tutoring, by the local government involved in the Provincial administration and about 60 municipalities) both worthy and promising.

Still further to the south, the Bassa Milanese finds welcome interruption in the **Colle di San Colombano**, an enclave of the Milan province in the province of Lodi, established in 1992. (When it was declared a new province, the inhabitants preferred to continue to report to Milan as their provincial capital). Here, other than tranquility, wine reigns supreme.



Information

The Parco Sud and its landmarks

With a view towards the future since its institution in 1990, the **Parco Agricolo Sud Milano** extends in a vast semicircular area along the southern perimeter of the province of Milan, surrounding the city. Conceived with the aim of protecting and making the most of the agricultural vocations of Milano Sud and to protect the environment and the countryside, it is managed by the Province of Milano.

The park is rich in farms and farm-houses, in addition to historical buildings, among them some which particularly stand out are the **abbeys** of Chiaravalle (in the territory of Milan municipality), Mirasole and Viboldone (near Opera and San Giuliano Milanese respectively). In addition, also found in this area are the Visconti

castles of Binasco, Cusago and Melegnano, as well as those of Cassino Scanasio (in Rozzano), Locate Triulzi, Peschiera Borromeo, Buccinasco, Macconago (in Milan) and Rocca Brivio (in San Giuliano Milanese).

There are also many fortified farming centres like Carpiano, Tolcinasco (in Pieve Emanuele), Settala and Coazzano, in addition to Fagnano and Gudo Visconti, which are found in the westernmost portion of the Park, towards Abbiategrasso.

For further information, you can consult the heading "Parco Agricolo Sud Milano" within the webpage of the Province www.provincia.mi.it

Locations where you can find information, product materials and promotional offers are called Punti Parco. Aside are addresses in town and in the areas covered in this guide.





Punto Parco Boscoincittà
Via Novara 340, Milano
Cascina San Romano
Phone 024522401

Punto Parco Naviglio Grande
Società Cooperativa " Presenza"
via Vittorio Emanuele II 27
Corsico
Phone 0245119508

Punto Parco Ticinello
Associazione Parco Ticinello
The Parco Agricolo Ticinello is an
example of the integration be-
tween the environment, farmlands
and spaces for leisure time and
learning, with an area of 800.000
square metres.
via Dudovich 10, Milano
Phone 0289500565

Punto Parco Nocetum
Associazione Nocetum
At the entrance of Milan and just a
short distance from Chiaravalle.
The association organizes town
festivals, creative parties, round
tables, concerts, literary events
and conventions.
via San Dionigi 77, Milano
Phone 0255230575



Corsico

City Council website: www.comune.corsico.mi.it
km 9 from Milan. Map: E-F 2



An integral part of the urban fabric along the final tract of the **Naviglio Grande**, Corsico, since the 1950s, has been among the areas of Milan primarily interested in residential growth due to post-war expansion. Industrialization in the zone began at the start of the 1900s, with the Burgo Paper Mills and the Società

Materiali Refrattari.

A pair of *cascine*, or farmhouses, **Guardia di Sotto** and **Guardia di Sopra**, located on the



Cascina Guardia di Sopra, overlooking the Naviglio Grande.

banks of the canal in the tract towards Trezzano, are testimony to centuries of Corsico's agricultural roots; the latter was once an outpost of the Visconti villa of Cassinetta di Lugagnano.

Buccinasco

City Council website: www.comune.buccinasco.mi.it
km 9,5 from Milan. Map: F 2

Situated between the Naviglio Grande and Pavia, it probably owes its name to the Latin root 'bucina' (conduit or canal) and the suffix 'asco' of Etruscan origin. In this territory where water is plentiful, development has been carried out respecting the environment with the boosting of farming traditions in the vast expanse of the Parco Sud (Buccinasco Castello and Gudo Gambaredo), industrial and craftwork factories (along the ring road) and residential building ensuring a pleasant way of life.

The **Castle** is actually a Renaissance era palace on a grid pattern, with a colonnade and a small balcony. The nearby **Santa Maria Nascente** church is decorated with a Lombard school fresco of the Crucifixion of the same period. The chapel of **San Biagio**, in 18th century style, has an interesting altar-piece. The **Villa Durini Borromeo** on the Naviglio Grande is an ex-16th century convent converted for residential use.

Of the numerous *cascine*, most of which have been modernized, those currently used for public activities are the Fagnana (Library and Youth Centre) and the Robbiolo (social-cultural centre). Unspoiled areas offer relaxation and wellness.

15th-century
Castle,
Buccinasco.



Agri-Camping in Buccinasco



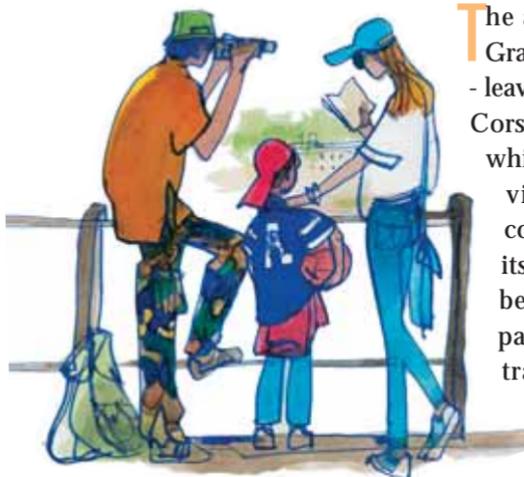
Trovaletto
Azienda Agricola
Meraldi Antonio
e Simone
Via Marconi 32
Phone 0245708540
Agri-Campsite 60 pitches
Recreational activities
for 80 guests
(picnic area, 5-a-side
soccer pitch, volleyball
court, fishing)

Oratory
of San Biagio,
Buccinasco.



Trezzano sul Naviglio

Information: ProLoco di Trezzano sul Naviglio sede, c/o Casa delle Associazioni
Via Cavour 22 - info@prolocotrezzano.it
City Council website: www.comune.trezzano-sul-naviglio.mi.it
km 12,4 from Milan. Map: F 2



The atmosphere of the Naviglio Grande becomes more airy when - leaving Milan behind and passing Corsico - you come to Trezzano, which was essentially a farming village until the 1960s. One could say perhaps though, that its true centre for 40 years has been the **Quartiere Zingone**, passing the canal and railroad tracks and straddling the 494 Nuova Vigevanese road.

Glimpses of the past can still be seen in the historic centre around the parish church of **Sant'Ambrogio**, which could be dated back to the first millennium, because of its origins linked to the properties in the zone which were holdings of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan. The church, enlarged in the 16th century, is of historical importance for the bell tower dated 1582, designed by Martino Bassi, as well as a Madonna and Child, found in the interior, attributed to Bernardino Luini.



Town Hall, Trezzano sul Naviglio.

Cesano Boscone

Information: ProLoco di Cesano Boscone, via Dante 29
c/o Trattoria "Vecchia Cesano"
proloco_cesano@hotmail.it - prolococesano.altervista.org Phone: 02/4580213
City Council website: www.comune.cesano-boscone.mi.it
km 9,9 from Milano. Map: E 2



Villa Marazzi Lattuada; below, parish church of San Giovanni Battista.

Today a little city in itself – even if practically integrated into the urban fabric of the metropolis - it has in reality more than a thousand years as a tiny rural burgh.

Certainly the city centre shows the design of a Roman encampment, and surely Cesano, in the Middle Ages, was a centre of one of the eleven parishes within the countryside around Milan.

A sarcophagus and memorial stone in the piazza bring to mind its remote origins, but the building farthest from our day is the “Corte del fabbro”, a structure with ogival windows dating from the 15th century, and the **Villa Marazzi Lattuada**, which dates back to the first half of the 1700s.

If the parish of **San Giovanni Battista** was indeed, as tradition has it, founded by the Longobard Queen Teodolinda, it is impossible to figure out from the current baroque appearance, due to restructuring in 1899.



Raw Milk in Cesano Boscone

Azienda Agricola
Donetti Angelo
e Modesto
Cascina Nuova,
Via Vespucci
Phone 024453323

Assago

City Council website: www.comune.assago.mi.it
km 10,1 from Milan. Map: F 2-3

If Assago
reaches
for the sky

For Milanofiori,
a project has been
proposed for a pair
of towers of 50

The most favourable position from the point of view of communications - Assago is located next to Milan at the crossroads between the Bypass and the axis of the A7 highway for Pavia and Genoa - has allowed this area to become the centre of what could be termed the first attempt, starting in the 1980s, to give the metropolis a suburban



Parish church of San Desiderio, Assago.

and 42 story high,
which would be among
the tallest buildings
in the Po Valley.

office district: **Milanofiori**. Even more than a zone for offices of the high-tech service industry, it is well-known for the **Forum**, which combines the functional possibilities of an auditorium, a sports complex, as well as an exposition and congress centre. In the past history of Assago, there have been historical reports since the 13th century, supporting the existence of a Carthusian convent. The parish of **San Desiderio**, with origins dating from 1200s, has frescos surviving from the 15th century.



'Forum' sports stadium and exhibition centre, Assago.

Rozzano

City Council website: www.comune.rozzano.mi.it
km 10,3 from Milan. Map: F 3



Cassino Scanasio Castle, Rozzano.

Directly linked with the territory of Milan, and without any clear division from the southern edge of Milan, and accessible by urban public transport, it has benefited from its position in a building boom typical of the 1960s, a series of public architecture mentioned within books on the history of Italian architecture. Often cited are the **Municipio** or City Hall (1965-70), the **elementary school** (1973-80) as well as the **middle school** (1973-75) in the neighbourhood of Quinato Stampi. Perhaps even more relevant is a similar private operation: the headquarters of **Domus Editoriale** (1982) designed by Marcello Nizzoli.

The most important historical landmark in the territory of Rozzano is the Castello Visconteo in **Cassino Scanasio**, with origins dating back to 1000, while the current structure dates back to the 13th to 14th century.

Quattroruote collectibles

Near the Domus building, you can visit a museum of automobiles, which is associated with the publication of the magazine Quattroruote. Thirty-some vintage cars built between 1902 and 1972 are on display.

Editoriale Domus Museo
Via Gianni Mazzocchi 1/3
Rozzano
Phone 02824721



Cascina Grande in Rozzano, now the municipal library.

Basiglio

City Council website: www.comune.basiglio.mi.it
km 15,2 from Milan. Map: G 3



Parish church of Sant'Agata,
Basiglio.

Now part of 'Greater Milan' – also due to **Milano 3**, a large development of residential structures in a green area in operation since the 1980s – the ancient "Basilio" was already of importance to the Milanese country-dwellers during the Middle Ages, dependent on the parish of Decimo, which at that time was located close to Lacchiarella. The territories appear in documents since 1307. The parish church of **Sant'Agata** apse and prothyrum survive from



Basiglio nature reserve, an important wetlands area in the province of Milan where many species of flora and fauna can be seen. The reserve is equipped for bird watching.

Rice and plants in Basiglio

Azienda Agricola
Mario Gennari
Piazza Monsignor Rossi 18
Phone 0290753585



the 14th century, but present a baroque appearance.

From a Holy Roman building, there remains a bell tower and arch close to the small church of San Bernardo, a portion of a rural complex of the **Cascina Vione**.

The last, based on a four-sided plan probably dating from the 17th century, is perhaps the most classical example of this noted type of agricultural buildings of the Bassa.



Cascina Vione, Basiglio.

Binasco

City Council website: www.comune.binasco.it
km 16,9 from Milan. Map: G 2



Visconteo Castle, Binasco.

Historically a burgh on the confines between Milanese and Pavese along the Naviglio, divided by the “fossatum” (or Ticinello canal) dug by the Milanese in the 12th century, today’s Binasco corresponds with the location of the first tollbooth south of Milano along the A7 headed for Genoa. The importance of this locality is underscored by that of the **Castello**

More

Ducal crime scene

In 1418, the castle of Binasco was the location where Beatrice di Tenda, accused of adultery by her husband Filippo Maria Visconti, duke of Milan, was imprisoned and later decapitated.



Parish church of Santi Giovanni Battista e Stefano Protomartire, Binasco.

Visconteo, well-known since 1329 (today it’s the City Hall) and by the dimensions of the church of **Santi Giovanni Battista e Stefano Protomartire**, a building from the end of the 1700s, with an interior featuring an altarpiece by Luigi Pellegrini, known as Scaramuccia, and two works by the circle of Bernardino Luini.

Casarile

18,9 from Milan. Map: G 2



Rice and rest in Casarile

Azienda Agricola
Il Melone

Agriturismo Il Mulino

Phone 0290093596

www.agriturismoilmulino.it

Direct sales of meat,
pork and rice

Catering for 80 guests

Rosmari Vallino

Cascina San Rocco 7

Phone 029055877

Lodging for 10 guests

Catering for 80 guests
two days per week



Casarilese cuisine

Rosignoli Giorgio

Cascina San Rocco 2

Phone 029054137

Informal catering
for 10 guests

Strigazzi Enrico

Cascina San Rocco 7

Phone 029055877

Catering for 80 guests
two days per week

Well connected from the point of view of accessibility, Casarile - situated on state road 35 dei Giovi - is located just about halfway between Milan and Pavia, a circumstance which has, starting in 1267, periodically exposed it to controversies of ownership.

The small municipality which was established during the years in which Italy was being formed, more precisely November 4, 1860, reunited scattered rural villages of early origins like **Colombera**, **Melone**, **Porchera** and **Zavanasco**. The character of this place depends more on the long history of the countryside than on a specific art or architectural historic work. The church of **San Biagio**, at Zavanasco, dates from 1877. A church with origins in the 17th century, **San Rocco**, can be found in Porchera. Remnants of frescos from the 16th century have survived at the **Cascina Rizza** along the state road.



17th-century church of San Rocco, Casarile.

Lacchiarella

Information: ProLoco di Lacchiarella, corso Matteotti 4
 proloco.lacchiarella@libero.it Phone: 02 90030570 Fax: 02 90030570
 City Council website: www.comune.lacchiarella.mi.it
 km 18,1 from Milan. Map: G 3

At the limits with the territory of the province of Pavia, in the Lower Plain to the east of the Naviglio Pavese, Lacchiarella dates back at least to the ancient Romans, in an area that in the Middle Ages was traversed by Huns, Goths, Lombards, Franks and Hungarians, and that was later the location where many battles were staged between Milan and Pavia.

The defense was provided by the **Rocca**, which was surrounded by a large moat, was dismantled after 1275 but reconstructed 20 years later by Matteo Visconti. The oratory of **San Rocco**, dates from 1500s, while the church of **Assunta**, from the early 1600s, has been reworked in successive centuries: on the façade, to the left of the main door, is a Roman flagstone with a dedication to Mercury. The oldest surviving building is the church of **San Biagio (Cascina Coriasco)**, mentioned as early as 1289 by Goffredo da Bussero in his "Liber Sanctorum Mediolani".



The Rocca, Lacchiarella.



Oratory of San Rocco, Lacchiarella.



Parish church of L'Assunta, Lacchiarella.

Pieve Emanuele

City Council website: www.comune.pieveemanuele.mi.it
km 13,7 from Milan. Map: G 3

The reason for Emanuele

Why this Pieve is called Emanuele is explained by a decision in 1862 when the enthusiasm for a newly unified Italy pushed the inhabitants to ask their new king permission to rename this site, dating from the first millennium. Permission was granted.



Church of Sant'Alessandro, Pieve Emanuele.



In the first centuries of the second millennium, Mirasole, of the celebrated abbey, belonged to the 'Pieve Locate', today's Pieve Emanuele, a short distance south of the city along state road 412 of the Val Tidone.

While a direct heir, the current day church of Sant'Alessandro, has changed over the centuries. The original parish, in existence since at least 852 AD, comprised Cassino Scanasio, Ponte Sesto, Quinto Stampi, Rozzano and Terricula. Some of these have since become residential centres in 'Greater Milan'.

In the countryside there still remain *cascine* worthy of note, like Viquarterio or Pizzabrasa, but most important is the small fort of Tolcinasco, commissioned in the 1500s by the d'Adda family.

Opera

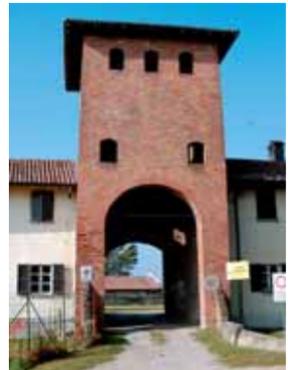
City Council website: www.comune.opera.mi.it
km 10,7 from Milan. Map: F 3

A recent and impressive residential development, with a particularly high standard of living, has fully integrated Opera into the area of southern Milan. It remains noteworthy from a cultural perspective due to the **Mirasoletto** Abbey - founded in the twelfth century by the Order of the Humiliati. Of this typical Lombard religious order - which the Borromeo sought to dissolve in the 1500s - Mirasole was one of the fundamental headquarters - second only to Viboldone.

The complex, a four-sided facility, makes up one of the best existing examples of a courtyard with columns from the Middle Ages, the sort of which led the design of the Lombard farmhouse into the modern age. The structure was surrounded by a moat and protected by a tower. Next to the courtyard is the **cloister**, with its overlooking refectory, kitchen, chapter - house and sacristy. The church of **Santa Maria Assunta** like the cloister, dates from the 14th/15th century, and contains a panelled wooden ceiling, with at its centre a 14th century fresco of the Assumption of the Virgin. Since 1797, Mirasole has been the property of the Ospedale Maggiore of Milan.



Mirasole Abbey, Opera.



Entrance to Mirasole Abbey, Opera.

Locate di Triulzi

City Council website: www.locateditriulzi.it
km 14,5 from Milan. Map: F-G 3-4

Direct Sales in Locate

Azienda Agricola
Cornalba

Cascina Nesporedo
Phone 029077327

www.aziendaagricolacornalba.it

Meat, poultry, rice,
cured meats, raw milk



Palazzo Trivulzio, Locate di Triulzi.

Shrine to Santa Maria alla Fontana

The shrine is outside the town, at the end of a pretty street that takes its name from the original spring next to which the church was built:

Via della Fontana.

This place of worship was erected at the request of the Trivulzio brothers, Benedetto and Urban, to commemorate a real miracle that took place in their home in Milan:

tears flowing from the eyes of Saint Jerome portrayed in an icon they owned. The interior of the church is decorated with a da Vinci school fresco of the Virgin of the Fountain.



If, as all are left to believe, "Triulzi" is a popular way of referring to the ancient family **Trivulzio**, it is clear that Locate links the memories of man with his image of that most famous of dynasties. Locate however - a name which means 'land upon water' - was mentioned well before 1400 when it became (like many other zones in the Milan area) the domain of the Trivulzio. Of a farming tradition, the town is still grateful for the philanthropy of Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso (1808-1871) who presented it with nurseries,

schools and a park. Between Piazza della Vittoria and Via Martiri della Libertà, **Palazzo Trivulzio** flanks 14th century buildings and a residence dated back to the 1700s. Nearby, in a street bearing the same name, **Palazzo Salazar** belongs to another important family, originally from Spain. Both buildings were previously castles, to defend the Milanese from the South.

Carpiano

Information: ProLoco di Carpiano, via San Martino 54 Phone: 02 9815488
 City Council website: www.comune.carpiano.mi.it
 km 17,9 from Milan. Map: G 4

Close to Melegnano - between this and the confines with the province of Lodi - Carpiano belonged to the Certosa di Pavia from 1386 to 1781. Gian Galeazzo Visconti donated to provide the assurance of long-lasting resources for the monks.

It was a fortified Carthusian grange that which today can seem just a farmhouse next to the church of **San Martino**. This Gothic building, in Piazza Colonna at the centre of the village, was constructed in the 14th century, although it has since been restored. Frescos by the Lombard school painters, contemporary of the building, survive in the interior, and a high altar sculpted in Candoglia marble by the artist Giovanni da Campione and his school tells the story of

Fresh Eggs from Carpiano

Azienda Agricola
 Poiago di Bartoli
 Cascina Poiago
 Phone 029815305

Cascina Zunico, a large farmstead



Parish church of San Martino, Carpiano.

the Virgin. Originally destined for the Certosa of Pavia, the altar was sent here because of the symbolism did not adhere to ecclesiastical standards.

Almost a landmark in this area is the very large Cascina Zunico: its structure is typical of farming communities in the countryside south of Milan, with the owner's home and the place provided for worship

completely separate from the working part of the farm. The church has a baptismal font worth noting.

Melegnano

Information: ProLoco di Melegnano , via Giardino 1 - promelegnano@libero.it
Phone: 02 9838397 Fax: 02 9838397
City Council website: www.comune.melegnano.mi.it
km 17,3 from Milan. Map: F-G 4-5



Panoramic view of Melegnano and the river Lambro.

Fruit and vegetables in Melegnano

Azienda Agricola
Cascina
Cappuccina
Via Verdi

Phone 029823207
amministratore@coopinsieme.net

An important strategic point located halfway between Milan and Lodi - today a meeting-point with the metropolis for those arriving on the highway from the south - Melegnano is the site of many battles, the first of importance being the "Battle of the Giants" on September 13th and 14th, 1515.

Crucial to the history of the Milanese and of northern Italy, it was fought close to what today is called **Marignano** between the French, who would win, and Massimiliano



*Mediceo Castle
in Melegnano,
home of history,
art, culture.*

Sforza's mercenary Swiss. With the economic growth of the following centuries the agricultural centre was transformed, but the **Castle** - seized by Federico Barbarossa, sacked by Federico II of Swabia, lovingly rebuilt in the 1300s by Bernabò Visconti - still boasts two imposing medieval towers and signs of renaissance refinement, among them 16th century frescos.

Not far from the Castle, in Piazza IV Novembre, the little church of **San Rocco** is of 14th century construction, with a rococo façade and a 18th century interior.



Church of San Rocco, Melegnano.



Church of San Giovanni Battista, Melegnano.

The parish church of **San Giovanni Battista** in Piazza Risorgimento, of medieval origins but reworked in the baroque age with a façade of the early 1900s, houses many important artworks, among which, in the first chapel on the right, a Baptism of Christ by Bergognone.

Pro Melegnano

For information on Melegnano and guided visits, inquire at Pro Loco, with main headquarters at the Castello Mediceo, which organizes activities and local events, starting with the Festa del Perdono which takes place in the spring.

Pro Melegnano
Pro Loco
phone 029838397
promelegnano@libero.it

Cerro al Lambro

Information: ProLoco di Cerro al Lambro, via della Repubblica 1
City Council website: www.comune.cerroallambro.mi.it
km 20,9 from Milan. Map: G 5



Oratory of San Rocco,
Cerro al Lambro.

Direct Sales in Cerro al Lambro

Azienda Agricola
Taveggia
di Tommaso Marino
Frazione Riozzo
Phone 029830063
3397293727
Raw milk

Azienda Agricola
Cascina Fornaci
Cascina Fornaci
Phone 0298230710
segr.sanfrancesco@libero.it
Meat, pork,
cured meats

Società Agricola
La Gazzera
Cascina Gazzera
Raw milk

On the river banks of the Lambro at the border with the Lodigiano, along the provincial road between Melegnano and Sant'Angelo, this is one of the municipalities of Milan's major growth as a consequence of the economic boom after the Second World War. Despite its ancient origins, hypothetically fixed somewhere between the fifth and fourth century BC, the current state of built-up areas is in large part residential and modern.

The most important historical building is the church of **Santi Cristoforo e Giacomo** with its 18th century façade. In Riozzo, the oratory of **San Rocco** is of interest.



Parish church of Santi Cristoforo e Giacomo, Cerro al Lambro.

More

The Lambro

With 130 kilometres running from Ghisallo to the Po, the Lambro river is among the largest in Lombardy. To the south of Monza and Milan - where the river involuntarily gave its name to the historical scooter Lambretta - it touches Melegnano, Cerro al Lambro, San Zenone al

Lambro and Sant'Angelo Lodigiano, receives the water of man-made canals of the **Lambro meridionale** (coming from Navigli and Olona), then flows through San Colombano al Lambro and opens into the Po near Orio Litta. The conditions of pollution, although improved, are not yet satisfactory.

San Zenone al Lambro

City Council website: www.comune.sanzenoneallambro.mi.it
km 22 from Milan. Map: G 5



Parish church of San Zenone, San Zenone al Lambro.



This small town – bordering on both Lodigiano and Pavese areas and not far from the A1 highway – is named after its patron saint, plus a reference to the river that flows through it.

The urban fabric of past centuries is still very much in evidence in the old centre: in its midst is Palazzo Tre Porte (literally, with three doors), with nearby **Villa Caccia Dominioni** built in a typically rural style around a large courtyard; opposite, beyond the piazza, is the 17th/18th-century parish church of **San Zenone**.

The outlying districts of Villa Bissonne, Ceregallo and Santa Maria in Prato also have a distinctly rural aspect. **Ceregallo** is essentially one huge farmstead that also comprises the 13th-century oratory of San Giorgio. Around **Santa Maria in Prato** countryside dotted with fields and poplars slopes down towards the river Lambro.

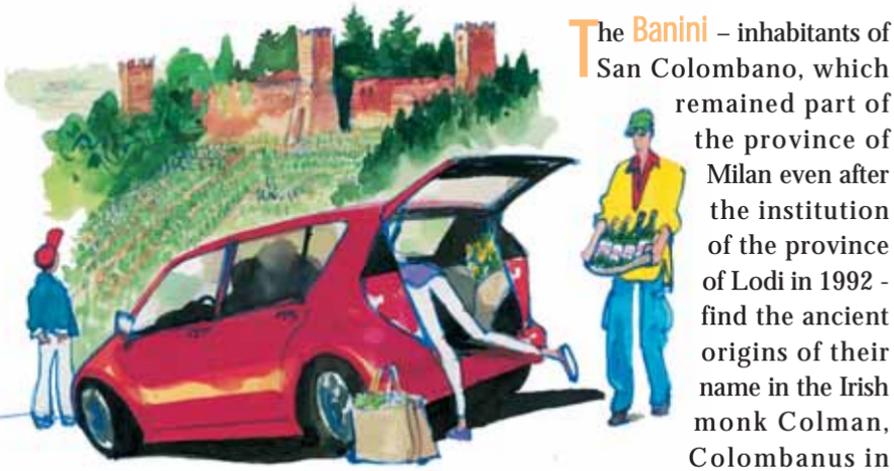
*Villa Caccia Dominioni,
San Zenone al Lambro.*



Santa Maria in Prato.

San Colombano al Lambro

City Council website: www.sancolombano.it
km 43,1 from Milan. Map: G 6



The **Banini** – inhabitants of San Colombano, which remained part of the province of Milan even after the institution of the province of Lodi in 1992 - find the ancient origins of their name in the Irish monk Colman, Colombanus in

Latin, who is said to have stopped here on his path towards Bobbio where in 614, he founded the celebrated monastery.

The village rises at the base of an extended hill

Tower situated on the west side of the castle, San Colombano al Lambro.





country covered in vineyards, the **Colle di San Colombano**, and preserves memories of the Middle Ages.

It was here, according to a memorial stone which survives on the tower of a castle, where Francesco Petrarca was provided sojourn in 1353, as a guest of the Milanese archbishop Giovanni Visconti. At the centre of the urban framework - where the axis of Via Mazzini and Via Vittoria intersect with Via Steffani - is the oratory of **San Rocco**, a small brick edifice with a four-sided exterior and an octagonal interior, which is included in the park of a villa. Via Mazzini leads to the church of **San Colombano Abate**, founded in 1499, and later expanded. The façade is 19th-century Neo-Classical. On the interior, there remain 15th-century frescos by Bernardino Campi, coming from the oratory of the castle. The taber-

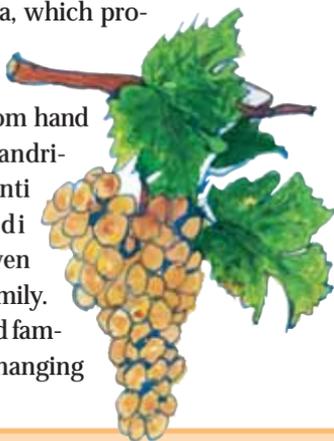


Oratory of San Rocco, erected in 1510 on an octagonal plan, in the style of Bramante, and still in a perfect state of conservation today, San Colombano al Lambro.



Parish church
of San Colombano Abate,
San Colombano al Lambro

nacle of the presbytery is from the 1400s. In front of the church you find a 15th century tower, destroyed by then and later rebuilt by Frederick Barbarossa, which protected the entrance to the castle. The castle was passed from hand to hand between Landriani, Torriani, Visconti and the Certosa di Pavia, and finally given to the Belgiojoso family. The fortress remained family property, with changing



More

Among the vines of San Colombano

What is best known as the "vino di Milano" corresponds more exactly to San Colombano DOC – a range of three reds obtained from Croatina, Barbera and Uva rara grapes, plus two whites from Chardonnay and Pinot nero grapes - produced also close to the cities of Miradolo Terme and Monteleone (in the province of Pavia), Graffignana and Sant'Angelo Lodigiano (in the province of Lodi).

Still speaking enologically, since 1995 the Colle di San Colombano has been part of an IGT area, or Typical Geographic Appellation, under the name "Collina del Milanese": it is only here the quintessential Verdea white is produced. Below is a list of producers indicated by their association:



Azienda Agricola Poderi San Pietro
Via Steffenini 6 - Phone 03712089050
info@poderidisapietro.it



Located inside the castle is the tourist information office,
San Colombano al Lambro.



The hill of San Colombano al Lambro.

**Azienda Agricola
Vini e Spiriti di Carlo Pietrasanta**
Via Sforza 55/77 - Phone 0371201168
carlopietrasanta@mtvlombardia.com

**Azienda Agricola
Gruppo Vignaioli - Cesari Mario**
Viale Milano 85 - Phone 0371898733
gruppovignaioli@libero.it

**Azienda Agricola
Panigada Antonio**
Via della Vittoria 13
Phone 037189103
vinobanino@hotmail.com



Azienda Agricola Panizzari Angelo
Via Madonna dei Monti
Phone 0371897613 - www.panizzariwine.it

Azienda Agricola Nettare dei Santi
Via della Capra 17 - Phone 0371897381
www.nettaredeisanti.it

The agricultural territory of San Colombano is crossed by a road of the same name, the **San Colombano Wine Route**, a sixty kilometre stretch between Milan and Lodi. Tourist itineraries in the area are organized by the association **Il Borgo e il Colle**, Phone 0371293236 www.itineraribanini.it



Harvesting grapes in San Colombano al Lambro.

Not just wine, on the Colle

**Azienda Agricola
Podere
Villa Maria**
Via Tobruk 13
San Colombano
al Lambro
Phone 037189075
Direct sales of fruit
and vegetables

Stopovers in San Colombano

Panizzari Angelo

Via Madonna dei Monti, 39
Phone 0371897613
www.panizzariwine.it
Catering for 80 guests
Cultural activities for 60
guests 30 days per year
Educational programs for
60 guests 100 days per year

Agricola San Bruno

di Seveso Maria Luisa
Cascina San Bruno
Phone 0371898008
Accommodation for 20 guests

Guided tour of the monuments

(from the beginning of
May to October)

Every first Sunday
of the month

10.00 am-12.30 pm,
3.00 pm-6.00 pm a
(free) guide is
available for visits to
the monuments

Every first Sunday of
the month

Free guided tour of
the Paleontological
Museum

10.00 am-12.15 pm
3.00 pm-6.00 pm

Meeting place:
the offices of the
"Pro Loco" in the
walled village of the
Castle

To book weekday visits
phone:

Council offices
0371 293211

Il Borgo e il Colle
Association

0371 293236
www.itineraribanini.it



More

Feast Days



- Cantine aperte (Open wine cellars):
4th Sunday in May
- Festa delle ciliege (Cherry festival):
2nd Sunday in June
- Benvenuta vendemmia
(Grape harvest festival)
2nd Sunday in September
- Guiderdone banino (Re-enactment
of siege of the castle)
3rd Sunday in September
- Festa provinciale dell'uva
(Provincial grape festival)
4th Sunday in September



*Palazzo Patigno, a typical 17th-century aristocratic
dwelling-place, now the Town Hall, San Colombano al Lambro.*

fortunes, until the first part of the 1900s.

Also remaining is the western tower, certainly from the 1400s, which was a part of the defence wall. More than anything else, it is suggestive of the village which once existed inside those walls. The Museo Paleontologico "Virginio Caccia", closed on weekends, is located in the 17th century **Palazzo Patigno** in Via Monti.

Vizzolo Predabissi

Information: ProLoco di Vizzolo Predabissi, viale Sarmazzano 2
City Council website: www.comune.vizzolopredabissi.mi.it
km 18,9 from Milan. Map: F-G 5

A name so particular, in some ways captivating, is derived from the ancient “Vico-ciolus” (a diminutive of the Latin “vicus”) of the family of Predabissi, Sofia Predabissi to be more precise, widow of an Alfieri, who had vast properties here between Milanese and Lodigiano in the 1800s, and who in 1863 obtained a decree to add her own maiden name to this historical place.

The lands of Sofia were for the most part in that area which today in the hamlet of **Calvenzano**,

also home of the ancient church of **Santa Maria Assunta**,

founded by Cluny monks, which is the most important art history presence in the zone. A document from 1093 attests that in this year the family “de Merignano” (today we would say Melegnano) were authorized to donate a church of theirs in Calvenzano to a community of Cluny monks: two years later, it had already been turned into an abbey. In 1558, however, the monastery was reduced to a lower status and later passed on to the Milanese Chapter House. Typical of Lombardy is the cotto used for the building. The façade is late 15th-century, the portal features relief work preserved from the 12th century. In the apse there remains a fresco from the mid 1300s. Tradition has it that here, in 524, Severino Boezio was put to death.



*Church of Santa Maria Assunta,
Vizzolo Predabissi.*

Colturano

City Council website: www.comune.colturano.mi.it
km 18,4 from Milan. Map: F 5



*Church of San Giacomo Maggiore,
Colturano.*



*Cistercian
monastery,
Colturano.*



Along the provincial road between Melegnano and Melzo, historically within the scope of Melegnano, this is a small city which, at the end of the 1900s, saw a very rapid transformation with residential building development, subsequently bringing about its attractive position in the picture of the “Greater Milan”.

Of artistic and historical interest are the small parish church and above all what, in the centre of the village, remains of the **Cistercian monastery**, founded in the first decade of the 1300s, later secular-

ized and even later passed to the Visconti, then to the Trivulzio, who passed it in part to the Gallarati Scotti.

Still recognizable is the internal ogival arcade, where the upper columns have painted coats of arms and some windows are framed in terra cotta. The homes in **Balbiano**, around the modern church of San Giacomo Maggiore, are of ancient construction.

Dresano

City Council website: www.comune.dresano.mi.it
km 19,7 from Milan. Map: F 5



Parish church of San Giorgio Martire, Dresano.

Between the Lambro and the Adda, crossed by the Muzza canal, the territory of Dresano was marshland for a millennium, but was reclaimed and put to use by the monks of San Pietro in Lodi Vecchio.

The three municipal centres of Dresano include its historic centre which has grown up around the church of San Giorgio Martire, the **Villaggio Madonnina** built in the 1960s along provincial road 159, which breaks off from Via Emilia near Melegnano and, to the west of the provincial road, the residential complex which makes up the **Villaggio Ambrosiano**. The area, natural farmland with an abundance of water and fertile soil, in some ways struggles between the sphere of influence of the metropolis and that of Lodi. But even as early as 1034, as a bequest of Ariberto d'Intimiano, and since 1658, it became the property of the Milanese hospitals.

Of particular interest is the ancient **Cascina Belpensiero**, situated a brief distance from the town's historic centre.

Bernabò and the peasant

The story goes that it was in Dresano that Bernabò Visconti, incognito, heard from a peasant all the complaints people were making about the Visconti rule. When the poor peasant discovered to whom he was talking, he thought he was doomed. But Bernabò had him taken to court where he was fed, and the peasant was given back the small field that had been taken from him.



Cascina Belpensiero, Dresano.

San Donato Milanese

City Council website: www.comune.sandonatomilanese.mi.it
km 8,8 from Milan. Map: F 4



Abbey of Chiaravalle,
San Donato Milanese.



Church of Sant'Enrico,
San Donato Milanese.



BMW headquarters.

In Roman times “ad quintum lapidem” – which means “at the fifth mile” from Milan along Via Emilia – this small city is located in a place where, in the 7th century, a parish church – a *pieve* – was dedicated to San Donato. Its current position is close to Milan, in some way a part of the city itself near to the interchange on the A1 highway, almost in front of the Chiaravalle abbey.

The farming tradition, historically very successful, due to the efficiency of irrigation systems, was surpassed in the 1950s, by the discovery of natural methane fields which brought Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi to transform San Donato into its headquarters: **Metanopoli**. The result brought about the entry of the city into books of the history of architecture, especially with the offices of **SNAM** by Albini, Helg and Piva (1969-73) and those by Gabetti and Isola (1985-91). The original *pieve*, reconstructed in early 1600s, still remains a valuable example of Lombard baroque. It is flanked by the church of **Sant'Enrico** in Bolgiano, constructed between 1963 and 1966 by Ignazio Gardella.

The **BMW** headquarters in Via dell'Unione Europea – like the rest of the buildings of Metanopoli, are easily distinguished from the highway – were projects designed by Kenzo Tange Associates Italia.

San Giuliano Milanese

Information: ProLoco di San Giuliano Milanese, via Giovanni XXIII 19
prolocosangiulianomilanese@hotmail.it
City Council website: www.sangiulianoonline.it
km 11,1 from Milan. Map: F 4



Viboldone Abbey, San Giuliano Milanese.

A small city – even a city, considering its current dimensions – is found in “Greater Milan” to the southwest of Milan, separated only by the territory of San Donato.

Of very ancient history along the Roman Via Emilia (two farmhouses present in the territory correspond to the seventh and eighth miles of the Mediolanum), the place bears the name of an early Christian missionary originally from Cappadocia, and in the Middle Ages was an important *capopieve*, or head church.

In what was, up to the 1800s, the independent municipality of Viboldone, - and the current hamlet of Sesto Ulteriano and Zivido have a similar history - the **Abbey of Viboldone** has existed since 1176, dedicated to San Pietro by the Humiliati, and completed between 1200 and 1300. With its cycle of Giottoesque frescos, it can be grouped with Chiaravalle, Mirasole and Morimondo as one of the most important monasteries of Milan. Part of the ancient com-

Hospitality in San Giuliano

Cascina Santa Brera Grande

Phone 029868752

Accommodation for 25 guests. Recreational activities for 50 guests
www.cascinasantabrera.it



*Main door of Viboldone Abbey,
San Giuliano Milanese.*

The countryside
of the south,
up to the Colle.



Fresh products from San Giuliano

Azienda Agricola
Bonetti Giovanni
Cascina Cologno
Phone 029880144
Fresh raw milk

Azienda Agricola
Terra e Acqua
Cascina Santa Brera Grande
Phone 029868752

plex was reconstructed by Luigi Caccia Dominioni after the Second World War. A short distance from Via Emilia between San Giuliano and Melegnano, the **Rocca Brivio** is no longer in reality a fortress, but a beautiful baroque building with frescoed ceilings and large fireplaces in the interior.

Commissioned in the 1600s by the Brivio mar-

More

The "Battle of the Giants"

It is at Zivido, in the municipal territory of San Giuliano Milanese, that a monument first commemorates the link between the historical memories with the name of Melegnano. As we know, at that battle in 1515, mercenary Swiss participated. However, what is less known is that to this day, there has never been another war with such heavy involvement of Swiss troops.



www.cascinasantabrera.it
Cheese, vegetables,
fruit, honey, eggs,
fresh raw milk

Azienda Agricola
Viganò Rinaldo
Cascina Carlotta 2
Fresh raw milk

Interior of Viboldone Abbey with its magnificent main and side aisles, San Giuliano Milanese.

quis, today it is private property, used for exhibitions, concerts and conferences.

Centro servizi per il turismo culturale Rocca Brivio
Phone 02/98128321 - Fax 02/98126812

www.roccabrivio.it

territoriodelleculture@roccabrivio.it

Mediglia

City Council website: www.comune.mediglia.mi.it
km 16,1 from Milan. Map: F 5

In the *Bassa* between the Lambro and the Addetta, just about halfway between the Paullese road and Melegnano, there is farmland with only occasional springs, farmhouses or ancient buildings: the municipalities of Triginto, Robbiano, Mombretto, Bustighera, San Martino Olearo, Vigliano and Bettolino, as well as the actual Mediglia. One curious historic feature is provided by the large ice-house, a property which, for many years, was rented to the contractor in the business of supplying Milan with ice.

Of religious historic interest is the church of **Santo Stefano Protomartire**, which is found at Triginto, heir to one of the churches mentioned in the area in 1280 by the "Liber Notitiæ Sanctorum Mediolani" and, before that, in contracts of acquisition in both 1254 and 1256.



Bustighera, Church of Madonna Maria Assunta, Mediglia.



Parish church of Santo Stefano Protomartire, Mediglia.

Fresh raw milk from Mediglia

Azienda Agricola
Ranghetti S.S.
Cascina Gavazzo



Azienda Agricola
Ercoli Giovanni
Cascina Canobbio

Tribiano

City Council website: www.comune.tribiano.mi.it
km 20,4 from Milan. Map: F 5



Parish church of San Barbaziano, Tribiano.



Muzza canal, Tribiano.

In the *Bassa*, southwest of the city, rather near to Paullo but at some distance from the principal roads, it lies on the border with the province of Lodi, in a zone of rich, fertile countryside. Historically “Tribianum”, it is documented for the first time around the end of the first millenium. The small town is close to the Addetta canal floodway originating from the Muzza: close to the bridge which crosses the secondary canal, a building which is included in the remnants of a 14th century fortification is still evident. Not far away, the church of **Santi Vito e Modesto** is from the 1600s. In the hamlet of **Zoate**, the little church of **San Barbaziano** is dated from approximately 1090.



Church of San Vito, Tribiano.

In the area, there remain numerous agricultural buildings typical of the *Bassa*, among them the Cascina Vecchio **Monastero**.

Paullo

City Council website: www.comune.paullo.mi.it
km 19,6 from Milan. Map: F 5

It is from the vast expanse of marshland of Lake Gerundo and of the marsh waters surrounding it, that the name of the city has been derived: from the Latin “palus” (marsh) to “Paullum” in 1140, then “Padule” in 1174, followed by “Paule” and finally Paullo. Place names and archaeological finds support the idea that there were Celtic residences located here, while also the urban layout contributes to document a complete Roman takeover. Of major importance then were the buildings of the Benedictine and of the Humiliati orders. The most important historic building, of which we have had notice since 1261, is



Interior of the sanctuary of Santa Maria in Pratello, Paullo.



Sanctuary of Santa Maria in Pratello, Paullo.

the small sanctuary of **Santa Maria in Pratello** that has recently been restored. An important plan between Milan and Cremona has lately been put into motion to significantly increase the width of the provincial road **Paulese** (415).

Peach and quiet in Paullo

Casorati Imelda
Cascina Sant'Antonio
Phone 0290632350
Accommodation for 10 guests

Peschiera Borromeo

City Council website: www.peschieraborromeo.com
km 14,1 from Milan. Map: E 4



Castle, Peschiera Borromeo.

Castelletto di Longhignana

The Castelletto di Longhignana, 2 Via Trieste, is the second most important monument in Peschiera Borromeo, even if little of its past splendour has stood the test of time and wear. The interior frescos, originally wide, have been lost and covered with plaster. Some decorations have nevertheless been restored by the most recent owners, who in accordance with Soprintendenza dei Beni Culturali have begun a recovery effort. Today the castle is home to a restaurant. In front of it, what was once the cascina di Longhignana has also been restored.



Close-up of the
Castelletto di Longhignana.

Like nearby Segrate – with which it shares the city airport of **Linate** – Peschiera Borromeo is today a medium/high-end residential area, surrounded by greenery, irrigation ditches and mills. Found close

to the path of the Lambro, it is in an area historically rich in woods which were traversed by the old road Paullese, now interrupted very near to Peschiera by the Linate runways.

The municipality is the result of progressive unification of small agricultural settlements: Zello, Foromagno, the ancient Mezzate (a head church) and Peschiera itself.

In 1432, Vitaliano Borromeo transformed what had been an agricultural building into **Castello**

di Peschiera, after which it was converted into a country home. Four brick buildings which include a chapel define the courtyard. The courtyard, as well as the double row of rectangular windows, is from the 17th century. The complex, which features its own museum, is today property of the Borromeo family.

Pantigliate

City Council website: www.comune.pantigliate.mi.it
km 16 from Milan. Map: E 5

A small centre of the *Bassa* to the west of Milan, a little north of the Paullese road past the town of Peschiera Borromeo, in an agricultural zone dating back for a thousand years, it still appears today relatively untarnished by industrialized civilization.

The countryside is furrowed by a tight network of irrigation canals, which touch the numerous *cascine* and which sometimes even today activate the mills. The city administration has started restoration in the case of the old mill of Cascina Riva, or Cascina di Sotto.

Today the zone of Pantigliate supports a great deal of traffic between Milan and Cremona, which is predicted to be alleviated by the lengthening of the third (yellow) line of Milan's metro network, the "Metropolitana Milanese" (MM) along the Paullese, towards Peschiera Borromeo.

Agriturismo in Pantigliate



Arrigoni Fermo
Cascina Roverbella
Phone 029067682
Family catering for 20
guests. Accommodation
within the facilities for 10
guests



Above: Parish church
of Madonna
Provvidenza,
Pantigliate.
Left: an old mill,
Pantigliate.



Settala

City Council website: www.comune.settala.mi.it
km 20,4 from Milan. Map: E 5

Cascina Castello

Slightly less ancient are the origins of the Cascina Castello, where the tower of a small palazzo survives from the 12th century.



Cascina Castello, Settala.



*Parish church of Sant' Ambrogio,
Settala.*

Not far from Milan, between the Adda and the Lambro, north of Paullo, it takes its name from the titled family of Settala, well known in the cultural history of Milan for the sepulchre in the church of San Marco as much as for the splendid 16th-century collection of objects of every type – a real Wunderkammer assembled by Count Ludovico at the dawn of modern science – which for a long time remained at the Ambrosiana and were then in part recovered by the Civico Museo di Storia Naturale. The Settala family, who in the 16th century gave Milan a bishop, San Senatore, had already given Milan the foundation of what was to become in 1108 the church of **Sant' Ambrogio**.

Rodano

City Council website: www.comune.rodano.mi.it
 km 14,6 from Milan. Map: E 5

Between Pioltello and Peschiera Borromeo along the axis of the Rivoltana road, the territory of Rodano has assembled since 1869 a series of historic residential buildings that have grown up around farmhouses, plus a few farmhouses which today remain isolated. Their common denominator is an origin far from the medieval works reclaimed by the Cistercian monks (one is the Cascina Pratomarzo, whose name recalls a water-meadow), although naturally there are industrial buildings present.



In the two photos, "Casa Gola", a rural building of 15th-century origin, now used as premises for the Polo Botanico in Rodano.

More

The Museum of the Lambretta

The collections of enthusiast Vittorio Tessera and a remarkable gift of the **Innocenti** family – who owned the company, located in the Lambrate area of Milan, which produced the Lambrette - gave life to an important historical story of the scooter.

Thirty-six of the most important Lambretta versions are exhibited alongside other Italian and foreign models, in addition to prototypes, miniature models, trophies, medals, clothing, and the only official Innocenti archive, with more than 5000 photos, detailed construction plans, manuals and films.



Museo Scooter e Lambretta

Via Turati 7, Rodano

Phone 0295320438

Opening hours:

Mondays and Fridays

pre-booked visits for groups

of min. 10 people 10 a.m.-

12 midday / 2 - 6 p.m.

No entrance charge

Sundays open to private
visitors too

Holding of Trenzanesio



The portion north of the municipal territory of Rodano includes the large and splendid holding of **Trenzanesio**, maintained as a park, with deer around a villa built by Litta in the 16th century.

In the main piazza in the hamlet of **Lucino**, in front of the city hall of Rodano, **Casa Gola** is a rural complex composed of a closed court, a typical example of 15th-century Lombard architecture. It is municipal property used by the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano which financed the restoration and gave the area its own **Polo Botanico**.

Also serving as a point of information within the park, Casa Gola is a short distance from the **Riserva Naturale Sorgenti della Muzzetta** and from the **Cascina Castello**, soon to be headquarters of a **ethnographical and rural history centre**.



Riserva Naturale Sorgenti della Muzzetta, Rodano.

Liscate

City Council website: www.comune.liscate.mi.it
km 18,5 from Milan. Map: E 5-6



Parish church of Santi Giorgio e Lorenzo, Liscate.

A small city less than three kilometres south of Melzo, along the axis of the Rivoltana road, Liscate is made up of its original historic centre, some farmhouses, and a recent residential zone for those who chose a tranquil life over a metropolitan one.

Mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Manzoni classic "The Betrothed" – by a youth that Renzo meets while fleeing towards Bergamo – Liscate has its historic building in the church of **Santi Giorgio e Lorenzo**, with its characteristic bell tower, interesting not only in itself, but more because it was the site of a preceding holy building in the Middle Ages, and previous to that a building of ancient Roman construction. In the flowerbeds surrounding the church, you can find an arrangement of sarcophagi, close to a wall featuring with a notable series of fragments dating back a thousand years. A bit scattered about in the interior are other materials from the Middle Ages.

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Countryside



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