



Brescia Villas and castles



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The Lake of Garda, Borghese Island (Brescia) - *The Borghese Villa*.

Cover:

- 1 - Brescia - *The Prisoners' Tower and the Fortress inside the Castle.*
- 2 - Area on the Brescia side of the Garda Lake - *The Bettoni Villa.*
- 3 - Brescia - *The Labyrinth Villa.*



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The castles and the historical ancient residences of Brescia have accompanied the history path and are still there, to testify of far epochs, wars, civilities, invasions, loves, as well as glory and development phases.

The Italian history, through houses and buildings, is entirely and continuously shown in Brescia, with its solar roman amphitheatres, austere medieval buildings, imposing castles and wonderful villas facing the lakes of this area.

Man's history is manifesting also thanks to the simple country farmhouses or the luxurious residences, scattered throughout the Brescia countryside, as expression of a joyful balance between nature and architecture. Many people have tried to speak about the beauty of this patrimony; and our suggestion is to deepen the knowledge of Brescia, thank to the richness and the variety of the present proofs; and on the other hand, thanks to the natural easiness in the discovery this territory allows.

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6 - Brescia - *The Capitulum, Roman temple*. • 7 - Brescia - *The Cidneo hill "The Castle"*.
8 - Brescia - *The Loggia Square*. • 9 - Brescia - *The courtyard inside the Broletto, the Tower of the People, the Dome of the New Cathedral*.



From the top of the Cidneo hill and close to the centre, the Castle of Brescia is representing one of the symbols of the town as well as one of the largest fortresses in Italy.

A legend says that Hercules was the first to fall in love with the beauty of this hill where the castle was built, and to surround it with "Herculean and the strong walls". Meanwhile, the Castle geometry has progressively changed, and nowadays, its old military function finished, it gifts of two important museums, city boast and obligatory destination for every visitor.

The Castle is easily reachable by foot, from the downtown, and passing through shadowy boulevards and flowered gardens.

Inside the Castle, the visitor can find two buildings of the "Mastio" (the Weapons Museum) and the big "Miglio" (with its Risorgimento Museum).

The walk in the city centre is offering the real soul of Brescia.

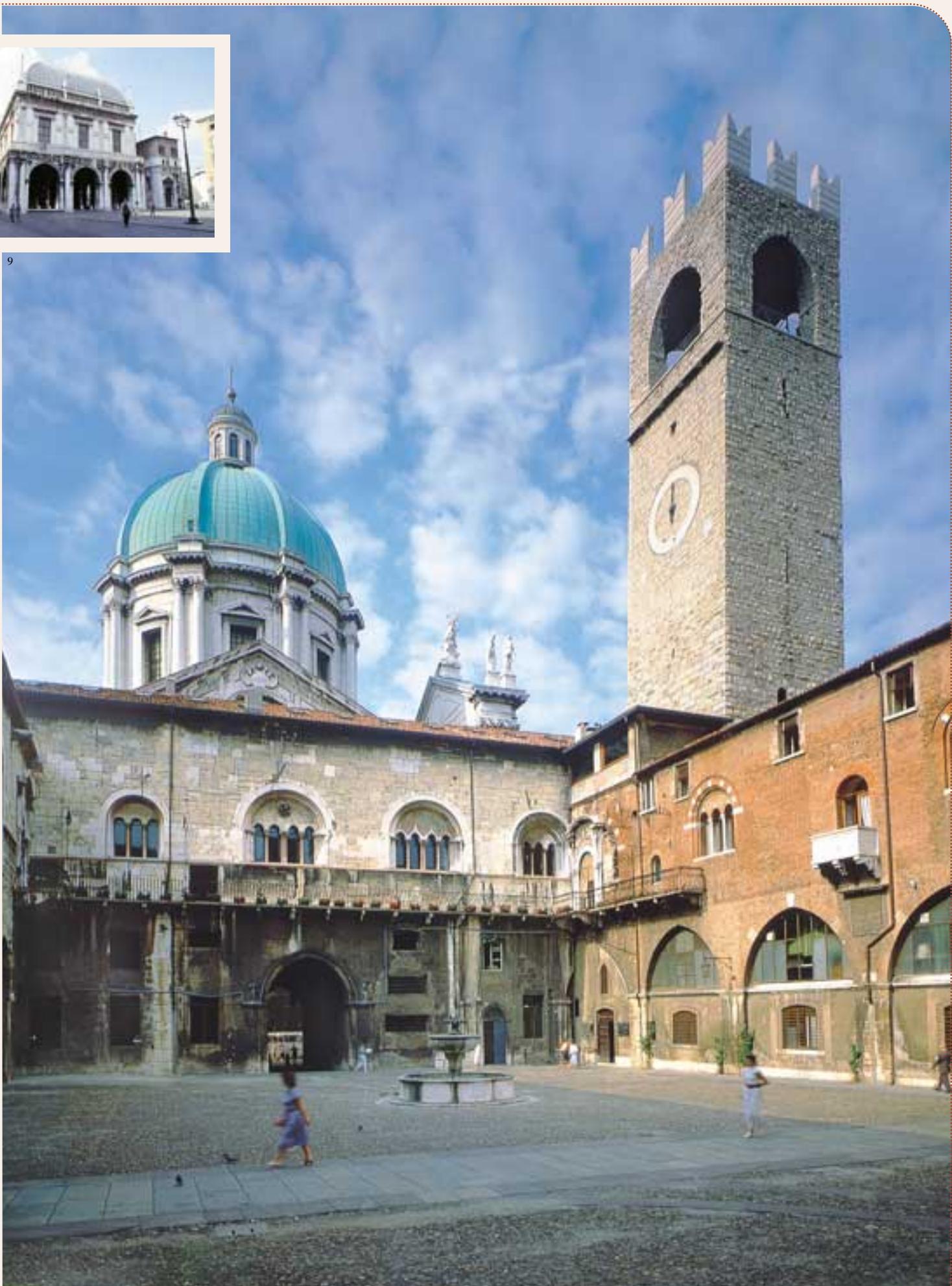
Surprising and fascinating town, since the very first contact, Brescia is giving the sense of strength and living. It is always pleasant for the visitor to lose himself in the many narrow streets, while walking through the heart centre and discovering villas, houses and monuments, living together in the sweetest balance.

In a short way, the visitor can pass from the noble theatrical sense of the patrician buildings along Musei Street or Trieste Street, to the Roman rests of the Forum and the Roman Theatre.

Costing the Longobardi church of San Salvatore (where still the grief of the refused wife of Charles the Great is heard, Ermengarda, who retired in the old monastery, at present welcoming the City Museum) the visitor walks through the narrow lanes to reach the old cathedral and the close "Broletto", precious proofs of the municipal age. The signs of the delicious Venetian civility are well represented by the geometries of Piazza Loggia and the Clock Tower, while the seventeen-century New Cathedral and the particular Piazza Vittoria gives architectural views, that make of Brescia a unique town, inserted with merit in the track of the main artistic towns in Italy.

Many historic buildings and houses and important villas are spread in the entire city area, as a pleasant unity of styles and architecture, offering the visitor of impressive visions and prospective scenes.

The initial showing of richness and power leaves then its scenario to more functional needs, thanks to modern architecture structures.



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In the southern area of Brescia, the low land, agricultural area, is representing the pride of this region for quantity and quality of products.

Many are the fascinating settlements here (colony houses, castles, ancient farmhouses still used for agricultural activity), as well as many are the opportunities to discover its richness in sown fields, poplars and irrigation canals, populated by local fauna. The Mella and Oglio rivers trace a border line; On their banks many old restaurants offer spontaneous cordiality, where the visitor can taste genuine products and where it is possible to buy different kinds of cheese, salami and wines.

The low land offer many surprises.

Building shapes rise instead of old castles, of which only few traces remain. As, for example in the small village of Pralboino, where, instead of the fourteen-century castle, once hosting the emperor Massimiliano the German, Gambara Palace is now rising; in the close Cigole it is valuable to stop and visit the fortifies architectural structure of the ancient Belvedere farmhouse, and the imposing Cigola-Martinoni Palace, after a walk through the streets of this ancient mediaeval property.

Villa Fenaroli, in Seniga, offers strong suggestions by its garden position, slowly descending to the close river, in the middle of secular trees.

The medieval origins of the Castle, in Pontevico, recall to its old glory, although the next neo-gothic interventions.



- 10 - Pralboino (Brescia) - *The Gambara Palace.*
- 11 - Cigole (Brescia) - *The Belvedere farmhouse.*
- 12 - Cigole (Brescia) - *The Cigola Martinoni Palace.*
- 13 - Seniga (Brescia) - *The Fenaroli Villa.*

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Richness and agricultural architectonic traditions are well represented by the seventeenth-century buildings of the particular rural building, in Monticelli d'Oglio, facing the village square, surrounded by the arcades, culminating in the prospective view of the surrounding plane.

And more, the luxuriant style of Gambara Palace, in Verolanuova, a sumptuous sixteenth-century villa with interesting frescos vaults; and four more castles belonging to the Martinengo noble family, built in the villages of Padernello, Villachiaro, Villagana and Barco, whose history through their architectural styles is pleasant to discover.

Our ideal journey continues with the ideal junction between the low lands, the city of Brescia and the lake of Garda. In Montichiari, the architecture of Bonoris Castle recalls to different stylistic traces that, as per indications of the same name committee had to testify noble traditions and ideal testimonies.

In the close Lonato there is the 14th century house “Casa del Podestà”, headquarters of the city charge up to the end of the Republic “Serenissima”; the rich furniture is still positioned as per ancient proprietors’ will.

In a close building of the Renaissance style, there is the great Library, with its 52.000 titles, incisions, drawings and documents about the history of Brescia.

From the terraces of the Venetian Fortress “Rocca” you can dominate the lake of Garda; the fortress represented the last symbol of the Republic of Venice, the “Serenissima” (XII century); today the Civic Ornithological Museum resides in it. Green hills, olive trees and horse chestnuts formed the natural garden and various possessions.

How many discoveries everybody can do wandering among the small villages of the area. Hidden in the green there is the Drugolo castle, wide possession with origin in the thirteen century, and patiently restored, not far from Lonato; thousands of other impressive corners, noble residences, fortified buildings hidden in the wood and the tall greenery on the hills.

The influence of the Venetian Republic is strongly felt in the Brescia province; Villa Mazzucchelli, in Mazzano, built in the first half of the 17th century, is of strong Venetian mark. In it, there are the Wine Museum and the Woman and Child Museum; in the first, objects dated from 15th to 19th century and coming from the tradition of winegrowing are conserved; china and glass bottles, glasses, “tastevins”, and rare incisions and printings. In the second, there are displayed bride dresses, woman religious works, linen and tools of household labour.

14 - Mazzano (Brescia) - *The Mazzucchelli Villa.*

15 - Lonato (Brescia) - *The “Podestà” House, the Library.*

16 - Lonato (Brescia) - *The Drugolo Castle.*



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Before the importance of its wine quality, the Franciacorta must be remembered for its history of domains, for its paths to Brescia and the heights of the Camonica Valley; and obviously for the many pilgrims and their personal stories to the place, testified by numerous valuable paintings.

The modern traveller, come here to buy the excellent wine or to visit the wonderful area, has got the opportunity to visit villas and castles of the greatest charm, situated on the top of the hills, as silent presidiums. Also in this area there are many architectural and noble testimonies; Villa Orlando, in Bornato, edified inside a medieval castle, a rare example of Renaissance building. The Roman fortress, presidium of the road that unified Bergamo to Brescia, became the meeting point of artists and poets coming from all Italy, such as Dante Alighieri.

In the main tower of the Castle the visitor can see the ancient wine cellars, where since 800 years ago an excellent wine is produced.

Among the hills and vineyards, in Nigoline, there is the Torri Palace, splendid residence fortified in the 16th century and famous, during the 18th century, of literary and artistic pools. The large rooms with superb frescos, the Chinas of the dining rooms, the antique maps as well as the amazing Venetian floors, evocate innumerable fantasies of nobility and opulence.

17 - Bornato (Brescia) - *The Orlando Villa.*



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On the banks of the lake of Garda, historical villas and residences are wonderfully set in an ambience of incomparable beauty and harmony.

From Sirmione to Desenzano, up to the extreme end of the bank belonging to the Brescia territory located in Limone, olive trees and lemon trees, sweet hills and hard slopes, oleanders and bougainvilleas set the scenario to historic residences of a extraordinary elegance.

The Roman era is testified in Sirmione by the Catullo Caves, grand villa of the imperial era belonged to the Latin poet; columns, mosaics and sculptures are enclosed by rich vegetation, in a scenario of an evocative atmosphere.

The Roman Villa in Desenzano is the important example of late villa of Northern Italy; it is situated in the city centre and conserves large zones of the mosaic floors and parts of the painted plasters.

Close to the Caves and in the centre of a beautiful park, in Sirmione, the mound of Cortine keeps the neoclassic Villa Cortine, today become an important hotel; the harmony of different styles is gathering together in the Scaligero Castle, rousing at the entrance of the town and erected on the rests of a Roman fortress; the castle in Sirmione is considered one of the best conserved Medieval buildings in all Italy.

All along the coast of the lake many other castles are erected as presidiums of small villages; in particular, extremely beautiful are Soiano, Padenghe and Moniga, on the road taking to Gardone Riviera. Here, where styles and romantic landscapes continually change, there is the Vittoriale of the Italians, monumental village and residence of the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio.

21 - Desenzano (Brescia) - *The Roman Villa.*

22 - Sirmione (Brescia) - *The Catullo's Caves.*

23 - Sirmione (Brescia) - *The Scaligero Castle.*



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24 - Gargnano (Brescia) - *The Feltrinelli Villa.*



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25/26/27 - Gardone Riviera (Brescia) - *The Vittoriale of the Italians: the Gardens the Ballet Lake, the Monumental Site.*



The Vittoriale is the Museum the most visited in Lombardy; it has been kept the same as D'Annunzio wanted it, to testify in the best way the personality and the tastes of the poet, with thousands pieces of art, statues, ceramics, remembering of his adventurous life.

Of a great suggestion is the ferry Puglia, given as a gift by the Navy in the year 1925 and set in the rock with its prow in the direction of the lake and the Adriatic Sea. The mysterious waters of the two "Vallette dell'Acqua Pazza" and the "Acqua Savia" merge in the "Laghetto delle Danze", designed in the form of a violin and created for dances performances, before it disperses in the lake.

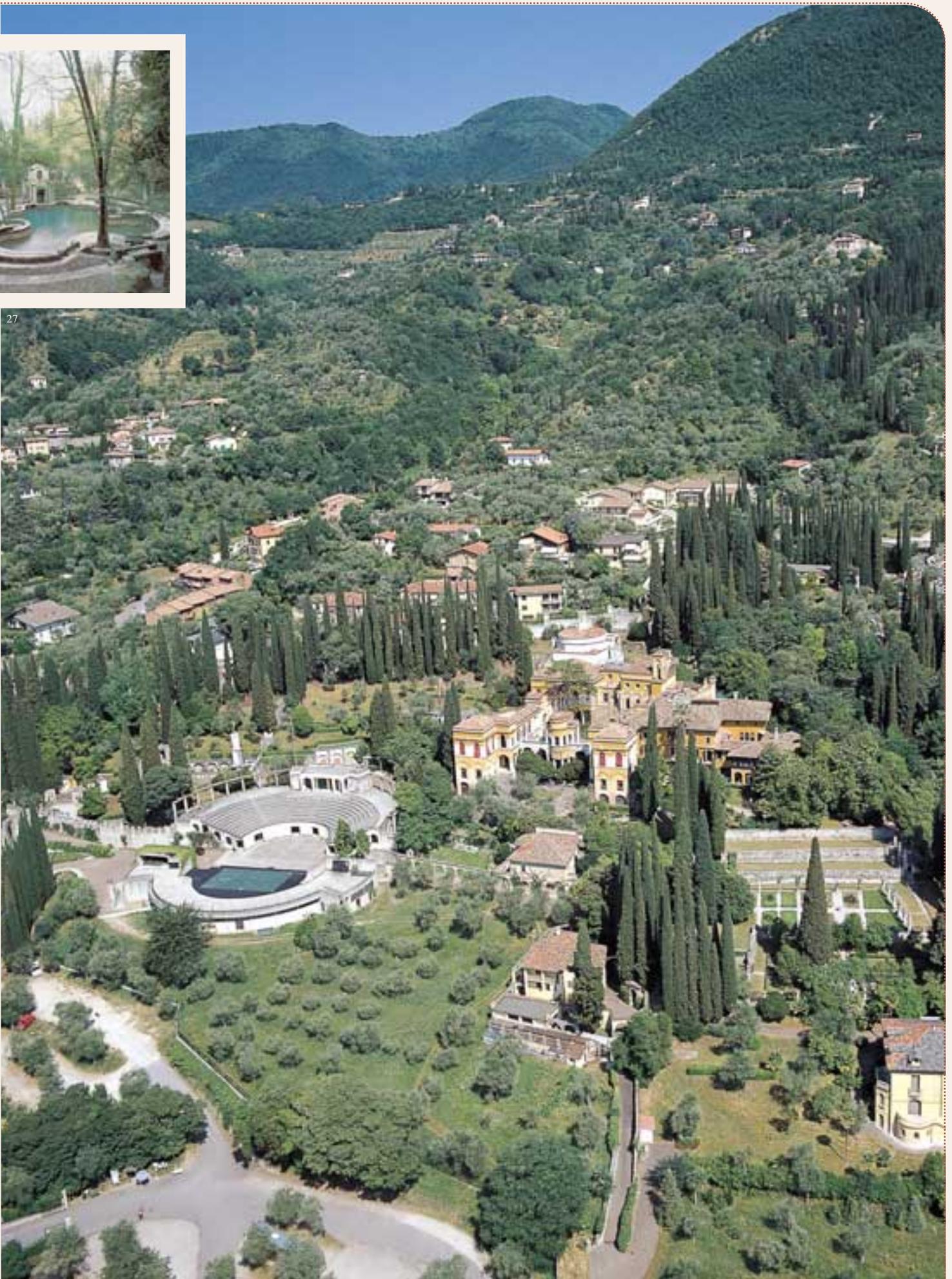
The amphitheatre is presenting, every year, a prestigious theatrical season of ballet, opera, and prose, classic and modern music.

The villages of Salò, Gardone and Gargnano were witnesses of a dramatic but important recent history of Italy. Richly decorated liberty villas were, at the end of the Second World War, site of Ministries and offices of the Social Republic, led by Benito Mussolini. Wonderful testimony from the architectonic point of view set in the rich vegetation, these residences have today become elegant and charming hotels and restaurants definitely appreciated by a cosmopolite clientele, and are enchanting places perfect for candle light dinner.

The three valleys belonging to the Brescia region (Trompia, Sabbia and Camonica) were historic transit ways for pilgrims, merchants and foreign armies. They represent a different aspect, as well as an important one, through their architectures.

The geometries of castles set in an ambiance of incredible charm were also drawn in a intelligent design of safety needs; the events told through writings and historic rests are the fascinating testimonies of a far away era.

In an incredible promiscuity, the time is displayed by antique luxury houses and internal courtyards, with stone fountains, wooden barns and residences with characteristic loggias, military buildings and the most humble stone houses. The surrounding landscape, green and sunny, with its heights on the horizon, makes the visit the most intense one.



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