

LAKE MAGGIORE



Lake Maggiore, or Verbano, extends over a surface of 66 km, from the Italian to the Swiss territory, from the plane up to the peaks of the Ossola valley. Fed by the waters of the Ticino and Toce rivers, it is situated at 194 meter above sea level with a maximum depth of 380 meters in the area of Cannero Riviera.

Set in the prealps, Lake Maggiore is of glacial origins and, as it is larger than the other neighboring lakes, since the Roman age it was named Lacus Maximus. It was however also known as Verbano, name derived from the association of two Celtic words.

The upper part of the lake, where Ascona and Locarno are located, belongs to the Swiss territory while the Italian portion is shared by the three provinces of Varese, Novara and Verbania. The western and eastern shores are quite different in some ways.

INFORMATIONS

<http://distrettolaghi.it>

<http://www.navigazonelaghi.it>

<http://www.illagomaggiore.com>

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lago_Maggiore

Audioguide/Audio - guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codice/code 308, 314)

Through the centuries along the western Piedmontese shore the tourism of elite has developed a closer and closer cooperation with a flourishing tourist industry while the Lombard eastern shore is still not largely exploited and poorly equipped.

Lake Maggiore with its water expanses, protected and closed northwards by the Alps, with the villages unceasingly following one another and the breathtaking Borromeo Gulf dominating it, has been for centuries a place and source of inspiration for men of letters, artists, musicians and writers from all over Europe, who made it the destination of the Gran Tour in the XIX century. Thanks to its strategic position between Italy and Switzerland, with the opening of the Napoleonic Simplon road first later to be used for the international railway line, Lake Maggiore has acquired in time a political relevance. In fact, starting from mid XVI century the lake area was granted as feud to the Borromeo, a Milanese noble family, who chose it also as a vacation residence.

Today every village and town of Lake Maggiore has its own identity and distinctiveness: Arona is the shopping town, Stresa has always been a destination for elitish tourists, Baveno was an important thermal resort and today it has become a lively vacation center; Verbania, the chief town of the province, represents a tourism junction point on one side and a political-administrative center on the other, while Cannero Riviera and Cannobio are among the foreign visitors' favourite destinations.

BORRROMEO ISLANDS



01

Through the years the luxuriant vegetation of Lake Maggiore, favoured by the particular climatic conditions, has been combined to the activity of man, who succeeded in harmoniously blending patrician residences of unique architectural and artistic value with the environment.

The Borromeo islands, situated in the homonymous gulf and delimited by the coast between Stresa and Pallanza, are quite enchanting.

The most renown is Isola Bella: the island was just a rough rock till the early decades of the XVII century, when in 1632 count Charles III Borromeo decided to transform it. He called it Isabella, in honour of his wife Isabella d'Adda, and only later it was simply renamed Bella. The complete work, commissioned to the most prestigious architects and artists of the time, was originally meant to appear like a big ship anchored off the coast of Stresa. And so it was: in fact the wet dock is the stem, while Palazzo Borromeo is the stern deck; the fore bridge is represented by the topmost of the gardens, which are in turn divided into ten terraces carpeted with the most diversified floral species.

Just a short distance away from Isola Bella is Isola Pescatori: geographically it is an integral part of the Borromeo Islands, though its history is quite different. Its official name is Isola Superiore, but the traditional activity of its inhabitants made it known

as Isola Pescatori (fishers' island). Worth mentioning from an architectonic standpoint is the seventeenth-century church of San Vittore, while the characteristic alleys of the island are an ideal destination for shopping of local handicrafts.

The third wonder of the Borromeo Gulf is Isola Madre, so called because it is the largest of the three main islands. It enjoys an extraordinary subtropical climate and houses a rich botanic garden where one can admire many rare species.

Finally, the islet of San Giovanni, where Arturo Toscanini also used to stay, is the fourth and smallest element of the little archipelago. Covered by a thick vegetation, the islet, situated at a very short distance from the Castagnola promontory of Pallanza, is not open to visitors.



02

INFORMATIONS

<http://www.borromeoturismo.it>

<http://www.comune.stresa.vb.it>

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isole_Borromeo

Altre schede/Also see indexes: Ville e Giardini

01 Isola Bella e Isola Pescatori
Bella Island and Pescatori Island
02 Isola Bella - *Bella Island*

VILLAS AND GARDENS



The numerous villas standing on the western shore of Lake Maggiore witness the presence of the Milanese and Novarese noble and bourgeois families since the XIX century. Here they built glamorous residences surrounded by beautiful gardens, and the mild climate and the abundance of water made it possible to cultivate exotic and Mediterranean plants.

The most renowned gardens overlooking Lake Maggiore are those of Villa Taranto, in Verbania, wanted by a Scottish gentleman who did all he could to create an area of absolute uniqueness with blooming botanical species and luxuriant trees all year round. Inside the garden visitors may admire various wonders: from the conifer alley to the dahlia garden, from the greenhouse with the largest waterlilies in the world to the rhododendron path.

Verbania also hosts Villa San Remigio, situated on top of the Castagnola in Pallanza and surrounded by a park where large panoramic terraces were built at the beginning of the XX century together with wide meadows delimited by exotic plants. By walking along the 8 hectares of Villa San Remigio park visitors experience a sort of journey through the history of the gardens, with an alternated sequence of Italian and British styles.

In Stresa is also another marvel, Villa Pallavicino surrounded by 15 hectares of land: It was Marquis Ludovico Pallavicino of Genua, who in 1862 chose the current English Garden. Especially fascinating is the Flower Park, a terrace decked with roses, magnolias, rhododendrons and azelias. In 1954 the Pallavicino Marquis Family further transformed the garden integrating it with a zoological park, where 40 species of mammals and exotic birds still roam around in total freedom.

Again in Stresa, at an altitude of 750 m. is the botanical garden of Alpinia, where can be seen about 700 species of prevalently alpine shrubs and bushes as well as officinal herbs. In 1933 Eng. Ambrosiani selected this site for its breathtaking beauty. The garden, where there is also a mineral water spring with low mineral contents, extends over an area of 12,000 sq.m. The gardens of Isola Bella are instead a magnificent example of Italian baroque garden, where ponds alternate with flowerbeds arranged in geometrical settings. The gardens, full of countless varieties of rare flowers, plants and trees, spread over ten terraces overlapping one another in a truncated pyramidal shape, where architectural shapes typical of the baroque style stand out among all the others. ricchi di ogni varietà di fiori e piante rare, si sviluppano su dieci terrazze sovrapposte a forma di piramide tronca in cui spiccano architetture tipiche del giardino barocco. The different parts of the pyramid bear names that recall the names of some members of the Borromeo family such as for example the Giulia Forest and the Elia Wood. Last but not least is the Garden of Cupid, where many species of birds fly around in total freedom..

Isola Madre, another of the islands of the Borromeo Gulf, is also quite captivating with its splendid gardens, where thanks to a particularly favourable microclimate, botanical species of subtropical origin can be grown in the open. In spring it's an explosion of blooming azelias, rhododendrons and camellias, and, while strolling among the secular trees and the hedges of magnolias, one may surprisingly come across small Chinese pheasants and white peacocks.

INFORMATIONS

<http://www.parcozoopallavicino.it>

<http://www.giardinoalpinia.it>

Altre Schede/Also see indexes

Isole Borromeo, Verbania Villa Taranto

01 Villa Pallavicino - Stresa

02 Villa Taranto - Verbania

VERBANIA AND VILLA TARANTO



The district of Verbania was originated in 1939 by the unification of the municipalities of Intra and Pallanza to which were later added Suna and Fondotoce, together with the hamlets located on the hills around it. Its territory overlooks Lake Maggiore and extends towards the hills gradually climbing up towards the alpine arc. Many are the opportunities offered to the visitor staying in Verbania: trips on the lake, visits to the parks and gardens, excursions, sightseeing tours of the hinterland, a great museum patrimony and numerous interesting religious as well as historical sites.

The artistic culture and the landscaping values of the Verbano area are witnessed by the Landscape Museum, founded in 1909. The departments of archaeology, painting and sculpture are seated in Palazzo Viani-Dugnani while Palazzo Biurni Innocenti houses the department of popular religiousness, which presents a collection, unique in Europe, of about 5000 painted votive offerings. The sacred buildings dominate the urban scenario and trace an itinerary marked by the austere-

rity of the Romanesque churches, the harmony of the XV Century forms and by the architectural inventions of the late baroque.

Villa Taranto, a true botanical and architectural jewel, made even more precious by luxuriant gardens, dates back to 1831. It was the Scottish gentleman Neil Boyd McEacharn who desired and actually succeeded in realizing one of the most beautiful botanical garden in the world. Thus the wild woodland area that surrounded the villa was transformed into a 7 km long itinerary, a perfect example of English garden in Italy. The villa was named after one of the captain's ancestors, who was nominated Duke of Taranto by Napoleon Bonaparte. To enrich his estate the captain travelled several times around the world in search of rare species and investing in this project most of his great patrimony. The project was aimed at retracing the taste for the English garden, which found a fertile land in the lake area, a destination beloved by the Anglo-Saxons. Strolling along the alleys of the garden one can admire countless rare and precious botanical species. The main entrance to the park is the conifer alley, on the right of which is the Valley of the Fern trees. Further on comes the dahlias garden with over 300 varieties and then the greenhouse, where can be seen many tropical species among which some of the largest waterlilies in the world. Just as an example: the leaves of the Victoria Amazonica can reach a diameter of 2 meters and can support up to 5 kg of weight. On the way to the villa one passes hundreds of rhododendron varieties, pride of the gardens. In 1939 captain McEacharn donated the estate to the Italian government and in 1952 the gardens were opened to the public. Since then the flow of visitors has continued uninterrupted and none, who has had a chance to visit them, will ever forget their beauty.

INFORMATIONS

<http://www.villataranto.it>

<http://www.comune.verbania.it>

<http://www.museodelpaesaggio.it>

Audioguide/Audio-guides

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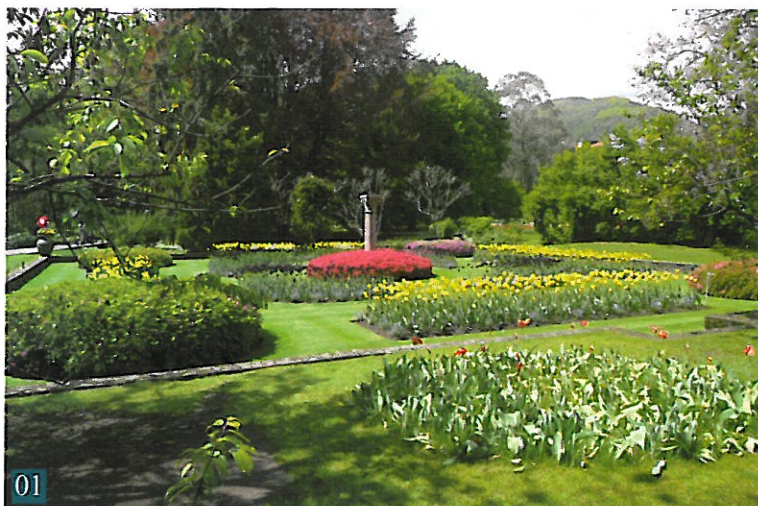
Altre schede/Also see indexes

Ville e Giardini

01 Villa Taranto

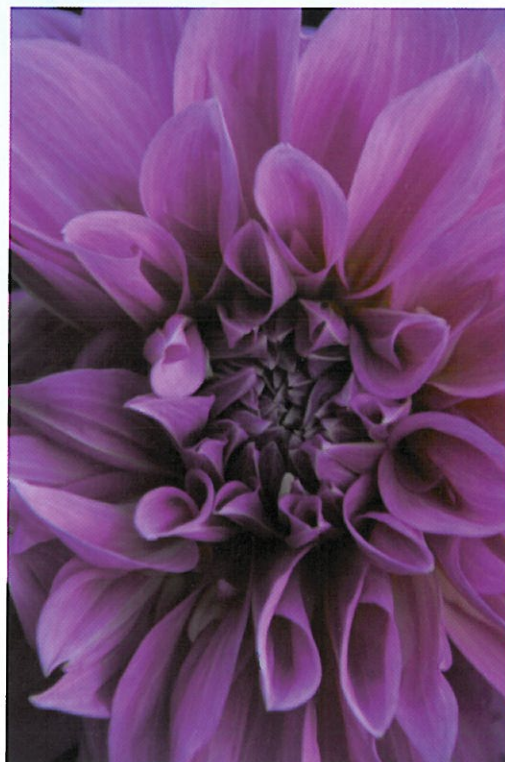
02 Camelia Japonica

FLOWER GROWING



Azaleas rhododendrons, camelias, Pieris, Skimmie and Kalmie: the highest concentration of acidophilic plants is found along the shores of Lake Maggiore with about 150 nurseries, botanical gardens and flower growing enterprises. For over 200 years high quality flowers and plants have been grown in this area: the fertile soil, the especially mild and temperate climate and the presence of villas and botanical gardens realized during the XIX century by Italian and European noble families, have led to the start and intensification of the production. The creation of parks and gardens developed into the introduction and exchange of new plants. The local flower growing industry is part of a floricultural production District with producers and floriculturists affiliated to the Typical Flower Cooperative of Lake Maggiore, and plants are exported all over the world. Among the most appreciated plants are the spring and winter camelias. While the first, originary of Japan and China are characterized by a variety of colour shades, the winter kind can continuously bloom from September to February. The azalea is number one among the flowers cultivated along Lake Maggiore, with over 1.5 million specimens produced every year. Another plant quite common in this area and generally available in the red colour is the rhododendron, which blooms during the same period as the azalea. Other less known acidophilic plants, such as the ones of the Pieris, Skimmia, Kalmia and Leucothoe species, characterized by pretty but less striking leaves and flowers, are also part of the local production. Several shows and exhibitions dedicated to azaleas and rhododendrons are held every year on Lake Maggiore: among the most ancient, best known and widely apprecia-

ted are the Spring and the Winter Camelia Exhibitions, both held in Verbania Pallanza. Meetings, shows and conventions are also organized along with the flower exhibitions not only in Verbania but also in Cannobio, Cannero Riviera and generally all along the shores of Lake Maggiore.



INFORMATIONS

<http://www.regione.piemonte.it/agri/ita/piemontedoc/fiori/produtz/laomag/index.htm>

<http://www.lastradadeifiori.it>

<http://www.lagomaggiorefiori.it/ita/index.htm>

<http://www.comunifloriti.it>

Altre schede/Also see indexes

Design ed artigianato, Ville e giardini

01 Giardini di Villa Taranto - *The gardens of Villa Taranto*
02 Camelia Japonica

Press kit



ARONA AND THE STATUE OF SAINT CHARLES



01

Thanks to its history and to its privileged geographical location, Arona, a traditionally shopping and sightseeing town, has in time become a really fascinating tourist destination. History, nature and trade merge into a series of itineraries, which from the mountain peaks down through the historical center of town reach all the way to the lakeside. From the pedestrian route, stretching out for about 3 km along the lakefront, it is possible to admire the panorama of the Lombard shore, the ancient town with its history-permeated lanes and the churches full of precious paintings. The striking Piazza del Popolo is dominated by the ancient Law Courts, a Lombard gothic style building.

Arona is also an important junction between the railway and the navigation on the lake. Many cruises are in fact organised on board a fascinating "Belle Epoque" boat or a modern motorboat, from which one can admire the beauty of Lake Maggiore.

Arona offers many opportunities for entertainment: art exhibitions and musical events at Villa Ponti, summer "get-togethers" such as the "Lunga Notte" (Long Night) the boat race and the Period Costume Parade, the Winter Competition, i.e. a dive in the lake in February, the Tredicino Fair on March 13 and the Fair of Lake Maggiore, held between May and June, which attracts about 150,000 visitors every year.

A truly unique lookout from Arona is offered by the Hill, on

which in the XVI Century rose the Castle of Rocca Borromea, later destroyed by Napoleon. The statue of Saint Charles Borromeo, popularly known as San Carlone, one of the most important and grandiose religious monuments in Piedmont, erected between 1614 and 1698, towers now from the hill above the town. Made of copper and bronze the statue is 23,40 meters tall and with the pedestal reaches up to 35,10 meters. It is the second highest statue in the world after the Statue of Liberty of New York. It was dedicated to Cardinal Charles Borromeo, who was born in Arona in 1538 and was canonized in 1610 for the help and assistance given to the poor and the sick. The statue can be visited inside: up to six people can for example stand inside the head and from the top windows it is possible to admire one of the most beautiful panoramas of Lake Maggiore.



02

INFORMATIONS

<http://www.comune.arona.no.it>

<http://www.ambrosiana.it/ita/colosso.asp>

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosso_di_San_Carlo_Borromeo

www.distrettolaghi.it

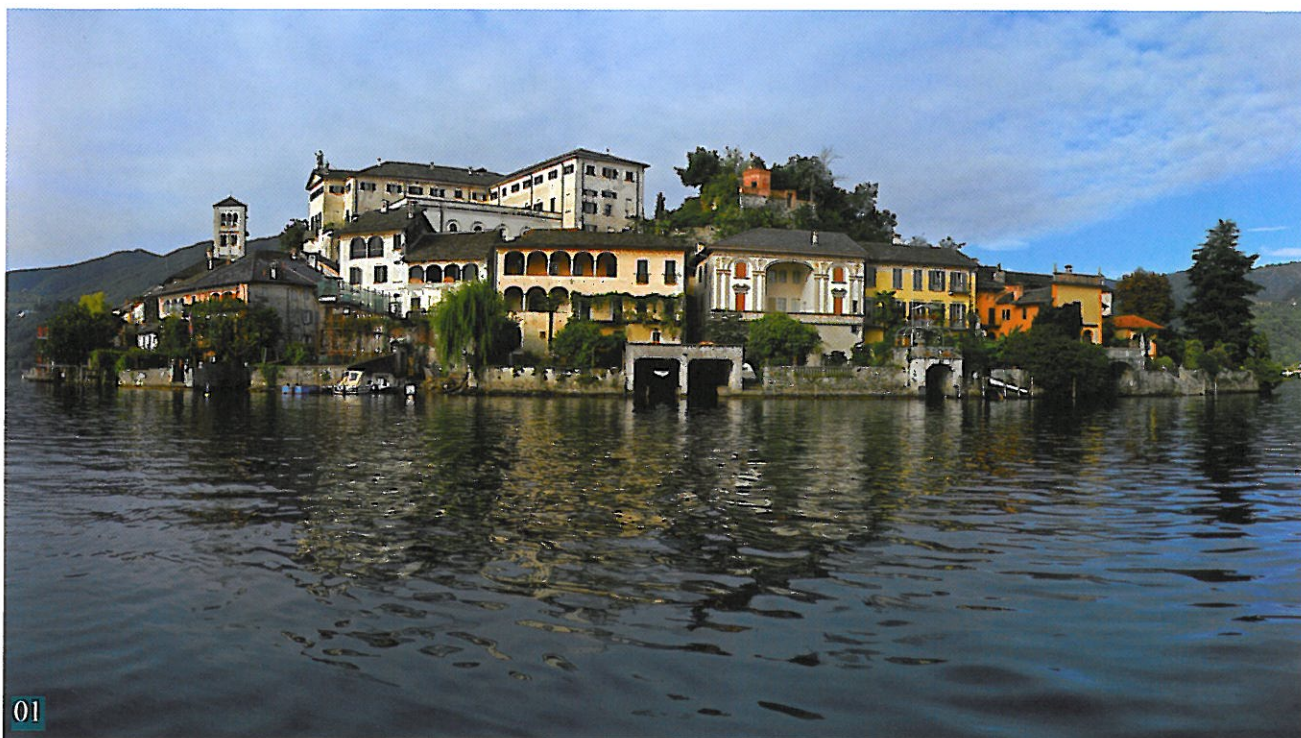


01 / 02 Vedute di Arona Views of Arona

Press kit



LAKE OF ORTA AND THE ISLE OF SAN GIULIO



01

The Lake of Orta is situated West of Lake Maggiore. It is the most occidental of the prealpine lakes and has its source in the southern front of the Simplon glacier. Contrary to what happens to many of the alpine lakes, which usually run South, Lake of Orta runs North and crossing the town of Omegna, forms the Nigoglia river, which in turn flows into the Storna and then through the Toce river, flows into Lake Maggiore. The presence of human beings on Lake of Orta dates back at least to the neolithic age. In 1786 the Cusio territory became property of the Savoia family thus passing from Lombardy to Piedmont.

Ideal destination for artists and writers, the coastal resorts of Lake of Orta are often described in works by important authors such as Balzac, Rodari, Montale and Soldati. Many local chefs-de-cuisine and industrialists of world renown have contributed through the time to boosting their fame. The Cusio, as the area of the Lake of Orta is called, is a charming jewel case where arts and culture magically intertwine in the rarefied atmosphere typical of lacustrine zones.

Omegna, capital of the Cusio, is among the best known locations of the Lake of Orta. Established in the past as leader in the houseware sector it is today also a cultural point of reference for the entire territory. Orta San Giulio, a tiny medieval town, which through the years has been attracting writers and cultured people, is the pearl of the Lake. Strolling through its me-

dieval narrow lanes, one breathes in an enchanting atmosphere. On Piazza Motta, lined with open air tables, is the XVI Century Palazzotto, first seat of the municipality, and the pier, departure point for the isle of San Giulio.

This is a plot of land where, according to tradition, San Giulio defeated dragons and snakes. In the centre of the island stands the ancient Seminary, mystical symbol of the entire lake, built in 1844 and today an abbey where a community of Benedictine cloister nuns lives and works. Inside the majestic Basilica of San Giulio, built by the Saint in the V Century, can be admired some beautiful frescoes reproducing images of Saints and paintings realized by the apprentices of the painter Gaudenzio Ferrari.



02

INFORMATIONS

<http://distrettolaghi.it>

<http://www.comune.ortasangiulio.no.it>

http://www.borghitalia.it/html/borgo_it.php?codice_borgo=711

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orta_San_Giulio

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Altre schede/Also see indexes: Vergante, Omegna

01 Isola di San Giulio - *Island of San Giulio*

02 Borgo di Orta - *The village of Orta*

LAKE OF MERGOZZO



Lake of Mergozzo, repeatedly awarded the Blue Flag for its clean waters, is situated right at the entrance of Val d'Ossola and is a favorite destination for swimming, sunbathing, canoe and fishing enthusiasts. About 2 ½ km. long and with a maximum depth of 74 meters, the Lake of Mergozzo was in ancient times an integrating part of Lake Maggiore. The great floods isolated then a section of the lake and generated the Lake of Mergozzo. Prehistorical remains discovered on the terrassings above the town prove that man settled down in this area at least 500 years ago. Later on, thanks to its favourable transit position, it acquired great importance during the Roman age. Nowadays the lake is especially appreciated for the peace and tranquillity and for the numerous opportunities it offers to open air sports enthusiasts, from canoeing to fishing, from trekking to simply strolling around the woods around it all the way to bicycling excursions.

Overlooking the lake is the town bearing the same name. Some of the charming stone houses are arranged almost as an amphitheatre along the western shore while some cling to the slope of the ancient hamlet of Sasso, which can be reached by climbing up a long flight of steps hollowed out of the rock and dominated by the Casaforte Castle, built at the times of the Communes.

On the shore stands majestically a centuries-old elm tree, with an almost hollowed out trunk, which has been declared by the Piedmont Region a monumental tree with landscaping, historical and cultural importance. From the main town it is possible

to reach the numerous hamlets of Mergozzo: Montorfano, with the ancient residential settlement built around the Romanesque church of San Giovanni, then Bracchio, Albo, Bettola, Nibbio and Candoglia, the latter known for the light-pink marble quarries, from which starting in 1387, by concession of Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo (the Venerable Board of The Duomo) started to mine the material required for the construction of the Lombard Cathedral.



INFORMATIONS

<http://distrettolaghi.it>

<http://www.comune.mergozzo.vb.it/home>

<http://www.duomomilano.it>

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marmo_di_Candoglia

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01/02 Vedute di Omegna - Views of Omegna

www.distrettolaghi.it

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REGIONE
PIEMONTE

PIEMONTE
REGIONE DA SEMPRE

PROVINCIA
VERBANO CUSIO OSSOLA

PROVINCIA
DI NOVARA

Press kit

MONTE ROSA AND MACUGNAGA



Valle Anzasca covers an area of about 30 km west of Valle d'Ossola with a level difference of over 1000 mt. culminating with Monte Rosa, the majestic massif towering with its 4633 mt., over a one of a kind scenario in the entire mountain chain. It owes its name to the pink shade spreading over its peaks at sunrise and sunset. The many peaks rising up to over 4000 meters make Monte Rosa a "must" for climbing enthusiasts. The eastern wall overlooking Macugnaga, with its 2000 mt. of ice, snow and rock, is considered a real Himalayan peak.

Macugnaga, defined the "pearl of the Rosa", is the most appealing town of Valle Anzasca and its first settlements date back to around mid XIII century. At the time the monks promoted the first fair, which takes place near the church and Macugnaga still represents the shopping town par excellence of the entire valley. With their history and traditions passed on from generation to generation the Walsers left a distinctive mark all through this area. They were natives of the German upper Valais and through a massive migration which lasted through the XIII and XIV century they actually started the first medieval mountain colonization through a remarkable migration.

The traces of such settlement are particularly evident both in the Walser village, perfectly preserved and maintained and in the Museo Casa Walser where visitors can discover the tough life conditions of people, who were able to adapt to such a harsh

environment.

Macugnaga is also a favourite destination for passionate skiers in winter and excursionist and nature enthusiasts and peace lovers in summer.

Worth the trip is the Miniera della Guida, situated in Borca: this is a 1.3 km long mine-museum where one can relive the history of such a back-breaking work, get to know the techniques and processes of gold mining and get a close look at the ancient tools.



INFORMATIONS

<http://www.monterosa.vb.it/ita>

<http://www.macugnaga-online.it>

<http://www.comune.bannioanzino.vb.it/Milizia-Tradizionale>

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milizia_Tradizionale_di_Calasca

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Altre schede/Also see indexes: Cultura, Arte, Folklore

01 Monte Rosa - *Mount Rosa*

02 Macugnaga, Lago delle Fate - *Lake of the Fairies*

03 Bannio Anzino

Press kit

VALLE VIGEZZO AND THE CENTOVALLI



Spreading over the plateau of the Lepontine Alps at an altitude of 800 mt. is Valle Vigezzo, the only one of the seven Ossola valleys extending Eastwards. The luxuriant vegetation, woods, meadows and alpine lakes offer countless opportunities for suggestive walks surrounded by nature and in total relax. Valle Vigezzo with its seven municipalities is known as the "painters' valley" for its ancient tradition of artists, portraitists and landscapists. Santa Maria Maggiore is the vibrant heart of the valley, a pretty town particularly appreciated for the plateau surrounded by conifers. In addition to the Rossetti Valentini Fine Arts school, the town also boasts the Chimney Sweepers Museums which narrates the story of the Vigezzini, who enduring great hardship, left their homes and families to walk the world in search of fortune.

Another charming destination is Craveggia, a small rural village which has turned into a true open-air museum with high-class buildings, decorations and frescoes. And then comes Re, the devotional core of the valley with its majestic Sanctuary dedicated to the Madonna del Sangue. From Malesco one can reach Valle Loana, the entrance gate of the Val Grande National Park, the most extended wilderness area in Europe, while in Druogno particularly striking are the terraced fields of Coimo. Villette, with its Museum of alpine culture, is the town of the sundials, the solar clocks that told the time to the entire community, while

Craveggia still keeps intact the atmosphere of its peasant culture. Valle Vigezzo is a synonym of silence and relax, but in winter offers skiing enthusiasts many opportunities to practice their favourite sports.

One can cross Valle Vigezzo on board of a traditional train of the Ferrovia Vigezzina, a railway line that from Domodossola crosses Valle Vigezzo and the Centovalli all the way to Locarno. A thrilling ride on board of a sightseeing train to enjoy a rich and breathtaking view in any season of the year.



INFORMATIONS

<http://www.vallevigezzo.vb.it>
<http://comune.santamariamaggiore.vb.it>
<http://www.comune.re.vb.it/Santuario>
<http://www.vigezzina.com>
<http://www.lagomaggioreexpress.com>

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 (codice/code 107)

Altre schede/Also see indexes: Parchi e aree protette

01 Santa Maria Maggiore

02 Festa degli Spazzacamini - Chimney Sweepers Festival

03 Treno della Vigezzina - Vigezzina Train

Press kit

THE HOLY MOUNTS



Faith art and history surrounded by nature: the Sacro Monte of San Francesco on the isle of San Giulio, the Sacro Monte of the Holy Trinity of Ghiffa, the Sacro Monte Calvario of Domodossola. On these sites, included in 2003 among the ones declared by Unesco "Patrimony of the Humanity", the visitor can really experience moments of deep devotion and meditation.

The Sacro Monte of Orta, now nature reserve, extends through a thirteen hectares historical park. Twenty-one chapels with frescoes and sculptures dedicated to the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, a series of life-size polychromatic terracotta statues, realized by the most important artists of the XVI, XVII and XVIII Centuries, over 900 frescoes, which stage real theatre representations, within a mystical environment, at times opening onto panoramic views over the Lake of Orta and framed by the majestic chain of the Alps.

The Sacro Monte of the Holy Trinity of Ghiffa, with its monumental baroque complex, which includes the Sanctuary, three main chapels, the arcade of the Way of the Cross, the Getsemani Chapel and the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrow, rises on a spectacular panoramic terrace with about 200 hectares of woodland overlooking Lake Maggiore.

The Sacro Monte Calvario of Domodossola stands on the panoramic hill of Mattarella, scene of many historical events, which overlooks the Ossola Valley. The Sacred Mount, dedicated to Christ on the Cross, was built starting in 1656 and through the centuries was enriched with the 15 chapels, which recall the stations of the Way of the Cross. In 1828

Antonio Rosmini, who was recently made a saint, came to stay and created the Charity Institution, of which the Rosminian Fathers are still the keepers. Near the sacred complex runs the excursion itinerary "Way of the Presses and Mills" where the visitors can admire interesting remains of ancient rural civilizations.

Another place of profound faith and destination of many pilgrimages is the Sanctuary of Madonna del Sangue of Re, constructed in memory of a miraculous event and located on the eastern side of the Vigizzo Valley.

Faith has prompted the construction of glorious monuments such as the colossal church of San Gaudenzio in Baceno, the church of Saints Pietro e Paolo in Crevoladossola, the churches of Madonna di Campagna and San Remigio in Verbania, San Lorenzo in Gozzano, which, according to tradition, was the ninety-ninth church built by the brothers San Giuliano and San Giulio, before they constructed on the Island, which from the Saint takes the name, the magnificent Basilica, where it is possible to admire a precious medieval ambo.

The uniqueness of our territory lies in the surprising contrasts that characterise our tourist areas ranging from chapels, oratories and small sanctuaries spread all over the mountains to the Giant Statue of Saint Charles. The colossal figure, second statue in the world after the Statue of Liberty, towers over the town of Arona and the surrounding area from a height of 35 meters and can be visited inside.

INFORMATIONS

<http://www.sacromonteorta.it>

<http://www.sacromonteghiffa.it>

<http://www.sacromontedomodossola.it>

Audioguide/Audio-guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codici/codes 102, 108, 112, 203, 209, 302, 303, 306, 119, 309, 310)

Altre schede/Also see indexes

Parchi e riserve naturali, Valle Antigorio Divedro

Formazza, Verbania, Orta San Giulio, Arona

01/02 Sacro Monte Calvario Domodossola



CULTURE ART AND FOLKLORE



A culture, whose roots go back to many centuries ago or that draws inspiration from a more recent grandeur. An example thereof is the culture of the Walser civilisation: an ancient population of Germanic origins migrated from the Valais to the Italian Alps, where they settled in colonies with their language, their architecture and their traditions. Macugnaga and Formazza with the ancient Walser houses, now also turned into museums, and then Agaro, Ausone and Salecchio, the “Walser of Silence” in the communities of Baceno, Premia and Campello Monti, a hamlet clinging to the mountain slope and part of the municipality of Valstrona; then comes Ornavasso, with the Sanctuaries of Boden and della Guardia, where the most ancient traditions still survive in spite of the passing of time.

A rural culture still very much alive in mountain villages, with the ancient houses clinging to the stone and surrounded by terraced fields, which tell about the antique civilization and preserve the fundamentals of the farmers’ way of life: wine-presses, stone ovens to bake the bread, imposing terracings, mills to grind rye, oats and chestnuts, as can still be seen on the Graglia streamlet in Trontano. Territory and material culture are shown and narrated in the museums and along the itineraries of the Ecomuseo del Cusio, and by typical exhibitions dedicated to the umbrella and the parasol (Gignese), to the chimney sweeper (Santa Maria Maggiore), the art of hat making (Ghiffa), the musical instruments (Quarna Sot-

to), and ethnographic collections such as the ones exposed in Gurro, in the Cannobina Valley. That’s where ancient crafts and modern trades can be rediscovered, such as in the Museo del Contrabbando (Smugglers Museum) and the Gold Mine of Guia (Macugnaga), the Museo degli Alberghieri (Museum of Hotel Traders) (Armeno), or where one can learn about the history of local production at the Forum of Omegna and the Museo del Rubinetto (Faucet Museum) in San Maurizio d’Opaglio.

A culture of bourgeoisie and nobility, which lives on in Vogogna, one of the most beautiful villages in Italy, with the Visconti Castle and the Praetorial Palace, traces of which can also be found in the mansions of Villa Caselli in Masera, villa Nigra, in the XIX Century Castle of Miasino and the Visconti Castle of Massino Visconti.

Verbania is fascinating also for its elegant palaces: Palazzo Viani Dugnani and Palazzo Biumi Innocenti house the important collections of the Museo del Paesaggio (Landscape Museum), while in Arona the Archaeological Museum retraces the age-old history of this territory.

A culture that through the “Belle Epoque” and the grandeur of the XIX Century, found in the mansions and palaces spread all around Lake Maggiore the meeting point for men of letters, humanists and artists coming from all over Europe, attracted by the rich art treasures of the Borromeos, whose collections, gardens and palaces continue to be among the attractions most appreciated by tourists from all over the world. Travelers through time and arts, who chose the lakes as one of the stops for their Grand Tour on the Simplon Railroad line, and who stopped here to stay for some time: Alessandro Manzoni, the composers Arturo Toscanini and Umberto Giordano, Balzac, Nietzsche, Hemingway, Eugenio Montale, Mario Soldati, Gianni Rodari, a native of Omegna on Lake of Orta, just to mention a few. Culture as a moment for knowledge, with prestigious events dedicated to Modern Art, such as the exhibitions held in Arona of paintings by artists like Picasso and De Chirico, the expositions in Orta.

INFORMATIONS

<http://www.minieradoro.it/http://www.walser-alps.eu>

<http://www.lagodorta.net/elenco.asp?cat=6>

<http://www.museodelpaesaggio.it>

<http://www.archeomuseo.it>

http://www.paesidipinti.it/s_legro.asp?LK=3

Audioguide/Audio-guides

+ 39 0323.1975525 (codici/codes 115, 207)

Altre schede/Also see indexes

**Forti e fortificazioni, Verbania, Isole Borromeo, Lago d’Orta
San Giulio**

01 Musco Walser, Macugnaga - Walser Museum

02 Casa Walser, Macugnaga- Walser House

DESIGN AND CRAFTSMANSHIP



01



02

Marble and wood, natural elements, symbol of the specificity of this territory, sometimes moulded into products typical of the local production, sometimes used to create sublime objects, such as for example the wooden "Pinocchio", elevated to symbol of Valle Strona, a real kingdom of local woodcrafting, or the grandeur of the Cathedral of Milan (Duomo) realized with marble coming from the quarries of Candoglia, overlooking the Lake of Mergozzo. White granite from Montorfano, pink granite from Baveno, "serizzo" and "beola", precious resources, with which skillful craftsmen have realized objects unique of their kind.

Objects for everyday use, present in all the kitchens of the world, pots and pans, coffee makers and tableware, objects which are not simply practical, but are also the symbol of the most refined design. It's in the Cusio area, on the shores of Lake of Orta, that the handicraft and industrial tradition of houseware production, along with the manufacturing of taps and fittings, was born and bloomed during the last centuries and has become today a symbol of international creativity and design.

Another well known aspect of this area is represented by the cultivation of flowers typical of the Lake Maggiore region: camellias, azaleas, rhododendrons and minor acidophilic plants, which, thanks to the very favourable microclimate of Lake Maggiore, thrive luxuriantly. The tradition of typical flower cultivation goes back to the mid XIX Century, the time when the nobility created beautiful gardens and introduced on the territory flowers and plants coming from all over the world. Undisputed queens are the camellias from Japan and China, and the azaleas.

Ancient traditions, passed on from generation to generation, such as pottery in Valle Antigorio, where with the clay extracted locally, craftsmen would make baroque style majolicas, today proposed with blue and brown flowery decorations, or again the weaving of textiles and the use of hand looms, or last but not least the realization of gold jewellery inspired by the ancient Walser tradition.



03

INFORMATIONS

<http://www.comunitamontanadellostronaebassotoce.it>

<http://www.itinerari.distrettolaghi.it>

<http://www.assocave.it>

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marmo_di_Candoglia

<http://lagomaggioreflori.it>

Altre schede/Also see indexes: Omegna, Lago di Mergozzo, Floricoltura

01 Ceramica ossolana - *Majolica from the Ossola Valley*
02 Artigianato in legno - *Woodcrafts*
03 Cava di granito - *Cave of granite*

Press kit



01



02



03

A full table of ancient flavours which take their roots from the traditions and history of a population that has been able to exploit the resources offered by the territory. From Appetizers to Desserts it's an outburst of skillfully prepared simple and genuine delicacies. Absolute protagonist of the mountain cuisine is bread, the making of which was in the Ossola region a consolidated family and social process. Bread was generally produced with rye mixed with other types of flour, sometimes enriched with nuts and raisins and served with locally made sausages and cheeses. From salami to mortadella, from raw ham to bresaola (cured meat), from the famous "goat violins" to flavoured lard, every family had a special recipe of its own, which would be passed on from generation to generation and that can still be tasted in all the various products of these valleys. The art of cheese-making dates back to the year 1000, when the work of a mountaineer and his family was officially sanctioned. About thirty alpine pastures produce excellent cheeses that bear the name of the places where the most important "casere" are located. A name in point is the Bettelmat, a cheese currently produced by seven alpine pastures of the Antigorio and Formazza valleys. A limited production which has contributed to enhance its taste and its preciousness on the market. Excellent are also the cheeses from Mottarone, which can be tasted and purchased from various farms located between the Lake of Orta and Lake Maggiore, possibly tasting them with a good glass of wine from the Novara planes. Cheeses to be tasted with the many sorts of honey produced in this area with various taste nuances. From the mountains to the lake, where both river and lake fish is the true protagonist. From the lake come the lavaret, the perch, the bleak, the jackfish and the trouts. The species typical of Lake Maggiore is the perch, which cooked with the original recipe brings to life once again the tradition

according to which, since olive trees did not grow in this area, people used to press nuts to obtain the oil to cook.

High quality wines and desserts are available to accompany a typically local meal. The absence of wind and the warmth rising up from the plane of the Toce river have allowed the cultivation of terraced vineyards in the Ossola region, where one of the most famous wines, the "Prunent", is produced. As for desserts the choice is quite ample: from the "Credenzin", made like the black bread of Coimo, but with the addition of nuts, raisins and figs, to the Sweet Bread of Cannobio, to the "Imperialine" and "Reginette", biscuits typical of the area of Omegna, to the "Margheritine" of Stresa, the "Fugascina" of Mergozzo, the "Intresine" of Intra and the "Amaretti" of Pallanza. All these products can be purchased from the numerous, mainly family-run firms or included in the menu of the various restaurants, some of which have been cited by the most important restaurant guides, as well as at several typical holidays farms.



04

INFORMATIONS

<http://www.regione.piemonte.it/agri/vetrina/index.htm>
<http://www.distrettolaghi.it>

01 Fugascina, Mergozzo
 02 Margheritine, Stresa
 03 Credenzin, Ossola
 04 Erbe e liquori - Herbs and liquors

SUMMER SPORTS



Canoeing sailing, windsurf, swimming, golf, trekking, beach volley, horse riding, free climbing or simple but regenerating nature strolls and excursions are just some of the sport disciplines that can be practiced in summer on a territory that represents a real open-air gym. In the Valgrande Nature Park, as well as in the countless parks, reserves and uncontaminated nature oases, one can practice trekking, alone or accompanied by expert environmental mountain guides. On the mountain it is possible to do some bird-watching or practice free-climbing on cliffs that can satisfy the needs of both beginners and experts. The Ossola area offers cycling enthusiasts and mountain bike riders many opportunities to enjoy themselves along thousands of paved roads or on "green" tracks and trails deep in the heart of nature. Horse riding, kayaking or paragliding complete the offer of sports that are available to mountain lovers. On the other hand the lake offers a great variety of water sports: canoeing, sailing, scuba diving can be practiced on Lake Maggiore as well as Lake of Orta and Lake of Mergozzo. The soft rolling hills of Vergante, with fully equipped international golf courses, are instead a paradise for golf lovers. Then those wanting to put their ability to the test can try out the many adventure parks located near the lake. Finally miles and miles of beaches are available for swimming, beach-volley matches and many other more or less demanding sports.



INFORMATIONS

<http://www.piemontefeel.org/it/sport/index.php>
<http://www.caipiemonte.it/sezioni.php>
<http://www.regione.piemonte.it/sport/organizzazioni/conitalia.htm>
Altre schede/Also see indexes:
Parchi e aree protette

Sport d'acqua - Water sports



A long series of events mark the passing of the seasons: from flower shows to open-air concerts, from literary awards to sport competitions, from patron saint festivals and oenogastronomic fairs to international events such as the Musical Weeks of Stresa on Lake Maggiore to the Umberto Giordano Festival of Baveno, that every year attract to our territory famous artists, well known works, concerts and shows of high cultural and artistic profile. Guitar, organ and antique music are protagonists of the events taking place on the lake of Orta, with "Un paese a sei corde", "Armonie sul lago" and the musical cruises on the lake, while "Orta Cultura" proposes every year events of great tourist attraction. Culture through music, but also literature with the "La Fabbrica di Carta" of Villadossola dedicated to the local publishing sector, an event especially lively and of high quality, and with LetterAltura, a festival dedicated to travels and adventure and to the mountain. Culture that generate opportunities for meeting with its protagonists: the "Premio Stresa Narrativa" one of the most important national awards, for years recognized as a moment of literary confrontation, the "Grinzane Cinema Festival" of Stresa and with its characteristic mystery conno-

tation, the Premio "Grinzane Noir" of Orta.

The explosion of flowers and fragrances is an occasion for events with the typical local flowers as protagonists: in Verbania the Winter Camellias national contest, the "Orchids on the Lake" festival, the flowery parade and the "Publishing and Gardens" show. The Camellias are also protagonists in Cannero Riviera while countless market-shows, conventions, meetings follow one another all over the territory.

Events tied to tradition and oenogastronomy, with fairs and shows dedicated to the typical products, and moments of popular devotion with festivals and important events characterized by merriment, such as the San Vito Fireworks show in Omegna or the June Feast of Domodossola. The Ossola region is rich in popular fairs and events such as the Feast of San Bernardo in Macugnaga, The Boden Festival in Ornavasso, the Grapes Festival in Masera, the Mushroom Festival in Trontano, the Blueberry Fair in Santa Maria Maggiore. Events as an opportunity to get together, to trade and promote, such as the Fair of Lake Maggiore, which for years has steadily been attracting visitors to Arona, a town also popularly known for the Tredicino Patronal Fair.

INFORMATIONS

<http://distrettolaghi.it>
<http://www.stresafestival.eu>
<http://www.festivalgiordano.it>
<http://www.unpaeseaseicorde.it>
<http://www.grinzane.it>
<http://www.letteraltura.it>
<http://www.lafabbricadicarta.it>
<http://www.cameliainmostra.it>
<http://www.corsofiorito.it>
<http://www.editoriaegiardini.it>
<http://www.sanvito-omegna.it>
<http://www.giugnodomese.it>
<http://www.fierarona.it>



01 Raduno spazzacamini S. Maria Maggiore - *Chimney sweepers festival*
 02 Sagra della Zucca Omegna - *Pumpkins Fair*
 03 Corso Fiorito Verbania - *Flower Course*