



International Camellia Society

Splendor of Italian Camellias

A guide to the ICS 2023 Congress

- Pre-congress Tour: March 21-25
- Congress: March 26-28
- Post-Congress Tour: March 29-31

Edited by Gianmario and Mirella Motta

Pre-Congress Tour: a Short Visit Guide

March 22nd, Wednesday: VILLAS & GARDENS

This day is dedicated to the villas and gardens around Lucca. Participants will be transported by bus. Buses will leave Hotel Guinigi at 08:00 AM.

Villa Reale di Marlia <https://villarealedimarlia.it/en/>



Villa Reale has always been the residence of aristocratic families. In 1805 Elisa Baciocchi, Napoleon's sister, sovereign of Lucca, created a grand ensemble by combining the extensive, old villa Orsetti, with the grounds and palace formerly used by Lucca's Bishops as a summer residence. She modernised the entrance lodges and the old Orsetti palace in the contemporary Empire style, leaving the splendid 17th century Orsetti gardens, including the outdoor theatre made of shaped shrubbery (Teatro di Verzura) and the "Viale di Camelie" (Camellia's Lane). This lane has many interesting, old and rare species of camellias.

After the Napoleon's fall, the villa went to the Dukes of Parma, then to the Grand Dukes of Tuscany. After Italy's unification, King Vittorio Emanuele the II assigned the Villa was assigned to Prince Charles, brother of the last king of Naples. Prince Charles married an English commoner, Penelope Smith of Ballynatray, and his family disinherited him. The couple lived in the villa and were buried in the chapel on the grounds. Their son, known as the Mad Prince, because of his

religiomania and eccentric behaviour, died in 1918. To pay his debts, the villa was put up for sale, the movable was auctioned off, and many trees were chopped down for timber.

Count and Countess Pecci Blunt acquired the property just in time to stop that destruction. They commissioned the French architect Jacques Greber to restore the park, re-create the woods, shrubbery, brooks and lake that make a romantic complement to the classical Italian gardens dating of the Orsetti's times.

In 2015 the Villa was finally purchased by Henric e Marina Grönberg who undertake a complete restoration of the Villa and its park.

Many famous visitors were guests in Marlia: the violinist Paganini, princes and princesses from all Europe, the American painter John Singer Sargent, who did several watercolours of scenes in the villa.

Now Marlia is hosting, thanks to the owners and Regional Government of Tuscany, concerts in Teatro di Verzura and Bishop's Palace. The complete tour of garden will take about two hours.

Camellias in Villa Reale Garden include

<i>'Aitonia'</i>	<i>'Francesca da Rimini'</i> ,	<i>'Mathotiana rosea'</i>
<i>'Alba plena,</i>	<i>'Gilliesi'</i>	<i>'Mutabilis Traversii'</i>
<i>'Anemoniflora rosea,</i>	<i>'Giuseppina Mercatelli'</i>	<i>'Palmer's superba'</i>
<i>'Bella di Firenze',</i>	<i>'Ignivoma'</i>	<i>'Pomponia rosea'</i>
<i>'Chandlerii',</i>	<i>'Il Tramonto'</i>	<i>'Principe Eugenio</i>
<i>'Cochettina'(?)</i>	<i>'Iwane Shibori'</i>	<i>Napoleone'</i>
<i>'Dionisia Poniatowski'</i>	<i>'Le Grand Frederic'</i>	<i>'Ridolfiana',</i>
<i>'Formosa de Young',</i>	<i>'Lefevriana'</i>	<i>'Roma Risorta'</i>

Villa Torrigiani <https://www.visittuscany.com/en/attractions/villa-torrigiani/>



The Villa dates to the early 16th century when it belonged to the Buonvisi family. In the second half of the 17th century, it was purchased by Marquis Nicolao Santini, ambassador of the Republic of Lucca to the court of Louis XIV, the famous French King. Santini added flowering gardens and large baths, which reflect the villa's façade, and the green theatre built with grottos and fountains, which are still working. The mansion is still inhabited by the descendants of the Marquis Santini, the Torrigiani family and finally the princes Colonna. The interior of the villa, with 17th century frescoes by Pietro Scorzini and the original 18th century furniture, is open to the public as well as the park, with its fountains, nymphs, and statues. Villa Torrigiani hosts about 50 old camellias.

Vito and Gemma's camellia wood

For more information <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087168603050>



Vito Menchini was a super-passionate of camellias (and magnolias). His garden in Piegaiò, a small village with about 250 inhabitants, at 300 meters above the sea level and 30 kilometers from Lucca, hosts a large private camellia collection on a steep slope, with over 600 plants from Tuscany, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and China. The garden hosts a collection of camellia species (about 40), Higo (over 40), sasanqua (some 60) and some *C. nitidissima* hybrids.



Also, the garden includes over 150 varieties of Magnolia. The camellia flagship is a *C. reticulata* "Mouchang". Sadly, Vito, who was preparing for welcoming the Congress delegates, passed away in 2022 because of an accident.

Celle Puccini (adapted from <https://www.visittuscany.com/en/attractions/puccini-museum-celle-pescaglia>)

Celle dei Puccini is a small hamlet, close to Piegaiò. It was the home of the Puccini family, starting from Puccini's ancestor, Giacomo, after whom the famous composer was named. The residence is part of the historic homes' association, Case della Memoria.

Giacomo Puccini spent many years in Celle, from his childhood till his death. His letters and musical instruments are displayed in the Puccini house museum.

Rooms across two floors are open to the public with family heirlooms on display, including a sewing machine used by the women of the house, pieces of furniture (including a wardrobe, a baptism gift to Giacomo), the piano that was used to compose part of *Madama Butterfly* and several manuscripts. You can also see the armchair that Puccini loved to use, as well as various photographs, letters and a family tree located in the entrance which details the history of this musical dynasty.

For more information on Puccini, the composer of *Madame Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot* etc. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacomo_Puccini



Giacomo Puccini, in center with a Panama hat, visiting his country house in Celle (from <https://www.turismo.lucca.it/un-anno-con-il-maestro>)

March 23, Thursday: PIEVE DI COMPITO

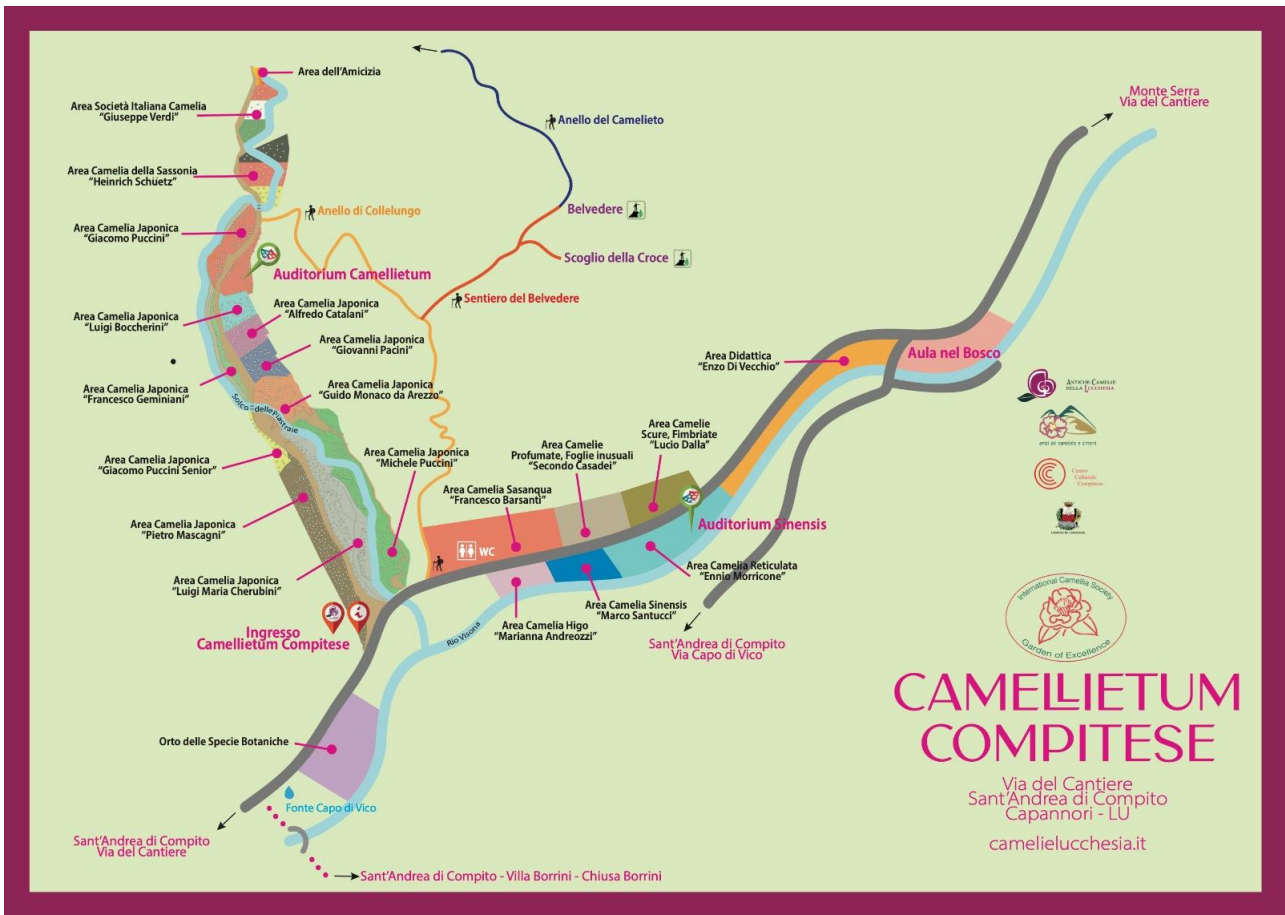
The whole day will be spent in Compito. Buses will leave the hotel at 08:00 AM.

Compito, a nice village at 20 kilometers from Lucca, Pieve di Compito features a number of camellia gardens and hundreds of camellia varieties and species.

Camellias (mainly *Camellia japonica*) are spread everywhere, in the small village orchards, along the creek, in ancient aristocratic villas, and, finally, in the Camellietum, one of the largest Camellia Gardens in Europe (awarded in 2016 as International Camellia Garden of Excellence). Altogether, Camellia plants in Compito may be estimated around 2,500.

The first camellias were planted in Compito around 1820 and still survive in Villa Borrini, Chiesa Borrini, and Villa Orsi. Around year 2000 Guido Cattolica, a descendant of the Borrini family, with Centro Culturale Compitese, (Compito Cultural Centre) created the Camellietum, to preserve ancient Tuscan varieties. Camellietum has continuously grown and now hosts over 1,300 camellias. Every year the Centro Culturale Compitese, a no-profit organization, organizes a camellia show “Antiche Camelie della Lucchesia” (Lucchesia’s old Camellias) that attracts fifteen thousand of visitors.

Camellietum



Right: President Greg Davis inaugurates the Camellietum (2005); Left: Gianmario Motta (then VP Europe) consigns the certificate of International Camellia Garden of Excellence to the late Augusto Orsi (1944-2022), president of Centro Culturale Compitese (2016)

Camellietum was initiated, thanks to Guido Cattolica and Angelo Lippi, around year 2000, to collect ancient Tuscan varieties, mainly released in the Nineteenth Century, such as ‘Stella di Compito’, ‘Dionisia Poniatowski’, ‘Oscar Borrini’, and many other varieties. In 2005, the

Camellietum was inaugurated by Greg Davis, President of ICS. Currently, Camellietum is operated by “Centro Culturale Compitese”, headed by Augusto Orsi, and is supported by “Amici del Cameliato” (= Friends of the Camellia Garden), headed by Daniele Bosi, who is ICS Director for Italy. In 2016, the Camellietum was awarded as International Camellia Garden of Excellence. Sadly, Augusto Orsi passed away in December 2022, he was denied to see his dreamed Congress in his Camellietum.

Villa Borrini

Villa Borrini is an ancient country house dating to Seventeenth Century with a garden of ancient camellias all planted around 1820-40. Alessandro and Angelo Borrini, the ancient owners, were Italian patriots; as camellia collectors released ‘*Ida Borrini*’ and ‘*Oscar Borrini*’. The Villa Borrini camellias include:

‘Alba Simplex’
‘Anemonaeflora Rosea’
‘Aspasia’ (looks different from the Aspasia described in Camellia Register)
‘Bella di Firenze’
‘Bella Romana’
‘Candidissima’
‘Centifolia Alba’
‘Eloisa Borrini’
‘Francesco Ferruccio’
‘Giuseppina Mercatelli’
‘Ida Borrini’
‘Latifolia Rubra’
‘Jubilée’
‘Lucina Plena’
‘Madoni’
‘Marchesa Teresa d’Ambra’
‘Marie Antoinette’
‘Moshio’
‘Mutabilis Traversi’
‘Oscar Borrini’
‘Parvula’
‘Pendula de Chandler’
‘Plutone’
‘Pomponia Semiplena’
‘Prof. Filippo Parlatore’
‘Rosa Mundi’
‘Rosa Simplex’
‘Rubina’

‘Rubra Simplex’
‘Stella di Compito’
‘Stella Polare’
‘Stellaris’
‘Terzana’
‘Tricolor (Siebold)’
‘Tricolor Florentina’
‘Variegata Alba’



Guido Cattolica in Villa Borrini

Chiusa Borrini (Borrini Dam)

The Dam was built at the end of 1600; there is the Borrini family chapel (1795); the garden hosts ancient camellias cultivars: Adrien Lebrun, Corallina, Francesca da Rimini, Ignea, Giardino Santarelli, Marie Antoinette, Principessa Bacciocchi, Stella di Compito, Stellaris, Marmorata (a wonderful spotted bloom).

Guido Cattolica, who authored a number of texts and essays on camellias, installed here a tea plantation and, moreover, created here a set of new cultivars.

Villa Orsi

Villa Orsi is an ancient country house, of the same age of Villa Borrini, with an edge of centennial camellias. In front of the Villa, you find the two centennial ‘Paolina Maggi’ and ‘Madame Pepin’. Camellias in Villa Orsi Garden include:

“Alba plena Casoretti”	“Iwane shibori”
“Alba plena”	“Lady Vanstart rosa”
“Alba simplex”	“Lavinia Maggi”
“Anemonaeflora Alba”	“Lavinia Maggi rubra”
“Asagao”	“Lefreviana”
“Bella Romana”	“Mathotiana Alba”
“Bonari”	“prof. Santarelli”
“C.H. Hovey”	“Roma risorta”
“Contessa Giovanna Nencini”	“Rubra simplex”
“Corallina”	“Sacco Vera”
“Drouard Gouillon”	“Saint Dimas”
“Francesco Ferruccio”	“Madame Pépin”
“Hagoromo”	“Paolina Maggi”
“Il gioiello”	“Variegata”

Villa Di Vecchio

Villa di Vecchio is an aristocratic mansion nearby Villa Orsi. It features about 50 old /centennial camellias.

March 24, Friday: PISA AND LUCCA

The day is dedicated to visit Pisa and Lucca. Buses depart from hotel Guinigi at 8:00 AM

PISA



Piazza dei Miracoli, the unmistakable core of Pisa

The visit to Pisa is limited to the main square, namely Campo dei Miracoli. It is guided. Delegates could visit on their own budget the Leaning Tower. **The visit to the Leaning Tower, which is based on small groups every 10 minutes, is not included.**

The Baptistery

Architects: Diotalvi (sec. XII), Nicola Pisano (1215/20 - 1278/84) and Giovanni Pisano (Pisa 1248)

The Baptistery, an imposing construction with a circular ground plan, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, is, together with the Cathedral, the Tower and the Camposanto Monumentale, one of the Focal points of Piazza dei Miracoli.

The construction began in 1152 by Diotalvi in Romanesque style. It was continued about a century later by Nicola Pisano who added the airy loggia with its Gothic embroidery of triangles and aediculas, the setting for sculpture from the workshop of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano. The finishing touch is the dome, finished in the 14th century, covered with tiles and lead plaques, and crowned by a bronze figure of the Baptist, attributed to the 14th-century artist Turino di Sano.

The Cathedral

Begun in 1063, it was built when Pisa ruled most of the Mediterranean Sea. The cathedral structure is a Latin cross with a five-aisled nave, with a transept with apses at each end, and an elliptical crossing dome (erected later). The building follows the early Christian template of separate structures for the church, baptistry, and bell tower, all of which are unified using similar stone and the design of blind arcades and horizontal galleries.

The Leaning Tower

The construction began in 1173 and continued for about 200 years, following the plans of the original designer, whose identity remains a mystery. The famous lean (over 14 ft. from the vertical) happened during the construction of the tower, and many attempts were made to correct it. The Tower of Pisa was closed in 1990 to reduce its dangerous tilt and reopened in 2001. Engineers are currently working with the soil below the tower to increase support.

LUCCA



Amphitheatre Square, the core of Lucca, built on the structure of the Roman Amphitheatre

Lucca was for almost 1000 years an independent aristocratic republic, a center of fabrics business. Thanks to that independence, it is perfectly preserved, and still keeps its Roman layout and renaissance walls. The walled city is pedestrian, and walking is a unique enjoyment.

Plundered by Odoacer, Lucca it was besieged for three months in AD. 553 by Narses, a Byzantine general. Under the Lombards, it was the seat of a duke who minted his own coins. It became prosperous thanks to the silk trade that got a start in the 11th century, to rival Byzantium. In the 10th and 11th centuries Lucca was the capital of the margravate of Tuscany, actually independent

with owing nominal allegiance to the Holy Roman Emperor. With the income from the silk trade, several magnificent churches were built across Middle Ages, with some founded in the 6th century, 1,500 years ago.

After the death of the marchioness Matilda of Tuscany, Lucca was independent for almost 500 years. Dante's *Divine Comedy* includes references to the major feudal families. In 1805 the ancient Republic of Lucca was taken over by Napoleon, who appointed his sister Elisa Bonaparte Baciocchi as Princess of Lucca. After 1815, Lucca became a duchy of Bourbon-Parma, and, finally, part of Italy.

The old city

"Lucca is Tuscany still living and enjoying, desiring and intending. The town is a charming mixture of antique 'character' and modern inconsequence". Henry James, "Italian Hours"

Lucca is so alive and there is so much to do. Taking a *passeggiata* on the splendid tree-lined city walls, shopping along Via Fillungo, having a cappuccino at Antico Caffè Di Simo, one of Lucca's fancy old coffee shops, browsing the Antique Market and Antique Book Market, walking through Puccini's birthplace, taking a break on the steps of the Cathedral San Michele, and seeing the people of Lucca go about their daily life - these are all rich experiences

The walls

Perfectly and completely preserved, the walls are considered one of the finest examples of military architecture in the world, thanks also to their transformation in a wonderful walkway.

The walls are formed by 11 curtains, 10 spur strongholds and a platform. They are supported by a double scarp wall, 12 meters high. The city was defended by artilleries behind the strongholds, 124 cannons and two 12,000-pound cannons; all were removed by the Austrians in 1799. Outside was an impressive series of defensive works: a moat (35 meters), a terraplane and 12 halfmoons. The current walls originally only had three doors closed by rolling shutters, one of which is still visible on Porta San Pietro. The latter was completed in 1556 according to a design by Resta, the two side doors were done in 1856. Porta Santa Maria was done in 1593 and is adorned by a marble group of the Virgin with Child and two panthers bearing the city's insignia. The Porta San Donato was founded in 1629 by Muzio Oddi. At the time of Maria Luisa Bourbon, who took up a project proposed by the Baciocchi family, the walls were turned into a public garden. The beauty of the trees on the ramparts, the striking view of the city and the surrounding countryside, and the architectural structure all contribute to make the park a unique work. Additions walls include Porta Elisa (1806), in neo-classic style, Porta Vittorio Emanuele (1910), Porta 4 Novembre (1930). The access to the city was made easier by further entrances, one by the Orto Botanico, built at the end of the last century, and one by San Frediano. Two old sorties, originally covered, were reopened recently, one by San Colombano and one by Santa Maria.

March 25, Saturday: GENOVA

Buses will depart from the Hotel at 08:30 AM. The visit will focus on Villa Durazzo Pallavicini. The park is a Masonic Garden, rather unique in Italy; also, it collects many rare species and a collection of centennial camellias planted by Marquis Pallavicini around 1840.

Villa Durazzo Pallavicini



The Villa (left) and the temple in the upper lake (right)

Marchioness Clelia Durazzo, born in 1760, built the villa in Pegli, a suburb of Genova. From 1794, she enriched the villa with rare and exotic trees the garden. Her successor, Marchese Ignazio Pallavicini, enlarged the villa with the architect Michele Canzio, who also designed the garden with its charming itinerary of grottoes, temples, and ponds. The garden was inaugurated in 1846 and in 1856 Marquis Pallavicini let build the Pegli train station just at the gate of his garden, together with a hotel. In 1928 Matilde Gustinani donated the Villa to Genoa for use as a public park. During the 20th century, the garden fell into some disrepair, and in 1972 was threatened by the construction of a nearby highway. Its restoration began in 1991. Currently, the Park Curator is Silvana Ghigino, a landscape architect.

The layout of the park is far from the classic romantic / English park. It is esoteric, thus disclosing the meaning of the scenery only to the people who are initiated to freemasonry. The park features an itinerary that eventually shows the victory of the light against the darkness. The itinerary is divided in Acts: 1. Back to Nature, 2- History Revisitation 3- Catharsis 4-Waterworks. Apart that masonic meaning, the park includes the entrance guarded by a Roman Triumph Arc, and the upper lake, where you can access through grottoes. In the lake centre, the beautiful circular temple, which is the icon of the park.

Camellias in Villa Durazzo Pallavicini Garden include - “Alba Simplex” - “Bella Romana” - “Bellina major” - “Conte di Cavour” - “contessa Lavinia Maggi” - “Contessa Woronzoff” - “Diamantina” - “Duchesse de Nemour” - “Durazzo Prima” - “Fanny Durazzo” - “Fiammetta Bianchi” - “Frà Arnaldo da Brescia” - “Giuseppe Mercatelli” - “Gloria del Verbano” - “Ignea” - “Il 22 Marzo” - “Incarnata” - “Madame de Strekaloff” - “Marchesa Teresa d’Ambra” - “Nina Durazzo” - “Omar Pacha” - “Queen of Danmark” - “Rosa simplex” - “Spini” - “Stellaris” - “Vergine di Collebeato” - “Warratah Rubra”

Congress: March 26-28: a Short Visit Guide

MARCH 25th Reception at the hotel DINO

Meet at Malpensa Arrivals (in front of the Pharmacy)

Transfer from Malpensa to Grand Hotel Dino h 12:00 - h 14:00 - h 16:00

Reception & registration at Grand Hotel Dino, Corso Giuseppe Garibaldi, 20, 28831 Baveno, Tel +39- 0323 922201 <https://zaccherahotels.com/en/grand-hotel-dino>

You can come to Dino Hotel by yourself from Malpensa airport or Milan; if you come by car, please call the hotel for parking



MARCH 26th Antique Gardens & Camellia Show

Inauguration and Camellia Show at “Maggiore” Theatre, Verbania

The “Maggiore” theater, inaugurated on June 11th, 2016, was conceived by Salvador Perez Arroyo, who wanted to build an artwork that can impress visitors. The design involved an international team with Peter Cook, Salvador Pérez Arroyo, Bargone Associati e Bianchini & Lusiardi Associati. The theatre was awarded with the International Architecture Award 2017. It has four volumes, coated by titanium zinc, and it overlooks on the lake and on the external arena.



In front of “Maggiore”, within the parc of Villa Maioni, a garden to host a large collection of camellias is being laid down, with the scientific contribution of the Italian Camellia Society. Nowadays it hosts a collection of sasanquas.



ISOLA MADRE (<https://www.isoleborromeo.it/en/isola-madre>)

Isola Madre is 330 meters long, 220 meters wide and 40 meters tall, with a surface of 80,000 square meters. The soil is acid, sandy and almost totally transported. The park includes five overlying gardens. At North-East, Isola gently slopes toward the lake and is protected by a wind break made of tall *Laurus nobilis*, *Quercus ilex* and other deciduous oaks, with an underwood made of *Ruscus aculeatus* and *R. hypoglossus*. On West side is the botanic garden with rare exotic plants. Here is the “Piano delle Camelie” (Camellia Place), with the oldest plants placed close to a wall, looking to the lake. Many other plants are near to palace, on the “Loggia del Cashmir” (Cashmir Loggia) and the “Piazza dei Pappagalli” (Parrot’s Square).

The island balances a perfect sunny radiation with the mild smoothing effect of the lake, resulting in a winter temperature that seldom drops under 3-5 C°. Isola Madre is open to the public and visited by 100,000 people per year. The botanical collection includes a selection of Chinese and Himalayan *Rhododendrons* (e.g., *R. sinogrande*, *R. arboreum* “Kermesinum) and over 150 varieties and species of camellias. Some plants of the original core of Eighteenth Century, made of japonicas, are still thriving in the island, as “Gloria delle Isole Borromeo” (Glory of Borromeo Islands). However, many current plants are later additions, e.g., *C. reticulata*, *C. sinensis*, *C. granthamiana*, and camellia relatives as *Ternstroemia*, *Tutcheria*, *Gordonia* and *Eurya*.

The current layout of the Isola reflects a complete landscape transformation. On September 13th, 1501, count Lancellotto Borromeo (1473-1513) asked Pietro da Castello and Luigi da Cantù to give him the investiture of Isola Madre. The emphyteusis contract was submitted to Louis XII king of France and Duke of Milano. On June 12th, 1502, count Borromeo started building the palace, while the gardener, Marco da Castelletto, bought in Genoa “pomerances” (oranges) to be grown in the island.

Vitaliano IX (1792-1874) was keen on botany and transformed Isola Madre into a park with rare plants from all over the world. He was in correspondence with the English traveler and botanist Joseph B. Pentland, an officer of Foreign Office, who provided him with seeds, and started exchanges with his colleagues around the world. So, he planted exotic trees, among which the gigantic *Cupressus torulosa* (Hymalayan Cypress) in the backyard of the Borromeo palace, which survived a whirlwind in 2006. Also, a special conservatory was installed to grow rare plants that required special climatic conditions.

The visit will last about 2,5 hours. It includes a 1-hour guided visit with guides speaking English and French. Afterwards the delegates can walk around the island.

Isola Madre in early 1700 before the transformations by Vitaliano IX and Renato Rovelli [Isola Bella Borromeo's Archives]



MAP OF THE ISOLA MADRE [Borromeo Turismo]



MARCH 27th Convention and trips

The whole day is allocated to the Scientific Paper sessions and to the meetings of the ICS directors and of the Committee for Historic Camellia Conservation. Papers will be presented in the morning while the meetings will be in the afternoon.

Delegates who will not attend the Paper sessions and/or the meetings can book on their own expense trips on Lake Maggiore, by checking at the reception desk. We suggest the following trips:

- Rocca Borromeo in Angera, across the lake, a big castle with wonderful collections of majolica and dolls (<https://www.isoleborromeo.it/en/rocca-di-angera/>)
- Dinner at Isola Bella, Restaurant Delfino, a very romantic set (<https://www.isoleborromeo.it/en/delfino/>)
- A boat trip to Cannero Castles, a ruined fortress built on cliffs just in front of the small village of Cannero (<https://www.isoleborromeo.it/en/castelli-di-cannero/>)
- A visit the nearby park of Villa Pallavicino, which features a zoo and an outdoor restaurant (<https://www.isoleborromeo.it/en/parco-pallavicino/>); Villa Pallavicino was purchased in 1855 by Ruggero Bonghi, statesman and man of letters. Afterwards, marquis Pallavicino from Genova built lanes for vehicles, decorated the park with statues, transforming the estate into a splendid nineteenth-century neoclassical villa. In 1952, Marchioness Luisa Pallavicino completed the work with a zoo.
- A trip to Pallanza (by boat) for visiting Villa Rusconi Clerici, with a collection of bicentennial camellias (<http://www.villarusconiclerici.com/>), which was inhabited by Stefan Turr, a Hungarian patriot, who lived there with his wife, the princess Adeline, nephew of Napoleone Bonaparte.
- A visit to Villa Fedora, just 300 meters from Hotel Dino, built in 1857 by Giuseppe Spatz, a hospitality businessman from Torino. The villa, which in 1900 was donated to Umberto Giordano, a famous musician, currently is a municipal garden, with many ancient camellias.

MARCH 28th The gardens of the lake

ISOLA BELLA

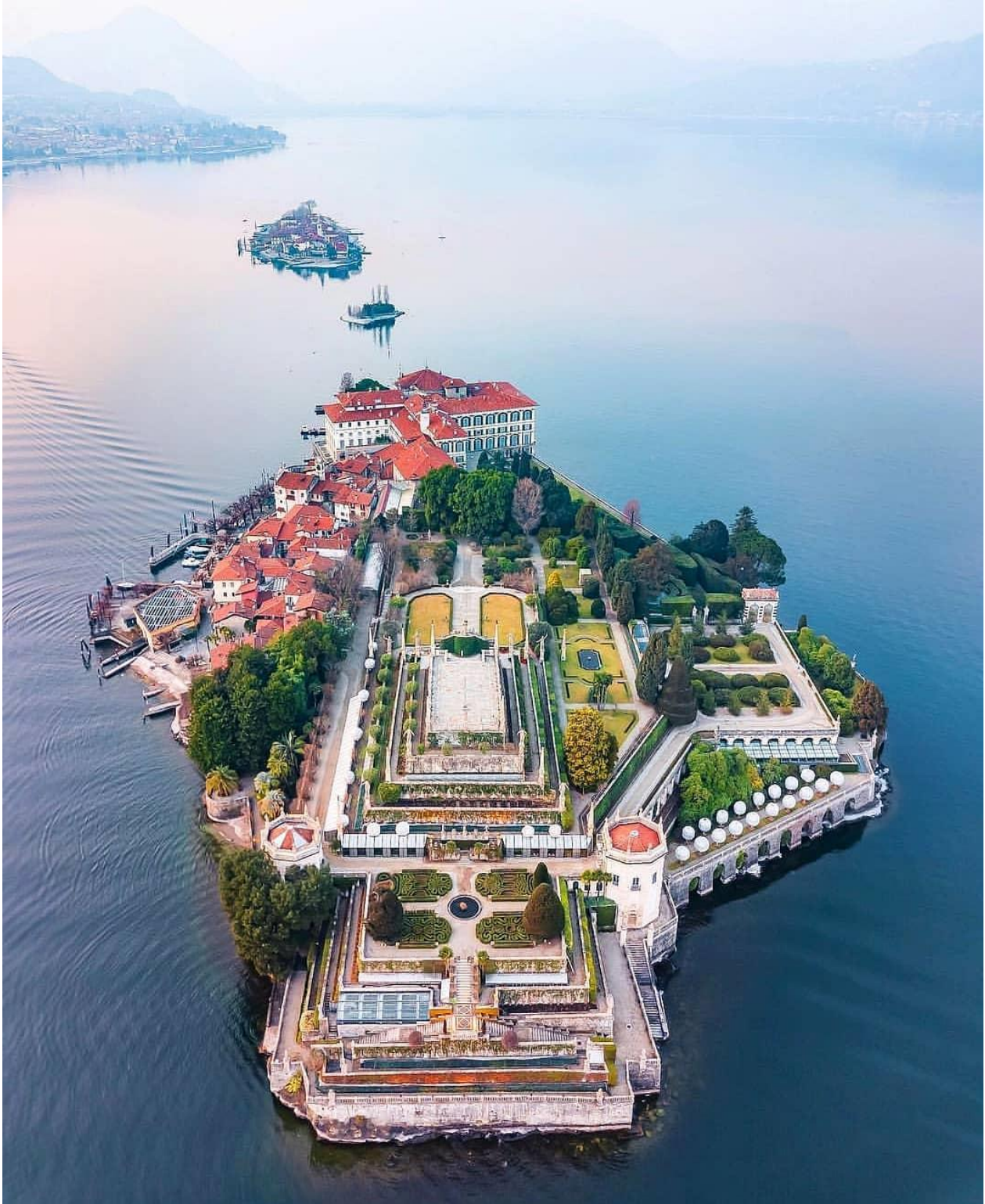
Isola Bella (20 hectares) is an outstanding baroque garden, perfectly preserved. The island shape mimics a ship navigating in the lake. It is named after Isabella, spouse of Carlo III Borromeo (1586- 1652). Till 1632, it was a cliff, with two small churches, and was inhabited by fishermen. From mid 1600s, Vitaliano VI Borromeo, V marquis of Angera (1620 –1690), a graduate from Pavia University and generous sponsor of fine arts and poetry, started building the palace and the garden.

The works continued during eighteenth and nineteenth century. The isle became a la page with Giberto V Borromeo (1751–1837) when it hosted Edward Gibbon, Napoleon and his wife Josephine de Beauharnais, and Caroline of Brunswick, Princess of Wales. In 1848, Vitaliano IX Borromeo built the Salone Nuovo, the northern façade and the big wharf.

The visit will last about 2,5 hours. It includes a 1-hour guided visit with guides speaking English and French. Afterwards the delegates can walk around the island.



Vitaliano VI by Salomon Adler
<http://www.nuovorinascimento.org/rosp-2000/persone/vitaliano.htmby>





VILLA TARANTO

Villa Taranto is a relatively recent garden, created by captain Mc Eacharn, who in 1930 bought the estate “La Crocetta” from the Marquise di Sant’Elia and transformed it into a botanic garden, which was finished in 1940. Captain Mc Eacharn died in 1964 and was buried in a chapel - mausoleum in the gardens. “Villa Taranto” is named after the Duke of Taranto, an ancestor of captain Mc Eacharn. At the founder’s death, the garden was taken over by a public body, namely Ente Giardini Botanici Villa Taranto.

Villa Taranto, with 16 hectares, hosts a variety of botanical collections. Conifers, including Sequoia and Montezuma pine, are along the entrance lane. They are followed by a large group of Magnolia. Right of the Conifer collection, there is a series of Camellias, which, unfortunately, are mostly unlabeled. Left of conifers, a collection of Asian Rhododendron (hundreds of species and cultivar) includes large-leaf species such as *R. sinogrande* and *R. grande*. In the upper garden, the famous pool with *Victoria regia* and a lawn with annual herbaceous. Finally, in a small meadow, a collection of Higo camellias, still very young.

The visit will last about 2,5 hours and will be partially guided. A coffee shop at park entrance offers relax and snacks.



VILLA ANELLI (<https://www.lacameliodoro.com/it/home/>)



The garden of Villa Anelli, established in 1872 by the Milanese nobleman Carlo Berzio, is an example of Romantic style. Currently, the garden curators are Giovanna Barbara Coggi with her sons Andrea and Benedetta, descendants of the founder.

The garden is 350 meters above sea level, surrounded by high mountains, facing east, with a surface of 6,500 square meters; it lies along a creek, with many terraces, a variety of paths and

views. In 2010 it was awarded as an International Camellia Garden of Excellence.

Since the 1950s, Villa Anelli hosts a large collection of camellias, started by Antonio Sevesi, founder of the Italian Camellia Society and co-author of the International Camellia Register, and continued by Andrea Corneo, President of the Italian Camellia Society. The collection includes about 500 cultivars, with 50 winter camellias and 40 species.

‘Vergine di Collebeato’, icon of the Italian Camellia Society, believed extinct, was re-discovered here by Antonio Sevesi. The garden also hosts Yunnan reticulatas, such as ‘Crimson Robe’, and classic cultivars, such as ‘Captain Rawes’. Last not least, *C. crapnelliana* was recently introduced, as well as everblooming hybrids of *C. azalea*.

The visit will be guided by the garden curators and will last about 2,5 hours.

SAVIOLI nursery

The nursery includes two sections. One section, located on the outskirts of Intra, includes a set of greenhouses for potted plants – camellias, azaleas, gardenias, etc. The other section, about 7 hectares, is on the hill and hosts some 700 camellia varieties.

The nursery, funded in the Seventies by Savioli Brothers, has an international reputation, since it preserves and reproduces ancient Italian cultivars, including the 350 varieties illustrated in the volumes authored by Hillebrand and Bertolazzi, “Antique Camellias of Lake Maggiore”. These camellias include masterpieces such as ‘Vergine di Collebeato’, ‘Bella Romana’, ‘Antonietta Colnaghi’, ‘General Colletti’, ‘L’avvenire’, etc. The camellias cultivated are mostly japonica and hybrid, but also include 50 wild species (yellow camellias, changii, and traditional species) and many sasanqua varieties.

The visit will be guided by the Savioli staff and will last about 2,5 hours.

ZACCHERA’S tea plantation



The tea plantation is in Premosello Chiovenda, a small borough at 23 kilometers from the lakeside. The plantation, founded and owned by Paolo Zacchera, currently hosts around 20,000 Camellia Sinensis plants, in various stages of growth, with a planned expansion in the next future. Most plants are from seeds of Rize, Turkey. Premosello is the second largest plantation in Europe after the Azores and the first in Italy. Though in the middle of an alpine valley, the plantation enjoys a special microclimate, mitigated by nearby Toce river.

The visit will be guided by the plantation staff and will last about 2 hours.

Post-Congress Tour : a Short Visit Guide

March 29th, Wednesday: Orta San Giulio

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orta_San_Giulio)

Orta Lake is located west of Lake Maggiore. The borough of Orta, on the East side, is a miniature city for pedestrian walking; the quiet beauty of the landscape and its Romanesque and Baroque architecture are charming. Orta has a long history, with settlements dating back to Neolithic times. Orta was Christianised by a Greek missionary, Saint Giulio, after whom the isle was named. With the invasion of Langobards (circa 560 AD) a German people, after whom Lombardy was named, Orta became important. During the Baroque period, the Sacro Monte, a world Heritage, was built as well as many mansions in Orta and surrounding boroughs. Aristocratic villas with parks were built in the Nineteenth century. Nowadays, Orta is an outstanding tourism destination, with 3 starred restaurants and many cosy venues.



Figure 1 The main square of Orta, named after Mario Motta, a partisan (by Gianmario Motta)

Dining in Orta

In Orta you can find restaurants which range from the 3-starred Villa Crespi, where you should book many months in advance, to the 1-star Locanda di Orta and to many cosy restaurants around Piazza Motta, namely Leon d'Oro, Olina, La Motta Restaurant & Bistrot, Al Boecc, Ai Due Santi, Re di Coppe, Pizzeria la Campana, Arianna (only uncooked food). A romantic location is Ristorante San Giulio on San Giulio Isle. You can find address and phone on the Internet.

San Giulio Island and Basilica

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Giulio_Island)

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_of_Volpiano)

According to the legend, once upon time, the Isle was dominated by a drake; San Giulio, a Christian missionary, crossed the lake and drove the drake out. In my opinion, the legend reflects the truth; the drake is a Keltic symbol; hence, I interpret the legend as the Christians invaded the isle and drove Keltic priests out. On the freed island, Giulio built his hundredth and last church. In the Middle Ages, San Giulio Isle became the headquarter of a Langobardic duchy, and a double wall ring, with a castle on the top, was built. In 962, Otto the Great besieged the Isle, which surrendered, and gave a special rule to the Riviera and Isle.



Figure 2 San Giulio Isle from Sacro Monte (by Gianmario Motta)

The Basilica of San Giulio is a masterpiece of Romanesque and Ottonian architecture. The Basilica features a double floor, with the ground floor for men and a gallery for women. During the baroque period the original structure was adorned with gold stucco, but recent restorations discovered original frescos and capitals. Inside the basilica, you find the pulpit, a masterpiece of Ottonian art. Made of black serpentine, it represents the four evangelists and an abbot or monk, who is believed to be saint Guglielmo (William) di Volpiano, born in 962 during the siege, and christened by the German emperor Otto the Great. A monk architect, Guglielmo designed and built masterpieces such as Mont Saint Michel in Normandy and Sacra di San Michele in Piemonte.

The Isle has an elliptic shape, with a ring of mansions and villas around the Benedictine monastery built in the centre of the isle, around 1840 instead of the old castle.



Figure 3 The Ottonian pulpit (<https://www.lapartebuona.it/basilica-di-san-giulio-isola-di-san-giulio/>)

Villa Motta – International Camellia Garden of Excellence



Figure 4 Villa Motta (by Gianmario Motta)

Villa Motta is at the North end of Orta peninsula, and its garden lies along the lake. A typical villa in the so-called Italianate style, built in the second half of Nineteenth Century, was acquired in 1920 by the Motta family. The park, designed by architect Mazzucotelli the 1920s, was almost destroyed by a whirlwind in 1979 and replanted by the current owner. Villa Motta is an aristocratic park rather than a pure camellia garden. Conifers make the boundaries of the park, while bushes – rhododendron, camellias, osmanthus, etc. are planted in large beds, surrounded by paths that allow a close view of flowers. The park is divided into subject areas, with sasanqua camellias along the lake. Continuous blooming -December to January- is another characteristic of the park, which, therefore, relies on autumn and winter blooming sasanquas, early roses, and summer-blooming hydrangeas, to integrate classic spring-blooming camellia, rhododendrons, and azaleas. In 2020, Villa Motta was awarded as International Camellia Garden of Excellence. A full list of camellias is in <https://internationalcamellia.org/en-us/europe-gardens-of-excellence/villa-motta>

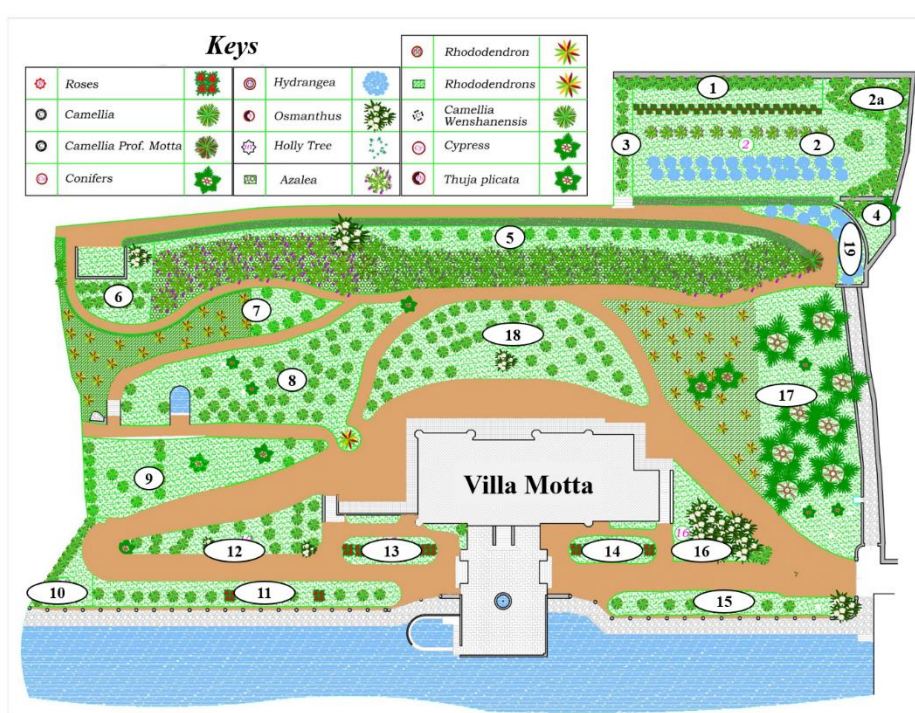


Figure 5 Map of Villa Motta (by Gianmario Motta)

Sacro Monte d'Orta (<https://www.sacrimonti.org/en/sacro-monte-di-orta>)

The Sacro Monte, located on the top of the Orta Peninsula, is made of a sequence of twenty chapels that illustrate episodes of the life of St. Francis, with sculptures and paintings. The chapels are distributed along a route that runs along the hilltop, offering spectacular views on the lake and on San Giulio Isle. The first idea for a Sacro Monte in Orta dates back to 1583, modelled after the religious itinerary of the Sacro Monte of Varallo. It only became reality in 1590, thanks to the contribution of Abbot Amico Canobio from Novara, and according to the project of Capuchin architect Cleto from Castelletto Ticino. From 1593 to 1615, Bishop Carlo Bascapé became the main actor of the building process.

Sacro Monte is an outstanding example of the Catholic-Reformation art, which represented good episodes of Christianity, in our case Saint Francis. Therefore, chapels have the role of theatres, and represent scenes of Saint Francis's life, with a multitude of statues and a typically baroque scenography taste. Given its outstanding level, Sacro Monte is a UNESCO world heritage.



Figure 6 Chapel xx, photo by Diego Bonacina, from https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacro_Monte_di_Orta#/media/File:Cappella_XX_Orta_San_Giulio.jpg

March 30th, Thursday: Locarno
(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Locarno>)



Figure 7 Locarno view by Ozonski, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=54559959>

Locarno is a Swiss municipality, located on the northern shore of Lake Maggiore. It has a population of about 16,000. It is known for hosting the Locarno International Film Festival, which takes place in August. Like many towns on lakes, the history of Locarno dates to Early Bronze age. After being part of Milano Duchy, Locarno joined Switzerland in 1503. Thanks to its mild climate, Locarno has today one of the largest Camellia gardens in Europe.

Locarno City Camellia Park (<https://internationalcamellia.org/en-us/europe-gardens-of-excellence/locarno-city-camellia-park>)



Figure 8 Locarno City Camellia Park

The Camellia Park was inaugurated in Locarno in 2005 during the International Camellia Society World Congress (ICS). In 1975 Works began in 2004, with 5,000 square meters and 320 camellias, with the support of the late Mary Caroni, ICS director for Switzerland, in subsequent years, the park, with Daniele Marcacci as Director, continued to grow. In 2010 was awarded as International Camellia Garden of Excellence. In 2022, a new area was added, with

new cultivars, such as ever-blooming *Camellia changii*

hybrids. Currently, the Park is on an area of 1,5 hectares and hosts 1,476 plants with 1,100 varieties and species. Every year, the park hosts the camellia show, with many thousands of visitors.

Botanical garden of Gambarogno (<https://www.ticino.ch/en/commons/details/Botanical-garden-of-Gambarogno/85680.html>)



Figure 9 Rhododendrons in Gambarogno

The late Otto Eisenhut, a famous nurseryman, cultivated here thousands of beautiful and colorful flowering plants as 950 camellia cultivars, 450 magnolias, and azaleas, peonies and rhododendron on a 2 hectares area. In addition, ivy, pines, juniper, and other rare European and exotic conifers grow here. Since year 2000 the park became by donation "Parco Botanico del Gambarogno", which to ensure the future.

March 31: from Locarno to Como Lake

The garden of Sir Peter Smithers in Vico Morcote (Switzerland)



Figure 10 The house of Sir Peter Smithers in Morcote

Sir Peter Smithers [1913-2006] laid out several gardens, notably Colebrook House in Winchester in the 1950s and 60s, and finally from 1970 Vico Morcote, an acre of a steep abandoned vineyard. He & his wife commissioned a new house inspired by Japanese design and without steps in or out. He built the greenhouse attached to his study, so he could visit it even in his pajamas! He laid out exotic plants suited to the climate and soil that would mature into a

self-maintaining ecosystem. He bought from Exbury Lionel Rothschild's collection of

Nerines when it was being dispersed in 1974, using it as the basis for another successful breeding program (the collection has now gone back to Exbury where it is being continued by Lionel's grandson Nicholas de Rothschild). Vico Morcote eventually contained some 10,000 species and varieties, including world-class collections of magnolias, lilies, wisteria and camellias. His memoirs, *Adventures of a Gardener*, (1995), were published by the RHS and are a classic of gardening history, full of his own photographs and charming anecdotes.

Locarno Public Park



Figure 12 C. japonica 'Bella d'Etruria' (by G. Motta)



*Figure 11 Piazza grande in Locarno
(<https://www.crossinvest-locarno.ch/>)*

In the center of Locarno, close to Piazza Grande, centennial camellias thrive in large beds, perfectly visible by visitors. They include rare ancient varieties, such as 'Bella di Etruria' and 'Il Garofano', both from Italy and registered in 1851. The public park is at a walking distance from the hotel.

Villa Carlotta in Tremezzo, Como Lake, Italy (<https://www.villacarlotta.it/>)

Villa Carlotta is a villa and botanical garden in Tremezzo, on Como Lake. Nowadays, the villa is a museum, whose collection includes works by sculptors such as Antonio Canova, a top neoclassic sculptor (1757-1822) and Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) a great competitor of Canova; painters

such as Francesco Hayez (1791-1882), a leading artist of Romanticism in mid-19th-century Milan, and Francesco Migliara (1785-1837), a nobleman painting views and historical subjects. The villa, whose architect is unknown, was completed in 1745, and had several ownerships. First owners were the Milanese noble family Clerici, then the Sommariva, who in 1843 sold the property to the prince Sachsen Meiningen. After world war I, the villa became a public property, which in 1927 was entrusted to the care of the foundation “Ente Villa Carlotta”, still responsible for the villa.

The park



Figure 13 By Jean-Christophe BENOIST - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16407555>

The botanical garden covers about 8 hectares (20 acres) and includes different sections. Immediately around the villa, towards the lake, the Italian garden with cut hedges and pergolas with orange and camellia trees. The rhododendron and 150 varieties of azalea spread up the slope. The property is also home to cedars, palms, redwoods, plane trees and other exotic plants. there is also a bamboo garden, covering 3,000 square meters which is home to over 25 different bamboo species.

The Villa

The villa includes three floors (two open to the public) with the lower floor dedicated to sculptures. The most famous is Eros and Psyche, a marble copy by Adamo Tadolini, taken from the original model that Antonio Canova made for the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. A second masterpiece is the original plaster model of The Muse Terpsichore by Antonio Canova. The sculpture was commissioned by Sommariva in 1811. An original sculpture is Palamedes by Antonio Canova, which in 1805, when it was still in the Canova's atelier in Rome, was broken by a flood. Canova personally restored it, between 1806 and 1808. A monumental work is the Entrance of Alexander the Great in Babylonia by Bertel Thorvaldsen. This work was originally made in stucco for Napoleon's visit to Quirinale Palace in

Rome, and was so admired that Napoleon ordered a marble replica for the Pantheon in Paris. Because of Napoleon's fall the work stopped, until in 1818 Sommariva decided to complete it. The 33 marble slabs of the frieze arrived in the villa between 1818 and 1828. The last two characters at the end of the frieze are a self-portrait of Thorvaldsen and a portrait of Sommariva.



Figure 14 The sculpture gallery in Villa Carlotta (<https://medium.com/villa-carlotta/meet-the-entrance-of-alexander-the-great-into-babylon-5320040a3dd7>)