

# SOANE TRAVELS: *Milan · Florence · Siena*

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SIR JOHN SOANE

Join us for our upcoming exploration as we visit incredible palazzos, villas, castles, casas, as well as many museums and other fascinating spots such as fashion and design industry studios. Our itinerary has been researched and arranged, in conjunction with the Soane Foundation, by *A Private View of Italy* and its founder and director Stefano Aluffi-Pentini. Also joining us on our exploration will be Soane Museum Director Bruce Boucher and his curator wife Diane Boucher.

We will be traveling in the footsteps of John Soane, who as a twenty-five year old, traveled from Rome, to Siena, to Florence and on to Milan as he was making his trek home to London at the end of a two-year Grand Tour that he'd begun in March 1778. Soane had been awarded the Royal Academy's Gold Medal for Architecture in 1776 after which he received their traveling grant funded by King George III. His travels took him overland through France, Germany, Switzerland and into Italy where he stayed in Rome and Naples, then traveling south to Sicily and Malta – before again turning northwards. On our travels, we will be walking some of those same streets and visiting sites that the young John Soane visited almost two and a half centuries ago.



*Explore Italy's amazing architecture, art, culture, design and fashion – plus gracious hospitality and cuisine!*

**SUNDAY, 14 MAY TO SUNDAY, 21 MAY 2017**

## HIGHLIGHTS ON OUR TRIP IN MILAN:

- ▶ Dinner at Palazzo Cicogna Mozzoni, one of the few private palaces of the Lombard aristocracy still inhabited in the heart of Milano. We will be received by Count Cicogna Mozzoni in his private residence.
- ▶ Dinner at Villa Manzoni in Brusuglio, one of the best preserved houses of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> c. with the original library of the writer Alessandro Manzoni.
- ▶ Visit to Villa Necchi Campiglio with the most intact interiors of early 1930's.

## IN FLORENCE AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS:

- ▶ The Palazzo Ginori, constructed 1516-1520 as residence of the family who started to produce the celebrated porcelains of Doccia. Per Stefano, this palazzo has one of the best preserved Italian interiors.
- ▶ Villa dei Collazzi, considered one of the best Tuscan houses, is one of the few in Italy that still has a substantial part of the furniture dating to its construction in the 1500's.

## IN SIENA ON OUR DAY-LONG VISIT:

- ▶ Palazzo d'Elci, decorated in the early 19<sup>th</sup> c. with the "piano nobile" overlooking Piazza del Campo.
- ▶ Villa Bianchi Bandinelli in Geggiano, that still has the 18th c. interiors with original furniture, fabrics and wall paper.



IMAGES: COAT OF ARMS - MILAN | FLORENCE | SIENA

*This Soane Travels program is organized by Stefano Aluffi-Pentini and his team with A Private View of Italy*

**SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM FOUNDATION | 1040 FIRST AVENUE, NO. 311 | NEW YORK NY 10022**

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# SOANE TRAVELS: *Milan · Florence · Siena*

Our trip encompasses seven-nights, but we are happy to arrange for early arrivals to Milan or extending in Florence – both will allow for extra time for independent exploring and shopping.

## FOUR SEASONS MILANO

will be our home for the first three-nights. The hotel is set in a former 15<sup>th</sup>-century convent in downtown Milan. As one could expect, the elegant rooms include flat-screen TVs, minibars and many amenities including Wi-Fi. The hotel has an award-winning restaurant, a relaxed lounge/bar, a terrace, a courtyard and gardens. There's also a gym, as well as a spa with a stunning indoor pool.



## HOTEL HELVETIA & BRISTOL

dates from the 19th century. This elegant historic hotel is in the central part of the city – surrounded by shops and just a short walk to everything including the cathedral, Uffizi Gallery, and more. The hotel features antique furnishings. There's a patio, outdoor street café, plus the intimate Bar Bibendum accented by Baroque mirrors.



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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SIR JOHN SOANE

SUNDAY, 14 MAY TO SUNDAY, 21 MAY 2017



**ALL INCLUSIVE\***: Trips with Soane Travels are all inclusive and provide a deluxe personalized travel experience. The cost per person includes seven-nights at five-star hotels – three at the **FOUR SEASONS** in Milan and four-nights at **HOTEL HELVETIA & BRISTOL** in Florence, breakfast each day, six lunches and five dinners including receptions, private airport to hotel transfer in Milan, deluxe motorcoach travel from Milan to Florence, local transportation, entry fees and guides. Also accompanying the group, will be an art historian.

\* Not included: air transportation to/from Italy, transfer from hotel to your departure point from Florence, travel insurance; personal expenses such as extra beverages, guest laundry, room service, phone calls/faxes.

**COST:** \$9,975 per person, based on double occupancy.

**Please reserve by February 24<sup>th</sup>!**

DOTS ON THE MAP: Milan at top, Florence middle, Siena bottom.

**ROOMS:** Doubles - all are superior or deluxe rooms. Twin beds *on request*.

Suites: available for a surcharge, price upon request. Single Occupancy - there is a supplement of \$2,130.

**ROOM UPGRADES:** Four Seasons - Premium king bedroom, \$190 per room covering the three-nights in Milan.

Helvetia & Bristol - larger deluxe rooms, \$450 per room covering the four-nights.

Cost is based on figures as of 11/1/16 at \$1.09 to the Euro, and includes a \$1,000 per traveler donation to the foundation. Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation reserves the right to request additional amounts to this pricing according to the current exchange rate at the time of any balances due for the trip; full payment locks in the pricing at the time of payment.

## **TRIP DEPOSIT:**

**A deposit of \$2,000 per person is due to confirm your reservation.**

After March 14th, the deposit becomes non-refundable unless the place can be resold to another traveler, then \$1,000 per person will be refunded.

**TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE RECOMMENDED.** Insurance programs are entirely independent from Soane Travels/Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation. Information provided as a courtesy only, and not an endorsement.

For further information contact Chas Miller – T. 212-223-2012 | [ChasMiller@SoaneFoundation.com](mailto:ChasMiller@SoaneFoundation.com)

**SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM FOUNDATION | 1040 FIRST AVENUE, NO. 311 | NEW YORK NY 10022**

[www.SoaneFoundation.com](http://www.SoaneFoundation.com)



SOANE TRAVELS: *Milan · Florence · Siena*

SUNDAY, 14 MAY TO SUNDAY, 21 MAY 2017

RESERVATION FORM

Yes, I/we would like to join you!

Please reserve by February 24<sup>th</sup>

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TEL: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT/ASSISTANT: \_\_\_\_\_

ACCOMMODATIONS:

- DOUBLE OCCUPANCY - we wish to have a room for two of us. One bed \_\_\_\_, Two beds \_\_\_\_ (if available)
SINGLE ACCOMMODATIONS at a supplement (please circle) at \$2,130 additional.
ROOM UPGRADES (please circle): Four Seasons Milano Hotel Helvetia & Bristol
Payment for room upgrades will be invoiced once they are confirmed by the hotels.

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

- DEPOSIT: Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ (a deposit of \$2,000 per person) to reserve \_\_\_\_\_ place(s) for the trip.
The deposit is due to confirm your place and includes the \$1,000 tax-deductible contribution.
After March 14<sup>th</sup> the deposit becomes non-refundable unless your place(s) can be resold to another traveler, then \$1,000 per person will be refunded.
FULL PAYMENT: I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ (\$9,975 per person, based on double occupancy).
\*Includes the \$1,000 per person donation to the Foundation. If single occupancy, please submit full payment in the amount of \$12,105.

FORMS OF PAYMENT:

- Check - Please make checks payable to: SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM FOUNDATION
Credit Card\*\* - Please charge the \$1,000 deposit and \$1,000 contribution amount per person to American Express, Visa, MasterCard and send a check for the balance.

\*\* the Soane Foundation is only permitted to accept credit card payments for the deposit and contribution, not for the balance due of travel related costs.

Please charge \$\_\_\_\_\_ Name as it appears: \_\_\_\_\_
Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN FORM TO:

Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation
1040 First Avenue, No. 311
New York, NY 10022

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Chas Miller - ChasMiller@SoaneFoundation.com
T. 212-223-2012 | F. 866-841-1928

Not included in rate: Airfare to/from Italy, airport transfer on departure, alcoholic beverages other than when provided, personal expenses, trip insurance.

# DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

SOANE TRAVELS: *Milan · Florence · Siena*

## SUNDAY, 14 MAY · MILAN

*Lunch on your own*

- ▶ START OF THE TRIP: Visit to the Museum Poldi Pezzoli
- ▶ Visit to Museo Bagatti Valsecchi, historic house museum
- ▶ Optional – OPERA: There is a 3pm performance of Don Giovanni at the Teatro alla Scala
- ▶ Drink at Galleria Carlo Orsi
- ▶ Dinner at Palazzo Cicogna Mozzoni - received by Count Cicogna Mozzoni

## MONDAY, 15 MAY · MILAN

- ▶ Visit to Pinacoteca di Brera
- ▶ Private visit to Casa degli Atellani - received by architect Piero Castellini. La Vigna di Leonardo (“Leonardo’s Vineyard”)
- ▶ Visit to Cenacolo to see Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci
- ▶ Lunch in a restaurant
- ▶ Visit to the studio of an architect
- ▶ Visit the studios/houses of designers: Osanna Visconti for jewellery, and Idarica Gazzoni for fabrics
- ▶ Dinner at Villa Manzoni in Brusuglio - received by Marchesi Berlingieri

## TUESDAY, 16 MAY · MILAN

- ▶ Visit to Hangar Bicocca
- ▶ Visit to Villa Panza di Biumo - surrounded by a magnificent Italian garden
- ▶ Lunch at Villa Giulini in Varese
- ▶ Visit to Fondazione Prada
- ▶ Visit to Villa Necchi Campiglio
- ▶ Dinner at leisure
- ▶ Optional – CONCERT: There is a Gustav Mahler Symphony n.7 in E minor - 8pm at the Teatro alla Scala

## WEDNESDAY, 17 MAY · MILAN TO FLORENCE

*Check-out. Depart by private bus (the luggage will travel together us in the same bus)*

- ▶ Visit to the Labirinto, the museum of Franco Maria Ricci
- ▶ Private visit to Palazzo Meli Lupi in Soragna- received by Principe Meli Lupi
- ▶ Lunch at the Castle
- ▶ Arrival in Florence. Check-in at to Hotel Helvetia & Bristol
- ▶ Private visit to Palazzo Guicciardini , to the library and to the archives - received by Conte e Contessa Guicciardini (he is also the architect of the new Museo dell’Opera del Duomo)
- ▶ Dinner at Palazzo Corsini - received by Principessa Corsini

## THURSDAY, 18 MAY · FLORENCE

- ▶ Private visit to Garden of Villa Capponi at Arcetri
- ▶ Private visit to Convento San Matteo received by Marchesa Gondi
- ▶ Wine tasting and lunch at Villa Antinori del Cigliano - received by Signori Montecchi
- ▶ Private visit and coffee at Villa I Collazzi residence of the Marchi, Gazzoni, Pallavicino and Frescobaldi families
- ▶ Dinner at Palazzo Gondi, received by Marchesa Gondi

*- continued -*

[Program as of 11/27/16]

# DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

SOANE TRAVELS: *Milan · Florence · Siena*

*- Page 2 - continued -*

## **FRIDAY, 19 MAY · FLORENCE TO SIENA, RETURN TO FLORENCE**

*Optional day at leisure if you choose to stay in Florence...*

- ▶ Depart at 8:30am by bus, return planned for 6:30pm (7pm latest...). Travel time is approx. 1hr 45mins.
- ▶ Private visit to Castello di Brolio
- ▶ Lunch at Villa di Geggiano - received by Andrea Boscu Bianchi Bandinelli
- ▶ Private visit to Palazzo d'Elci - received by Contessa d'Elci
- ▶ Private visit Palazzo Bianchi Bandinelli - received by Contessa Piccolomini
- ▶ Private visit Bindi Sergardi
- ▶ Visit to the Duomo and to the Libreria Piccolomini Siena's Duomo
- ▶ Dinner at leisure

## **SATURDAY, 20 MAY · FLORENCE**

- ▶ Visit to Museo dell'Opificio delle Pietre Dure
- ▶ Visit to Museo Opera del Duomo (newly restored)
- ▶ Visit to Chiesa di Santo Spirito
- ▶ Lunch at Palazzo Pandolfini - received by Conte e Contessa Pandolfini
- ▶ Afternoon at leisure
- ▶ Dinner at Palazzo Ginori - received by Marchese and Marchesa Ginori

## **SATURDAY, 21 MAY · FLORENCE**

*Departure day by train or flight; option to stay on in Florence...*



There are two optional performance events in Milan.

Tickets must be purchased by the traveler - details are below and web sites listed.

### **Sunday, May 14 – Milan**

OPERA: There is a 3pm performance of Don Giovanni at the Teatro alla Scala, the most famous of all opera houses – booking of tickets is done independently, online box office opens March 6<sup>th</sup> at noon (Italian time).

> [www.teatroallascala.org/en/season/2016-2017/opera/don-giovanni.html](http://www.teatroallascala.org/en/season/2016-2017/opera/don-giovanni.html)

### **Tuesday, May 16 – Milan**

CONCERT: There is a Gustav Mahler Symphony n.7 in E minor performance conducted by Pavvo Järvi at 8pm at the Teatro alla Scala – booking of tickets is done independently, online box office opens March 13<sup>th</sup> at noon (Italian time).

> [www.teatroallascala.org/en/season/2016-2017/concert/symphonic-concert/filarmonica-della-scala-paavo-jarvi.html](http://www.teatroallascala.org/en/season/2016-2017/concert/symphonic-concert/filarmonica-della-scala-paavo-jarvi.html)

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SUNDAY, 14 MAY TO SUNDAY, 21 MAY 2017

## *Select Descriptions for Some of Our Visits*

DESCRIPTIONS PROVIDED BY A PRIVATE VIEW OF ITALY

### SUNDAY, MAY 14 – MILAN

#### VISIT TO THE MUSEUM POLDI PEZZOLI

In 1850 the art collector Gian Giacomo Poldi Pezzoli began the decoration of his own apartment within the family palace. The result was a series of rooms inspired to various artistic and decorative styles of the past (Baroque, Medieval period, Early Renaissance, Rococo), designed and decorated by some of the most innovative artists of the time. Each environment was conceived to contain objects belonging to the epoch of reference. Thus, Eighteenth century porcelains found their place in the Rococo-style room, while the Flemish "Polyptych" was an integral part of the furnishing of the Black Room, where a Sixteenth century Northern-European environment was re-created. Likewise, Gothic golden jewels were placed in the Medieval study, and Baroque statues around the Antique Staircase. Although the collocation of the art objects mainly followed such historical strategy, their position also depended upon the collector's personal taste. Gian Giacomo Poldi Pezzoli's house-museum was opened to the public in 1881 and was such a success, that the museum became a model for other house-museum projects, including those of the American Isabella Stewart Gardner, Antonio Borgogna from Vercelli (Italy), and the French Jacquemart-Andrè. The impressive collection includes works by Giovanni Bellini, Andrea Mantegna, Sandro Botticelli, Piero del Pollaiuolo, and Jusepe de Ribera.

#### VISIT TO MUSEO BAGATTI VALSECCHI

This historic house museum expresses an extraordinary adventure of collecting at the end of the 19th century. The protagonists were two brothers: the Barons Fausto (1843-1914) and Giuseppe (1845-1934) Bagatti Valsecchi. Beginning in the 1880s, these two undertook the refurbishment of their family home in the heart of Milan between via Gesù and via Santo Spirito. For political as well as stylistic reasons, their approach was strictly in the Neo-Renaissance style of the then popular trend of historicism. At the same time, they began to collect paintings and decorative arts of the 15th and 16th centuries in order to decorate their house and to create an ambiance inspired by princely Lombard homes of the 16th century. The two brothers had, in fact, very different personalities: Fausto, brilliant and worldly, and Giuseppe, more reserved and inclined to quiet domestic life. It is to Giuseppe that the family continuity is owed thanks to his five children born of his 1882 marriage with Carolina of one of Milan's most ancient, important and powerful noble families: the Borromeo. After the death of Fausto and Giuseppe, the Bagatti Valsecchi family home continued to be inhabited by their descendents until 1974. In that year, Pasino, one of Giuseppe's children who was by then in his seventies, decided to create the Bagatti Valsecchi Foundation to which he donated the patrimony of art his ancestors had collected. At the same time, the mansion was sold to the region of Lombardy with the clause that the historic displays on the first floor were to be preserved "as is" in order to preserve the unbreakable tie between the "container" (the spaces) and the "contained" (the furnishings and art collections), one of the distinctive traits of the Bagatti Valsecchi brothers' collecting efforts. Twenty years later, in 1994, the Bagatti Valsecchi Museum was opened to the public.

#### PRIVATE DINNER AT PALAZZO CICOGNA MOZZONI - RECEIVED BY COUNT CICOGNA MOZZONI

The Palazzo Cicogna Mozzoni is one of the few private palaces of the Lombard aristocracy still inhabited in the heart of Milano. We will be received by Count Cicogna Mozzoni in his private residence.



## MONDAY, MAY 15 – MILAN

### VISIT TO PINACOTECA DI BRERA

Milan's finest art collection is held in an imposing 17th century building, the Palazzo di Brera. The Accademia di Belle Arti was founded here in the 18th century; the picture collection was developed alongside the academy. Inside the Brera hang some of the finest examples of Italian Renaissance and Baroque painting, including major works by Piero della Francesca, Mantegna, Bellini, Raphael, Tintoretto, Veronese and Caravaggio. The collection also includes 20th century works by some of Italy's most famous modern artists.

### PRIVATE VISIT TO CASA DEGLI ATELLANI - RECEIVED BY ARCHITECT PIERO CASTELLINI

La Vigna di Leonardo ("Leonardo's Vineyard") was a gift from Ludovico il Moro, Duke of Milan, given to Leonardo da Vinci in 1498, in recognition for his many years of service at court. It was a fitting gift, given that da Vinci came from a family of winemakers. Leonardo and Ludovico had known each other since 1482, the year in which Leonardo left the Medici court in Florence to join the Sforza court in Milan.

In 1495 Ludovico commissioned Leonardo to paint the Last Supper in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie. Three years later, Ludovico gave Leonardo the vineyard. La Vigna di Leonardo was a vineyard of more than eight thousand square meters, planted in the garden of the grand palazzo Casa degli Atellani, located in central Milan. But with the defeat of the Moro in 1500, everything changed: Milan fell to the French, Ludovico was taken prisoner and Leonardo da Vinci abandoned what was to become his house.

Thanks to the support of the current owners of Casa degli Atellani, and the collaboration of Confagricoltura and Expo 2015, Leonard's Vineyard has been born anew. Researchers excavated the garden and to their surprise and delight found that a few vine roots had survived. The experts have replanted Malvasia di Candia vines, recreating Leonardo's original vineyard, in the garden of the palazzo in Milan's Corso Magenta.

### VISIT TO CENACOLO (LAST SUPPER BY LEONARDO)

This beautiful 15th century Renaissance convent, its lovely apse and small cloister designed by Bramante, contains one of the key images of western civilization: the Cenacolo (Last Supper) by Leonardo da Vinci. The image captures the moment at which Christ tells his disciples that one of them will betray him. Note, however, that the Christ figure is unfinished: Leonardo did not consider himself to be worthy enough to complete it.

The artist also spurned the standard fresco technique of painting on wet plaster, applying tempera to the dry wall instead. The result is full of subtlety but has deteriorated significantly: it is almost impossible to stop the paint from flaking off, and restoration has proved difficult. The painting is now protected by a complex filtering system.

### DINNER AT VILLA MANZONI IN BRUSUGLIO - RECEIVED BY MARCHESI BERLINGIERI

The present Villa Manzoni belonged to the family of Counts Imbonati who built its oldest part at the end of the 17th century. After the death of Carlo Imbonati in 1805 the house and the land were left by will to Giulia Beccaria, the mother of Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873) one of the most important Italian novelist, poet and playwright, best known as the author of *The Betrothed* (1825-1827).

From 1811 to 1818 Alessandro Manzoni personally supervised, together with the Architect Gottardo Speroni, the construction of the central body of the building. The two existing buildings were linked and the Villa took the present aspect that recalls the French style.

From 1810 to 1820 he devoted himself to creating the wide park. In 1813 Manzoni had a hillock raised on top of which a belvedere was built where the mountains of Lecco and in particular Mount Resegone could be admired.

The Villa and the park, which are still the private residence of the descendants of the family have remained unchanged and maintain unspoiled the charm of the numerous witnesses of Manzoni not only as a writer but also as architect and botanist.



## **TUESDAY, MAY 16 – MILAN**

### **VISIT TO HANGAR BICOCCA**

Hangar Bicocca is a space devoted to the production, exhibition and promotion of contemporary art. Established in 2004, it occupies a vast redeveloped industrial complex formerly owned by Ansaldo-Breda. With solo exhibitions of works by top international artists, the artistic program is characterized by its focus on research and experimentation and by its particular emphasis on site-specific projects capable of interacting with their unique setting. The history of the HangarBicocca is closely linked to that of Breda, a company incorporated in 1886 by Engineer Ernesto Breda, who moved it to the Bicocca district from 1903. Pirelli, Falck and Marelli followed suit with their own companies, thus transforming the area into one of the most important industrial centers in Italy. In the new 200,000 square meter factory, Breda mainly manufactured railway carriages, electric and steam locomotives, boilers, farm machinery and equipment and, during the First World War, airplanes, projectiles and other machines for the war effort.

One of these factory buildings was HangarBicocca, which at the time was divided into blocks of different types, origin and size. The "Shed", for example, a typical low bare-brick factory building with double-pitched roof and large skylights, is already quite recognizable in photos dating from the first half of the 1920s. It was here that components for locomotives and farm machinery were manufactured.

### **VISIT TO VILLA PANZA DI BIUMO**

Surrounded by a magnificent Italian garden, Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza in Biumo was built in the mid-eighteenth century by Marquis Paolo Antonio Menafoglio and expanded in the neo-classic period by architect Luigi Canonica, commissioned by Duke Pompeo Litta Visconti Arese. The villa is famous throughout the world for the collection of contemporary American art that Giuseppe Panza di Biumo began creating in the 1950s. The halls and the huge stables today exhibit more than one hundred works by contemporary artists, as well as rich 16<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> century furnishings and an important collection of African and pre-Columbian art.

### **VISIT TO FONDAZIONE PRADA**

In 1993, the interest of Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Berteli in contemporary art and its capacity to penetrate and epitomize the complexity of the world today led them to open a new exhibition space. The institution held two shows every year devoted to artists of international standing, accompanied by the publication of editorial support with the production of books documenting the works on exhibition – often including the creation of appendices with drawings and photographs by the artists themselves. With the exhibition by Eliseo Mattiacci, PradaMilanoArte was born, which aimed to receive and transmit to the city of Milan and the international public the “most profound mental provocations” (Miuccia Prada, 1993) of the art of our times.

After the exhibitions dedicated to Nino Franchina and David Smith, where the installations were closely linked to the exhibition site - a shuttered and “recycled” industrial building- PradaMilanoArte was reorganized in November 1995 and became the Fondazione Prada.

Staged in close cooperation with the artists themselves, the exhibitions presented by the Fondazione Prada in Milan, which to date have included Louise Bourgeois, and the first Italian exhibitions dedicated respectively to Dan Flavin and Walter De Maria, have sought to keep the spirit of contemporary art alive by offering the quality and commitment of what is virtually a museum.

### **VISIT TO VILLA NECCHI CAMPIGLIO**

Villa Necchi Campiglio is a lavish residence with generously proportioned interiors and stunning public rooms built by Piero Portaluppi between 1932 and 1935. Its perfectly preserved architecture encapsulates the history, rituals, worldly pleasures and day-to-day living of Milanese high society during the first half of the 20th century. Villa Necchi Campiglio is a historical treasure that has remained unchanged over time.

The Villa also houses the extraordinary Claudia Gian Ferrari collection of early 20th-century art, featuring works by Mario Sironi, Simone Martini and Giorgio de Chirico; and the exceptionally refined collection of Alighiero and Emilietta De' Micheli, which concentrates on 18th-century decorative arts and paintings, including works by Giovanni Antonio Canal better known as “Canaletto.”

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 17 – MILAN TO FLORENCE

### DINNER AT PALAZZO CORSINI - RECEIVED BY PRINCIPESSA CORSINI

Of Florence's families, the Corsini are certainly the most splendid, combining the patrician heritage of an ancient Florentine family with the glory of the papacy, since Pope Clement XII was a member of the family. The Corsini were influential in Florence, especially as intellectuals in scientific and literary studies, and as Church dignitaries.

The Baroque Corsini palace overlooking the Arno River contains one of the vastest private collections in all of Italy. Palazzo Corsini al Prato is the other family palace and current residence of Princess Corsini. Its gardens remain a rare example of a late urban Renaissance garden. Built in 1572 by Bernardo Buontalenti, the palace and all the surrounding land was bought from the Acciaioli family by the Corsinis in around 1620.

In 1624 the architect Gherardo Silvani was asked to landscape the garden and to embellish the façade with an open gallery. From the loggia (1625-28) a double avenue of statues and large pots of lemon lead the eye to an entrance gate. The viale of statues is crossed by a series of axial views leading on the east side to a romantic bosco of evergreen oaks and hackberries (*Celtis australis*). The paths flanked with hedges of *Laurus nobilis* and evergreen viburnums, and a profusion of periwinkle and acanthus, recall the 19th century Italian idea of the giardino inglese.

## THURSDAY, MAY 18 – FLORENCE

### PRIVATE VISIT TO GARDEN OF VILLA CAPPONI

Two perfect examples of the smaller type of Tuscan garden still exist in the environs of Florence, Villa Capponi and Villa Gamberaia. The Villa Capponi at Arcetri is that rare jewel, a Tuscan garden of the second half of the sixteenth century preserved in all its original charm and cared for to perfection. When on the 7th of February, 1572 Gino Capponi bought a small house with a tower on the steep road leading up to the Pian de' Giullari, his choice may well have been influenced by the superb view.

The plan of the Villa Capponi garden is very simple and typically Tuscan in that it consists of three areas; the first, and largest, is the open grassy terrace that runs the whole length of the back of the house, from where the north-western end of Florence and the Arno valley are seen spread out as in a seventeenth-century bird's-eye view of the city. This part of the garden could, in accordance with Alberti's principles, be used for bowls and other games, and for the family to enjoy the air on summer evenings.

At the western end of the terrace, the little walled garden area which is an actual room complete with windows, lacking only a roof, which was evidently designed to offer shelter on cold but sunny tramontana days. Its only entrance until this century was by an underground passage from the house. With its flower-filled box parterres, gurgling wall fountains and battlement walls festooned with roses and wisteria, this little room is probably the most enchanting example of the Italian giardino segreto in existence.

### PRIVATE VISIT TO CONVENTO SAN MATTEO - RECEIVED BY MARCHESA GONDI

"At the end of the Arcetri hills, descending towards the Ema valley, in the 13th century the Sant'Agostino hermit monks built a little hospice, which in 1269 became a nun's monastery of the same order. Cosimo and Decca degli Amidei in 1318 donated their belongings to this same monastery, but the nuns accepted only their donations and appointed the couple to a house outside of the monastery (Amidei was a famous family from Florence, they caused the beginning of the war between Guelfi and Ghibellini). Around 1400 the nuns decided to change to the order of Santa Chiara, but they encountered serious opposition, they even addressed the "antipope" Giovanni XXIII and finally the Santa Susanna cardinal decided to please their desire, so that the monastery went to the Clarisse, a very very poor seclusion order. In 1600 the two daughters of Galileo Galilei, Livia and Virginia, decided to enter the monastery changing names to Suor Maria Celeste and Suor Arcangela. From here Suor Maria Celeste maintained a very famous epistolary exchange with her father, summarized by Daba Sobel in her successful novel "Suor Maria Celeste la figlia di Galileo."

The cloister was built following the needs of its inhabitants, and so, because the rule was to buy a part of the convent instead of giving an endowment, when the monastery was suppressed by the Granduca di Toscana, shortly before Florence became capital, San Matteo became property of 4 Carmelitan monks because meanwhile the convent had become masculine and under the rule of the Franciscans. The three great antique dealers Bardini, Salvatori, and Volpi decided then to buy properties in Arcetri, at the time much less famous of Fiesole, Bardini bought the Torre del Gallo, Volpi bought the Villa San Michele in Monteripaldi, and Salvadori bought the San Matteo convent in Arcetri, a part of which he returned to the church and in 1897 the Carmelitan barefoot monks recreated the seat of their order. The remaining part remained private and became destined as a villa also with the convent's refectory."

## THURSDAY, MAY 18 – FLORENCE *continued*

### WINE TASTING AND LUNCH AT VILLA ANTINORI DEL CIGLIANO - RECEIVED BY SIGNORI MONTECCHI

The Villa del Cigliano has been in the Antinori family since 1500. The Villa is situated in the Chianti Classico area, near the village of San Casciano in Val di Pesa, in the tuscan countryside, 20 km from the center of Florence. It was built in the second half of the 1400 on existing medieval buildings. Alessandro di Niccolò Antinori bought it at the end of that century, and it still belongs to the descendants of Eleonora Antinori, recently deceased in 2001. The courtyard of the Villa is adorned by two round majolica garlands, attributed to Giovanni della Robbia, with the coat of arms of the Antinori and the Tornabuoni families, commemorating the wedding between Alessandro Antinori and Giovanna Tornabuoni in 1513. The Villa has a magnificent garden enclosed by high walls. It was designed around the middle of 1600 and is shaded by 200 year old cedars. There is also a beautiful raised pond, surrounded by wisteria, where the stunning reflexions of the baroque facade and the towering intricately designed Neptune fountain, made of river pebbles and shells, can be admired. The Villa and the garden have faithfully preserved the essential spirit of the old Tuscany.

### PRIVATE VISIT AND COFFEE AT VILLA I COLLAZZI - RESIDENCE OF THE MARCHI, GAZZONI, PALLAVICINO AND FRESCOBALDI FAMILIES

If the traditional though unlikely attribution of this villa to Michelangelo Buonarroti is to be believed, it must still be granted that the great Florentine followed closely - adding little of his own - an architectural design already implemented with great success by Baldassarre Peruzzi. In Le Volte in Siena, and in La Farnesina in Rome. Whoever the architect, there can be no doubt that Villa I Collazzi represents one of the most accomplished and important examples of the vast repertory of Tuscan villas.

The south façade is adorned with a semicircular staircase and two small loggias on the top floor: the rear prospect boasts two raised loggias extending into both of the lateral wings. A well-known engraving of the villa by Giuseppe Zocchi (printed in 1744), gives in advance a glimpse of the double entrance stairway from the open courtyard. This was added ten years later, in 1754, by Medea Castelli, the wife of a Dini, who also had the chapel frescoed by Giuseppe Meucci. The wing left of the courtyard originally left unfinished, the villa was finally completed and rendered perfectly symmetrical in the 1930's by a "scholarly" operation commissioned by the Marchi family, current owners of the property.

### DINNER AT PALAZZO GONDI - RECEIVED BY MARCHESA GONDI

Palazzo Gondi is located in Piazza San Firenze, one block from Piazza della Signoria in Florence. It was built by Giuliano da Sangallo in 1490 on the example of other major works by building elegant in town, as the Palazzo Strozzi and Palazzo Medici. Compared to his models, however, the Sangallo was able in a set of these elements, making it one of the most successful buildings of that era. The most innovative element is the design of windows, with the profile of the stones provided radially, which resembles the facets of a precious stone. The building had a very slow genesis and remained incomplete for several centuries. At the end of the seventeenth century worked Antonio Maria Ferri for architecture and Matthew Bonechi for painted decoration. In 1874 the building could be said to be finally finished, with the affixing of the coat of arms of the Gondi on what had become the corner side. Leonardo da Vinci lived in one of the destroyed houses to expand the building and it is said that here he painted the Mona Lisa.

## **FRIDAY, MAY 19 – FLORENCE TO SIENA, RETURN TO FLORENCE**

### PRIVATE VISIT TO **CASTELLO DI BROLIO** - RESIDENCE OF BARONE RICASOLI

This historic 12th Century Castle with massive walls and spectacular views over the Sienese countryside was originally constructed in the middle ages as a Florentine outpost fortress in Sienese territory. This ancient scene of conflict between the two rival cities is now situated in the heart of the Chianti Classico region of Italy. The Castello di Brolio has been the property of the Ricasoli family since the first half of the 19th century and is one of the oldest and largest wine estates in the Chianti area. Chianti Wine, like other Tuscan wines, has been produced since Etruscan times. Chianti wine experienced a major decline at the end of the 18th century, as did Italy itself, but enjoyed a resurgence largely due to the efforts of Bettino Ricasoli and his Brolio production. He rebuilt the manor as a permanent home, replanted the vineyards and experimented with different varieties and combinations of grapes. The Brolio vintage 1841 became the standard for today's best Chianti and the "Brolio Ricasoli" label is one of the most prestigious. In the mid 1800s, Baron Bettino Ricasoli formulated the modern method of making Chianti wine by refining the use of grape varieties in the blend and specifying effective vinification techniques. Francesco Ricasoli, the 32nd Barone Brolio, took charge of the winery in 1993. He produces wines of expressive style and harmonious balance, including the 1995 Casalferro, a new super-Tuscan which recently received the highest award from Gambero Rosso magazine.

### LUNCH AT **VILLA DI GEGGIANO** - RECEIVED BY ANDREA BOSCU BIANCHI BANDINELLI

The Villa di Geggiano near Siena stands on property inhabited since the 12th or 13th century. Acquired by the Bandinellis in 1527, it has remained essentially unchanged since it was remodeled in the late 18th century. The villa, inherited by the Countess Alessandra Bianchi Bandinelli in 1975, has been described as “an airy uncomplicated structure on three levels, topped by an attic of simple dignity”. The long entrance hall off the garden has doors at either end and is decorated with frescoes by Austrian painter Ignazio Loder that represent peasant and country life and the four seasons. The frescoes are based on engravings by Francesco Bartolozzi of drawings by Giuseppe Zocchi. Great efforts have been made to preserve and conserve the interior of the palace. 20th century tales abound. “My parents were constantly surrounded by intellectuals and artists like the poet Umberto Saba, who lived here n hiding during the occupation along with other Jewish or antifascist friends”, the countess continues. They also saw a lot of the painter Renato Guttuso, Bernard Berenson and, later on, Carlo Levi. There was a surreal incident here during the war. Just before they withdrew, the German army brought in explosives to blow the villa sky-high. Whereupon my father somehow managed to convince the officers that Goethe had stayed at Geggiano (actually, it was Count Vittorio Alfieri, the Italian playwright, who was always the star guest). So the Germans gave up their scheme to demolish the house, because to do so would have been a sacrilege against Aryan culture.”

### PRIVATE VISIT TO **PALAZZO D'ELCI** - RECEIVED BY CONTESSA D'ELCI

The palace, positioned in the spectacular surroundings of Piazza del Campo, was completely restored and embellished during the early 1800's by the Sienese architect Agostino Fantastici who joined several nearby houses that had been owned by the Pannocchieschi since the Middle Ages. The Pannocchieschi d'Elci family was one of the most ancient and powerful feudal families in all of Tuscany. At the end of the Xth century, the family already possessed several castles in the territory of Pisa, Massa Maritima, and Volterra. The Pannocchieschi were once quite near becoming the lords of the latter, but when Maremma was subdued by Siena, they were subordinated (1263), (although in 1355, Charles IV eventually recognized their importance, giving them the title conti palatini). During the following centuries they flourished in Siena, with numerous great men, prominent among whom was Francesco, made Cardinal in 1773.



## **FRIDAY, MAY 19 – FLORENCE TO SIENA, RETURN TO FLORENCE** *continued*

### PRIVATE VISIT **BINDI SERGARDI**

It may be best to cite what Giorgio Vasari wrote of Domenico Beccafumi's frescoes, which are found on the vaults of this structure, formerly known as Palazzo Agostini in Siena: "In the home of Signor Marcello Agostini, Domenico painted some extremely beautiful works in fresco on the vault of a room containing three lunettes on each wall and two lunettes at each end, with a row of friezes running all around the room. In the middle of the ceiling the compartment forms two pictures: in the first, with a decoration of feigned silk cloth, it seems that we can see woven upon it Scipio Africanus returning the young bride intact to her husband, and in the other Zeuxis, a most famous painter, is drawing the portraits of several female nudes in order to create the painting that must be placed in the temple of Juno. In one of the lunettes are small but very beautiful figures about half an armslength high that depict the two Roman brothers who were enemies but became friends for the public good and the benefit of their homeland. In another that follows there is the figure of Torquatus who, in order to obey the laws, must put out his son's eyes, and who puts out one of his son's and one of his own. In the one that follows there is the petition . . . when, after having been read a list of the crimes he has committed against his homeland and the Roman people, he (Spurius Cassius) is put to death. And after this one the Roman people is depicted as it decides in favour of Scipio's expedition to Africa. Next to this one in another lunette is the picture of an ancient sacrifice filled with different and very beautiful figures containing a temple drawn in perspective which stands in very high relief, for in this technique Domenico was truly a splendid master. The last contains Cato committing suicide as several horsemen, who are painted most beautifully, overtake him. Similarly, the spaces of the lunettes contain some small scenes that are very well done.. "

### VISIT TO THE **DUOMO** AND TO THE **LIBRERIA PICCOLOMINI**

Siena's Duomo(1136-1382) is one of the most spectacular in Italy, and one of the few to have been built south of the Alps in full Gothic style. Many ordinary citizens helped to cart the black and white stone used in its construction from quarries on the outskirts of the city. In 1339, the Sienese decided to build a new nave to the south with the aim of making it the biggest church in Christendom. This plan came to nothing when plague hit the city soon afterwards, killing off much of the population. The uncompleted nave now contains a museum of Gothic sculpture. Of particular interest are the pulpit panels carved by Nicola Pisano in 1265-8, which depict scenes from the life of Christ; the Piccolomini Library, decorated with frescoes by Pinturicchio, portraying the life of Pope Pius II; and the inlaid marble floor, decorated with various themes such as the Massacre of the Innocents, medieval astrology and alchemy.

## **SATURDAY, MAY 20 - FLORENCE**

### VISIT TO **MUSEO DELL'OPIFICIO DELLE PIETRE DURE**

In the 16th century, Florentine craftsmen perfected the art of pietre dure, piecing together cut pieces of precious and semi-precious stones in an inlay process, and the Medici-founded institute devoted to the craft has been in this building since 1796. Long ago misnamed a "Florentine mosaic" by the tourism industry, this is a highly refined craft in which skilled artisans (artists, really) create scenes and boldly colored intricate designs in everything from cameos and tabletops to never-fade stone "paintings." Masters are adept at selecting, slicing, and polishing stones so that the natural grain or color gradations in the cross sections will, once cut and laid in the design, become the contours, shading, and molding that give good pietre dure scenes their depth and illusion of three-dimensionality.

The collection in this museum is small, but the pieces are uniformly excellent. Souvenir shops all over town sell modern pietre dure items -- much of it mass-produced junk, but some very nice. The best contemporary maestro is Ilio de Filippis, whose workshop is called Pitti Mosaici.

## SATURDAY, MAY 20 - FLORENCE *continued*

### VISIT TO MUSEO OPERA DEL DUOMO (NEWLY RESTORED)

The museum is situated in a building that was created especially for the Opera del Duomo, or rather, for the large number of administrators, artists and craftsmen who were employed in the construction of Santa Maria del Fiore. The Wool Guild, from whom the Opera took its coat of arms with the Agnus Dei, supervised the entire organization (from 1331 to 1770).

Once the basilica was completed, the Opera stayed open for the care and maintenance of the holy group of buildings, composed of the Duomo, the Baptistery and the Belltower and, after 1891, also opened some of its rooms to the public, transforming them into a Museum. In fact a great many masterpieces from the three monuments, together with various historic reminders connected with the actual construction of Santa Maria del Fiore, like Brunelleschi's model for the cupola, the numerous 16th-17th century projects for the façade and pieces of building equipment (winches, trolleys, ropes...), had gradually been collected here over the centuries.

The first art works to be brought to the seat of the Opera were pieces of sculpture from the north door of the Cathedral (Door of the Mandorla). These were followed by the sculptures created by Arnolfo di Cambio, Nanni di Banco and Donatello for the first façade of Santa Maria del Fiore. The statues of Pope Boniface VIII and the Madonna and Child (1296) by Arnolfo are particularly beautiful, while the St. John the Evangelist was one of Donatello's first masterpieces (1408-15). In this century, the Museum has given shelter to the various masterpieces that have been restored over the years: these include the: Magdalen in wood by Donatello (from the Baptistery), sixteen statues by Donatello (Prophet Abacuc), Andrea Pisano and Nanni di Bartolo (from the Belltower), the bas-reliefs in marble by Giotto, Andrea Pisano, Alberto Arnoldi and Luca della Robbia (from the Belltower) and the panels for the Door of Paradise by Ghiberti. All these bas-reliefs, statues and panels have today been replaced by copies.

The Pietà by Michelangelo comes instead from the Cathedral; the artist carried out this sculpture for his funerary chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome between 1548-55 but left it unfinished because of the poor quality of the marble.

### LUNCH AT PALAZZO PANDOLFINI - RECEIVED BY CONTE E CONTESSA PANDOLFINI

Bishop Giannozzo Pandolfini (died 1525) built this palazzo on the road leading to Porta San Gallo, and it was the first to appear on the northern side of the town of Florence.

Vasari states that it was Raphael Sanzio who designed the palazzo, and as his testimony has been accepted by all the critics, it makes this house the only one designed in Tuscany by this great artist. Vasari adds that Giovan Francesco da Sangallo was sent to Florence to supervise the building. When Giannozzo Pandolfini died in 1525, he left the unfinished palazzo, garden and everything in it, including ancient statues, tapestries, gold and silver plate, fountains etc., to his oldest nephew Ferdinando, who also succeeded him as Bishop of Troia and completed it. After belonging to various members of the family, the palazzo became the property of Senator Ruberto in the 17th century. He moved there from the ancestral home in Via de' Pandolfini, and made it the principal residence of his family and descendants, some of whom continued to distinguish themselves during the principality. Inside the palazzo there are many corbels and capitals decorated with the Pandolfini's heraldic dolphin. Among the numerous works of art are a splendid 16th century panelled ceiling painted with richly-framed religious subjects, and a small room with an allegorical high frieze. Other rooms on the ground floor were redecorated and furnished in the eclectic style of the time.

Recent restoration to the façade of this beautiful building has completely renewed the stone decorations on a large number of the famous windows designed by Raphael.

### DINNER AT PALAZZO GINORI - RECEIVED BY MARCHESE AND MARCHESA GINORI

In 1516, Carlo di Lionardo Ginori demolished the buildings that stood on this site in order to make room for his palace. Built between 1516 and 1520 by Baccio d'Agnolo, the new home was particularly impressive, towering over the other houses lining the streets of the San Lorenzo quarter. Later, between 1691 and 1701, the palazzo was enlarged under the supervision of the architect Lorenzo Merlini, taking advantage of a small house and garden on Via della Stufa that had been acquired by the Ginori. Merlini built a complex that enclosed the small garden and fountain on three sides, with a balustraded terrace on the second floor. Since then, the palace has undergone further, though minor changes, such as those commissioned by Marchese Lorenzo Ginori Lisci, who lived here during the XIXth century. Chief among his projects was the task of paving the palazzo in marble. The porcelain collections of the celebrated Ginori manufactory, begun in 1737 by the Marchese Carlo Ginori, are conserved in the palace.

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