

*Le Dipendenze di Villa Rusconi-Clerici
Pallanza Verbania via Vittorio Veneto 16*



Recommended itineraries

- **Visit to the GARDENS OF VILLA TARANTO at PALLANZA**

On foot or by bicycle, distance 2 Km.

These are considered the most important botanical gardens in Italy. The gardens are famous for rhododendrons but they are laid out with plants of interest in all seasons of the year.

- **Visit to the ISOLA MADRE**

By rowing boat, by ferry from Pallanza, or by motorboat from the villa's own boat dock (mobile: ++39/336/236132)

At the end of the 17th century the ISOLA MADRE was transformed from a citrus orchard into an English style botanical garden. From then on plants from all over the world were imported and acclimatized and plants and seeds were recorded. All the azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons found on Lake Maggiore originated from here, and from Lake Maggiore they have been exported to the rest of Europe for over a century.

- **Visit to the ISOLA BELLA**

By ferry or from the villa in motorboat (mobile: ++39/336/236132)

ISOLA BELLA (the beautiful isle) has been famous all over Europe since the 17th century - it is the symbol of Lake Maggiore. Here you will find an outstanding example of Italian garden.

- **Excursion to the mount MOTTARONE (1.491 m. asl)**

By car or from the villa in motorboat (mobile: ++39/336/236132)

From the Lido of STRESA CARCIANO, with the cableway, in 20 minutes you can reach the top of the Mottarone, a beautiful natural balcony from where the eye sweeps over 360°, overlooking the Alps, especially Mount Rosa, the Po Valley and seven lakes.

On the Mottarone you can practice winter sports and trekking and you can descend on properly marked paths by renting a mountain bike.

At the intermediate stop of the cableway we suggest to visit the botanical garden ALPINIA, with over 500 herbs and flowers solely from the Alps.

- **Visit to the MUSEO DEL PAESAGGIO (Landscape Museum) at Pallanza**

On foot, distance 300m.

This museum, founded 300 years ago is still very much alive. As well as an important collection of local painters, the museum houses one of the most interesting collections from the end of the 18th century : the gypsoteque belonging to Paul Troubetzkoy.

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Troubetzkoy is considered one of the most interesting "Italian" sculptors of the period, even though he was the son of a Russian prince, ambassador for the Tsar at the first court of the king of Italy in Florence in 1860.

While here also visit the historic centre of PALLANZA, which is slowly being restored.

- **Walk on MONTEROSSO**

On foot, or by mountain bike, circuit 5 Km.

Starting from PALLANZA you may take a very interesting walk to the village of CAVANDONE on MONTEROSSO, following the path indicated on the map distributed by the tourist office in Pallanza.

- **Visit to INTRA**

By ferry, by rowing boat, by bicycle or on foot, distance 2,5 Km.

With 2 rowers it will take 1 hour in each direction. Follow the coast from PALLANZA around the magnificent PUNTA DELLA CASTAGNOLA to INTRA. At INTRA moor the boat in the port and have lunch at the *Bottigliera del Castello* (+39/0323/516579), about 50 m. from the port.

At the next door wine shop you can find a selection of excellent Piedmontese wines.

On Saturdays, near the port there is a lively open air market, where you can find everything from clothes to local food specialties such as the cheeses from the Piedmontese valleys.

The historic centre of INTRA is very interesting and relatively untouched.

- **Excursions in VAL GRANDE**

On foot or mountain bike.

If you go by car or bicycle towards CICOGNA, inland from INTRA, you can turn towards the VAL GRANDE by foot from PONTE CASLETTO (dangerous!), or continue on foot as far as CICOGNA and ALPE POGALLO.

VAL GRANDE is the largest wilderness area in Italy. If you wish to visit it you should ask for information at the PALLANZA Tourist Office as you will need a guide.

If you descend from ROVEGRO to the SAN BERNARDINO river you will cross the so called Roman bridge (in fact Mediaeval) in a lovely gorge.

- **Tour along the river TOCE and to LAKE MERGOZZO**

By bicycle, circuit 30 Km

Leaving from PALLANZA take the road as far as FONDOTOCE (attention this is a busy road) then you may take the unmade up road or side roads along the FIUME TOCE and then to LAKE MERGOZZO. On your way home you could stop to eat at MERGOZZO (restaurant "La Pagul" - ph. (0039) 0323/800949).

If you wish to go further continue from MERGOZZO along the VAL D'OSSOLA; visit VOGOGNA, the antique capital of the valley, with a Visconti castle and important palaces. At NIBBIO there is a friendly trattoria *Asprimonti* (tel. +39/0323/880105); or at VOGOGNA you could eat at the restaurant *del Vecchio Borgo* (tel. +39/0324/87504)

- **Excursion to the mountains above PALLANZA**

By car or mountain bike

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Take a trip to the mountains above PALLANZA to discover the old villages (CAPREZZO, INTRAGNA, AURANO, SCARENO etc.) and the woods and wild rivers (the SAN GIOVANNI river is good for rafting); and marvellous views over the lake.

From the village of IL COLLE you may take the unmade road towards MONTE ZEDA and see the fortifications built before the 1st WW against a possible German invasion through Switzerland.

Return to the lake by the TRAREGO road through the pretty village of CANNERO. At COSSOGNO there is a delightful farmhouse B&B, *Villa Cresta*, which offers lunch and dinner at weekends (booking required tel. ++39/0323/468185)

- **Tour of the VAL D'OSSOLA – VAL VIGEZZO – upper LAKE MAGGIORE.**

By car or bicycle(!!!!)

Take the road from PALLANZA to FONDOTOCE which goes along the shore of LAKE MERGOZZO; visit MERGOZZO and see the church.

Continue up the VAL D'OSSOLA along the road on the north side of the valley (do not take the expressway!) Visit the centre of VOGOGNA, mediaeval capital of the valley.

Continue as far as TRONTANO and from there go on up the valley to SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE.

If you are travelling by bicycle, in DOMODOSSOLA you may take the delightful little train which twists and turns its way up to SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE to avoid a tiring hill climb. From there the roads are on the flat or downhill.

Visit the centre of SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE, a small town with a very interesting past. People used to emigrated from here to France in search of work and to make their fortunes. Those who succeeded returned and built houses in perfect Parisian style! They were expert in many crafts from chimney sweeps (one of whom saved a French king from plotters whom he had overheard while cleaning out the chimney) to goldsmiths (the Mellerio family were jewellers to Louis XIV!) to house painters specialized in stucco and fake marble (to this day the valley is known as the “valley of painters”).

Every year in September there is a meeting of chimney sweeps from all over Europe.

The inventor of the famous brand of Eau de Cologne 4711 came from VAL VIGEZZO.

You MUST visit the picturesque village of CRAVEGGIA, 1 Km from SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE, to see the houses with their stone roofs and very tall chimneys.

From CRAVEGGIA descend towards the lake along the VAL CANNOBINA, a narrow rocky alpine valley that terminates in the gorge of SANT'ANNA (which you should try to see if you have time; there is also a good trattoria here.)

Along the valley there are side roads to incredible little villages, such as GURRO, which was founded in 1500 by Scottish deserters and where up until a 100 years ago a Scottish dialect was still spoken.

One arrives at CAVAGLIO over a hanging bridge.

When you have returned to the lake visit the fascinating lakeside town of CANNOBBIO. Return to PALLANZA along the lake. You will see the Isles of CANNERO, with the remains of a castle conquered around 1420 by the Borromeos who overthrew a family of pirates in the pay of one of the ancestors of the writer of these notes!

Before CANNERO you could stop to eat at the *Ristorante Cà Bianca* on the lake edge with a marvellous terrace overlooking the islands. (to book tel. ++39/0323/788038)

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The road continues through CANNERO, OGGEBBIO and GHIFFA , charming villages with a delightful climate and vegetation. Above GHIFFA there is the interesting church of the Holy Trinity. It is interesting to note that the lakeside road to Switzerland did not exist until 1880 and previously all communication was by boat or over the mountains!

- **Excursions to the lateral valleys off VAL D'OSSOLA**

By car

From PALLANZA go along the shore of LAGO DI MERGOZZO and then continue along the road on the north side of VAL D'OSSOLA as far as DOMODOSSOLA. Continue all along VALLE FORMAZZA until the end of the tarmac road.

The whole of VALLE FORMAZZA is very beautiful, with isolated farmhouses, waterfalls and valleys. You should try the local cheeses.

You could also visit the lateral valleys off VAL D'OSSOLA. For example, if you go towards MACUGNAGA along the VALLE ANZASCA you will come close to MONTE ROSA and an area inhabited by the Walser, a community with Swiss/German origins, traditions and language, who moved to various parts of the Alps in 1500. The houses are built in wood in a Nordic style, very different from the traditional Latin stone and brick buildings.

You can also visit the valleys of ANTRONA, BOGNANCO, DIVEDRO, DEVERO etc.

In each valley at the end of the tarmac roads you will find footpaths, once used by woodcutters, hunters, shepherds and smugglers, now for magnificent walks.

- **Visit to LAKE ORTA**

By car.

From PALLANZA go to LAGO D'ORTA via GRAVELLONA and OMEGNA.

You should park at the outskirts of the town and visit the beautiful town of ORTA. If you have time you should also visit the ISOLA DI SAN GIULIO (ferry crossing), seat of the Bishops of Orta who were the rulers of this region up until 1800. Look at the beauty of the houses and palaces. It is also interesting to visit the SACRO MONTE with its 12 chapels of the Via Crucis decorated with life-size statues from about 1600.

On the way back, (or there) if you have time, you could take a trip up the VAL STRONA as far as CAMPELLO MONTI. If you look carefully you can see several Roman bridges as this zone is peppered with very old mines. Some of these actually produced metal up until 1900. In the valley craftsmen produced pewter ware and you may still be able to find some pieces. Today there are also craftsmen working in wood.

The antique metal working tradition has given rise to an industrial area specialized in kitchenware between GRAVELLONA and OMEGNA.

ALESSI and LAGOSTINA are two internationally famous names and you may wish to visit their factory outlets at CASALE CORTE CERRO and OMEGNA.

P.S. We hope that our suggestions are of interest to show you also places that are a little off the beaten track. We would suggest that you avoid the main roads at weekends as traffic is very heavy. If you find any mistake in these notes please tell us, so that we can amend them for next guests.

The Tourist Office in Pallanza (100 m. from the villa towards the town square tel. ++39/0323/542250) can supply brochures, maps and useful information.

We are at your disposal for any information you may need.

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