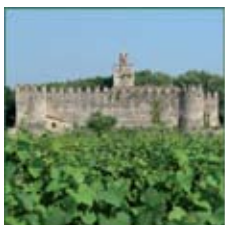


# *Lake Iseo and Franciacorta*



Discovering the area around

# Lake Iseo and Franciacorta

## LAGO D'ISEO - FRANCIACORTA

There are many reasons for choosing where to spend one's holiday, the expectations are high and there are many needs to satisfy.

There are many places, small treasure coves where nature, history and man's sheer hard work have produced an extraordinary effect, a kaleidoscope of landscapes, colours and architecture that speak to the most diverse of interests.

This occurs in the area surrounding Lake Iseo and Franciacorta, an extraordinary, fascinating and captivating area in the province of



Brescia, in the heart of Lombardy.

All the special ingredients are present: the calm majesty of the lake, an expanse of blue water magically reflecting the Pre-Alp mountains on its surface, mountains that are high, solemn, rugged, at times mellowed by natural terraces and meadows. The turf, where the lake meets the shores, is the favoured environment of many animal species, with their life cycles visible to all those people who choose a guided tour of this extraordinarily interesting area.

The Oglio River, in its slow meandering over one thousand years has witnessed many natural events and countless episodes involving humankind.

The hills of Franciacorta, so relaxing and restful, now also invite the visitor to discover a new world by using the cycling tracks.

Sweet hills are punctuated by rows of vines, passionately and proudly cultivated by the farmers of the area, headed by ancient and important manor houses or more rustic country homes where the grapes are carefully and lovingly worked to become valued, tasty wines.

Franciacorta is a real pearl in this treasure chest, its winemaking abilities have developed so far as to reach prestigious heights and achieve international fame. A hot summer sun invites



one to have fun, to swim in the waters of the lake and the numerous swimming pools in the parks and entertainment areas. Winds that blow daily around Sebino entice the visitor to try surfing and an excursion on a sailboat, revealing surprisingly interesting landscapes. The picturesque villages that are dotted along the shores of the lake



and the large island in its centre, Monte Isola, the largest inhabited lake island in Europe, are intriguing and still have many traditional characteristics and ancient homes.

The larger towns have many historical places and there are numerous good shopping opportunities for young and old.

Cultural events, music, folk festivals, sports events and food and wine exhibitions are programmed in every season. The mountains sides that frame the lake are also dotted with rural villages and country churches, immersed in meadows, woods and terraced fields where wheat and olives grow. The modern, flowing roads wind their way



through this peaceful countryside where the gaze can fall on medieval fortresses and elegant villas, humble parish churches and imposing churches of great artistic value.

There are solitary and magnificent monasteries where, in centuries past, monks worked to help model the landscape.

Prestigious hotels or family-run inns join agricultural tourism centres to offer a wide variety of possible accommodation.

There are also well-equipped campsites and tourist villages that open out directly onto the lake for lovers

of holidays in the open-air. Restaurants and trattorias offer all kinds of cuisine, from dishes prepared by master chefs to traditional dishes of the area prepared by following ancient recipes.

Lake Iseo and Franciacorta are all this and much, much more.

Explore them, it will be a real surprise!

## LAKE ISEO

Lake Iseo or Sebino is the fourth largest lake in Lombardy, the seventh largest in Italy, it lies at 185 m. above sea level and has a surface area of 61 km<sup>2</sup>.

The maximum width is 2.4 km and the perimeter is approximately 60 km. The lake has a maximum depth of 258 m between Siviano (Monte Isola) and Tavernola. It is one of the great lakes that have a glacier origin and is fed by the Oglio River that has its source at Passo Gavia, follows the Camonica Valley and enters the lake in the municipal area of Costa Volpino and exits between Paratico and Sarnico. At the centre of the lake there is an island, Monte Isola, the largest inhabited lake island in Europe, reaching heights of 600 m above sea level and characterised by typically Mediterranean vegetation also found in the lovely gardens on the two smaller, privately-owned, islands Loreto and S. Paolo to its north and south. The climate is ideal for restful holidays. In summer the temperatures reach an average of 26-27 degrees. At night there is a mountain breeze called "Vet" that blows from the Camonica



Valley towards the lake. In the afternoon, another breeze called "Ora" that blows from the plane. The surface temperature of the water is approximately 18-19 degrees in June and September, in July and August it is 20-22 degrees. The main towns are: Lovere, Pisogne, Sarnico and Iseo. The lakeside towns are connected one to the other by means of the "Navigazione Lago d'Iseo" (Lake Iseo public line service), a transport company that has its head office in Costa Volpino, special summer cruises are also offered. Water tours are also offered by the company Barcaioli Monteisola Service ([www.barcaiolimonteisola.it](http://www.barcaiolimonteisola.it)).



## FRANCIACORTA

The name 'Franciacorta' indicates the hillside area in the province of Brescia, bordered on the East by the Mella River, on the South by the state road Padana Superiore and Monte Orfano, to the West by part of the Oglio River running between Paratico and Capriolo and to the North by Lake Iseo and the Brione and Polaveno mountains. The area extends for over 230 km<sup>2</sup>.



The accepted origin of this name derives from "curtes francae", namely the medieval villages that fell under the protection of the Benedictine monks that were exempt from paying taxes. Other scholars instead refer to Charlemagne, who conquered Brescia in 774. He set up his camp at Rodengo Saiano, but wanted to celebrate the feast of Saint Dionysus in Paris, he solved the matter by decreeing: "These lands are a smaller France". He ordered that those lands were to have that name. A legend also tells of the people's revolt of 1265 against Charles d'Anjou that therefore led to a brief French domination of the area. Some specific aspects of the territory have made this an attractive tourist area. Franciacorta offers in fact wonderful rolling hillsides punctuated by vineyards with lovely walks, excellent wine and food, discretely fascinating ancient villas belonging to the Brescia nobility, important evidence of major historical events that still today allow us to see castles, towers and fortresses, but also places of great faith such as monasteries, convents, shrines and many country churches that bear witness, since earliest times, to the presence of the monks of Cluny in these areas.



## NATURE, COUNTRYSIDE, ENVIRONMENT

It is the vegetation with its appearance and varied composition that characterises the more visible outlines of the landscape around Lake Iseo and Franciacorta. Woods with broadleaf plants, meadows, graz-



Torbiere del Sebino

ing lands and fields, olive groves and orchards, are the "green" environment more frequently found in the area. Nature has also endowed the area with a rich flora consisting of approximately 1300 plant species without equal throughout Italy.



On Sebino and in the hillside areas of Franciacorta spontaneous and cultivated vegetation are integrated and alternate, merging with the signs of an age-old human habitation.

Around the residential areas cultivation of vines and olive trees on the sunnier, warmer hillsides still give the area that characteristic appearance of the Lombard countryside, which was so loved by the great travellers of the past.

Those areas that benefited from a sense of aesthetics have become superb gardens that surround splendid villas, with cedars, exotic palm trees, magnolias with large flowers, camphor trees and majestic horse chestnut trees.

On mountains, in valleys and on hillsides the woods contribute greatly to the harmonious appearance of the landscape. Like all the other great lakes of Lombardy, the Sebino also has its bed well below sea level as it was worn down by the "camusa" tongue of ice that formed during the Quaternary period.

The water in the lake changes approximately once every four years, flowing out again with the Oglio River that then runs



The Erosion Pyramids in Zone



from Sarnico, towards the Po River. To the observer walking along the Sebino shores, the mountains appear to consist of light coloured rocks of similar shape, usually with striations and of marine origin.

There is a very picturesque bay at Orrido di Zorzino, in the municipal area of Riva di Solto. Here the local limestone is black with smooth sheer cliffs above the water of a small gulf.

At Zone, erosion by glacier deposits has created the characteristic and precarious landscape of the "Erosion Pyramids", pinnacles of clay earth each surmounted and protected by a rock.

Some rocks have even influenced the history and economics of the area. The Rock of Sarnico is one of these. Known as the "serene rock" it has been used in local architecture since the 1400's.

The glacial imprint left more spectacular signs, the glaciers of Camon-

The mountains around Lake Iseo



ica Valley left behind great quantities of rubble that now make up the vast morainal hillsides covered by famous vineyards.

Near Provaglio d'Iseo, in Franciacorta, when the glaciers retreated small ponds were formed which became swamps and marshes. In the early XIXth century the exploitation of peat deposits in some way recreated the original wet-lands which are now protected as the natural reserve "Torbiere del Sebino".

## ART AND HISTORY

Torbiere del Sebino: arrow heads and blades



The Lake Iseo area and the circle of morainal hills known as Franciacorta are characterised by a single geological and natural origin, the area has witnessed similar historical and cultural events, leaving many historical remnants.

Archaeological remains have allowed us to trace the presence of human life in this vast area since prehistoric times. Nonetheless the true origin of the territory lies in the Roman conquest at the end of the 1st century B.C., which led to a total reorganisation and the countryside was divided into "centuria". After the arrival of the Longobards (569 A.D.) many more shelters were built as a protection against the raiding Franks. These sparse dwellings were grouped together into villages. Since then and in the centuries that followed many castles,

defence towers and inhabited towers were built, surrounded by defensive walls and fortified villages. Traces of these buildings are found more or less everywhere. The struggle between the towns of Brescia

Oldofredi' Castle in Iseo



and Bergamo for control over the Oglio River also encouraged the building of defence structures. Another type of settlement found in the area is the rural hamlet, with characteristic rustic architecture, often dating back to medieval times.

Beautiful villas belonging to the nobility and dating from

different eras, from the renaissance to the early 1900's, are scattered around the area. The landscape throughout the area is characterised by a large number of churches, from the imposing, large parish churches in the town centres to the outer lying smaller churches, vestries, and chapels that have often been built on prior places of worship. As well as the churches, also worthy of mention are the many shrines, a symbol of popular devotion, largely dedicated to the figure of Mary. These areas of worship are usually outside the town centres; some are even in isolated areas and can only be reached by following a mule track. There are also a large number of monasteries in the area.



Passirano Castle



## The artistic shores of Lake Iseo

### A one-day itinerary

The itinerary begins in **Iseo** (pag.18), the main town of the lake, an ancient village with Medieval origins ruled by the Oldofredi, their *Castle* can still be seen; travelling along Mirolte road in the direction of *Garibaldi Square*, one can admire the small *Church of Santa Maria del Mercato*, continuing to the right along Pieve road one arrives at Sagrato Square where there is the *Parish of Sant'Andrea*. In front there is the *Church of San Giovanni Battista* and on the right the *Church of San Silvestro*. Leaving Iseo, along the lakeside road one arrives at **Sulzano** (pag.35) where the *Parish of San Giorgio* dominates the upper

part of the town. In a panoramic position along the *Antica Strada Valeriana* (ancient Valeriana road) the *Churches San Fermo* and *Santa Maria del Giego* deserve a visit. Continuing to the north one arrives at **Sale Marasino** (pag.34) with the imposing *Parish of San Zenone* and its beauti-

ful lakeside villas, among which *Villa Martinengo-Villagana* stands out.

A quick detour to see the *Church of Santa Maria della Neve* in **Gandizzano** and the *Church of San Giacomo* in **Maspiano** is a good idea. A few more kilometres and a traffic circle with an olive press welcomes visitors to the town of oil, **Marone** (pag.19). The ancient *Parish Church of San Pietro in Vinculis* is set on a hill, while the historical centre houses the *Parish of San Martino di Tours*. After following a stretch of the *Antica Strada Valeriana* (ancient Valeriana road), one arrives at **Cislano**, hamlet of **Zone** (pag. 36), from where one has the best view of the *Erosion Pyramids*. The small *Church of San Giorgio* is always open. After about a kilometre one arrives in the town that looks like a mountain village built around the *Parish of San Giovanni Battista*. Returning to the lake, continue along the road to **Pisogne** (pag. 26), the last village on the Brescia side of Sebino.

Arranged around the *Mercato Square*, there is the towering *Vescovo Tower*,

and the nearby *Corna Pellegrini Square* where there is the *Parish of Santa Maria Assunta*.

At the northern end of the town we end our journey at the two treasures in the art and history of the lake: the *Church of Santa Maria in Silvis* and the *Church of Santa Maria della Neve*.



Chiesa di S. Giacomo a Maspiano



Chiesa di S. Giorgio a Cislano

## Villages and places of worship in Franciacorta

### Itinerary: first day

The itinerary begins from the *Monastery of San Pietro in La-mosa* (pag.29) in **Provaglio d'Iseo** (pag. 28). We then travel towards **Monticelli** (pag. 12) where we pass the *Parish of Santi Tirso e Emiliano* to reach the *Shrine of the Madonna della Rosa* a short distance away, and admire the wonderful view. We travel along the valley in the direction of **Ome** (pag. 22) and we reach the *Parish of Santo Stefano*. In the district of **Cerezata** a small road leads visitors to the *shrine of Madonna dell'Avello*, open to visitors in September for the Feast of the Nativity. From Ome we continue on towards **Rodendo Saiano** (pag. 30), with destination the *Abbey of San Nicola* (pag. 31).

We then continue on towards **Gussago** (pag.17), moving in that direction from the district of Ronco. There are many noblemen's homes and religious buildings that are particularly interesting, such as the *Parish of Santa Maria* e the *Santissima*, located at the top of the Barbisone hill. Moving southwards we reach **Castegnato** (pag. 13), where we can see the *Parish of San Giovanni Battista* in the town centre. The historical homes in the town centre and in the immediate vicinity are also well worth a visit. Proceeding on towards **Paderno Franciacorta** (pag.23), we can visit the *Medieval Castle*, that has been completely restored. A lovely road winding along the green countryside leads to **Passirano** (pag.25). At the end of the village, in the direction of Cazzago San Martino, there is solitary and majestic *Castle-haven*. Continuing on towards Monterotondo, we pass **Corte Franca** (pag.15). Then there is **Borgonato**, with the *Palazzi Lana-Berlucchi* and the parish church next door. We then move onto the Iseo-Rovato provincial road that takes us



Olivetan Abbey of San Nicola



Palazzo Torri

to **Nigoline**. At the entrance to the town there is the parish church and the *Palazzo Monti della Corte* in front. A cobbled street leads to *Palazzo Torri* and the small *Church of Sant'Eufemia*. Follow the road that skirts Monte Alto and you get to **Colombaro** and **Timoline**. At the traffic circle take the road towards Provaglio, passing *Palazzo Pizzini* and the small *Church of Santa Giulia*.

## Villages and places of worship in Franciacorta

### Itinerary: second day

We start from the centre of **Rovato** (pag.32): the walls of the *medieval castle* are quite characteristic, so are the *Parish of Santa Maria Assunta* and the lively *Cavour Square*. At



Church of S. Stefano in Rovato



Parish of S. Maria in Erbusco

the foot of Monte Orfano the *Church of Santo Stefano* deserves a visit and on the summit there is the *Convent of the Annunciata* (pag. 33). From Rovato take a short detour to visit the *Roman Castrum* at **Coccaglio** (pag.14), then retrace your steps towards **Erbusco** (pag.16). From the province road it is possible to see the scenic *Lechi Villa*, entering the village on the left there is *Palazzo Cavalleri*, now the Town



Parish Museum

Hall, and in the old village the *Church of Santa Maria Assunta* and the ancient *Church of Santa Maria* are well worth a visit. We then return to the state road where, shortly afterwards we see *Palazzo Bargnani-Dandolo*, now the Town Hall of **Adro** (pag.9). Entering the town we reach the *Parish of San Giovanni*

*Battista* that contains an unusual museum of elegant holy vestments. An uphill road leads to the *Church of Santa Maria Assunta*, an ancient parish church now in use as the cemetery church, while about one kilometre away there is the *Church of Santa Maria in Favento*; lastly, a little further away, there is the *Shrine of the Madonna della Neve*. We return to the road to reach **Capriolo** (pag.12). The *Parish of San Giorgio* is worthy of note as it contains a painting by Romanino, and the small *Church of Sant'Onofrio* is located on a hill north of the inhabited area. Moving southwest, along the banks of the Oglio River, we reach **Palazzo** (pag.24), the last part of the itinerary. The historical centre is characterised by the *Parish of Santa Maria Assunta*, the old town of Mura and the imposing *Popolo Tower*.



Church of S. Giorgio in Capriolo

## ADRO

In Franciacorta, at the foot of Monte Alto, Adro has a main town and the one hamlet of **Torbiato**. We can still see the 14th century ruins and the Ghibelline tower, the last vestige of what was a defense fortification for the original dwelling nucleus. The territory, traditionally used for agriculture, has undergone changes over the last few decades due to the numerous artisan and industrial activities along with expansion for residential needs. One of Adro's most important monuments is the 15th century **Church of Santa**



Palazzo Bargnani-Dandolo

**Maria Assunta**, an old parish church, in the ancient **castle** erected on a hill which was richly frescoed in the 16th century. The recent **Parish of San Giovanni Battista** (XVII-XVIII centuries), enriched by baroque friezes and decoration works by *Fantoni da Rovetta*, is in the centre of the town.



Parish of S. Giovanni

The interior hosts the **Parish Museum** which has been recently realized with finely embroidered sacred parments. The **Church of Santa Maria in Favento** is approximately one kilometre from the town centre, built in the second century and frescoed in the 15th and 16th centuries. The **Sanctuary of Madonna della Neve**

(XVIII century) presided by Barefooted Carmelites erected on the grounds of the original church, in memory of the appearance in 1519 of the Virgin Lady to a deaf and dumb shepherd. Near the sanctuary there is the **Silk and Linen Museum**, testifying the role played by these activities in the economy of the area. Among the various buildings to be remembered is the **Palazzo Bargnani-Dandolo**, built in the seventeenth century, which preserves a famous portrait by *Pitocchetto*. Near besides there is the elliptical formed contemporary Gentility Chapel. In Torbiato, in the 18th century Parish church dedicated to **Saints Faustino and Giovita**, there is an alter piece realised by *Antonio Paglia*.



Sanctuary of Madonna della Neve



## CAPRIOLO

On the banks of the Oglio river, the town borders with the Provinces of Brescia and Bergamo. It is in Capriolo that the people of Brescia and Bergamo, the Guelphs and Ghibellines, Milan and Venice undertook their historical battles. Capriolo's social and economic development is based on winegrowing and on the manufactory industry.

The original hamlet developed on a hill around the 11th century **Cas-**



**tle**, which, built on ancient Roman ruins still dominates the area with its impressive walls, is the last and only vestige of bygone days. It was reduced to a pile of ruins in the 15th century when it lost its strategic importance, but in 1694, further to some important restructuring



The Castle

works, it was converted into a cloister convent hosting the enclosed Capuchine nuns. It now hosts the Orsoline nuns. Behind the castle, on a higher morainic hill, offering a breathtaking view of Lake Iseo and the surrounding area there is the little **Church of Sant'Onofrio** where this hermit's statute is pre-

served. The Parish, erected on the hilly slopes, was rebuilt in the 16th century inspired by the existing **San Giorgio** chapel and in which the Patron Saint was kept. The altar piece represents the Resurrection, a remarkable work by **Romanino** realised in 1525.

The organ, instead, was realized in 1828 by the Serassi family from Bergamo. The wooden soasa framing the old Madonna statue is attributed to the **Fantoni**.

The majolica bell tower has been subjected to a long series of restructuring work that started in 1938.

Noble dwelling places testify the wealth of bygone days.



Church of S. Onofrio

## CASTEGNATO

The name of this town derives from a chestnut grove that was near the inhabited area, and which, due to its flatness, water abundance and fertile soil, was mainly used for agriculture, particularly wheat. Nowadays, industrial, commercial and artisan complexes have somewhat changed to the area's appearance. The **Parish of San Giovanni Battista** was built in



Callegari's portal

1685 next to a church of the fifteenth century dedicated to this saint. The façade, completed in 1724, did not follow the original project of a simpler and disadorned structure, but was instead endowed with some rich elements.

The portal with the statue of San Giovanni Battista is attributed to **Antonio Callegari**. The patron now, however, is San Vitale solemnly celebrated every 25 years and whose remains are preserved in the parish.

Twelve 18th century canvases by **Paglia** are kept in the church dedicated to the Apostoles with rich decorations in marble and stucco.

The **santella of the Madonna del Buon Viaggio**, by **Dino Decca**, is next to the Gandovere stream. **Palazzo Rodengo**, **Palazzo Camadini** and **Villa Lana** are among some of the most

important residences in the area, including **Palazzo Pianera** and **La Baitella** characterized by some 18th century architectonic elements.



The Parish of S. Giovanni





## COCCAGLIO

The town's older centre was built on a Roman castrum plant, where a medieval castle was erected to defend the Brescia and Bergamo borders. Today, the area is mainly developed at the foot of Mount Orfano, from which one the best views of the Annunziata's convent can be admired. From a traditional agriculture economy it has developed of late into an important industrial centre. The main basement of the **Roman Castrum** (1st



The Tower and S. Giovanni Battista



century B.C.) and the ancient **castle's Tower** are the respectively the only things left, including some remains of the boundary walls. Next to the tower there is the **Church of San Giovanni Battista** erected in

Tenuta Castellino



the 14th century in the place of a previous parish of the 12th-13th centuries. Ancient little roads can be walked along inside the castrum which characterize the present historical centre. On the other side of the main road opposite the Roman tower, the **Parish of Santa Maria Nascente** was built in 1719, whose façade was finished only in 1759. In the square facing the church there is the Monument to Luca Marenzio (a column dominated by a lyre with the inscription "il più dolce cigno d'Italia"), (the sweetest Italian swan) to the illustrious Coccaglio citizen who was an internationally acclaimed composer of madrigals towards the middle of 1500. Along the old mountain road towards Cologne, it would be worthwhile to visit the little medieval **Church of San Pietro**, with frescoes from '400 and '500. Continuing along the road, a singular construction known as **Tenuta Castellino** appears from the vineyards.



The Parish of S. Maria Nascente

## CORTE FRANCA

Corte Franca has four hamlets: **Borgonato, Colombaro, Nigoline** and **Timoline**. The name describes the origin of the hamlets which, in ancient times, were rural courts exempted from paying tollage. Early in the middle ages these territories bordered with the Torbiere (peatlands); they were reclaimed by the monks of the San Pietro Monastery in



Borgonato



Lamosa. The monk's work was finalized by the rich families in the area, who erected, in the 1700s, beautiful holiday dwellings, developing an agricultural economy specialized in growing cereals, vines and silkworm breeding. Today, Corte Franca is

an active tourist centre, due to receptive and recreational structures such as an aquatic park, a golf course, a commercial centre and a well-known night club.

Among the best artistic centres there are Colombaro, the **Church of Santa Maria in Zenighe**, **Palazzo Ragnoli**, **Palazzo Barboglio de Gaioncelli** and the **castle's ancient tower**. At Nigoline, opposite the parish church, there is **Palazzo Monti della Corte** (XVII century) still preserving in the garden the lower part of the **Chapel of San Martino**. On the hill, the ancient **Church of Sant'Eufemia** preserves frescoes from the *Ferramola* school of art, the annexed cemetery goes back to the 11th century. Not far away, recently restructured and always open to the public there is **Palazzo Torri**, a noble 18th century dwelling. Borgonato's historical centre rises on a suggestive hill dominated by the parish; on the side the two beautiful **Palazzi Lana-Berlucchi**. At Timoline the most significant building is **Palazzo Pizzini**, a 17th century villa with park; next to it, the beautiful **Church of Santa Giulia**.



Palazzo Monti



## ERBUSCO

Placed on the road that led from Brescia to Milan, Erbusco used to be a stage coach stop. It was a rural parish and feudal land of the Martinengo family. In the little historical centre, and the country nearby, the beautiful noble homes have witnessed the ancient noble achievements of Brescia and Milan nobility, who found the area an ideal environment for summer holidays. Today Erbusco is a well-known and acknowledged centre



mainly within the enogastronomic sphere as the centre of the "Consortium for the protection Franciacorta" and of the "Route of Franciacorta Wine". Prestigious cellars and names such as Gualtiero Marchesi and Henri Chenot are here to offer a relaxing holiday. Remarkable testimony of the medieval period is the delicious centre around the **Castle**, erected between 1279 and 1312, of which remain only the



Villa Lechi

slits portal and the drawbridge leading to the **Church of Santa Maria**. Built in the 13th century in Romanesque – Gothic style, the parish was restructured in the 15th<sup>th</sup> century. The semicircular apse inside and polygonal outside preserves the *Announcement* by *Gentile of the Fabriano* school and a *Crucifixion* of 1400. The

*Madonna on the Throne with Baby* is of great prestige as well as the *Portrait of S. Orsola and the Virgins*. The **Parish Church of Santa Maria Assunta** which has the five marble and the wooden tabernacle by *Fantoni*. The entrance into Erbusco is highly characterized by the presence of **Villa Lechi**, built between the 16th and the 17th centuries in Palladian style, probably ordered by Bartolomeo Colleoni, the commander of mercenaries, for one of his daughters. The villa has a majestic courtyard with an ashlar portico with round arches. Worthy to be noted, the **Palazzo Cavalleri**, today the premises of the local administration with an elegant courtyard and annexed chapel.



Annunciation

## GUSSAGO

A few kilometres from Brescia, on the first morainic hills dividing Franciacorta from the Trompia Valley, we find Gussago. Of very ancient origins, Gussago, during the various destinies which it has undergone and, due to its climate and suggestive geographic position, is today a summer destination as the splendid and well-preserved and noble dwellings testify. Known in the Brescia area for its wine, cherries, chestnuts and its local cuisine based on meat on the spit, mushrooms and game, Gussago offers hospitality and



warm-heartedness of ancient origins.

Many of the religious structures distinguish Gussago's artistic heritage. The **Parish of Santa Maria**, built in 1470 on the ruins of a previous Longobard building, is most probably the best. Inside there is the nave with polygonal apse set up on a second semicircular one of the IX-X centuries. Fifteenth century frescoes by the *Foppa* school and two by *Paolo da Caylina* (Old and Young). The **Parish of Santa Maria Assunta** dates back to the 8th century and it is characterized by the marble set of steps by Basiletti with the two lion heads.

The 17th century **Church of San Rocco** emerges from the hill through a long file of cypresses. The emblem of Gussago is a building in the vineyards on the Barbisone hill, the **Santissima**. Erected as Church of



Santissima

the Santissima Trinità in the 14 century, it was entrusted to the Dominicans who added a convent. After the Napoleonic oppression, the palace became a private property. Inside there are frescoes by *Angelo Inganni*.



Parish of S. Maria



## ISEO

The most important of Lake Iseo has been an important commercial port and exchange place between Brescia and the Camonica Valley. Due to the opening of the railways Iseo-Edölo, it lost its strategic role and its economy which changed from industrial to tourist. Today the port is, once again, the protagonist of the economy of Iseo with hundreds of tourists coming and going whilst visiting other localities. The hub of this medieval historical centre



The lakefront



Garibaldi Square

is in **Garibaldi Square** surrounded by ancient buildings with a portico reminiscent of the hectic activity lost in the oblivion of the past. In this square there is the very first monument erected in Italy in 1883 to honour the hero of the two worlds, the **Town Hall** (1830) designed by architect



The Parish of S. Andrea

*Rodolfo Vantini* and, just outside the square, the **Church of Santa Maria del Mercato** that the Oldofredis built in the 14th century. It has one only nave where frescoes that date back to the 15th and 16th centuries are preserved. Nearby there is the **Parish of Sant Andrea**, founded in the 6th century and rebuilt in the 12th century in Romanesque-Longobard style. It underwent changes until the 19th century, when the aforementioned Vantini had the interior redone. The façade is characterized by a centrally enclosed bell tower. In this square there is, almost hidden,

the 13th century **Church of San Silvestro**, the *Danza Macabra* (macabre dance) is frescoed in the apse. The centre is dominated by the inhabited **Oldofredi Castle** (13th century) the present seat of the town's library. The town has three hamlets: **Pilzone**, **Cremignane** and **Clusane**. The latter is a fishing village, dominated by the **Carmagnola Castle** (1429) and appreciated for its gastronomic tradition.



Clusane sul Lago

## MARONE

Half way between Iseo and Pisogne, on the side of the lake is the town of Marone. Known in the 1800's as an important reference point for industry and wool and more specifically for felt material, today Marone is famous mostly for the cul-



S. Martino di Tours

tivation of olives, which has hence given it the name "town of oil". Marone is also the ideal place for walks, on foot and on mountain-bikes along the numerous paths that, from the centre, go up towards the Cross of Marone and Mount Guglielmo. Marone also bears witness to the past: in the area **Cò de Hela**, along the railway,

it is possible to find the ruins of a Roman villa from the first century A.D. On a rock spur, in the area of an antique castle destroyed in the 13th century, it is possible to find the ancient **Parish of San Pietro in Vinculis** (15th century). Along the Zone street, the **Sanctuary of the Madonna della Rota** (15th century) deserves a visit with fresco paintings by *Giovanni da Marone*. Worth noting is the 18th century **Parish of San**

**Martino di Tours**, with a *Crucifixion* by *Pietro da Marone* (16th century). Belonging to the town of Marone is the hamlet of **Vello** which extends down a single road between the lake and the hill. The inhabited centre is gathered around the **Parish of Sant'Eufemia** (1715), which has a painting by Ottavio Amigoni of 1647. At the entrance to the town it is possible to find the 15th century antique parish church, today the **Church of the Cemetery**, with fresco by *Giovanni da Marone*, among the others, an *Annunciation* of 1489. The old coastal runway in the rock has recently been transformed into a beautiful and panoramic walkway to be used either on foot or by bicycle.



Vello



## MONTE ISOLA

A hill in the middle of the lake, declared as one of the most beautiful boroughs in Italy, Monte Isola has a total surface area of 4.5 km<sup>2</sup>, a circumference of 9 km and an altitude that reaches 600 meters. It has 12 typical boroughs, some on the lake and some on the hill, all connected and characterized by little streets and alleys in the direction of the lake to show the fundamen-



tal role this had on the economy of the island, which has always been based on the manufacturing of wooden boats, on the production of nets and on fishing. The island is a must to see, on foot, by bicycle or by small buses that run the official service. From a historic – artistic point of view



Siviano

it is possible to see, from a distance, two buildings: half-way up the hill above **Sensole**, is the **Martinengo Fortress** erected in the 14th century by the Oldofredis; the tower is found unusually in the centre of the castle. Despite its bellicose aspect, the building was transformed into a residence in the 15th century by the Martinengos. At the top of the

island stands the white **Sanctuary of the Madonna della Ceriola**, built in ancient times on the ruins of a sacred pagan building: the view is spectacular. The main town, **Siviano**, preserves



Rete e Pesca Museum

medieval traces in its stone walls, in its very narrow alleys and in the **Martinengo Tower**. **Peschiera** is a town which is easily reachable and shows along the lakeside antique houses with stone arcades from Sarnico. In a higher

position, near the parish church, we find the **Oldofredi Castle**, recently restructured, which now has an arch and verandah. Do not miss the **Pesca Museum** in Peschiera and the **Rete e Pesca Museum** in Siviano.



Martinengo Fortress

## MONTICELLI BRUSATI

The name of this town suggests the wavy land upon which it develops, made up of twelve hills that host antique medieval areas and more recent neighborhoods with beautiful villas. Despite the industrial development, Monticelli maintains a clear agricultural imprint, especially in the Vineyard area, as shown by the numerous cellars in the various hamlets, the terracing cultivated with vines that denote the view beautifully. The historic-artistic wealth of this area

The Sanctuary of the Madonna della Rosa



is found predominantly in the religious buildings. Very pretty, on a hill in the hamlet of **Fontana**, is the **Church of San Zenone**, ex parish church, constructed in the 15th century. The present **parish church**, instead, devoted to the **Santi Tirso and Emil-**

**iano**, is found in the centre of the town on an elevated level and is from the 18th century. On another hill, in a beautiful panoramic position, preceded by a small vineyard, is the **Sanctuary of the Madonna della Rosa**, whose tower reminds one of a guard post erected in remote eras. Built in the 15th century and subsequently re-adapted, it preserves works by *Cossali* and by *Paglia*. It tells of a legend that says that in this place the Madonna came to the rescue of a man dying of thirst indicating



Church of S. Zenone

to him a water spring, whilst a rose bed budded at his feet. Among the civil constructions, the most significant building is the **Palazzo Montini-Pisa**, with an impressive 1500 Tower with external frescos.





## OME

Surrounded by wooded mounts and hills with vineyards, Ome lies in a basin where the Gandovere torrent passes. The origins of the inhabited town centre are pre-Roman, but the historical traces today show only the settling of later-Romans and the presence of the Lombards. The various medieval areas of the town have been preserved. The town has seen, in the last few decades, a noticeable economic development, stimulated by the



Madonna dell'Avello

construction of a hospital and a thermal centre. On the hill of the **Cerezza** district we find the **Sanctuary of the Madonna dell'Avello**. The present church is from 1400 and has votive frescos from 1500 and 1600. Still in the hills, but in the Goiane district, arises the **Church of San Michele**. The present structure is from the 15th century with



Church of S. Michele

frescos from the 15th and 16th centuries, but it is archaeologically documented as having Lombard origin. In the square it is possible to visit the **Parish of Santo Stefano** (1693-1704), with frescos from 1400, built around the 15th century

antique church. Among the works, is the remarkable organ case (17th century), carved works by Fantoni and an oil painting by *Cossali* from 1598. Amongst the most important monuments there is a 15th century mallet, but datable to 1080, the **Averoldi Mallet**. Situated in the area of Grotta, there is a two-storey building used as a forge to work metal, with opposite portico which is co-used, deposit rooms and movement areas and water bearers. The only Mallet still in function in the Province of Brescia, is in the museum circuit "La via del Ferro e del Fuoco" in the Trompia Valley.



Maglio Averoldi

## PADERNO FRANCIACORTA



Ancient Castle

Paderno, the smallest area of Franciacorta, extends externally from the morenic hills onto a surface which is completely flat which gives the agricultural reserves and vine cultivation a good part of its surface. The distance from the principal ways of communication, it gives a certain tranquility and peaceful life to the inhabited town centre. In the town square rises the majestic **medieval ancient Castle** which was the scene of many battles, first against the Huns and then against the Viscounts and then the French, during which they were partially destroyed. After about three centu-

ries of abandon, the castle underwent a first restructuring in 1800 which modified the original structure and a recent restructuring of the left wing at the same which now hosts the town council library and the civic hall and the creation of a square externally from the principal entrance of the Castle. The only original structure left is a wall with two rounded towers. Inside the walls there is the **Church of the Madonna del Castello** (17th century) which hosts an image antequely worshipped by the inhabitants for the "need of rain" in times of draught. The



Parish of S. Pancrazio

**Parish of San Pancrazio** was constructed from 1740 to 1790 from a



Sandrinelli Palace

project by *Marchetti*. Inside there are precious oil paintings, decorations in plaster and frescos by *Teosa*.

The stone statues that are on the façade represent Saint Pancrazio and Saint Gottardo, patrons of the town. Amongst the civil buildings, worthy of a visit there is the 18th century **Palazzo Sandrinelli**, now town hall.

## PALAZZOLO SULL'OGLIO

An area situated to the west of Franciacorta and of the province of Brescia, Palazzolo develops its own inhabited area on the banks of the Oglio river, forever the main character in the economic and historical events of the town.

The transformation of Palazzolo into an industrial area was, by far, more advanced compared to the other towns in the Franciacorta area. Already from the mid 17th century, regarding agriculture, that characterized the local economy until the 16th century, the first silk spinning wheels were flanked, the

tanneries for hides, mallets, mills, supplanted then, over time, by textile manufacturers, button companies by foundries, and by mechanic laboratories that today make up the principal productive activities. Amongst the most important monuments we remember **Parish of**

**San Fedele**, of the 15th century, today used as an Auditorium, that preserves internally the structures of two previous churches, the first from the 9th century and the second from the 12th, with pictorial works by Pietro Marone.

The new **Parish of Saint Maria Assunta**, that rises on the banks of the Oglio river, built on the project of *Massari of Venice*

in the middle of the 17th century. Kept inside there is: a polypych by

*Civerchio* (1525), an alter piece by the *Cosali* (1620) and one by *Batoni* (1760).

The **Church of S. Giovanni Evangelista**, that gathered the inhabitants of Mura, has a crape devoted to S. Rocco with frescos from 1495. The **Popolo Tower**, characteristic monument, stands out 100 meters above the built-up area. Built during the years 1813 - 1830, it rises above the **Mirabella Tower**, one of the three towers of the ancient medieval castle.



Ancient Castle



Popolo Tower



## PASSIRANO

The area, made up of the centre and three hamlets (**Camignone, Monterotondo and Valenzano**), is immersed in the greenery of the Franciacorta countryside. Secular walls and



Castle shelter

inhabited buildings, typical of the area, give the town the aspect of an ancient borough. Camignone distinguishes itself for its beautiful vineyards, the historical heart of the Barboglio district, going back to the 16th century, **Villa Giordani** and **Villa Duco-Catturich** from 14th century origins. At Monterotondo, whose name comes from the high ground from whence it emerges, worthy to note is the 15th century little **Church of San Giorgio**, that rises in place of the castle destroyed in 1153. Striking is the sparse group of old stone

houses in Valenzano. Next to these is small **Church of Sant'Alessandro** that preserves in its steeple Romanesque lines. South of the town, in the direction of Bornato rises powerfully and perfectly conserved, the emblem Passirano: the **Castle shelter**.

Built around the 10th century to protect the population from the invasion of the Hungarians, it was reconstructed between the 13th and the 14th century. The walls in cobblestones are surmounted by Ghibelline battlements added probably only at the beginning of the 19th century. Noticeable on the east side is the powerful square donjon and, on the southern part, remain the angular semi-circular towers. One has access to the internal courtyard from an 18th century door. Here a few rural constructions arise. In the front of the castle rises the 16th century **Villa Fassati**, with



Parish of S. Zenone



Villa Duco-Catturich

18th century façade and vast gardens. In the hills one notices the elegant **Villa la Tesea** of 16th century origin. The **Parish of San Zenone** was built at the end of the 1600's on the original structure of a convent and a sanctuary.





## PISOGNE

The last area to the north of the Brescia coast of Sebino, Pisogne was historically the meeting point between the lake and the mountains. A very vast area with many hamlets and districts, it has its historical centre situated on a light rise and is made up of very narrow roads and antique buildings.



The antique origins of the area are visible in the **Church of Santa Maria in Silvis**, the most ancient in Pisogne. Dating back to the 7th-8th century, it was reconstructed in 1400 with the characteristic shape of the rustic parish; beautiful, inside, the frescos of late 15th century by *Giovanni Pietro da Cemmo* and the *Danza Macabra* (macabre dance) painted in counter-façade. The heart of the little town is the elegant



Parrocchiale di S. Maria



Il centro

**Corna Pellegrini Square**, surrounded by characteristic arches that host the monumental **Vescovo Tower** built in 1250; it measures 32,60 meters in height, with a square base of about 7 meters on the side. The legend states that in 1518 eight women were burnt alive here at the stake, accused of witchcraft. The **Parish of Santa Maria Assunta**, built starting from 1769; the inside has a single aisle with six side chapels and décor from the 19th century. However, the artistic treasure of Pisogne is found in the **Church of Santa Maria della Neve** (see opposite page).



S. Maria in Silvis

### Church of Santa Maria della Neve (Romanino Church)

The church, with a single aisle, built in the 15th century is one of the most remarkable examples of sacred paintings of 1500. The doorway is in red sandstone, sculptured in ornamental motifs; in the lunette there is an antique statue of the Madonna with her Baby. The frescos on the lateral external arches are by Giovanni da Marone (16th century). Inside, the cycle of frescos dedicated to the Passion of Jesus, are the works of Girolamo



Romani known as the Romanino, who worked on them during the years between 1532 and 1534. Born in Brescia, this artist was an important



representative of "non finished" paintings, according to which the figures were lined with few, powerful brush-strokes and the shading were already expressive with no need for subtle touches. The colour technique was extraordinary. His very personal and unmistakable stile was a complete break from the academicism of the time. Romanino was among the first to abandon the subordination of order and the aesthetic and architectural norms to give vent to popular expression by using also unconventional figures, sometimes even grotesque. The grand fresco of the Crucifixion is an ensemble of moving figures of exaggerated proportions, but also of a soft drawing that immortalizes the atmosphere of that time.

Info: 9.30-11.30/15.00-18.00, Monday closed; for groups please contact: 0364/86011



## PROVAGLIO D'ISEO

Developed in pre-Roman times on the important transit road that connected Brescia to Valle Camonica, the town owns its origin and development to the presence on its territory of the Cluniac monastery of San Pietro in Lamosa built in the 11th century. Adjacent to the lake, the area boasts two hamlets in the heart of Franciacorta: **Fantecolo**, characterized by the elegance of **Villa Fenaroli**



built between 1895 and 1909 and **Provezze** with the Soncini buildings from 1600, villa Gussalli from 1700 and the parish church of **San Filastrio** which preserves an altar piece by *Moretto*. The town, which originally had an exclusive agricultural economy, today is a center for rendering services, artisan and industrial activities. The symbol of Provaglio is the **Sanctuary of the Madonna del Corno** (16th century) which overlooks the built-up area of Mount Cognolo, with an unmistakable profile. One reaches it after a beautiful walk that gives a spectacular view of the Torbiere peat bogs and of the morainic amphitheatre of Franciacorta. Along the route, one meets up with the little **Church of**

Church of S. Rocco and the Castle Oldofredi



**San Rocco** (19th century) and the ruins of **Oldofredi Castle** (11th century) destroyed in 1400 by Pandolfo Malatesta. The base of a tower and a long outer wall are visible. The center is developed around the **Parish of the Santi Pietro e Paolo** and of the town hall in **Palazzo Francesconi**, originally of the 15th century. At the borders of Provaglio, coming from Iseo, the **Monastery of San Pietro in Lamosa** (see opposite page) dominates from above the natural Reserve of 'Torbiere del Sebino'.



Madonna del Corno

## Monastery of San Pietro in Lamosa

It is a small complex of religious and civil buildings placed above a rise as guardian of the area, once a marshland, from whence comes the term "lamosa"; the



The cloister

small stone church of Romanesque origin is the destination of thousands of visitors every year. The most antique core of the monastery of San Pietro in Lamosa, in Provaglio d'Iseo, probably placed in the area of a Roman temple at Mitra, goes back to the 1th century. The Romanesque features of the building was given to the monks of Cluny, who in the four centuries of their existence made it bigger. In 1536 it became the property of regular canonicity of San Salvatore of Brescia and the church was made bigger with the addition of the chapel to the left of the doorway (1555). From below the organ area there is access to a beautiful cloister and from there to the Discipline of Saint Mary Magdalene (16th century), so called because it was the area where the Con-

fraternity of the Discipline met; a movement that carried out rigid practices of mortifying the body to remove sins. The cycle of frescos preserved narrate the story of Jesus from His birth up to the Assumption and dates back to the beginning of the 16th century, although the author is unknown. Worthy of attention is also the baroque chapel in the front part of the church. *Info: 10.00-12.00/14.00-17.00, Monday closed; for groups please contact: 030/983477*



Frescos of the Discipline





## RODENGO SAIANO

Rodengo Saiano is in Franciacorta, halfway between Brescia and Lake Iseo. A lovely chain of hills surrounds the inhabited center, arising in a flat area and travelling through the waters of the Gandovere torrent that flow from the source in Ome and Monticelli. **Rodengo** and **Saiano** maintained, during the course of the centuries, their own identities, maybe due to their different



Villa Fenaroli

origins (Saiano dates back to the Roman era, while Rodengo had Lombard origins), they were united into one town only in 1927. The present town, made up also of the **Padergnone** area, bases its own economy not only on agricultural activities but also on an excellent artisan and commercial material. Over the years, due to the presence of importance religious centers, the town has become a destination for numerous tourists. The most famous and important religious complex is the **Abbey of San Nicola** (see opposite page). It is the symbol of Rodengo Saiano. Its foundation dates back to 1090 on commission of the Benedictine Cluniacs and, in fact, forms part of the European Cluniac itinerary. Among the noble abodes there is in the area of **Corneto** the beautiful **Villa Fenaroli** with an arch and ample garden. The villa, with its typical Brescian architectural style of the central part higher than the two side wings which are lower, is visible through an elegant gateway. On Mount Delma arises the **Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli** and the Franciscan Convent, both from 1500. The two religious buildings are reachable from a pathway through Via Crucis that gave the name of **Calvario** (calvary) to the surrounding hill.



Parish of Cristo Re in Saiano



The Calvario (Calvary)

## Abbey of Saint Nicola

Situated on an important Roman crossroads that led to the town, it is most certainly the most famous religious complex of Franciacorta. Its foundation dates back to 1090 on commission of the Benedictine Cluniacs and, in fact, forms part of the European Cluniac itinerary. Passed by the Olivetans in 1446 it was reconstructed between 1450 and 1534 when it became an Abbey with Renaissance imprint.



Cloisters



Frescoes by Romanino

Very important Brescian painters of the era such as Gambara, Romanino, Moretto, Marone and Cossali contributed to its transformation. The Napoleonic laws suppressed the works in 1797, but in 1969 upon the will of the Brescian Pope Paolo VI a great work of restoration was started with the return of the Olivetans. The church dates back to 1480-90. The inside, with a single aisle, shows a rich 18th century decoration. It has an important oil painting by Moretto from 1545 and beautiful wooden inlay work on the choir stalls, carried out in 1480 by Cristoforo Rocchi. Among the frescos of major importance, the Crucifixion on the wall at the back of the refectory, of the school of Foppa and the amphitheater frescoed by Gambara (XVI century), with an apocalyptic scene on the vault and twenty-three biblical scenes on the walls. The frescos of Romanino, are found in the refectory of the guestrooms.



Crucifixion of Foppa

There are three cloisters of various widths and styles, the small one, the oldest one, in its simplicity almost rustic, dates back to the first half of the XV century with Gothic elements. The big cloister (1480-90) has an arch and an arcade majolica decorations. *Info: the abbey is always open; for groups please contact: 030/610182*



## ROVATO

The area of Rovato is geographically situated in the southern part of Franciacorta and lies at the foot of Mount Orfano. It is an important center, made up of numerous hamlets, that preserve the signs of its rich history in different buildings both civil and religious. Agriculture, the livestock market and commerce have always been the basis of Rovato's economy.



Cavour Square



**Palazzo Porcellaga-Quistini** receives guests at the entrance to the town. The historical house has the features of an important castle from the powerful towers that today has a single rose garden available to visit on appointment. The lively social life is concentrated under the arches of **Cavour Square**, made in 1838 by the architect *Vantini*. Still visible, all around the walls of the Castle constructed on the line of the

Quistini Castle



**Roman Castrum**; a few meters from the square, is the **Parish of Santa Maria Assunta** constructed at the end of 1500 and reconstructed in 1800. The path that leads up to the top of Mount Orfano offers various churches starting with the **Church of Madonna of Santo Stefano**.

Erected around the century and made bigger in subsequent periods, the church shows characteristics of the Early Christian and Romanesque times with Gothic influences. In the apsis there are 15th century frescos, some are attributed to Foppa. Following along the path of Mount Orfano one reaches the **Convent of the Annunciata**, a place where the spirit immerses into nature (see opposite page). A further stop must be dedicated to the **Church of San Michele**, dating back to the 10th century



Church of S. Stefano

## Convent of the Annunciata

The convent is on top of Monte Orfano, visible from afar for its double arcade which offers a spectacular view of the flatland below. Har-

Annunciazione by Romanino



Fresco "Madonna della tenerezza"

moniously immersed in the quietness of nature there is the ancient chapel dedicated to the 'Annunciata'. It was built by the "Servi di Maria" congregation between 1449 and 1503, when the church and the cloister were completed with bas-relief for the capitals.

After various vicissitudes that started in 1700, the friars took possession again, starting reconstructing in 1960. Inside the church, in the choir, next to ancient frescoes there is Romanino's Annunciazione.

*Info: the convent is always open; Frati Servi di Maria: 030/7703360*



Cloisters





## SALE MARASINO

Sale Marasino was chosen as a summer residence by many noble families from Brescia as many elegant buildings overlooking the lake can testify. **Villa Martinengo-Villagana**, is a typical example of the Renaissance architecture with a majestic lake park. It represents the most relevant residence of the entire Sebino. The town is still one of the most impor-



tant lake tourist areas dividing its resourced between lake and mountains, where characteristic hamlets offer splendid sceneries. A ferryboat service connects Sale Marasino to Montisola and other localities on the lake.

There are interesting art works within its churches starting from the **Parish of San Zenone** which was erected in the 18th century opposite the port because, according to tradition, it protects fishermen. It was projected by the famous architect *G. Battista Canina*.

During 1870, following the building of a coastal road, it was beautified with the addition of a flight of steps with a marble balustrade.

The interior is well lit by the windows of the round cupola set above the central nave richly decorated in baroque style. In the historical centre there is the 15th century **Church of San Antonio Abate** with remarkably artistic valuable frescoes. The **Church of San Pietro dei Disciplini** (16th century) has many frescoes of the early 6th century. At **Gandizzano** it is worth visiting the **Church of Santa Maria della Neve** (16th century). At **Maspiano** the 6th century **Church of San Giacomo Apostolo**. At **Conche**, the beautiful **Church of San Giovanni Battista** built in 1700.



Parish of S. Zenone

Villa Martinengo-Villagana



## SULZANO

On the border with Pilzone di Iseo, there is a picturesque gulf formed by the beautiful peninsula of Montecolo, the quarters of the "Associazione Nautica Sebina" (Sebina Nautical Association) which is Sulzano's reference point for sailing lovers, as here they can find whatever equipment could be needed for such sport. The characteristic village lake of Sulzano, with hidden alleys and dwellings very near to one another is the best port

to reach Montisola, due to the many day and night ferry runs. The original nucleus developed on the hill and it was only later, following the construction of the coastal road in 1850 that it continued to develop along the lake. The 18th century

**Parish Church of San Giorgio** is in the upper part of the town. The church with one only nave has baroque decorations. In a panoramic setting there is the 17th century **Church of San Fermo**. The façade is hut styled with rose window; it has an only nave with a trussed cover. It can be reached on foot, by mountain-bike or by car along the **Nistisino** road. The 15th century, **Church of Santa Maria del Giogo** is at a height of about 1000 meters, it has many frescoes dating back to 1400 and 1500. The view of the lake is breathtaking. The **Church of the Visitazione** is in the lake village; in baroque style, it has a simple facade with a beautiful portal of the '700. Inside there are a wooden altar and frescoes by an unknown author and there are villas overlooking the lake.



Church of S. Maria del Giogo



Church of S. Giorgio



## ZONE

The town is approximately at a height of seven hundred meters at the foot of mount Guglielmo. It is quiet residence mainly used during the summer period by lovers of relaxing walks along the numerous paths. Zone's notoriety is now due to the presence of enormous earth spires in **Cislano** supporting large blocks: the **Erosion Pyramids**



Church of S. Giorgio



(earth pyramids), due to a rare natural phenomenon like very few others in the world. It would be worth while visiting, in this extraordinary place the little **Church of San Giorgio**, Zone's parish until the 16th century. Built in the 15th century on the external lateral side it has frescoes from 1400 including San Giorgio on a horse killing the dragon. Proceeding towards Zone, after about 500 meters on

Church of SS. Ippolito and Cassiano



the top of a summit there is the **Church of Santi Ippolito e Cassiano** of from the 15th century. The façade has a pronaos with a cross vault.

Inside the single nave has frescoes and wooden statutes of Santi Ippolito and Cassiano. The portal is in Sarnico marble.

The historic centre has ancient wooden and stone houses, some of which date back to the 17th century and the **Parish of S. Giovanni Battista** (17th century).

The lateral entrance is preceded by a pronaos with a cross vault. In the single nave there are wooden works by *Fantoni*. In the same square there is the 18th century little **Church of the ancient Cemetery** with an octagonal plant.



Church of the ancient Cemetery

## FOOD AND WINE

Great surprises await the tourist who wishes to discover the colours and tastes of local cuisine and products.

The territory fulfils any need, associating tradition to technological

Beef with oil from Rovato



Oven-baked tench from Clusane



novelties and modern readings, with a top quality result.

Agriculture and livestock are still economically important.

The presence of restored water mills and the constant presence of polenta as part of the meal show that maize farming is still important, now relaunched with the production of Castegnato flour. There is an exceptional production of wine: the Franciacorta brands are recognised and offer a guarantee of excellent quality thanks to the thorough grape selection and execution methods.

In recent years we have witnessed the development of a food and wine tourism.

A growing number of tourists follow the "Franciacorta Wine Route", which stops off at a number of towns in the area that also offer historical-artistic points of interest and lead to the discovery of well-known cellars.

Also worthy of a visit are a few agricultural and wine-making museums that illustrate the history of local wine-making. Oil production is also growing in importance: especially in the areas surrounding the lake, with important achievements such as the DOP trademark.

Livestock farming of cows and sheep especially on the highlands results in the production of butter and various types of cheeses, such as the Silter camuno-sebino and the Casolet of the Marone and Zone alpine meadows.

Many other farms breed different animal species like horses, pigs, farmyard animals, often in association with beekeeping, small fruits and vegetables.

This results in a flourishing offer of agricultural products, also organic: honey,

Bee-keeping on Lake Iseo





jams and marmalades or simply just fresh fruit, various types of cured meats, from salami (worthy of mention is the one from Monte Isola made mainly in the district of Cure, characterized by being slightly smoked), to more traditional cured hams.



Also the chestnuts are worthy of note, with the sale of fresh or dried fruits, or worked into flour used in delicious cakes.

Besides the products of the soil, the lake also offers various types of fish: char, bleak, whitefish, eels, tench being the main types.

Rudds, chubs and twaites undergo a special treatment, they are sun-dried and preserved under oil, according to an ancient tradition.

The area has a larger number of restaurants, inns and agricultural tourism establishments than average, and they all offer first courses that include soups, freshly-made pasta and tasty tripe dishes.

Main courses include beef with oil from Rovato, oven-baked tench

from Clusane, meat skewers and roasts with steaming polenta side dish.

Tasty cheeses are always available (hard, roasted cheeses are very tasty), accompanied by Franciacorta wines with the DOCG and DOC labels.

To end off the meal there is dessert, ranging from simple cakes made with sugar, eggs, flour and butter, like the "spongada", to more complex and filling dishes like the "chisöi".

After the meal there is still room for refined dessert wines and spirits, new harvests or aged.



Traditional dishes of Lake Iseo

## AN ANCIENT HISTORY OF BUBBLES

Franciacorta certainly deserves a visit, because of its wines, that take their name from the same production area. From time immemorial vines have grown in this area, this was confirmed by the discovery of grape-seeds from a prehistoric era. These morainic hills, developing thousands of years ago from the movement of glaciers, have a light soil, perfectly drained, ideal for the harmonious development of vines. The importance of water in the lake and that of air currents from the Camonica Valley result in a particularly temperate climate.



Wine has had a good name since ancient times: this is confirmed by various quotations and mentions in ancient writings. The most important text is the 'Libellus de Vitis Mordaci' written in 1570 by Girolamo Conforti, who stated that the current Franciacorta was excellent and "mordacissimo" (very sharp). In the 60's a young local wine technician innovated traditional methods by establishing production of "spumante traditional method" with refermentation in the bottle. In 1967 the law allowed the production of Franciacorta DOC (Appellation of Controlled Origin). In 1995 Franciacorta was awarded DOCG, (Appellation of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin), becoming the first Italian brut with refermentation in the bottle to obtain this appellation. This was followed by the DOC Terre di Franciacorta, today called



Curtefranca, in the versions White and Red, to protect still wines. At present in Franciacorta vines cover approximately 2500 hectares, resulting in a production of approximately 10.000.000 bottles. The cellars are open for visits, tastings must be booked.

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## WINELANDS

### FRANCIACORTA DOCG

The Franciacorta DOCG wines obtain prestigious mentions every year in the most important wine guides in Italy and abroad, they are written about by the greatest critics and writers in the sector, both Ital-



ian and foreign. Not only. The noble Franciacorta bubbles are chosen when celebrating many important events: at the White House, at the wedding of the heir to the Norwegian throne, at official visits to Italy by the British Queen, to name just a few.

#### Franciacorta:

Franciacorta is made from Chardonnay and/or Pinot noir grapes in free proportion and/or Pinot blanc up to a maximum of 50% and is obtained from the maturation and working for at least 25 months from harvest with at least 18 months of slow second fermentation in the bottle in contact with yeasts.

**Franciacorta Millesimato**, which states the year of harvest on the label, is obtained from grapes gathered in particularly favourable weather and harvest conditions. No millesimato can be sold until at least 37 months have passed from the harvest, with at least 30 months spent maturing on yeasts. The millesimati with particularly good characteristics can mature in contact with yeasts for much longer and at the end of the sixtieth month of refining can bear the wording "Riserva" (Reserve).

In the six types of tastes accepted, the **Non Dosato** and **Extra Brut** are excellent as aperitifs, **Brut** is ideal as a wine for meal times as it can be matched perfectly with 'risotto', fish and white meat dishes, **Extra Dry** is recommended for savoury baked dishes and oven-baked vegetables, the **Sec** is perfect for ice-cream and non-sweet desserts and the **Demisec** is ideal with desserts, especially pastries.



### Franciacorta Satèn:

Satèn is the impersonation of the harmony, pleasure and taste guaranteed by Franciacorta. It is made only with Chardonnay grapes (prevalent) and Pinot blanc; it can be sold only after 31 months from the harvest with at least 24 months spent maturing on yeasts.



Less pressure in the bottles makes this wine creamier, more harmonious and smoother than all other Franciacorta wines, ideal for any mealtime, but exceptional with oven pasta dishes, delicate 'risottos' and fish dishes

(sturgeon, salmon, trout, whitefish, tench, blue fish).

### Franciacorta Rosé:

White grapes (Chardonnay and/or Pinot blanc) and red grapes (Pinot noir) are vinted separately with a soft pressing of the full grapes. The minimum percentage of Pinot noir is 25% there are many Franciacorta Rosé with a greater percentage of Pinot noir or where it represents the entire percentage of the wine. Franciacorta Rosé can be produced in all taste types and also millesimé. The non-millesimé Rosé, like the Satèn, must mature at least 24 months on yeasts before being ready to be sold. Very pleasant with aperitifs and dishes with an intense, strong taste, like roasts and boiled meats with chilli sauces, and cured raw or cooked meats.



### CURTEFRANCA DOC

#### Blanc:

It is made mainly with Chardonnay grapes, with possibly a part of Pinot blanc that can be maximum 50%. Curtefranca DOC bianco is light yellow in colour with slight greenish tinges, with a very delicate taste that is dry, fresh and velvety. Minimum alcohol content is 11%. Curtefranca DOC Bianco with the vine toponym identifies a superior product, matured for at least 12 months and refined in the bottle for



a long time; it therefore acquires particular importance and releases intensely characteristic and refined bouquets of flowers and fruit. Minimum alcohol content is 12%. It is suited to all fish dishes and is especially recommended for lake fish such as oven-baked tench.

#### Red:

Strongly characterised by the presence of Cabernet Franc and Carmenera, a red berry vine historically found in Franciacorta and re-discovered recently. Also present are Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. The main characteristics are a lively red colour with violet hues and it has a grassy and fruity taste. It has an average body, with minimum alcohol content of at least 11%.

Curtefranca DOC rosso with the name of the vine on the label identifies a superior product aged for longer and produced only in selected



vineyards in special years. It is garnet-red in colour, velvety and intense, with minimum alcohol content of 12 percent, aged in wood and refined for at least 24 months. It is ideal when drunk with red meats and an exceptional speciality from the Franciacorta lands: beef with oil.

#### IGT SEBINO

In Franciacorta some quality reds and whites are qualified by the wording *Indicazione Geografica Tipica* (IGT - Typical Geographical Indication). Sebino Wines with the Sebino indication can be obtained from all the varieties of red grapes allowed for cultivation in the Province of Brescia and, if they bear the name of the vine, must contain at least 90% of that grape. The grapes from red vines are used to make **Sebino Rosso**, **Sebino with the mention of the vine** (eg. Sebino Pinot noir, Sebino Merlot etc.) or **Sebino Novello** (a “nuoveau” that must be sold by the end of the year of harvest). The sweet wine **Sebino Passito** is made using partially dried Chardonnay grapes.



## ECONOMY

Agriculture and sheep-farming have always had an important role in the area of Lake Iseo and Franciacorta.

Since prehistoric times fishing has sustained the populations that lived on the banks of the lake, at times leading to conflict concerning who controlled navigation, that was, up to the end of the nineteenth



century, the only means of easy communication between the towns on the shores of the lake, the Camonica Valley and the plains.

The activities directly concerned with fishing were drying of the fish, the manufacture of boats (naf, barcù, naèt) and nets, which migrated to the more conducive area of Monte Isola.

Many trades were present in the area, the most important being the quarrying and working of stone, with the valued stone of Sarnico be-



ing especially worthy of mention.

Some towns had mineral mines, for example Pisogne, then there was forging, in the town of Zone. Also worth mentioning is Maglio Averoldi of Ome in Franciacorta, which is today a forging museum that is open to public. At the top of all these economic activities there were, naturally, coal mining and wood-gathering.

For a certain amount of time there was also the cultivation of silk worms, with silk factories in Iseo, and textile factories (for example in Marone, where wool and felt were manufactured).

A brick-making industry also flourished in the Municipal area of Franciacorta.

The past is seen as being a valued asset in this area. Modern-day economics is indeed founded on the activities of yesteryear and on tradi-



tion but uses modern technology as a means to achieve the highest quality levels. This leads to the prestigious wines with DOCG and DOC appellation, but also traditional products with DOP branding.

This leads to the craftsman becoming an industry or specialising, for example iron-working in Franciacorta and stone-working in Paratico. It is also not surprising to find, close to the traditional shipyards, master carpenters from Monte Isola, the prestigious and most avant-garde technology of Cantieri RIVA (RIVA shipyard) in Sarnico that are the pride of Lake Iseo ship-building throughout the world.



The manufacture of nets has also changed: small family run laboratories have become industries in order to reach an international market. Trade has undergone considerable development and in many towns there are public meeting places and entertainment areas that liven up the place and offer many opportunities to meet others.

Even agriculture has widened its horizons opening out to a high

level agricultural tourism or promoting select, top quality traditional products to offer restaurants or the discerning tourist. Ancient traditions have become entertainment for the public at large: wine and food events or trade shows are an example of this. Areas where nature and art have given their best are now the destination for cultural tourism and learning experiences. Future economics seems once again, to be founded on the territory, safeguarding it and a correct "use" thereof, in order to guarantee that it remains a valuable asset. Lake Iseo and Franciacorta appear therefore to be moving towards an important choice: encouraging tourism.



## SPORT AND FREE TIME

For lovers of sports holidays and those who choose to alternate visits to nature reserves and culturally interesting areas with some physical activity, Lake Iseo and Franciacorta offer incredible opportunities. The range of different landscapes, geological formations and tourist organisation offer a choice of sports for all tastes. Lake Iseo's sailing centres are among the oldest in Italy. At present Sulzano and Pilzone



both have schools with Federazione Italiana Vela (Italian Sailing Federation) accreditation that organise summer courses for adults and children in spring/summer. Important regattas are among the most popular summer events. Enthusiastic windsurfers prefer the upper part of the lake where winds from the side valleys allow the surfers to perform audacious feats. One of the towns, where this type of activity is popular, is Vello, in the

municipal area of Marone. Golf enthusiasts will undoubtedly love the 18 and 9-hole courses of the Golf Club Franciacorta. Horse riding is also very popular due to the characteristic complexities of the territory. Limestone cliffs overhanging the lake or more accessible rock faces offer a tempting pastime to free-climbers. The most exciting faces are found at Buca del Quai, Iseo and Corna delle Capre, in Zone. The area also attracts lovers of extreme sports such as paragliding, with launches from the hills of Sale Marasino and Mount Rodondone in Sulzano; there are a number of courses for novices. Scuba Diving



enthusiasts have ample opportunity to dive, with the help of local clubs. There are many Cycle tracks or tracks with varying difficulty, throughout the territory, especially through the hills of Franciacorta. Mountain bike paths lead to wonderful panoramic views.

Dirt tracks and easy paths will fulfil the hikers need to be in contact





with nature.

Anglers will love the many opportunities to fish at the many local fishing centres, which will also offer useful information and advice on the best times and places and which also organise fishing courses, fly spinning courses and fishing competitions.

As well as sport, there are many opportunities for entertainment, fun and free time.

For many years in Iseo there has been "Sassabanek", an area immersed in nature with swimming pools, tennis courts, ping-pong, beach-volley courts, gym and sauna, an enormous beach onto the lake where it is possible to hire windsurfing equipment, canoes and pedal boats,



and with a well-equipped playground for children. In Colombaro di Corte Franca youngsters can enjoy water games at the modern and up to date "Acquasplash Franciacorta" water park.

For those who prefer to relax while keeping an eye on their health, there are the Franciacorta Thermal baths in Ome, where the water is particularly suited for the treatment of problems with the biliary system, respiratory tract, liver and kidneys. The centre also offers treatments based on holistic medicine and other activities that help to regain one's physical well-being and equilibrium.

Within the structures of the centre there are also numerous well-being areas offering beauty and revitalising treatments.



## TRADITIONS AND EVENTS

There are many traditional events at the lake and in Franciacorta. Some have an ancient history and are linked to local culture and economy; others instead have been introduced recently but are nonetheless linked to traditions products of the earth, religious festivals, important traditions and customs which the people are still proud of. One of the most important events of Lake Iseo is undoubtedly the spectacular "**Festa di Santa Croce**" celebrated once every five years



Festival del Franciacorta

in Monte Isola precisely in the town of Carzano. Windows, doors and sills are completely covered in flowers. A profusion of form and colour that astounds the thousands of visitors. There are many important food and wine festivals.

One of these is the "**Festival del Franciacorta**" held in autumn, a tasting experience for all palates, held in splendid residences.

In view of the importance that olive oil production is taking on at an

economical and touristic level, the territory organises two different events that celebrate this noble product: "**From the olive...to the oil**" in Marone at the beginning of June and "**Sapor d'olio**" (a taste of oil) at the end of November in Rodengo Saiano. Moving towards the lake, there is the "**Settimana della Tinta**" (tinch week) held in July in Clu-



Sapor d'olio



Sale in Zucca

sane, a speciality of the town since the mid 1800's.

Another event that has national coverage is "**Sale in Zucca**" in Sale Marasino, where the Pumpkin King is elected each September, i.e. the person who has cultivated the largest pumpkin in Italy, with tastes of dishes made using pumpkin in the restaurants in the municipal area. There are also a number of gastronomic events with meat-based menus: in April there is "**Mese del Manzo all'olio**" (month of beef with oil) in Rovato and the "**Settimana del Brasato**" (week of braised meat) in Capriolo, in September the "**Sagra dello Spiedo**" (feast of the

Gimondi Bike



spit) in Gussago, in October the **"Sagra del Cinghiale"** (feast of the wild boar) in Sulzano.

Concerning musical events, **"Iseo Jazz"** each years awards a prestigious prize to the best Italian jazz musician.

For sports lovers in September there is the international mountain Bike competition **"Gimondi Bike"**, organised along a specific trail going from Iseo across Franciacorta. A series of competitions called

Tench week



**"Naët d'or"** is organised specifically for the traditional boats of lake Iseo, where the rowing teams from the larger ports long the lakeside enter this fierce competition. History is very well represented in various events and the most important one is **"Rivive l'Antica Valeriana"**, with hundreds of actors. The trading history of the area can be experienced in various markets, fairs and events held throughout the year. One of the more important events is **"Lombardia Carne"**, a window onto the best beef farms in northern Italy. In Castegnato, **"Franciacorta in bianco"** exhibits the products made using milk, with tastings of hundreds of valued cheeses from Italy and abroad.

Lombardia Carne



Franciacorta in bianco



#### Lake Iseo and Franciacorta can be reached

##### By car:

SP BS 510 Brescia - Iseo

SP BS 11 Brescia - Rovato - Milano

Motorway A4 Milano - Venezia

Exits Ospitaletto - Rovato - Palazzolo s/O

##### By train:

FFSS Milano - Venezia

Le Nord Brescia - Iseo - Edolo

##### By bus:

FNMA Brescia - Iseo - Edolo

Trasporti Brescia Sud

##### By plane:

Aeroporti Milano - Orio Bergamo

Aeroporti del Garda:

Valerio Catullo - Verona

Gabriele d'Annunzio - Montichiari





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