

MONZA

# EXPERIENCE THE OUTDOOR

The Royal Palace  
and Gardens,  
the Park with its villas  
and farmsteads



# MONZA: BREATHE THE GREEN

A widespread green to be experienced and enjoyed for physical and intellectual well-being.

The Park makes Monza a privileged destination for tourism and recreation that has nothing to envy to other similar establishments on a European radius, from Schönbrunn to Versailles to Caserta. Commissioned by **Eugene de Beauharnais**, Napoleon's stepson and viceroy of Italy, in 1805 and designed by **Luigi Canonica** as a model estate and hunting reserve, the Park has encompassed within its perimeter a large portion of territory north of Monza and a stretch of the Lambro Valley, including the Durini villas and numerous farmsteads and mills.

But greenery in Monza is not summed up in the Park alone. In addition to the **Gardens of the Villa Reale**, mention must be made of the **Boschetti reali**, an avenue of invitation and connection between the historic center and the monumental complex, the "**Niso Fumagalli**" **rose garden** overlooking the Serrone of the Villa Reale, and the many "**secret gardens**" that dot the city's most prestigious private residences.



## THE PARK

Monza Park was established on September 14, 1805 by **Napoleonic** edict for the purpose of making it a model agricultural estate and hunting reserve. Construction began in 1806, at the behest of Viceroy Eugene de Beauharnais, on land north of the Villa and Royal Gardens desired by Maria Theresa of Austria as early as 1777. The Swiss-born architect Luigi Canonica, a former pupil of Piermarini and “national” architect of the French court, was charged with the design.

The gradual acquisition of the surrounding land and northward allowed the Park, around 1808, to become the **largest fenced park in Europe**. Inside were included pre-existing greenhouses, vegetable gardens, orchards, villas and gardens now all forming part of the complex, almost a compendium of Lombard agricultural land.

Three main areas were identified: the area near the Villa Reale, to the south, kept as gardens and open countryside; the area to the north, the so-called “**Beautiful Woods**”, functional mainly for hunting; and the strip along the Lambro River, with wetland vegetation. To connect the areas, Canonica created a main north-south axis, **the Mirabello and del Gernetto** avenues, leading up to the “**Rondò della Stella**” (in the middle of the “Beautiful Woods”).



An extensive network of secondary avenues was traced transversely. In the **Restoration** it was the home of Archduke Ranieri, who increased the naturalistic vocation of the complex, and finally the favorite residence of the Savoy family, particularly King Umberto I and Queen Margaret.

**The park can be visited on foot, on skates, by bicycle and on horseback.** Today there are **three main entrances** to the park: viale Cesare Battisti in **Monza**, via S. Stefano in **Vedano al Lambro**, and via Farina in **Villasanta**. The Monza and Vedano al Lambro entrances have an attached parking lot. In addition to the main entrances, there are numerous pedestrian entrances.

## ITINERARIES IN THE PARK

Within the Park you can discover many nooks, sceneries, buildings that you have never paid attention to.

So we have created simple and fascinating **guided tours** for lovers of nature, architecture, and why not, even legends!





# ARCHITECTURE IN THE PARK

The buildings constructed within the Park of Monza constituted a system of agricultural and technical infrastructure intended for the cultivation of land and its maintenance.



These buildings, although related to a productive function, presented a **high architectural quality** in some cases curated by Canonica himself, the Park's designer. Other noteworthy buildings within the Park of Monza are the villas, farmsteads, mills and bridges.

## VILLAS AND FARMSTEADS

The Park also owes its beauty to the presence of buildings of considerable interest. These include **Villa Mirabello** and, in an axial and elevated position, Villa Mirabellino, scenically connected by a recently restored hornbeam avenue.

Among the various buildings, **Cascina Frutteto**, designed by the architect Canonica, has an arched façade and neoclassical turret, while **Cascina San Fedele**, with its neo-Gothic forms, is clad in marble salvaged from the demolished Milanese church of **Santa Maria di Brera**.

Today they have taken on different functions related to the needs of the community, while maintaining their distinctive features: Cascina San Fedele hosts events and educational activities; Cascina Frutteto is home to the Park of Monza Agricultural School; Cascina Costa Alta is now a hostel; and Cascina Costa Bassa a day care center for the elderly.





## MILLS AND BRIDGES

Once the cogs of the Park's economy, today the mills within it perform housing or agricultural functions.

At the **Mulini Ascianti**, where the only paddle wheel still in working order is preserved, is home to the **Centro Ricerche Educazione Ambientale (CREDA)** engaged, among other things, in a project to discover the techniques of bread-making and independent grain processing. At the **Mulino San Giorgio**, on the other hand, dairy products and yogurt are produced.

The mills were powered by the force of the waters of the Lambro River, which crosses the park from north to south, creating a network of ditches and canals. Its path is punctuated by the admirable views offered by the numerous bridges and footbridges: among them the **Ponte delle Catene**, by **Canonica**, has two arches with granite trunks joined by chains, from which there is also a magnificent perspective view towards the gardens and the Villa Reale.

## CYCLE TOURISM

Monza is not only a city of art and culture, of racing and speed, but it is also a city of greenery and bicycle routes.

In fact, the city enjoys, in addition to the Park, two other important resources: the **Lambro** and the **Villoresi Canal**.

The latter in particular represents an extraordinarily interesting plug of greenery and enjoyment, on foot and by bicycle, that allows one to cross the city in a green landscape, overlooked by old factories, private gardens, vegetable gardens and orchards.

The bike path built alongside the Villoresi Canal, as well as the one leading from the city center to the Autodromo, skirt the Park of Monza and then reconnect, at the height of the Villa Reale, through the Viale Cesare Battisti bike path, to the East-West axis of the Villoresi, representing the city's response to a need for slow mobility that allows reconnecting the city's living spaces, putting both the inhabitant and the tourist and the shared desire to discover Monza and its beauties at the center.



## ROUTES

- Il Parco e le sue Ville
- Lungo il fiume Lambro



## VILLA REALE AND PARK OF MONZA

1. Villa Reale of Monza
2. Giardini Reali
3. Villa Mirabello
4. Mulini Asciutti
5. Mulino San Giorgio
6. Beautiful Woods

# THE VILLA REALE

Built at the behest of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria between 1777 and 1780 as a summer residence for her son Ferdinand, the building echoes the model of 18th-century Lombard villas.



[Visit to the Villa Reale](#)





Piermarini designed a U-shaped neoclassical-style building, according to the tradition of the time.

The building, designed by architect **Giuseppe Piermarini** in the neoclassical style, has a “U-shaped” plan and a central representative body with two side wings for visitor quarters and two other sections for servants and stables, for a total of nearly **700 rooms**.



Completing the historic complex are the **Royal Chapel**, the **Appiani Rotunda**, and the **Serrone** (now an exhibition venue for temporary exhibitions), also created by Piermarini, the **Teatrino di Corte**, designed by Ticino architect **Luigi Canonica**, and the **Neo-Gothic Portal**, the first and most important entrance to the **Royal Gardens**.

## THE ROSE GARDEN OF THE VILLA REALE

Designed by architects Francesco Clerici and Vittorio Faglia where there was one of the formal gardens adjoining the archducal residence, the rose garden at the Villa Reale in Monza features a pond and enchanting paths among the specimens in the collection.







The rose garden at the **Villa Reale** of Monza, which occupies the area designated for one of the geometric parterres on either side of the courtyard of honor, was created at the behest of **Niso Fumagalli**, an industrialist and president of Candy, as well as a great lover of floriculture, with a predilection for roses. After numerous trips to France, Belgium, Holland and England, where the competitions promoted by the trade associations were also followed with interest by the general public, in 1964 he decided to found the **Italian Rose Association** right in Monza. The first competitions were held in **1965**, when the work was not yet completed, and in the following years there were some outstanding godmothers, including Princess Grace of Monaco, in 1970, and Nobel Prize winner **Rita Levi Montalcini**, in 1991.

The layout includes different thematic sections, depending on the planted rose collections, with some old varieties arranged around the water feature, or climbing, along the gate and on the arbor. Most of the space is devoted to roses with **more than 400 varieties**, created by rose growers from around the world and judged by international technicians, poets, artists, and fashion or television personalities.



Visit to the Rose Garden of the Villa Reale



## THE ROYAL GARDENS

The gardens extend over an area of **40 hectares** around the Villa Reale and surround the buildings of the complex, constituting a heritage of inestimable landscape, historical, monumental and architectural value. Behind the Serrone, which delimits the geometric garden currently dedicated to the rose garden, one enters the area laid out in the **“English” style**, characterized by a nature seemingly left to spontaneity, but which actually responds to a precise overall design conceived by architect **Giuseppe Piermarini**, assisted by gardeners sent from Vienna at the behest of **Maria Theresa of Austria**.

The feature that has made the Gardens famous throughout the world is the great variety of **ultrasecular** trees: the green giants including oaks, cypresses, horse chestnuts, and cedars of Lebanon, which in size or botanical characteristics constitute an unparalleled sampling.

Created in the late 18th century, they constitute one of the earliest examples of “English-style” gardens in northern Italy, with historic furnishings and fine essences.

Follow the paths among the rich tree and shrub vegetation to reach the small lake, with the **classical temple** in the background.



Visit to  
the Royal  
Gardens

From the banks one can admire the tree foliage reflected in the water, with the grotto and the **statue of Neptune**, or cross the so-called “**rock garden**” to descend to the large central lawn, admiring the waterfall and the small stream with its winding path through the vegetation, which here becomes more sparse.

Continuing to the left, along the spyglass facing the villa, you can admire the **Antro di Polifemo**, already portrayed in the famous plates published to accompany Ercole Silva’s treatise at the beginning of the 19th century, the **neo-Gothic walls** and the **turret**: all founding elements of the culture underlying the new landscape style.

## GREEN MONUMENTS

The Villa Reale Gardens, whose surface area is **about 40 hectares**, surround the buildings of the Monza complex on all sides and are divided from the 600-plus-hectare Royal Park behind by a fence. The feature that has made the **botanical and arboreal heritage** of the monumental complex one of the most famous in the world in its two hundred years of existence is the great variety of ultrasecular trees: the green giants.



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