



Cultura, arte, paesaggi, tradizioni fanno parte del patrimonio turistico, spesso sottovalutato, della provincia di Milano. Eppure il nostro territorio è al sesto posto nella graduatoria italiana per le presenze turistiche e, anche se gran parte di queste vengono generate dal flusso di visite per affari, vi è un sempre crescente numero di cittadini interessati a scoprire inaspettati luoghi di interesse a poca distanza da casa. Per questo motivo presentiamo con soddisfazione, insieme alla Camera di Commercio e con il patrocinio di Urban Center, questo programma di itinerari attraverso la storia e l'arte nei dintorni della città senza tralasciare le aree dedicate all'agricoltura, all'industria e quelle degli ambienti naturali. Brevi visite per scoprire che, per "fare turismo", non sempre è necessario affrontare lunghi viaggi in terre lontane.

**Filippo Penati**  
Presidente  
Provincia di Milano



Milano, la grande capitale della laboriosità italiana, ha una lunga storia da raccontare e da leggere nei segni che dal passato ad oggi e nelle prospettive del futuro segnalano gli interventi dell'uomo sul territorio, con le diversificate forme di agricoltura e di produzione e nelle infrastrutture. E poi la rete dei centri urbani divenuti centri dell'industria lungo le linee del trasporto viario, d'acqua e ferroviario, e accanto alle fonti di energia. E ancora gli snodi del commercio, dell'incontro e della residenza dalle più lontane forme di insediamento ai nuovi quartieri. Negli itinerari per "conoscere Milano e la Provincia" si leggono stratificati tutti questi interventi e si vede anche quanto lavoro ancora si possa e si debba promuovere per migliorare la qualità della vita e dell'ambiente e per dare nuovi impulsi economici e sociali allo sviluppo.

**Carlo Sangalli**  
Presidente  
Camera di Commercio di Milano



Dopo aver avviato, ormai nel lontano 2002, i primi itinerari alla scoperta di una Milano in profonda trasformazione, e in particolare dei nuovi quartieri con nuovi parchi sorti su aree industriali dismesse, Urban Center promuove questo nuovo Conoscere Milano esteso a tutto il territorio della provincia. Gli itinerari, disegnati a corolla attorno a Milano, con tappe molto diverse tra loro, toccheranno il ricco patrimonio storico e artistico insieme a trasformazioni e recuperi contemporanei, partendo spesso da luoghi storici, nuovi quartieri o progetti di recupero realizzati a Milano, a sottolineare il ruolo baricentrico che il capoluogo detiene. Urban Center si dimostra ancora una volta il luogo dedicato alla comunicazione e all'informazione sul territorio, in questo caso con l'obiettivo rivolto alle tante mete ricche di storia e di tesori disseminati nella provincia milanese



Conoscere Milano e la sua provincia. Un invito che AIM rivolge a tutti i cittadini della città centrale a diventare "viandanti nella loro terra", ad uscire dalle mura urbane e a ritrovare nei segni del passato e nelle realtà della vita odierna il percorso che l'uomo ha condotto occupando e facendo fruttare un territorio fra i più fertili e ricchi dell'Europa. Il percorso di conoscenza del moderno viandante incontrerà poi, pur nella ricorrente congestione di un territorio fitto di presenze abitative, produttive e infrastrutturali, i segni evidenti di nuove politiche di recupero e riassetto dei centri storici, di restauro di beni monumentali pubblici, privati ed ecclesiastici, nuove tipologie di parchi tutelati e aperti ad utilizzi vari per il tempo libero e lo sport. Segnali concreti di un diffuso rinascimento e rinnovamento ambientale promosso e gestito dagli enti locali che sono anch'essi una ricchezza del nostro territorio.

## Knowing Milan's province: History, art, nature and new architecture

Today, Milan's province includes 189 cities. This area is so rich and diverse that it deserves several itineraries: hence, the publication "Knowing Milan and its province". This project aims at promoting and enhancing the Milan area; it was conceived by the Department for Tourism of the Provincial Administration, together with the Urban Center of the City of Milan and the Chamber of Commerce of Milan. AIM designed and co-ordinated the itineraries. Ten guided tours, diverse and interesting, to unveil an area that has a rich heritage and a strong drive towards the future.



# CONOSCERE MILANO E LA PROVINCIA

ARTE E NATURA, INDUSTRIA E ARCHITETTURA

## ITINERARY 9

### ANCIENT ABBEYS IN THE FERTILE PLAINS OF LOMBARDY

Abbazia di Mirasole  
South of the city, the Humiliati abbey sits alone in the farmland

Carpiano  
Along a country road, an ancient Carthusian farmhouse with a precious church

Melegnano  
In the centre of town, an imposing historic castle

Vizzolo Predabissi  
A site of faith and art, founded by the Cluniac monks at Calvenzano

Viboldone  
One more abbey on the doorsteps of Milan, with beautiful 14th-century frescoes



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## ANCIENT ABBEYS IN THE FERTILE PLAINS OF LOMBARDY



We go South, in a fertile plain that has long been irrigated for farming. Before exiting Milan, we travel through the new neighbourhood on the former Officine Meccaniche and Iveco site. Abbazia di Mirasole stands in a rural landscape: it was founded by the Humiliati monks, and is maybe the least famous of the many abbeys South of Milan. The itinerary then goes by the Abbazia di Viboldone and the better-known Abbazia di Chiaravalle. The monks made major reclamation works in the countryside surrounding their abbeys, growing new crops and creating a landscape that has remained virtually unchanged until the 20th-century urban development.

We travel through the farmlands of Parco Sud, and get near Melegnano. In the past, it was one of the most important farming towns in the lower Milanese plains. Memories of the past are still to be found in the historic centre, especially the Castle, one of the most relevant Lombard monuments from the late Middle Ages.

We get back to Milan on historic Via Emilia, travelling through the towns of Vizzolo Predabissi, San Giuliano and San Donato Milanese. After World War II, Metanopoli was built here: ever since then, this area has developed dynamically, specialising in the industrial and service sectors. Its economic activity is closely connected to business in Milan.



# 1. QUARTIERE RAVIZZA

The new Ravizza neighbourhood has been built on the large site where the OM Officine Meccaniche and Iveco factories were. Two elegant towers, designed by Massimiliano Fuksas, characterise it, and three interconnected parks: Parco della Cultura, Parco delle Memorie Industriali and Parco della Vettabbia.



# 2. ABBAZIA DI MIRASOLE

As we go towards Opera, narrow country roads lead to the Mirasole monks' abbey, that can be seen from a distance thanks to its tall bell tower. The abbey was founded in the early 13th century; it is maybe the least known of the many abbeys around Milan. The entrance tower used to be protected by a moat; it leads to a square courtyard where rural facilities and places of worship are mixed together, which was typical of the Humiliati architecture. Stables, the farmstead proper and courtyard are next to the small church of Santa Maria Assunta, a single-nave building decorated with 15th-century frescoes. The church leads to a lovely cloister, where the refectory, the meeting room, the administration office, the vestry and the Chapter room all open up.



# 3. CARPIANO

Carpiano deserves a stop: it is an ancient rural village, later industrialised, dominated by the late 14th-century Carthusian church of San Martino, that appears as a surprise along the road. The inside is quite intimate, its naves separated by brick pillars. This church also includes works of art: a fresco attributed to Bernardino Luini depicts Mary Magdalene; a wonderful altar in Candoglia marble surprises for its beauty, and even more for its story. It was sculpted by Giovanni da Campione and his school with relieves on the story of the Holy Virgin. Originally, it had been commissioned to be the altar of the Carthusian monastery of Pavia, but it was soon removed because it portrayed scenes taken from the "apocryphal" Gospel of Saint Matthew. Eventually, it was taken to the Carthusian farmstead of Carpiano and long forgotten. In front of the church, we find a still active farmhouse and the castle that Gian Galeazzo Visconti donated to the Carthusian monks in 1396 together with the feud.



# 4. MELEGNANO

Melegnano is another important stop in our itinerary South of Milan. In the centre of town, we find the imposing Medici Castle, one of the most important late Middle Ages monuments in Lombardy, which was built as early as in the 10th century to protect the entrance to Milan from the Via Emilia. Its complex story can be traced in its architecture. Emperor Frederick Barbarossa conquered it, then it was the location of power struggles between the Visconti and Torriani families. It was later rebuilt, first in the late 13th century, then in 1350, by fierce Bernabò Visconti, who chose it as his favourite residence. Gian Giacomo Medici had it renovated in the 16th century; his accomplishments are depicted in the spectacular first-floor frescoes. Later, it was sacked by the French, and in 1859 it witnessed the battle where the French defeated the Austrians, on the very day when Napoleon III and Vittorio Emanuele II triumphantly entered Milan. The building, that has been restored and changed several times, has the typical architecture of low-land castles. It is made of brick, with stout corner towers and a porch-lined courtyard. Inside, it still has many pictorial decorations, most dating back to the 16th century.



# 5. VIZZOLO PREDABISSI

In the town of Vizzolo Predabissi, the borough of Calvenzano has the ancient Cluniac monastery of Santa Maria Assunta, a far-away, mysterious beauty. This is a timeless site, even though the city hospital looms on the horizon. The late 15th-century church façade is made of brick and still has a medieval portal sculpted with scenes from the life of the Holy Virgin and Jesus' childhood. Inside, the church is bathed in light, has harmonic proportions and is beautifully quiet. The church has three naves leading to three apses. The only fresco still remaining shows the Crowning of the Virgin. It was painted in the late 14th century by artists influenced by the Umbria and Tuscan style.



# 6. ABBAZIA DI VIBOLDONE

This green land offers many surprises. The Viboldone Abbey was founded by the Humiliati monks in 1176. Today, it is home to a community of Benedictine Nuns who dedicate themselves to the restoration of ancient books and codes. The church of San Pietro is the only authentic part in the compound, that was partially rebuilt by Luigi Caccia Dominioni after World War II. The façade is brick with marble decorations; the wooden portal leads to a three-nave interior, amazingly beautiful and nearly all covered in frescoes. They are considered to be the most impressive 14th-century frescoes in Northern Italy, and are clearly influenced by the work of Giotto.



# 7. SAN DONATO METANOPOLI

# 7. SAN DONATO METANOPOLI

We make our way back to Milan through San Donato Milanese. The town is best known for the Eni Metanopoli complex, that Enrico Mattei had built in the 1950s. It is a business centre comprising five green glass buildings designed by leading Italian architects and a residential area, that has had a deep impact on the town's appearance. Around Metanopoli, new buildings designed by top international architects have been built, such as the new Kenzo Tange BMW headquarters and new interesting residential housing projects.

