



BETWEEN CULTURE AND NATURE IN THE UNESCO AREAS OF NOVARA AND VALSESIA

A journey between Novara and Valsesia, through the landscapes and heritage listed in the UNESCO, between the protected areas of the Ticino Park and Lake Maggiore of the Novara area (Biosphere Reserve and MAB area - Man and Biosphere), the Sacro Monte of Varallo, the oldest among the Sacri Monti of Northern Italy and inscribed in the World Heritage and symbol of the Valsesian area, to end with the curious case of the Supervulcano del Sesia, inserted among the Geoparks protected by UNESCO, a very rare geological case, on whose remains are cultivated the noble nebbiolo of Alto Piemonte, which give savory, mineral and full-bodied wines.

8.00 am: departure from Torino to **Cameri**.

10.00 am: arrival in Cameri at Villa Picchetta, headquarter of The Management Body of the Protected Areas of Ticino and Lake Maggiore and the Ticino Val Grande Verbano Biosphere Reserve MAB: Man and the Biosphere, visit of the villa and its historic gardens.

Transfer to the Mulino Vecchio in **Bellinzago Novarese**, an environmental education centre located in the MAB area on the banks of the river, and experiential visit.

11.45 am: transfer to **Varallo** and ascent by cable car to the Sacro Monte of Varallo, the oldest Sacro Monte in northern Italy and UNESCO heritage site since 2003, composed of 44 frescoed chapels and a Basilica, surrounded by the greenery of a Natural Park.

Ancient palaces, museums and churches that are genuine treasure troves of art, a charming old town characterised by traditional districts and a magnificent Sacro Monte - Unesco World Heritage Site.

Varallo is home to the oldest (1491) Sacro Monte in northern Italy and a UNESCO heritage site since 2003.

Conceived and commissioned by Milanese Franciscan Friar Bernardino Caimi as a model of the holy places of Palestine, it consists of 44 frescoed chapels and a basilica, beautifully immersed in a nature park. The tour winds its way along streets and small alleys, enriched by chapels with more than 4,000 frescoed figures and about 800 statues depicting scenes from the Gospels, created by local artists and craftsmen, such as Gaudenzio Ferrari, Giovanni d'Enrico, Antonio d'Enrico (also known as Tanzio or Tanzio da Varallo), Tabacchetti and Francesco Mazzucchetti (also known as Morazzone).

When admiring the artistic masterpieces of Varallo, one cannot fail to mention Gaudenzio Ferrari. The works of the artist and his students can be found in the city's churches, at Sacro Monte and at the Pinacoteca.

However, one of his greatest works is the "Parete Gaudenziana", located in the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, the prologue to the Sacro Monte experience. Considered to be a monument of national importance and an undisputed masterpiece of Renaissance painting between Piedmont and Lombardy, the Gaudenzian Wall is an amazing fresco that entirely covers the partition of the church. Gaudenzio Ferrari chose to create scenes from the life and passion of Jesus, starting with the Annunciation and ending with the Resurrection, dividing them into 21 frescoed panels, which he produced with expert communication skills.

1.00 pm: lunch at a restaurant at Sacro Monte and visit to the complex.

Descent by cable car, visit to the historic centre of Varallo and the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, considered the prologue to the experience at Sacro Monte, where Gaudenzio Ferrari painted one of the works of greatest artistic value: a large fresco still known today as the "Parete Gaudenziana".



5.30 pm: transfer to **Romagnano Sesia** for a guided walk through the vineyards of the Supervulcano in the Sesia Val Grande UNESCO Global Geopark with narration by a viticulture expert of the geosite. The Ticino Valley Natural Park extends along the north-western bank of the river, from Lake Maggiore to the border with Lombardy. Together with the Lombard-side of the Ticino Park, it is the largest protected area along a river in Europe, recognized as a World Heritage Site in the MAB-UNESCO programme and a European Heritage Site within the Natura 2000 network. The Park has a remarkable variety of environments, rich in biodiversity. Villa Picchetta, in Cameri, is the headquarter of The Management Body of the Protected Areas of Ticino and Lake Maggiore. The U-shaped structure consists of a central body, once the owner's residence, surmounted by an octagonal tiburium with a lantern, and side wings with service rooms. Inside, the Sala dell'Ottagono displays interesting 19th-century frescoes with grotesques. The gardens surrounding the villa are of great scenic effect. The Mulino Vecchio of Bellinzago Novarese is one of the many water mills that have been built in the Ticino valley; today it is the only one still working and in good condition. With the contribution of the Piedmont Region, the Mill has become a Regional Center for Environmental Education. The area of the Supervulcano is part of the Sesia Val Grande Geopark recognized by UNESCO in 2013 and became, in 2015, "UNESCO Global Geopark", a new programme where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.

7.00 pm: visit to the Ioppa Winery with wine tasting and light dinner.

10.00 pm: return to Torino.

Fam Trip organized and offered by the Local Tourism Board Terre dell'Alto Piemonte



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**TORINO
21/23
Settembre
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in partnership with local partner operators involved in the tour

