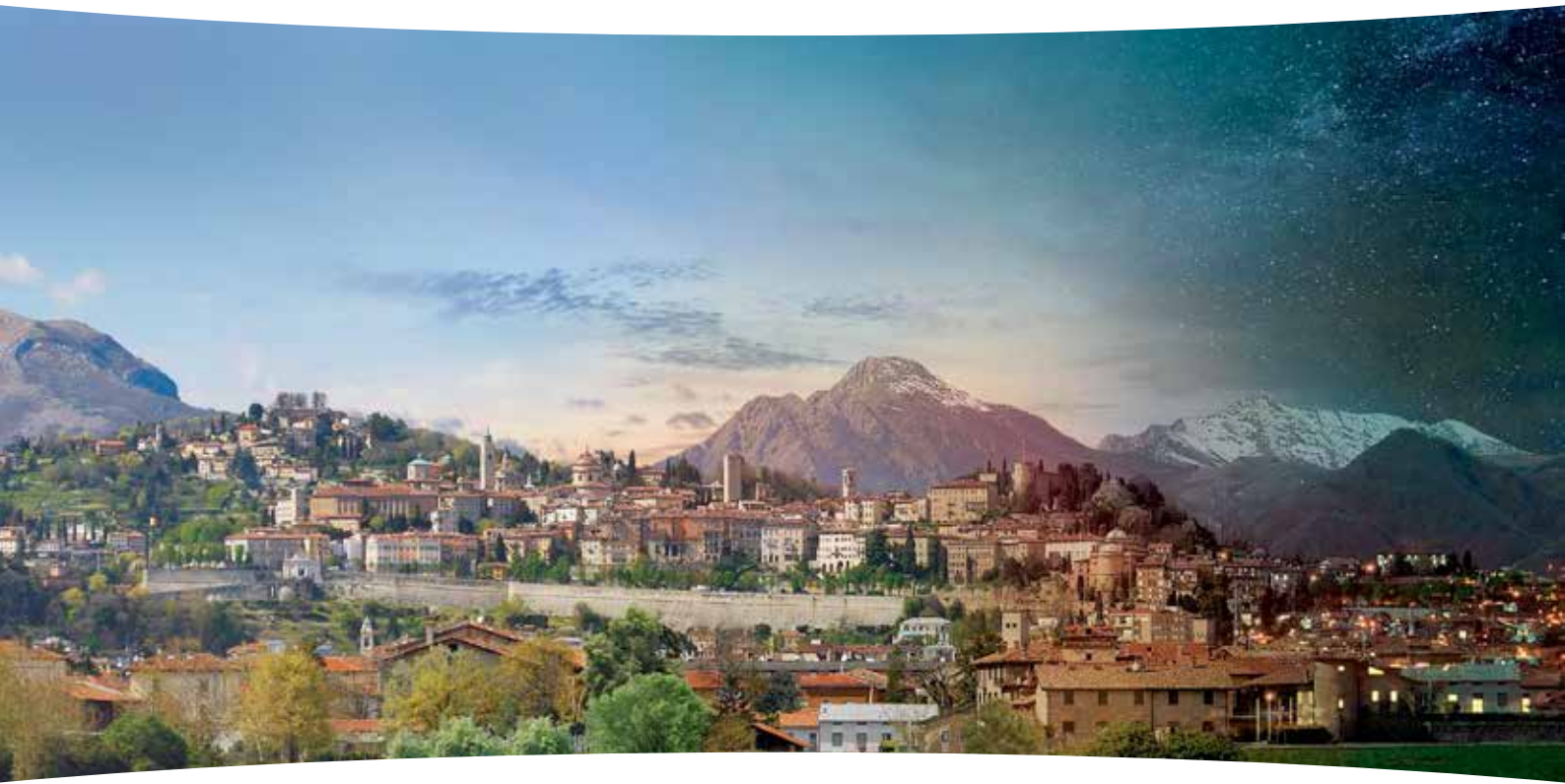


BERGAMO

HISTORY YOU'LL WANT TO SHARE



THE ROUTES OF NATURE

THE ROUTE OVER THE BERGAMO HILLS CUTS THROUGH THE SOUTHERN SLOPES DOTTED WITH HISTORIC VILLAS AND ANCIENT RURAL SETTLEMENTS. THE FIRST ROUTE LEADS TO THE CASTLE OF SAN VIGILIO, AND OTHER SCENIC ROUTES LEAD TO THE MONASTERY OF ASTINO THE CENTRE OF THE GREEN VALLEY BY THE SAME NAME. THE LAST ROUTE, IDENTIFIED BY THE LETTER Q (NOT RECOMMENDED IN INCLEMENT WEATHER), PASSES THROUGH THE FORESTS OF THE NORTHERN SLOPES AND FOLLOWS THE ANCIENT VASI AQUEDUCT. THE VARIOUS ROUTES CAN ALSO BE COMBINED TOGETHER AS FOLLOWS: M-N-P, M-N-P-Q OR Q ON ITS OWN.



FUNICOLARE S. VIGILIO - CHIESA S. VIGILIO

Take the funicular (in service since 1912) to reach the third level of the city: the hill of San Vigilio. From the small square of the church shaded by a vigorous oak, next to the funicular arrival station, you can enjoy one of the most beautiful views of the Upper Town (that looks low from here!). The area, once barren due to the presence of the castle, between the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was transformed into a neighbourhood – with a park, residential buildings, hotels, restaurants and trees.



FUNICULAR OF SAN VIGILIO

Largo Porta Sant'Alessandro, 3

The funicular went into operation on 27 August 1912, equipped with 2 cars capable of holding 32 people each, later replaced by a 55-seat car. The funicular travels a distance of 630 m with an altitude gain of 90 m, as can be seen from the panoramic terrace located on top, offering views from the hills to the city's plains and surrounding towns. An ideal starting point for a peaceful and pleasant stroll.



CASTLE OF SAN VIGILIO

Via al Castello-Via Cavagnis

A Roman garrison offering spectacular views over the plains and Bergamo's Alpine foothills, it was rebuilt in the twelfth century and referred to as the Chapel, after the little church dedicated to S.Maria Maddalena. Subjected to modifications and expansions beginning in the fourteenth century, in the 1500s it was merged with the Fort of San Marco with an embankment where a covered road ran. Today it is the site of a public park.



CHURCH OF SAN VIGILIO

Via San Vigilio, 32

Built at the beginning of the eighth century after the bishop of Trentino's alleged stay in the hills of Bergamo, in the thirteenth century it was managed by the Dominican friars and in the fourteenth century by the Order of the Humiliated, abolished two centuries later. Renovated in 1512, it assumed its present appearance with the construction work carried out in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries that included the addition of a panoramic terrace overlooking the Lower Town and the western hills.



SCORLAZZONE - CASA NATALE DONIZETTI

The steps of Scorlazzone, one of the most famous tiered streets in the Bergamo hills, cut through the village of Sudorno to bring you down to the Astino Monastery, located in the basin by the same name. The dark forests of Astino and Allegrezza, named Sites of Community Interest by the European Union, stand out from the soft green valley. Once you reach the valley, the path leads back up towards Borgo Canale, one of the city's oldest villages, renowned as being the birthplace of the famous composer Gaetano Donizetti.



SCORLAZZONE STEPS

Salita dello Scorlazzone

362 metres long, with a slope of 77.5 meters and 210 steps, its name can probably be attributed to its proximity to the castle of San Vigilio, with "scorlas" being the archaic and corrupt dialect term for "castellazzo", meaning castle. Another theory attributes the name to the word "scorlas" (machete), most likely used to clear thistles from the path.



TEMPIO DEI CADUTI

Via Sudorno

Built on the ruins of the ancient church of S. Maria di Sudorno, destroyed specifically for its construction in 1915-16, the temple is also known as the church of Sudorno, named after the street where it stands and under which one of the two ancient Roman aqueducts ran. Dedicated to the victims of war, the altar-piece of the old medieval church is housed inside (covered entirely with dark marble).



FORMER MONASTERY OF ASTINO

Via Astino

The monastery dates back to the twelfth century and was ruled by the order of the male Benedictine congregation of Vallombrosa (Fi) until its abolition (1797). The entire complex was used as a mental hospital and then for agricultural purposes: acquired by the MIA of Bergamo it is currently undergoing extensive preservation work, aimed at reviving its artistic and historic heritage, in a precious environmental setting.



RIPA PASQUALINA

Via Pasqualina Ripa

The slope can be reached from the corner of a tower house, overlooking via Astino. The initial path is rather flat. However, beyond via del Caltro (from the dialect term "selter" and the Latin word "ciltrum", meaning "arch"), it becomes narrower and slightly more steep, until it turns into a paved flight of steps that ends on a paved road that connects to via Sudorno (a place name that refers to the medieval cult of the god Saturn).



CHURCH OF SAN GRATA INTER VITES AND STEPS

Via Borgo Canale

According to tradition, the church was built in the fourth century over the tomb of Grata, the patron of Bergamo along with Alexander. However, the earliest records of the church date back to the eighth century. "Inter vites" (meaning between the vines) distinguishes it from the church by the same name on via Arena. It houses important paintings by Vincenzo Bonomini. In front stands the grand staircase of S. Gottardo, named after the former monastic complex situated on top.



GAETANO DONIZETTI BIRTHPLACE

Via Borgo Canale, 14

Located in the ancient Borgo di Canale district, it was built in the seventeenth century on top of fifteenth century structures: here, in the basement, is where the famous composer was born and spent his childhood, widely recognised as one of the major proponents of nineteenth century Italian opera. The house, purchased by the city of Bergamo in 1925, has been a national monument since 1926.

VILLA RUMI VIVIANI - SLARGO VETTA

An extended visit of the Bergamo Hills will allow you to admire breath-taking landscapes and traces of ancient settlements: a journey amidst Art Nouveau style villas, sixteenth century villages and the residences of Bergamo's most illustrious citizens. As you walk through the lovely streets, which were once used for travelling between rural towns or to reach individual crops, you can admire the scenery of the plains embraced by incredible stillness, and continue on foot to Monte Bastia, the city's highest hill.



RUMI VIVIANI VILLA

Via Monte Bastia, 6

The ground floor of this sixteenth century building has retained its original appearance. An ambitious reconstruction project that began in 1925 gave the rest of the building its current eclectic style, with the addition of a crenelated tower and windows featuring round brick arches. The terrace has a carved stone balustrade, while the stately terrace garden is divided into walkways and stairs on staggered levels.



VILLA NATTA VIEWPOINT

Via San Sebastiano

Here, the village opens up towards the slopes of the Colle San Vigilio hill. The surrounding neighbourhood, with its Art Nouveau villas, is dominated by the church of San Sebastiano. Between the terraces below, the long wall of the ancient Gavazzolo road can still be seen, which led down from the Astino monastery. The linear centre of Sudorno lies along the ridge to the right.



CASE MORONI DISTRICT

Tra Via Torni e Via Sudorno

The sixteenth century "Case Moroni" district offers splendid views over the valleys of Astino and surrounding plains (sometimes you can catch a glimpse of Milan's skyline): to the right is the Botta di S. Sebastiano, further down is the Allegrezza Wood, the Parco dei Colli Nature Reserve, and the nearby Church of Madonna del Bosco, with the Astino Monastery in the centre and the Sudorno complex on the left.



SLARGO VIA VETTA

Monte Bastia - Via Vetta

Once you reach the ridge and continue along the northern side, houses and gardens become a rare site. Follow the sign for via Vetta to reach the top of Monte Bastia, the city's highest hill. Further ahead you will see an isolated building, once given to the 'sguratori', workers who handled the maintenance of the Vasi aqueduct that runs, underground, at the base of the slope.

BOSCO BACIO - NUCLEO CASTAGNETA

This route crosses through the wooded areas of the northern slopes and continues to the outskirts of the city where traces of the ancient Vasi aqueduct can still be seen. Winding along stairways and passageways, this itinerary is recommended for those who are physically fit. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes since the trail inside the Vasi Forest is a wide dirt path. Not recommended in the event of inclement weather.



BACIO WOOD

Ingresso da Via Vetta fino a Via dei Vasi che incrocia via Castagneta

The route cuts through the Vasi Forest. To the north the undergrowth is teeming with ferns, which is also strewn with flowers in the spring. The trees most commonly seen here are the chestnut, oak and locust. This rarely seen historic urban forest was defended by the city throughout the ages. Today it is an area of environmental and landscape interest included in Bergamo's Parco dei Colli nature reserve.



● STONE PLAQUE IN THE GALLINA DISTRICT

Via dei Vasi che incrocia via Castagneta

This grey marble plaque placed here in 1329 was renovated in 1696. Somewhat illegible from the very start, it commemorates the cleaning of the Vasi aqueduct, commissioned by the municipal podestà Beccaro Beccaris. The works concerned the stretch of the aqueduct in the village of Castagneta, up to the ancient gate of Sant’Alessandro (slightly further down from today’s Colle Aperto).



● LOOKOUT POINT FROM THE RURAL TOWN CENTRE

In via Castagneta all’incrocio con la scaletta Tavernelle

At the highest point of via Tavernelle the view extends over the Gallina district, with its rural buildings surrounded by typical ‘ronchi’, or terraced vineyards. In the background is the tip of Canto Alto mountain, recognizable for its metal cross on top. The village of Sorisole lies at the foot of the mountain with its large whitewashed parish church. Off to the right are the Garatti and Maresana ridges.



● CASTAGNETA DISTRICT

Via Castagneta

The Castagneta district is located along an old road leading to the Brembana Valley and the Canton of Grigioni (CH), which ran parallel to the Vasi aqueduct. Castagneta belonged to the Corpi Santi, the administrative perimeter that wrapped around the city for a few miles. The name recalls the chestnut trees scattered in the Bergamo hills, around the eighteenth-century church dedicated to San Rocco.

◇ ACQUEDOTTO - POLVERIERA

This last route, which cuts through the northern slope, leads to the Upper Town on a completely flat route. As you make your way through lovely villages, like Castagneta, immersed in the silent verdant hills, you will discover ancient practices, intriguing traditions and interesting natural reflections. You can also catch a glimpse of Bergamo’s Orobie Mountains, which serve as the enchanting backdrop along this journey of “views” around Bergamo.



● ACQUEDUCT

Via Castagneta

From the source of the spring to the gate of San Alessandro, the Vasi Aqueduct (3.5 km, slope of 70 m) brings water from the springs on the northern slopes of the hills into the city. Of ancient origins, it provided water for domestic purposes up to the nineteenth century. The water needed for industrial uses was brought in from the Serio River, to the foot of the city, where the main manufacturing facilities were established.



● BIRD SNARE OF CASTAGNETA

Via Castagneta

The city’s most beautiful and intact specimen was used for capturing birds for scientific purposes. Bird snares are a unique type of green architecture designed to capture birds. They are created through the patient pruning and shaping of trees, from which nets are hung: the birds remained entangled there, after the bird catcher frightened them by throwing a bogey out of their hiding place.



● PORTA DEL SOCCORSO GATE

Via C. Beltrami - incrocio con via Sotto Mura di Sant’Alessandro

Located mid-way along the pedestrian street under the walls of Sant’Alessandro, accessible from Colle Aperto, it is located behind a fence on private property. It represented the last escape point of the defensive system of the Venetian walls (1561-1595) and was aptly given the name Soccorso, or Rescue, as it connected the main district (Forte S. Marco) with the Castle of San Vigilio.



THE OAK TREE AND VIA ROCCOLINO

Via C. Beltrami - incrocio con Via Roccolino

Via del Roccolino begins with an ancient specimen of English oak. The oak was the queen of the forest that dominated the area before the city was founded. The tree, uncommon in urban environments, is easy to recognise for its lobed leaves and acorns held by a long branch. The road, whose name recalls the ancient presence of a bird snare, leads to the village of Valverde, at the base of the Upper Town.



GUNPOWDER STOREHOUSE

Via C. Beltrami

Built at the end of the sixteenth century like the one in the valley of Colle Aperto, it is made of sandstone, constructed with an overturned rectangle positioned on top of a pyramid. Two metres wide and 7 metres tall, the top was covered with lead to ensure water resistance, necessary for the proper storage of gunpowder. Defence walls and gunpowder storehouses are the only Venetian military structures that have remained intact.

GETTING HERE

- on foot from the Upper Town
- from the Lower Town, take ATB bus no. 1 to the Colle Aperto station
- on foot, take the steep flight of steps leading to the Upper Town from the area near the Italcementi Swimming Pools (taking the More steps then continue to the right along via Borgo Canale, or by going up from via Fontanabrolo);
- by car. It is not recommended to travel to the Upper Town by car: there are many ZTL (limited traffic) areas that are completely closed off to traffic on weekends and summer evenings. If necessary, cars can be parked for a limited time along the walls, in the two parking lots in Piazza Mercato del Fieno and next to the lower station of the San Vigilio funicular. Another option is to park your car for free near via Grataroli then take the nearby steps to the Upper Town or walk up to the funicular in the Upper Town;

Services along the way

- a few cafes and restaurants can be found on this itinerary;
- various fountains with drinking water;
- public toilets.

Parks

- San Vigilio Park;
- the entire area features green areas and parks.

BERGAMO HILLS

Itinerary

The Routes of Nature



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