



Camera di Commercio
Pavia



PAVIA



Discover an enchanting world
on the outskirts of Milan



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HOW TO GET TO THE PROVINCE



The excellent location, at the centre of the major Italian and European communication routes, makes the province of Pavia the ideal destination both for a day out and a long journey through history, nature and great food.

Several of **Italy's major airports** are just a few kilometres away:

- Milan Linate - 43 km;
- Milan Malpensa - 88 km;
- Bergamo Orio al Serio - 90 km;
- Genoa - 127 km;
- Turin Caselle - 182 km.



Even if you choose to travel by **train**, it is very easy to reach Pavia: the main north-west routes meet in this area:

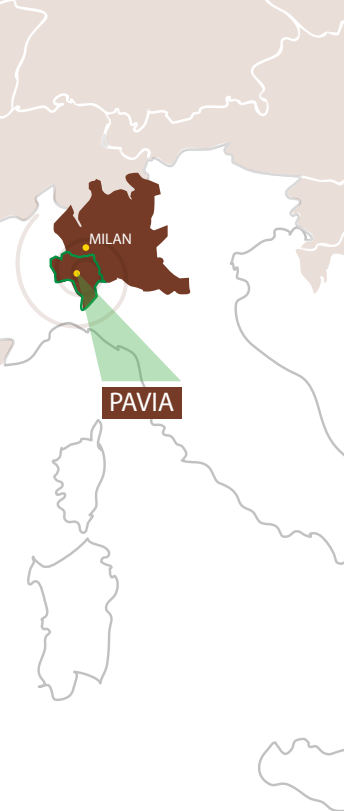
- Turin - Bologna;
- Milan - Genoa.

From both, it is easy to access both the high-speed

and local rail networks with numerous railway stations throughout the province.

By **car**, it is possible to take the A7 motorway (Milan - Genoa) with three exits (Pavia Bereguardo, Pavia Gropello Cairoli, Casei Gerola), which crosses the province from north to south, or the A21 (Turin - Piacenza - Brescia), which instead runs in the east-west direction, with three exits (Broni-Stradella, Casteggio, Voghera).





INLAND CONNECTIONS

Not only is it very easy to get to Pavia and the surrounding province, but it is even easier to visit it.

The widespread **railway network**, with frequently running local trains, allows you to move easily between one municipality and another.



The **public transport** service by road (urban and out-of-town buses)



that connects the smaller towns and the three major cities - Pavia, Vigevano, Voghera - makes every visit easy and more environmentally friendly.

The continuous investments in soft mobility and availability of numerous **cycle and pedestrian** paths also make it easy to travel on foot or by bicycle to discover small medieval villages, imposing strongholds, rice fields and vineyards.



You can, of course, also choose to travel around in your own **car**: in this case, in addition to the road network featuring a multitude of parking lots and excellent connections with public transport, it is worth mentioning that there are already numerous recharging points for electric vehicles.





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PAVIA

and its

province

Discover an enchanting world
on the outskirts of Milan



 **PAVIASVILUPPO**

Azienda Speciale Camera Commercio Pavia



DISCOVER AN ENCHANTING WORLD ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF MILAN

Pavia and its province are a treasure trove of flavours, art and emotions lying just to the south of Milan. An area, never taken for granted, which combines a multitude of different landscapes, allowing you to discover the lush agricultural plain around Pavia, the universe of water and rice fields of the Lomellina and the gentle hills that rise up to the summits of Mounts Lesima and Penice in the Apennines.

Easily reached from the major Italian and European cities, Pavia is a destination that never ceases to amaze and bewitch thanks to its rich history, uncontaminated landscape and kaleidoscope of activities and initiatives suitable for everyone, from children to families, from sports enthusiasts to foodies and wine lovers.

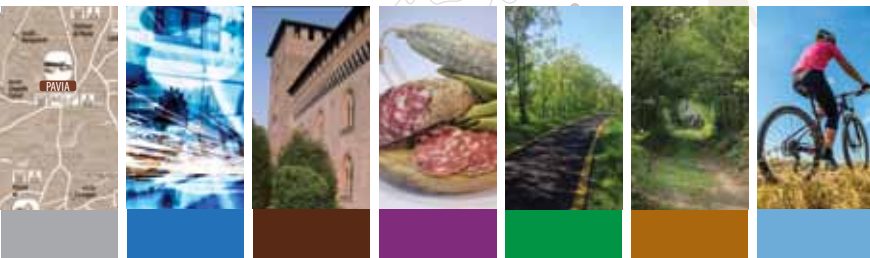


PAVIA



WHERE IS PAVIA?

The province of Pavia lies in the most southern part of the **Lombardy** region in **north-west Italy**. Historically, it was a **border area**, located on the crossroads between the major states before the unification of Italy: the Duchy of Milan, Republic of Genoa, Duchy of Savoy, and Duchy of Parma and Piacenza. A strategic position which makes the province a not-to-be-missed destination to experience the unique qualities of Made in Italy. Milan is no more than 15 km away, the Ligurian coast is less than an hour's drive and the charm of this province is all here, to be visited by bike, on foot, or travelling by train or car.





WHERE TO EAT AND SLEEP

There is a wide and diversified hospitality offer in Pavia and the surrounding province. In addition to the **traditional** offer with numerous hotels of different categories, there are an increasing number of Bed&Breakfasts available, even in the smallest and most isolated villages. **Nature** lovers can choose different options to experience the traditional rural life of the countryside and hills of Pavia, thanks to the many farms that have chosen to convert part of their premises into attractive holiday homes. There is also no shortage of facilities designed to combine the **relaxation** of modern spas with your stay, offering the possibility of ending a day spent walking among ancient Romanesque monuments and paths in the countryside, by immersing yourselves in an oasis of well-being.

On the congress front, on the other hand, there are various solutions in the province to organise **events** and meetings in places steeped in charm.

For eating out, Pavia offers a vast array of traditional **osterie** and inns, more refined **restaurants** and a variety of ethnic options. Not to be missed, of course, is the opportunity to enjoy the rich **food and wine heritage** of an area well-suited to agriculture: from breakfast to after dinner, cold cuts, cheeses, great wines and recipes range from hill area to river flavours, with all the classics of the Po Valley Plain.





SHOWS, MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT, EVENTS

While the Milan social scene is less than 20 km from the province, if you decide to stay in the lovely towns in and around Pavia, there is no shortage of opportunities to enjoy an excellent play, concert or a traditional festival.

There are several **theatres** that each year put drama, classical and contemporary music on the bill: the Frascini Theatre in Pavia, Carbonetti Theatre in Broni, Cagnoni Theatre in Vigevano and the Martinetti in Garlasco. During the summer and autumn, **music festivals** are held in the most enchanting places in the province and city, including early music, jazz and chamber music, thanks also to the initiatives of the Vittadini Conservatoire and the university colleges of Pavia.

Almost every municipality offers you the chance to enjoy the typical flavours of the province with **festivals and fairs** that combine fun, wine and tradition. Don't miss the Autunno Pavese festival in Pavia and the Ascension Fair in Voghera.



PAVIA and its province



MADE IN PAVIA

The province of Pavia, like the region of which it is a part, has a history of **entrepreneurial passion** and artisan know-how that, for centuries, has shaped the environmental, social and economic landscape of this area.

Not just a province to visit, discover and savour, but also a place where people work and produce, the birthplace of some of the excellent products that have contributed to making Italy a model of quality.

Industry and artisan crafts, together with agriculture and trade, are the true heart of the province and express both the ability to preserve large-scale traditional productions and look to technological innovation.

There are **40,000 companies operating** in the province,





which offer work to about **133,000 employees**, achieving over **12 billion Euros of added value**.

The productive infrastructure reflects the artisan history of Made in Italy: 99.3% are micro and small enterprises, which employ just under 75% of the total number of employees in the province while the remaining medium and large enterprises employ over 25% of workers.

The **agri-food** world is very important, in the primary sector, of course, with rice and wine-growing occupying the key role, as well as in the transformation, with many small artisan producers and numerous industrial plants. The agri-food chain is, in fact, well represented at every stage, from agriculture to agricultural machinery, packaging and trade. On the industrial front alone, there are 4,000 employees and exports stand at figures that exceed 341 million Euros per year.

In industry, it is the **manufacturing** sector that represents the driving force, with 3,600 companies employing as many as 31,000 employees, generating 23% of all added value alone in the province, with exports abroad of over 4 billion Euros per year.

In this scenario, the **footwear industry** plays a key part in production constituting one of the cornerstones of Pavia's industrial history. Vigevano, in particular, is one of the main centres of the Italian shoe industry. The footwear industry, in the strict sense, employs 1,700 workers and generates 126 million Euros per year in exports, while the footwear machines sector, of which Italy is the world leader, has 50 production companies that employ about 1,000 employees, with a total turnover of 210 million Euros, 70% of which is produced by foreign market sales.

There is no shortage of major **engineering, mechatronic** and **metallurgical** companies (over 11,500 employees), also involving transport, such as the historic railway





workshops in Voghera, as well as **oil & gas**, petrochemicals and plastics.

Chemicals and pharmaceuticals, which together produce 1 billion exports (27% of total manufacturing), are instead part of the wider **Life Sciences** supply chain, which represents one of the authentic areas of excellence of Pavia's manufacturing and innovative world. Technological research and the presence of the prestigious University of Pavia, one of the oldest universities in the world, is the nerve centre of a universe structured around healthcare. In the city and throughout the province, there are major hospitals, clinics and rehabilitation centres of national and international fame, including 3 IRCCS (Scientific Research and Care Institutes) and the CNAO Foundation, the only Italian centre (of which there are only four in the world)

to offer hadron therapy to treat cancer. The figures for technology transfer in this area are very high: 12 out of 24 spin-offs from the University of Pavia operate in the

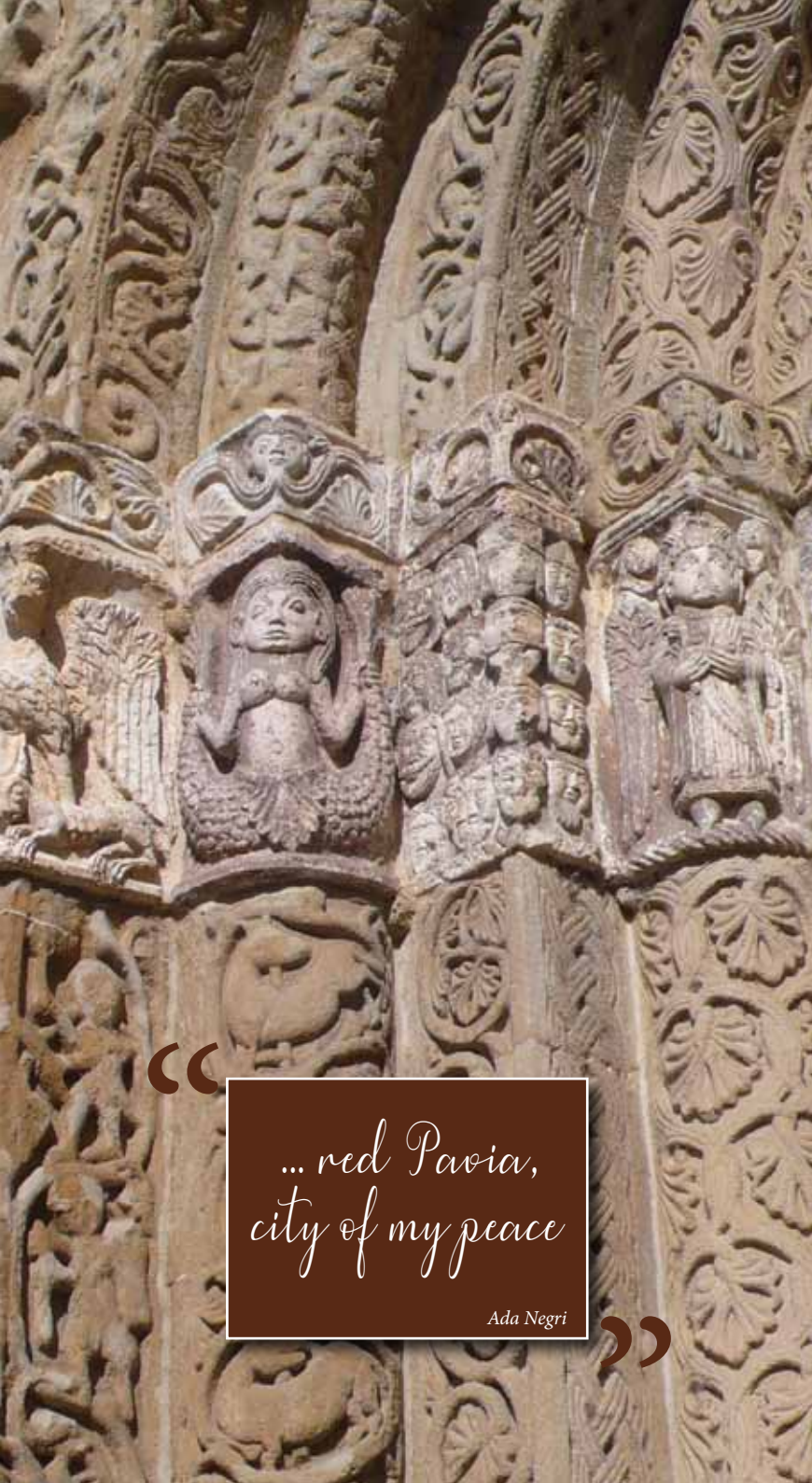




medical and pharmaceutical sectors.

The **logistics sector** is also becoming increasingly important, especially in recent years, which thanks to the strategic position of the province has led to the set-up of various centres, including intermodal facilities. Moreover, transport and warehousing employ about 8,100 employees working in 1,200 local units, plus a further 1,300 companies with 8,200 rental employees, including 11% of the companies and 26% of total employment generated by services. Furthermore, there are many niche sectors, such as goldsmithing and watchmaking, and there are also a whole host of artisan shops that perpetuate age-old expertise, from decorative arts to printing.





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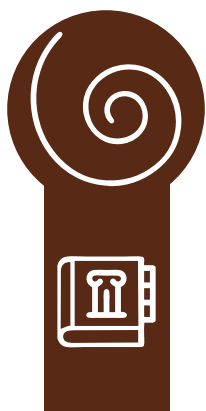
*... red Pavia,
city of my peace*

Ada Negri

”



*In the midst
of Lombards,
medieval castles
and baroque
churches*





IN THE MIDST OF LOMBARDS, MEDIEVAL CASTLES AND BAROQUE CHURCHES



Site of the imperial mint and capital of the kingdom. Residence of dukes and battle field for the control of northern Italy. Illustrious place of study, worship and art.

The ancient and austere charm of the city of **Pavia** can still be felt today, when walking around the city, discovering the traces that the Romans and Lombards, noble families, empires and artists have left in this area on the outskirts of Milan. The large historic centre, dotted

with soaring **towers**, a legacy of the municipal era, gives you a feel for the Middle Ages, along narrow cobbled alleyways that still follow the Roman chequerboard layout of the city, against the backdrop of the mighty **medieval ramparts**, gradually extended as far as the **Spanish wall** (still largely visible). Numerous gates opened onto them, three of which are still intact: the **Porta Nuova**, dating back to the 12th century overlooking the Ticino river, the nearby **Porta Calcinara**, from the 12th century and remodelled in the 14th century, and the **Porta Milano**, with a neoclassical layout and appearance, built at the end of the eighteenth century in what is now Viale XI Febbraio. The most important churches in the city also date back to the High Middle Ages, such as the **Basilica of San Michele Maggiore**, where the king of the Kingdom of Italy was crowned for centuries, including the future emperor, Federico Barbarossa. The current building, from the 12th century which replaced the previous one from the Longobard era, is the most important testimony of Lombard Romanesque architecture, built exceptionally

Above: view of Pavia;
Below: main façade
of the Basilica of San Michele





The Ark of Saint Augustine and the medieval narrative

The magnificent Ark, in Gothic style, dates back to 1362 and features three styles, in addition to the cymatium, with reliefs and statues that portray different periods in the life of the bishop of Hippo Regius, the transportation of his remains from Sardinia to Pavia and his miraculous appearance at Cava Manara. Among them, images of the virtues, angelic choirs, saints and popes who conjure up an imposing story in white Carrara marble.



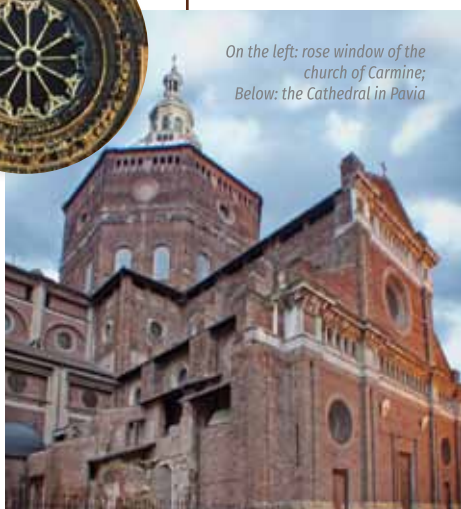
from sandstone, with fine reliefs on the façades. The grand interior, with large galleries, preserves numerous works of art such as the mosaic of the months and the imposing 10th century crucifix in silver foil of Santa Maria Teodote.

Also mentioned by Dante in the Divine Comedy, is the **Basilica of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro**, similar to the previous one of Lombard origins, but with the current structure dating back to the twelfth century; it houses the tombs of King Liutprand, Saint Augustine (whose remains were moved here at the request of Liutprand from Sardinia), and Severinus Boëthius.

The **Ark of Saint Augustine** is a fourteenth-century marble masterpiece, with over 150 reliefs and statues, in Gothic style. The church of **Santa Maria del Carmine**, an elegant 14th century building is also Gothic. It bears witness, along with numerous other buildings of worship and monasteries prior to the year 1000, to the central role of Pavia among the European roads of faith, thanks also to the ancient link with the powerful monastic fief of Bobbio. A final mention deservedly goes to the **Duomo**, the cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta and Santo Stefano; the events behind its construction are very long and complex, but the size of its imposing dome (the fourth largest in Italy),



On the left: rose window of the church of Carmine;
Below: the Cathedral in Pavia



*The Visconti Castle in Pavia**The Scarpa hall, University of Pavia**Façade of the Collegio Borromeo**The Covered Bridge*

designed by Bramante, means it should not be missed if you are visiting Pavia. After the demolition of the royal palace and the end of the municipal period, local government took up residence in the **Visconti Castle**, built at the end of the fourteenth century by Galeazzo II Visconti. He designated Pavia as the joint capital with Milan and it is still possible even now to stroll under the elegant loggia and through the grand halls which are home to the **Civic Museums** and the Malaspina Art Gallery. Through the various collections in the museums, you can not only retrace the history of Pavia starting from the Roman era but also enjoy a wonderful collection of paintings with works by Bellini, Antonello da Messina, Hugo Van der Goes and Francesco Hayez. Among the buildings, don't miss the 12th-century **Broletto**, in Piazza della Vittoria (where you can also admire the 14th-century **Casa dei Diversi**), the **Almo Collegio Borromeo**, a fine example of Mannerist architecture that houses beautiful frescoes, the late sixteenth century **Collegio Ghislieri**, **Palazzo Mezzabarba**, in Rococo style, **Palazzo Malaspina**, reinterpreted with neoclassical features at the end of the eighteenth century, today the seat of the

Prefecture and the Historical Archives. The **Fraschini Theatre**, which started life as the Teatro dei Quattro Cavalieri in 1772, hosts important programmes featuring opera, symphonies music and dramatic art.

The largest and most well-known place in the heart of modern-day Pavia is the **University**. Founded as a school of law, rhetoric and liberal arts by Lothair I in 825 and transformed in *Studium generale* (University) in 1361 by the emperor, Charles IV, with its imposing site overlooking the Strada Nuova, the University was frequented by famous students and lecturers: Carlo Goldoni, Alessandro Volta, Ugo Foscolo, Vincenzo Monti, Lazzaro Spallanzani, Carlo Forlanini, the Nobel Prize laureates Camillo



Golgi, Giulio Natta and Carlo Rubbia. It is definitely worth taking the time to visit the various courtyards, the result of the large extensions commissioned by the Empress Maria Theresa of Habsburg and her son Joseph II, which house a major collection of Roman epigraphs, along with the rooms of the University Library and the highly decorative historic lecture halls.

As you leave the centre and cross the **Covered Bridge**, rebuilt after the war and modelled on the ancient Romanesque bridge demolished by bombing, you come to **Borgo Ticino**, a fascinating part of the city, which retains the atmosphere of a bygone river life.

From here, you can venture into the historic regions of Siccomario and Lomellina, on the border of which is **Cava Manara** whose central square still reveals the ancient layout, closed off at opposite ends by two arched gateways. To the east of the city, you can see one of the elegant country residences that were built in the Pavia countryside during the eighteenth century, the sophisticated **Villa Botta Adorno in Torre d'Isola** with the grand court of honour and the park that stretches as far as the Ticino river.

Heading north, however, you come to one of the most fascinating places in the entire province, steeped in history: the **Certosa di Pavia**. Commissioned by Gian Galeazzo Visconti as a family mausoleum, the first stone was laid in 1396 to fulfil vow of his wife, Caterina. The work continued throughout the fifteenth century, creating the imposing Carthusian monastery with a mix of Gothic and Renaissance elements, still perfectly preserved today. Reliefs, sculptures, wall paintings and frescoes, the majestic Visconti funeral monuments, cloisters, fine stained glass windows, etc., there are countless treasures that can be admired on a visit to the ancient monastery and the Certosa Museum, built inside the halls of the Duke's Palace (later turned into a guesthouse).

Leaving the area of what used to be the Visconti park, and heading towards the west, you reach **Lardirago**, site of the castle, consisting of two fifteenth-century buildings erected on older bases, donated by Pope Pius V to the Ghislieri College and currently used for conferences and cultural events.

As you near the Po, you come across **Belgioioso**, with its Visconti Castle, first a hunting and recreation place for the dukes of Milan, then



**The Certosa:
a celebration
of the Visconti
power**

Symbolically placed midway between Pavia and Milan, the Certosa was, in the plans by Gian Galeazzo Visconti, known as the Count of Virtue and first Duke of Milan, intended to be the Visconti mausoleum. Inside the church, in fact, you can admire the grand funeral monument of the duke, commissioned by Ludovico il Moro and completed over a period of more than seventy years. It features an intricate decoration that ranges from pure Renaissance to early Mannerism.



The Belgioioso Castle



From the top:
the Civic Tower of Stradella;
the Sanctuary of Torricella Verzate;
Interior of the Cathedral of Voghera

a fiefdom to Barbiano who, when they became princes, turned it into a country residence in the eighteenth century. The castle retains both the fourteenth-century features of the oldest part and the noble wing in neoclassical style which today hosts fairs and events, flanked by the stables designed by the famous architect, Leopold Pollack.

In **Inverno and Monteleone**, on the other hand, there are the remains of an ancient castle of the Knights Hospitaller of Malta, who rebuilt it in the 15th century. You can still admire the towers, one of which is an unusual cylindrical shape.

A few kilometres to the east, there is another castle which, following work carried out in the eighteenth century in Baroque style, was turned into a real palace: **Chignolo Po**. Probably dating back to the eighth century, the castle was enlarged and transformed by the architect, Giovanni Ruggeri on behalf of Cardinal Agostino Cusani Visconti, papal nuncio, who also had it enhanced by a magnificent park.

After crossing the river, you enter Oltrepò before reaching **Stradella**, the capital of the accordion, at the foot of the Val Versa and overlooked by the ancient Rocca di Montalino. The civic tower, from the fifteenth century, is worthy of note. It was remodelled in the nineteenth century and transformed into the bell tower of the nearby parish church which houses a fine Serassi organ. Continuing west along the Via Emilia, you come to **Broni**, an important wine-growing area, with the prestigious Basilica of San Pietro which houses the remains of Prince San Contardo d'Este, surrounded by large estates, including that of San Cassino Po, today the home of the Regional Wine Cellars of Lombardy.

Passing by the foot of **Cigognola**, a charming well-preserved medieval village with its own castle, you reach **Toricella Verzate**, where the only example of Monte Sacro in Lombardy, south of the Po, stands, namely the Sanctuary of the Passion, a complex of 14 chapels linked to the Stations of the Cross, which are laid out around the eighteenth-century church.

Not far from there is **Voghera**, known as Iria in Roman times, which lies on the banks of the Staffora river. Voghera, the main town in the Oltrepò, was a county seat, marquisate and then, provincial seat, carving out a place for itself as a border town between Bobbio, Tortona and Pavia. Despite undergoing extensive modifications over the centuries, the **Visconti Castle**, in the centre of the city, still preserves fine frescoes attributed to Bramantino, portraying the Virgin with Child





Carlo Gallini, an engineer with a passion for painting and agriculture

Carlo Gallini was an eclectic native of Voghera, who graduated in engineering from the Polytechnic of Turin, dedicated himself to promoting agricultural education and was an amateur painter and avid collector. In the family residence, which overlooks the Via Emilia, he collected numerous works, including a sleeping Endymion attributed to Guercino and an interesting collection of Flemish landscapes.



and the Muses. The **Duomo**, collegiate church of San Lorenzo Martire and main place of worship in the city, with a modified Greek cross layout, was rebuilt in the 17th century and features richly restored interior decoration. The central tabernacle which houses the relic of the Holy Thorn is also noteworthy. Among the various buildings in the centre, **Casa Gallini** deserves

a particular mention with its excellent art collection. The large 19th-century **former Barracks**, only partially restored, houses both the Historical Museum (with numerous military objects, uniforms and memorabilia) and the Museum of Natural Sciences. Other fascinating buildings are the ancient **Chiesa rossa** (Red church) or of Sant'Ilario from the twelfth century and now the Shrine of the Italian Cavalry, the late Renaissance **Church of the Carmine** (which has remained virtually unchanged), the **Church of San Giuseppe** which houses important works by the painter Paolo Borroni and the **Church of San Rocco**, where the saint's body in its entirety was once kept, before it was stolen and taken to Venice (with the exception of one arm).

Further up the Staffora Valley is **Rivanazzano Terme**, with its rare medieval pentagonal tower and the enchanting village of **Nazzano**, which dominates the Staffora Valley from a natural terrace, perched around the 12th century Malaspina castle and Villa Sanpietro with its lovely terraced Italianate gardens. Later, you will come across the recently renovated ancient fortress of **Montalfeo** and, in **Godiasco**



In the previous page, on the left: the Visconti Castle of Voghera; Above: the gardens of Villa Sanpietro and the Malaspina Castle of Nazzano



Fine Roman mosaics in Lomellina

The Lomello Castle, now the site of the town council, houses two different art treasures. On the ceilings and vaults, there are wonderful sixteenth-century frescoes, in one room the artefacts of an exceptional find, evidence of the ancient importance of Laumellum. It was 1969 when the black and white mosaics came to light, with a multicoloured part depicting the Gorgon, dating back to the 2nd or 3rd century AD, now preserved and on view on the second floor of the Castle.



Salice Terme, the two Malaspina buildings and the village which has retained its medieval layout.

Towards the Po, however, lies **Cervesina** where the Castle of San Gaudenzio is located, commissioned by the Beccaria family.

On the way back to Lomellina, you can easily take a detour to **Lomello**, an ancient Roman settlement full of authentic treasures, on the road that from Ticinum (Pavia) led to Turin and the Alpine passes. The original decorative cycles are still preserved inside the fifteenth century castle, and especially the lovely Roman multi-coloured mosaics, together with many other artefacts. Worthy of note is the 11th century **Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore**, an important example of Romanesque architecture, set against the octagonal Baptistry of San Giovanni Ad Fontes, dating back to the Lombard period (8th century).

In **Valeggio**, there is a uniquely shaped castle, originally from the Middle Ages, but clearly featuring Renaissance towers which was also home to a very young Pico della Mirandola among others. In **Scaldasole**, an even larger manor house still looks out over the entire town with its mighty walls. Once you reach

Garlasco, take the time to visit the Sanctuary of the Madonna della Bozzola, an eighteenth-century building, which stands on the site of a miraculous apparition of the Virgin Mary in 1465.

Returning to Oltrepò area, on its eastern margins on the border with the province of Piacenza, you arrive at **Arena Po**, where you can admire the thirteenth century Romanesque

church of San Giorgio and the surviving section of an ancient castle, partially demolished in the mid-seventeenth century. As you climb up the Apennines, dotted with vines, you can admire the castles of **Luzzano** and **Rovescala** and, after a short detour to the **Corkscrew Museum** in **Montecalvo Versiggia**, you eventually reach the peaks surrounding the Val Tidone. Here, you can visit the magnificent **Castle of Zavattarello**, long home of the powerful Dal Verme counts, inside which there is also a museum of contemporary art. In **Romagnese**, a



*From the top:
Romanesque complex
of the Basilica of Lomello;
the Valeggio Castle*

*On the next page, from the left:
the Hermitage of S. Alberto di Butrio;
the Castle of Zavattarello;
the Malaspina Castle of Oramala*



Sant'Alberto, model of a school of painting of the Oltrepò area

The interior of the churches of the Hermitage of Butrio is extensively decorated with frescoes that portray fragments of the life of the Saint, evangelical scenes, prophets, saints, etc. They were all painted in 1484, but the most interesting aspect is that the unusual style, with a mix of Byzantine references and more naïve solutions, as well as some details and similarities with other Oltrepò wall paintings, lend credence to the idea of an independent school of painting founded on the Oltrepò hills.

smaller castle, belonging to the Dal Verme family, houses the Lombard Apennine Museum of the four provinces which reconstructs the rural life of the area. In the town of **Brallo di Pregola** you can admire the ancient parish church of Someglio, dating back to the eleventh century, perched on the slope of Mount Lesima. Going back down to the valley, however, before reaching **Varzi**, you come across the Roman Furnace of **Massinigo** which dates back to 30 AD. The ancient medieval village of Varzi is still enclosed between the two turreted gates (Porta Soprana and Porta Sottana). In the middle, there are three fine churches: the parish church of San Germano, the Oratorio dei Rossi and the smaller Oratorio dei Bianchi, with its unusual round hall. The Malaspina Castle overlooks the village with the Torre della Strega. Leaving the town to the north lies the ancient Capuchin parish church, built at the end of the twelfth century, with its characteristic façade that combines Romanesque elements with the first Gothic influences. In the distance, to the east, you can see the outline of a mighty stronghold, the **Castle of Oramala**, ancestral home of the Marquis Malaspina, with its unmistakable half-moon tower. Not far away, probably of Malaspina origin, is the 11th century **Hermitage of Sant'Alberto di Butrio**, made up of three very old churches which are joined together and house a

complete cycle of frescoes from 1484. According to the legend, as testified by several documents, King Edward II of England died and was buried here, and whose original tomb is still visible. On the opposite side of the Staffora river there is another hermitage, that of **San Ponzo**, with a small church built partly in the sixteenth century, and the cave where the saint lived. As you continue to go





back down the valley, you come to the medieval village of **Cecima**, and, along the Ardivestra Valley, the ancient parish church of **San Zaccaria** in the municipality of Rocca Susella, dating back to the 11th century, with its fascinating simple lines and decorative façade, with alternating bands of sandstone and exposed brick. Further up this small side valley, you will come across the **Castle of Monteseale**, a stronghold of the Gambarana counts, and the **small town of Fortunago**, with the Church of Saints Cosma and Damiano and the nearby Pieve Mormorola, from the 13th century, belonging to the municipality of **Borghetto Mormorolo**. You then come to the Coppa valley and, as you work your way down from the hills, you can admire the **Castle of Montalto Pavese**, a refined and panoramic country residence belonging to the Marquis Belcredi. A few kilometres further along the valley lies **Casteggio**, the site of the historic battle between the Romans and Carthaginians led by Hannibal.

Take the time to visit the ancient collegiate church of San Pietro Martire, with its fourteenth-century bell tower (known as Pistornile) and the eighteenth-century building of the Certosa which houses the Archaeological Museum, an interesting collection of finds from all over the Oltrepò area.

The entire area is dotted with important noble villas that welcomed notable figures from the period of Italian unification, such as Mazzini and Garibaldi. Nearby **Montebello della Battaglia**, in fact, is the site of the shrine in memory of the great battle of the Second Italian War of Independence.

Crossing the Po again, you reach **Pieve del Cairo**, where you can see a triumphal arch in brick built in the seventeenth century to commemorate Margaret of Austria-Styria, as she passed through on her way to Spain to marry Philip III.

Continuing towards the west of Lomellina, you arrive at **Frascarolo**, the site of two important monuments in Pavia's history: the castle, which retains an unusual mix of original elements of the medieval fortress and others more typical of the noble family residence, and the ancient Acqualunga Abbey, of which only the 13th century church survives with fine 15th century frescoes, evidence of a large and thriving Cistercian



*From the top:
the Castle of Monteseale;
ancient woodcut of the Memorial of
Montebello della Battaglia;
the Castle of Sartirana*

*In the next page, from the top: the
Castle of Frascarolo;
the Castle of Cozzo;
the Basilica of S. Lorenzo in Mortara;
the Castle of Gambolò*



family home in Lomellina. In nearby **Sartirana** it is possible to visit the castle with the iconic cylindrical tower, the work of the architect Fioravanti who then continued his career at the court of the Tsars, and the Romanesque country oratory of Santa Maria in Pollicino. Nearby are **Mede**, with the fourteenth-century church of Saints Marziano and Martino, and **Breme**, home to the important Benedictine Abbey of San Pietro dating back to the tenth century, still visible today in the cloister, in the monks' kitchen and fascinating crypt. In **Vellezzo Lomellina** you can admire the ancient parish church with a baptistery, now in Romanesque style, but dating back to the 9th century. In **Cozzo**, the Castle, rebuilt in the 12th century, has wall decorations that portray the visit of the French king, Louis XII, in 1499. A little further north lies **Mortara**, home to several noteworthy churches: the Basilica of San Lorenzo, featuring fine Gothic architecture, built at the end of the fourteenth century which preserves works by Bernardino Lanino, Procaccini and Cerano; Santa Maria del Campo, still with frescoes by Cerano, and the Abbey of Sant'Albino, founded in the eighth century, with a 12th century apse and bell tower and an impressive cycle of frescoes.

In **Robbio**, the churches of San Pietro, in Romanesque style, and that of San Valeriano are worth a visit, as is the ossuary in memory of the great battle during the Second Italian War of Independence, located in **Palestro**. In **Gambolò**, there is an imposing 11th century castle. The four cylindrical towers at the far corners are of medieval origin, while the Baroque entranceway with the emblem of the Litta family is from the seventeenth century.





Finally, you reach **Vigevano**, the Renaissance pearl of the province. Much loved by the Sforza family, who took over from the Visconti to govern Milan and Pavia, Vigevano reached its period of greatest splendour between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the imposing **castle** underwent the most important interventions: the construction of the piazza, one of the most beautiful squares in the whole of Italy, designed by Leonardo da Vinci, commissioned by Ludovico il Moro as an antechamber of the castle, and the subsequent, imposing **Bramante Tower**. The stables of the castle feature particular architectural similarities to the prestigious Malatesta library in Cesena.

The castle also houses three museums: the International Shoe Museum, the Casimiro Ottone Art Gallery, with works from the 15th to the 20th century, and the Leonardiana, dedicated entirely to Leonardo da Vinci. The **Cathedral of Sant'Ambrogio** is particularly impressive with its spectacular "concave" Baroque façade.

Also noteworthy is the church of **San Pietro Martire**, in pure Gothic style, and the baroque **Santa Maria del Popolo**. **Palazzo Sanseverino** is also a fine building, which, despite the significantly altered and rather anonymous external façade, hides a courtyard in Renaissance style inside. Not to be missed is the fine **Cagnoni Theatre**, built in

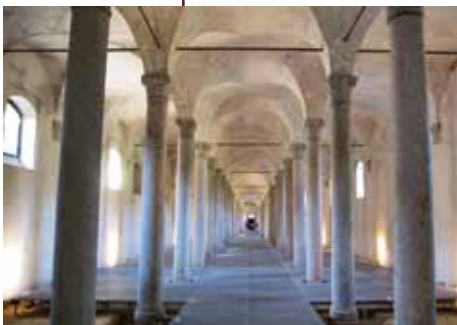


The international shoe museum

It is one of three museums housed in the ancient Sforzesco Castle, an authentic treasure trove of antique and designer shoes from all over the world and with a permanent exhibition of shoes by the most famous international designers, ranging from Salvatore Ferragamo to Christian Dior, as well as Karl Lagerfeld and Louis Vuitton. It bears witness to the historic link of Vigevano with the shoe industry and the highest quality craftsmanship.



the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A visit to **Sforzesca** is not to be missed, a small village lying two kilometres from the centre, consisting almost entirely of the Colombarone, a vast farmhouse commissioned by Ludovico il Moro where Leonardo da Vinci also stayed and who perfected various hydraulic works there.



*On the previous page, from the top:
Piazza Ducale in Vigevano with the Bramante Tower;
Cathedral of Sant'Ambrogio; Cagnoni Theatre*

*On this page, from the top:
The inner courtyard of the Castle;
the inside of the stables*



“

*Then ochre squares
are drawn, and
it's harvest time*

Gianni Brera

”



Flavours of
rice fields and
hills among
vineyards





FLAVOURS OF RICE FIELDS AND HILLS AMONG VINEYARDS



*Above: some typical products from the province of Pavia;
Below: rice from the province and ears of rice*



The province of Pavia is a land of unique flavours and aromas, an incredible blend of classic Po Valley recipes, Piedmont and Emilia Romagna influences and excellent Apennine dishes. From the water of the rice fields to the wines of the Oltrepò Pavese hills, every corner of the province has an outstanding hidden dish and wine to savour and take home.

Agriculture and, more generally, the agri-food sector have always been the strong points of this area that manages to produce a **unique mix of options to delight the palate**. Pavia is, in fact, home to illustrious traditions and some of the most important Italian producers. It is leading producer in Europe of rice, the so-called white gold of the Po valley plain, and in second place, after Burgundy, for surface area planted with Pinot Noir vines.

The superb quality of Pavia's food and wine is echoed not only in the variety of typical products, but also in the number of products with European (PDO and PGI), regional (PAT) and municipal (De.Co.) protected status.

Rice, cultivated for centuries throughout the northern part of the province (Lomellina and Pavese), was brought here at the request of the Sforza family in the 15th century, arriving from Sicily to where the Arabs had imported it. The characteristics of the climate and soil immediately decreed the success of this crop and over time it led to the selection of the main varieties which now form the basis of traditional and international recipes: **Carnaroli, Arborio, Vialone nano, Baldo, Balilla, Roma, Sant'Andrea, Otello, Loto, Gladio**. The unique organoleptic qualities, flavour and cooking properties of genuine Carnaroli rice are



Cloistered monks and refined cuisine

One of the richest and tastiest recipes in the province has a history linked to the Certosa di Pavia monastery and its monks, namely risotto alla certosina. It is a risotto prepared with peas, porcini mushrooms, frogs and fillets of perch (caught in the many rivers of the lower Po Valley), finished off with something that is now an absolute rarity, freshwater crayfish.



protected by the “**Carnaroli da Carnaroli Pavese**” trademark. On the hills south of the Po, vines have been grown for over two thousand years resulting in the **DOC, DOCG Oltrepò Pavese and PGI Province of Pavia** wines. The position, on the 45th parallel, has always

made this area of the province of Pavia the home to top quality wines; look no further than the 13,269 hectares of vineyards (over 55% of those in Lombardy), of which 11,102 are registered with the various protected statuses (70% of those in Lombardy). Historically, a considerable variety of vines have been cultivated, many of which are indigenous, such as Vespolina (also known as Ughetta) and Uva Rara. It is these grape varieties, together with Croatina, which form the basis of the most historic and representative wines of the area. The first is **Bonarda**, whether still or sparkling, pleasantly tannic, often semi-sweet, perfect paired with cured meats and rich dishes such as agnolotti pasta parcels with stewed meat sauce or mixed boiled meat. **Buttafuoco**, full-bodied and with a fascinating history, is one of the most symbolic wines to taste: its muscular character is also captured in its name, literally “throw the fire”, and with its spicy aroma, it is excellent when paired with red meat and game. Absolutely unique, **Sangue di Giuda** is produced exclusively in a small area of the eastern Oltrepò Pavese. Its low alcohol content and sweetness, whether sparkling or semi-sparkling, with a fruity and jam bouquet, mean it goes well with desserts and fresh fruit. One of the most popular white wines is **Riesling**, the Italian

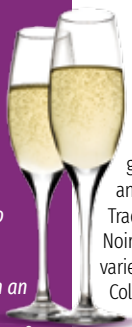
Below: the vineyards of Oltrepò Pavese; a glass of Bonarda





Oltrepò or Champagne? Pinot Noir!

It was 1870 when the engineer, Domenico Mazza, in Codevilla, on the advice of French technicians, created the first Traditional Method of Oltrepò Pavese, also using Pinot Noir with the name Champagne d'Oltrepò, preserved in an iconic bottle, still in use today. The province of Pavia, in fact, is the historical birthplace of the Classic Method for sparkling wine in Italy.



or Rhine version, which has an unmistakable aromatic profile and pleasant minerality. In addition, **Moscato**, often vinified in a sparkling version, pleasantly sweet and fragrant, is perfect with pastries or, according to an age-old tradition, with seasoned coppa (cold pork cut). An important international grape variety which, however, has found a home here and is definitely worth tasting, is Pinot Noir.

Capricious and sublime, **Pinot Noir** arrived in the province of Pavia probably at the beginning of the nineteenth century and has also become the most important base for sparkling wines here. This exceptional grape variety is still mainly used in the white or rosé **Traditional Method**. Characterized by excellent acidity and the fullness and richness that only Pinot Noir can give, Oltrepò Pavese sparkling wines are perfect for any meal and on any occasion. **Cruasé**, a collective brand produced with the Traditional Method for a naturally rosé wine, with at least 85% Pinot Noir, is one worth discovering. There is also the red version of this variety, produced mainly in the low hill areas.

Cold cut meats are another cornerstone of the taste of Pavia: it is impossible not to try one while visiting the province. First of all, there is **Salame di Varzi DOP**. Produced only in an area of 15 municipalities in the Oltrepò Pavese, it may even be of Lombard or Roman origin and was undoubtedly served on the tables of the marquises of Malaspina when they hosted Dante in the fourteenth century. Obtained from fine cuts of pork, flavoured with wine and a few spices, it must age slowly to release its unique aromas. It is perfect eaten with the traditional **Micca** bread roll, which has a characteristic golden crust and perfect soft centre.

In **Mortara**, it is possible to find **goose salami**: it comes in two types, the PGI version, which adds a percentage of pork to the goose meat and is cooked, and the so-called **salame ecumenico** (literally ecumenical salame), made exclusively of goose meat and seasoned





uncooked. The salami is just one of the many **goose-based cured meats** typical of Lomellina, where you can still taste authentic delicacies that originated in the Jewish communities that flourished in these places in the Middle Ages: cacciatori d'oca (mini salami), crackling and goose gizzard, foie gras, goose breast and cured goose ham, etc.

Eating well in the province of Pavia also means enjoying the **cheese**. There are important regional products such as Grana Padano DOP, Taleggio DOP, Quattroirolo Lombardo DOP, Gorgonzola DOP and crescenza, as well as small local gems. In the middle and upper areas of the Apennines, in particular, culinary masterpieces are created: **fresh and seasoned goat cheeses**, the ancient **Molana del Brallo** (a soft cheese made from cow's milk), the creamy and spicy **Nisso di Menconico**, **Pizzocorno**, made with raw cow's milk.

The banks of the Ticino and the rice fields of Lomellina are home to two aquatic delights: **frogs**, to be eaten fried or in risotto, and **sturgeon**, farmed both for its fine, delicate meat and excellent **caviar**.

The vegetable crops also have pleasant surprises in store: the **pink Asparagus from Cilavegna** and sweet hat-shaped **pumpkins, Bertagnina di Dorno** and **Berrettina di Lungavilla**, both De.Co (registered municipal designation of origin). In **Gambolò**, a special variety of **Borlotto bean** is still grown, used in a special type of biscuit. Onion lovers can find two

*On the previous page, from the top:
Salame di Varzi DOP;
the traditional Micca bread roll;
Salame d'oca di Mortara IGP;
a selection of Oltrepò Pavese
cheeses*

*On this page, from the top:
pink asparagus from Cilavegna;
Bertagnina di Dorno pumpkin;
some bottles and pupitre wine
racks for the traditional refinement
method*





important varieties: the **Breme red onion**, very sweet and easy to digest, already grown before the year 1000 by the monks of the Novalesa abbey, and the **golden onion of Voghera** with a more decisive and pungent flavour. In Voghera, there is

also another truly excellent vegetable, the **Voghera pepper**, which is small and green, with firm flesh and unmistakable flavour, used to prepare the traditional risotto. In the hills, a fine native breed of cattle is bred, the **Varzese cow**, protected by a Slow Food Presidia project. For some years now, the cultivation of **saffron** has gained a footing, producing golden pistils that give colour and flavour to every dish.

Among the fruit, try the typical **Bagnaria Cherry** and the **Pomella Genovese**, an apple grown between the Staffora and Nizza valleys, whose name is derived from the market for which it was destined.

When dining, the **Zuppa alla Pavese** is a must, according to tradition it was created at the time of the Battle of Pavia when a peasant woman hastily produced this soup for an illustrious prisoner, King Francis I of France. It is prepared with stock, stale bread, eggs and Parmesan.

If you have a sweet tooth, there is no shortage of desserts to choose from:

Brasadè di Staghiglione, biscuits that are cooked three times and traditionally come tied on strings, and **Offella**, a classic biscuit, plain or with chocolate, made in Parona.





Sailing ships and wine miracles

The Buttafuoco and Sangue di Giuda wines, with their peculiar names, conceal even more curious stories. The emblem of the Club of Buttafuoco Storico portrays a sailing ship with sails on fire, a reminder of a company of soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian Imperial Navy stationed in Stradella operating the ferry on the Po in the mid-19th century. It would seem that they were definitely more interested in the Oltrepò wines than in the waters of the river.

In nearby Broni, on the other hand, according to the legend, Judas made his appearance, resurrected by Christ who took pity on him after his belated repentance. On recognising him, the people of Broni wanted to kill him, but he healed the vines, which had been affected by a serious disease, and the winemakers, as a sign of gratitude, dedicated the wine, that now bears his name, to him.



Among the cakes on offer, there is **Torta di San Siro** and **Torta del Paradiso** in Pavia, the **almond cake** typical of **Varzi** and the Staffora Valley.

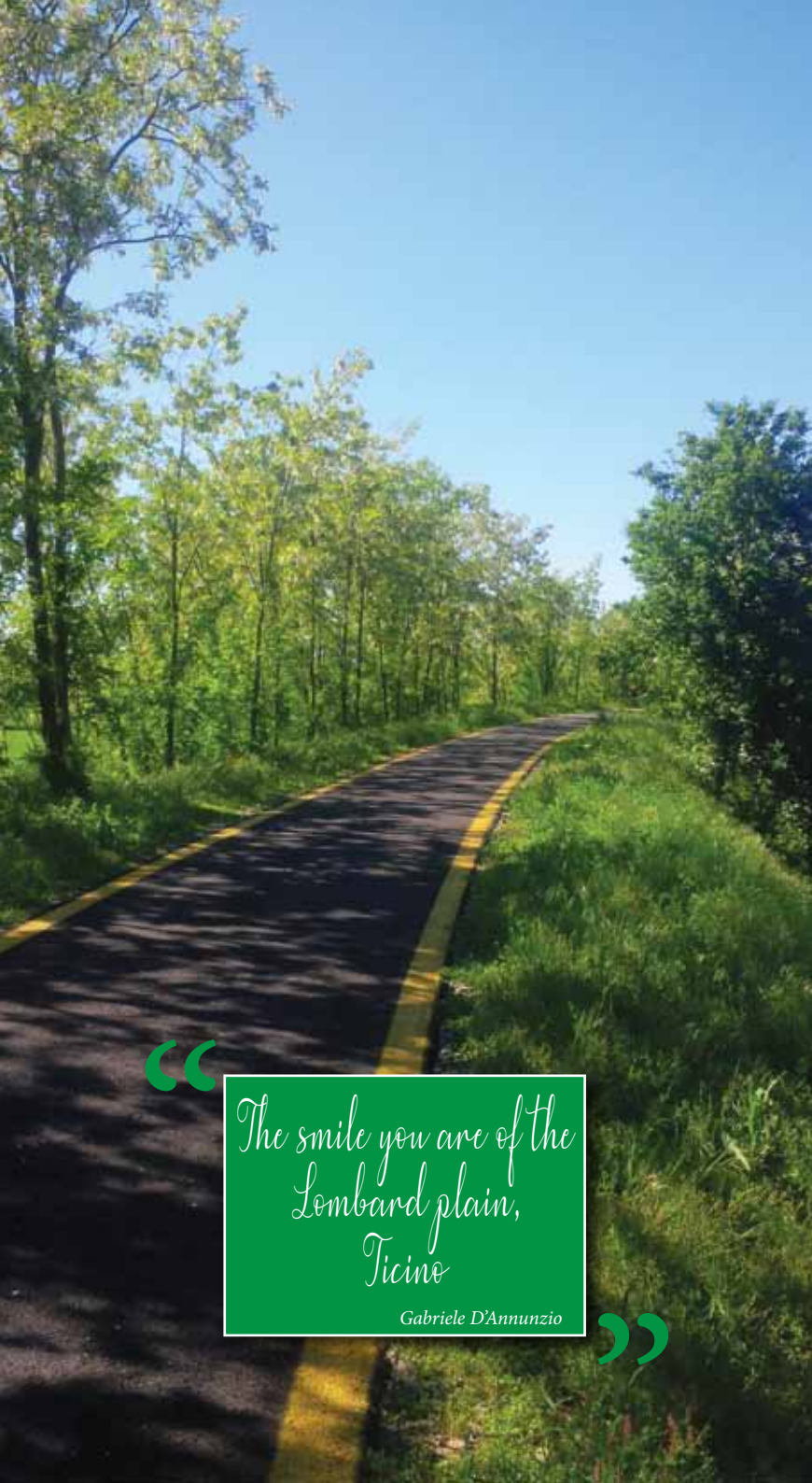


Mostarda di Voghera is unique, unusual and still retains a medieval flavour, made of candied fruit and mustard, with a characteristic sweet and spicy flavour, ideal for accompanying soft cheeses and mixed boiled meats.



*On the previous page, from the top:
Voghera pepper;
saffron flowers;
Breme red onion;
Pomella Genovese apple;
Bagnaria cherries;
Brasade di Staghiglione*

*On this page from the top:
Torta del Paradiso;
Offella di Parona*



*The smile you are of the
Lombard plain,
Ticino*

Gabriele D'Annunzio



*Pavia
green*





PAVIA GREEN



*From the top: the Vernavola Park;
the Bosco Negri Oasis;
a rice field in Lomellina*



Just outside Milan, you will find an area of unspoiled nature, a refuge for powerful noblemen over the centuries. The province of Pavia was, in fact, a place for country retreats and hunting for the Visconti and Sforza families and, even now, it never ceases to amaze and enchant with its ever-changing scenery of wide waterways, vast meadows, rice fields and mountains overlooking the distant sea. To appreciate them, you can choose to go by bike or walk along paths and through nature parks, even in urban areas.

For those who love green spaces, the city of Pavia is home to two must-see gems. Firstly, the **University's Botanical Garden**, a place of research and conservation. Founded in 1773, it has numerous collections of azaleas, roses, tropical greenhouses, a herbarium and arboretum, featuring a monumental plane tree, planted by the great Italian naturalist, Scolopi, in 1778, today over 55 m high. To complete your visit to the naturalistic part of the university museums, take the time to stop at **Kosmos**, the Natural History Museum founded in 1771 by Lazzaro Spallanzani and recently refurbished and enlarged inside the Palazzo Botta-Adorno.

The second natural gem in the city are the **Borromeo Gardens**, a large green area south of the Borromeo College, which separates it from the Ticino river, encompassing two enchanting gardens, the Italian and English gardens. Beyond the Ticino river, to the south, you come to the **Lipu Bosco Negri Oasis**, with a visitor centre, created to preserve various species of birds.

Just outside the city, to the north, you can enjoy the **Vernavola Park**, the last vestige of the vast hunting



Water, alders, reeds: heronries

The vast areas of marshland that characterizes the entire northern section of the province of Pavia, filled with streams and springs, has created environments of significant importance for wildlife, namely, heronries. They are inaccessible areas, with swampy ground, where alders, marsh reeds and willows grow, chosen by different bird species of the Ardeidae family (especially herons) to create colonies where they can reproduce, feed and defend themselves from predators.



reserve created by the Visconti family that stretched from the Pavia Castle to the gates of Milan. The park covers about 33 hectares around the Roggia Vernavola, a tributary of the Ticino river. The park has a riding school, play areas, authentic Po valley landscapes and an ecosystem of water meadows, an ancient crop-growing system that exploits the water springs. A little further on are the **Garzaia di Porta Chiossa** and the **Garzaia della Carola** (heronries), in San Genesio ed Uniti, with black alders and a variety of classic Po Valley birds.

A little further east, you will come across the castle of Sant'Alessio con Vialone, which is the gateway to the **Oasis of Sant'Alessio**. The oasis is a protected natural area, which also includes a heronry, in which numerous wildlife species in danger of extinction are preserved in the wild or captivity.

Three small areas meet just south of the Po. The first is **Bosco Arcadia**, in the municipality of Pancarana, a multi-purpose forest on the banks of the Po, fully equipped, the result of a redevelopment of abandoned areas. In **Lungavilla**, the Parco degli **Stagni** and, in Casei Gerola, the **Parco delle Follaghe**, are both parks at the centre of the migratory routes of different species of birds, established around former clay quarries, filled with groundwater, which have become nature areas.

Crossing the great river again, you reach the **Boschetto di Scaldasole**, a nature reserve that allows you to admire one of the very few remaining forests in the Lomellina area, with a sandy embankment, which is also a characteristic and increasingly rare formation. Continuing through **Lomellina**, perhaps by bicycle, you will come across a large number of

*Below, from the top:
entrance from the Castle
of the Oasis of Sant'Alessio;
The Botanical Garden in Pavia*





*From the top: the Barbavera Park;
the Ticino Park;
view from Monte Alpe*

heronries, wetland nesting areas for migratory species such as storks and herons, which result in an enchanting and fascinating landscape. In Gravellona Lomellina, twice a year it is possible to enter one of the most refined and early examples of **English gardens**, created at the end of the eighteenth century for the **Barbavera** counts.

To the east, you enter the largest nature area in the province, the **Ticino Park**, which extends along the entire route of the river well beyond the provincial borders. There are paths through pristine forests, hundreds of kilometres of cycling and pedestrian trails on towpaths, the typical fauna (fish, birds, mammals) of one of the largest rivers in Europe in addition to the evidence of the old farming way of life, etc.

Climbing up the Apennines to the south, in the easternmost area of the Oltrepò Pavese, you reach the **Pietra Corva Alpine Gardens**, in Romagnese, a fascinating collection of alpine botanical species from all over the world, perched at an altitude of almost 1000 m in the upper Val Tidone. Not far away, the **Monte Alpe Nature Reserve**, close to Monte Penice (1460 m asl), covers a protected area of 320 hectares between Menconico, Romagnese and Varzi, which can be visited on foot and by mountain bike, among chestnut trees, black pines, beech trees, oaks and larches.

Not just cycling enthusiasts, but everyone has access to 3 routes, in the province of Pavia, mostly in the area, which will soon be connected together in a single circuit. The first route is the **cycle path** that connects **Milan** to **Pavia**, running from Certosa di Pavia along the Naviglio Pavese. Completely on the flat





**On the
railway track
of the old
train**

Up until the 1960s, a short railway network departed from Voghera and went up the Staffora Valley to Varzi in the centre. Today, after significant investments, it has been converted into a completely paved cycle/ pedestrian path, which still runs alongside the old stations. If you stop off at the Ponte Nizza station, you can visit the museum that tells the story of the old railway.

and almost entirely tarmacked, it is an easy ride, even for families and children, allowing you to go from Piazza Duomo in Milan to the Visconteo Castle in Pavia in just over two hours.

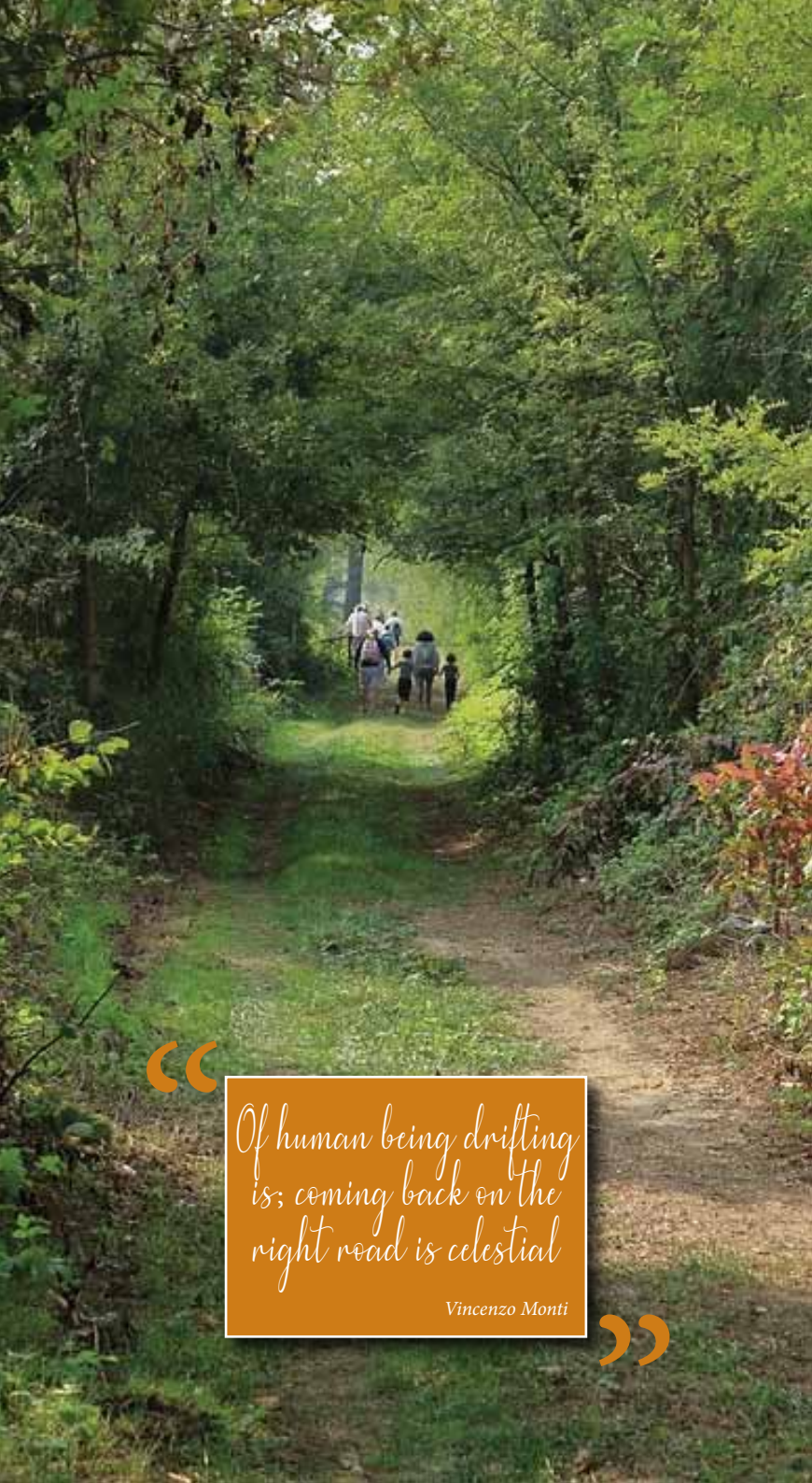
The second route runs in an east-west direction and forms the Pavia section of **VenTo**, i.e. the long tour that runs along the Po from Turin to Venice, mainly along the river banks and is currently being renovated.

The third is the **Voghera-Varzi Greenway**, covering just over thirty kilometres on the route of the old Voghera-Varzi railway, now a pleasant cycle path that climbs gently through vineyards, orchards and rolling hills up to the spectacular medieval village.

From here, continuing by mountain bike or on foot, you can head off to explore the comprehensive and **well-signposted network of paths of the Oltrepò Pavese**, climbing the peaks of Monte Lesima (1724 m asl), Monte Chiappo (1699 m asl) and Cima Colletta (1493 m asl), just to mention the mountain ridge that separates four regions, where Pavia meets Liguria, Piedmont and Emilia Romagna.



*From the top: aquatic flowers
in the Pietra Corva Alpine Gardens;
section of flat land along the Voghera-Varzi Greenway;
Monte Lesima seen from Val Trebbia*



“

*Of human being drifting
is; coming back on the
right road is celestial*

Vincenzo Monti

”



Ancient roads





ANCIENT ROADS

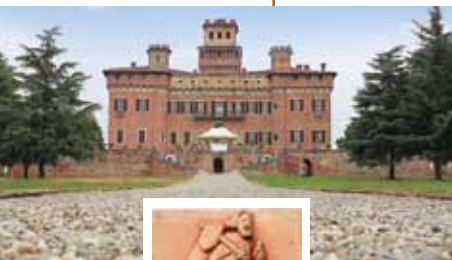


*From the top:
the Church of San Pietro in Robbio;
The Castle of Chignolo Po;
the emblem and signposts
of the Via Francigena*

When people still travelled around on the back of a mule or horse, for those who were more fortunate, or on foot tenaciously walking along impassable roads; when, despite the dangers, caravans of goods and soldiers crossed Europe; when pilgrims from all over the then known world came to Rome, capital of the world. At that time, the province of Pavia was the most intricate crossroads in Europe, a passing place for some of the major routes that connected different states and estates of noblemen.

Today, it is still possible to retrace those roads on foot, by bicycle and on horseback, following unique trails to visit and discover nature, history and culture, for a truly authentic experience.

The largest and widest of these trails is the **Via Francigena**. In the period of the Lombard kingdom, it was called Via di Monte Bardone, the ancient name of the Cisa pass, and it was the route that allowed you to reach Rome starting from the capital of the kingdom, Pavia, crossing the Apennines. With the arrival of the Franks, the route was extended to the other side of the Alps and became the main road that connected the papal seat with the French dominions. It was not a road in the Roman sense of the term, but a set of paths and tracks, the route of which was "codified" by Archbishop Sigeric in his diary, when he made a note of the eighty *mansiones* (roadhouses) in which he stopped to stay overnight on his way from Rome to Canterbury, the seat to which he had just been elected.





Sigeric the Serious: journeying along safe paths

After the fall of the Western Empire, the vast network of roads that the Romans had built and maintained throughout Europe fell into disarray, making it increasingly risky to travel. In 990, when Sigeric was elected Archbishop of Canterbury, he had to summon up considerable courage to undertake the journey all the way to Rome to receive the pallium from the Pope, a symbol of the pastoral duty of metropolitan archbishops. The diary of his return journey, with eighty safe places in which to sleep and eat, thus became a model for all pilgrims who wished to make the journey along well-known paths: the Via Francigena.



Today, this route can be easily walked and, in the province of Pavia, there are six old sections that wind through Lomellina, from Robbio, to Santa Cristina, in Campagna Sottana area of Pavia.

Another historical route is the ancient **Via degli Abati**, also used by the Lombards to cross the Apennines: the route starts from the city of Pavia, climbs up into the hills of Broni and Canevino and ends in Pontremoli. It takes its name from renowned Abbey of Bobbio, midway along the route. These are rather challenging paths that involve tackling a considerable overall difference in height (about 6000 m). It was used for centuries by the powerful abbots from Bobbio to reach the seat of Pope Peter in Rome, on whom they directly depended. An alternative way to reach Bobbio, from Pavia, passes through Voghera and Varzi, crossing what were formerly the so-called separate feuds, taking the name of **Via dei Malaspina**.

The abbey of Bobbio is still connected to the **San Columbanus Way**, the Irish saint who founded what was once one of the largest medieval European monasteries. The route, even older than the Via Francigena, was also intended for pilgrims who descended from northern Europe to Rome. It starts in Switzerland, crosses Milan and enters the province of Pavia at Bereguardo (just beyond the Abbey of Morimondo); once past the provincial capital, the path passes by Stradella and Canevino, Romagnese and, then, takes you on as far as Bobbio.

The **Via di San Martino di Tours** is also important. This is a complex route that unites Eastern and Western Europe, following the footsteps of the great saint

Below, from the top: stained glass window with the effigy of Saint Columbanus in the Abbey of Bobbio; view of the Oltrepò Pavese from Fortunago





Paths of faith, crossroads of saints

At least two great saints, venerated throughout Europe, journeyed along the roads of the province of Pavia in the Middle Ages. The first was St. Augustine, bishop and distinguished scholar of the Church who fought against heresies, and whose body was brought to Pavia, the capital of the Lombard kingdom, as a sign of prestige and a place of importance. The second was Saint Roch, a pilgrim and performer of miracles from Montpellier, whose cult was very widespread because he was a protector against the plague. He died while still very young in Voghera, on his return from a pilgrimage to Rome, and was buried here first, before his body was later moved to Venice, under circumstances that were never made clear.

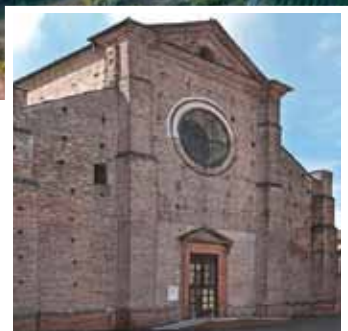
Below, from the top:
interior of San Pietro
in Ciel d'Oro Basilica in Pavia;
the Valeggio Castle



from Pannonia (Hungary). The **St. Augustine Way**, almost entirely in Lombardy, however, connects the key places of worship linked to the conversion of the father of the church, culminating in Pavia in the Basilica of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, where the Bishop and Christian philosopher rest.

From Varzi, this time heading towards the south and Liguria, marks the start of the **Lombard Via del Sale**, one of the main medieval trade routes. Passing through the lush Apennine valleys, it allowed merchants to take salt from Genoa to Pavia and Milan, usually on the back of a mule, and, in the opposite direction, it allowed Po Valley products to be sold to the important market and port on the Mediterranean. The oldest of all the routes that can still be travelled along today is the **Via delle Gallie**, established by the Romans, at the time of Augustus, to connect Gallia Cisalpina (the Po Valley) with Gallia Transalpina (France and Switzerland), from Milan to Ivrea up to Aosta and then, to the Little St. Bernard or Great St. Bernard passes. Part of the route overlaps the Via Francigena in the section that goes from Dorno to Lomello.

In the Vernavola Park, also connected to the cycle and pedestrian path along the Naviglio Pavese, is the **Via verde della battaglia**, a short route between the centre of Pavia and Certosa, along the places involved in the great battle of Pavia which, in 1525, decided the fate of the Duchy of Milan and northern Italy for a long time.



The Staffora, the valley of trade routes

Of the various salt routes that crossed the Apennines, the most important was the Lombard route, which connected Pavia (and Milan) with Genoa. In the middle was the Staffora Valley, at the heart of the lands of the Malaspina family, who prospered in the Middle Ages, thanks also to their control over the salt trade routes.

Also worthy of note is the **Transromanica**.

This is a cultural project on a European level, which connects paths and destinations united by history and Romanesque art, allowing you to discover common elements and local characteristics of a style that unites the entire continent, speaking the language of architecture, painting, cooking, landscape and worship.

*From the top:
view of the upper Scuropasso Valley;
Romanesque façade of the Basilica of San Salvatore in Pavia;
Terdoppio Park, in Dorno, on the Via delle Gallie*





“

*...if in the midst
of your idling,
idleness is left*

Giuseppe Parini

”



Wellness and Sport





WELLNESS AND SPORT



Pavia and its province have been an oasis of wellbeing just a few kilometres from Milan for over two thousand years. The Romans already knew of the mineral-rich waters of what would become Salice Terme. The Visconti family, a thousand years later, came to amuse themselves between Certosa and Belgioioso, taking part in hunting, which was considered a noble “sport” at the time.

If you are looking for a weekend of total relaxation, or you want to stay active and in shape, the entire province has much to offer: long cycling and hiking routes of different degrees of difficulty, a **network of trails** with numerous paths available and a multitude of facilities dedicated to wellness and sport.

In the province, there are three **golf** courses: in Pavia (6 holes), Vigevano (18 holes) and Rivanazzano Terme (9 holes). **Tennis** clubs and courts, located in sports centres, can be found throughout the province and, in particular, in Pavia, Vigevano, Voghera, Brallo di Pregola (where there is a large Federal centre).

For **horseback riding** and **equestrian sports** enthusiasts, there are numerous riding schools and equestrian facilities, both with English- and





American-style riding. For the more daring, the Oltrepò hills offer several places to do **paragliding** with dedicated associations.

If you want to have a go at more “extreme” bike sports, you can find challenging **downhill** tracks in Pian del Poggio, or panoramic **mountain bike** trails throughout the hilly and mountainous part of Oltrepò Pavese, as well as along towpaths and embankments in the plains.

There are also facilities for **winter sports** with ski lifts to Monte Penice, Cima Colletta and Monte Chiappo.

There is a wide range of **water sports** on offer: excellent **rowing** and river sports facilities on the Ticino have historic roots linked to the University, while there is no shortage of **river tourism** on the Po and Ticino.

Still on the river, there are several places dedicated to **sport fishing** for trout and other fish along some stretches of natural waterways. If you respect the relevant laws, it is possible to go **mushroom picking** and hunt for precious truffles.

The province offers lots of opportunities to visit thermal baths and spas, thanks to the presence of numerous natural springs.

The **largest spa facilities** are in Miradolo Terme and Rivanazzano Terme.

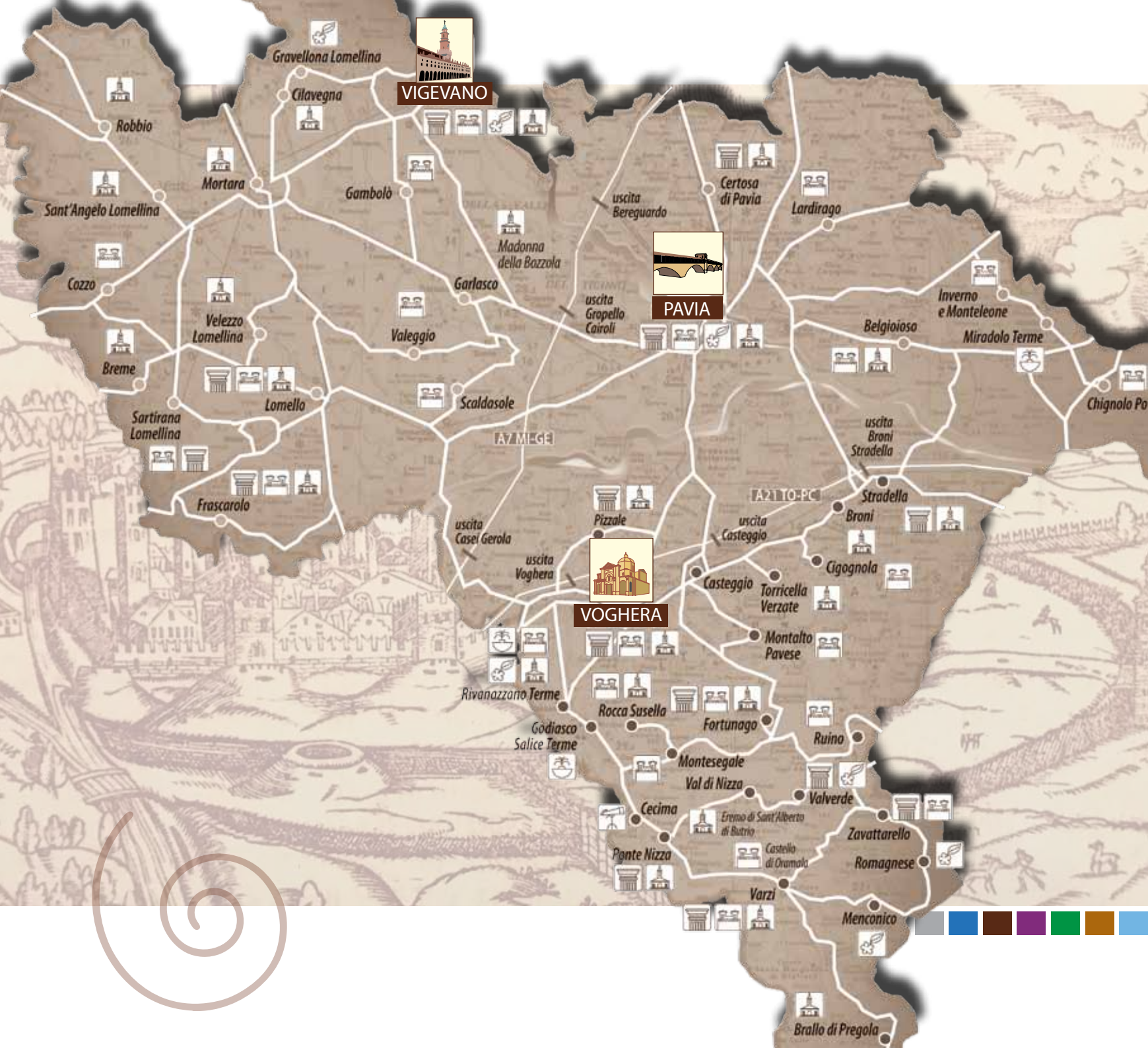


Roman baths

The use of the thermal baths as a place for relaxation and socialization has historic roots in the province of Pavia and is directly linked to the ancient Roman custom. It was the Romans, in fact, who discovered the first spontaneous sources of water that flowed from the hills at the mouth of the Staffora Valley, where mineral-rich waters still flow today, used both for aesthetic purposes and in thermal medicine.

Here, as in the nearby Banini Hills, there are waters rich in minerals and sulphur, suitable for a wide variety of uses.





VIGEVANO

PAVIA

VOGHERA





PAVIA

e
provincia
Vivi l'incanto alle porte di Milano

Credits

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