

GT Experiences

# ITALY

*The Passion Play of  
Sordevolo  
2021*



# Sordevolo

200<sup>®</sup>  
ANNI  
1815 - 2015

## LA PASSIONE



Since about 1490, the play was performed on Good Friday in the Colosseum, by the Roman Company of Gonfalon Confraternity, with a large attendance of spectators, pilgrims, travelers and notables. This tradition was interrupted in 1539 by Pope Paul III 's prohibition of such representations, due to the dramatic Reformation period and the subsequent Luther's, Calvin's and other religious independence movements from the Roman Catholic Church.

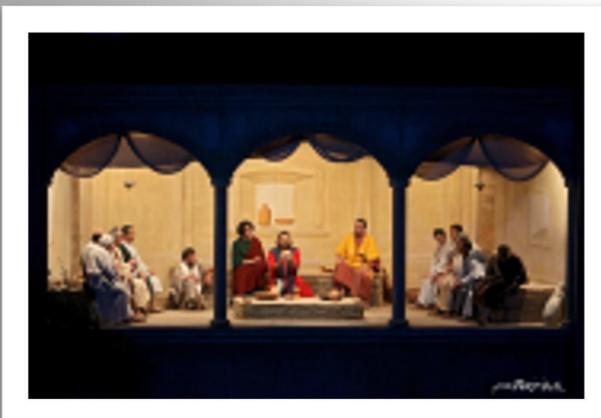
The "Roman" passion text reached Sordevolo through still mysterious ways. The first hypothesis is that the original text may be arrived in Piedmont thanks to the relationship existing between the Roman Gonfalon Confraternity and Sordevolo St Lucy Confraternity, its direct affiliate.

A second hypothesis takes into consideration the commercial contacts between the family Ambrosetti, weavers and merchants of Sordevolo

"fine cloth", and its own buyers in Rome. Since about two centuries, the entire community of Sordevolo has been representing the Passion of Christ, in a complete organizing and artistic autonomy.



The next appointment with the public is foreseen for June-September 2020. Sordevolo, 650 metres



above sea level, is situated on the hills north of Biella protected by Mt. Mombarone and Mt Mucrone, more than 2,000 metres high. The village may take its name either from super Elvum, the brook which flows close to it, or from surdibulum, a vulgar Latin word indicating a spring waters site, or else from the idiom Solo riverir Deo volo, written on the front façade of an ancient pilgrims hospice.

In this natural setting of hills, woods and mountains, for over two centuries from the beginning of '800, the representation of the Passion takes place every five years. Expression of the ancient popular theatre, the event actively involves the entire community of Sordevolo, about 1,300 inhabitants.

# Sordevolo

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ANNI  
1815 - 2015

# LA PASSIONE

The ancient Popular Theatre Committee of Sordevolo Passion, founded in 1816, has been replaced in 1991 by Sordevolo Popular Theatre Association, an independent non-profit organization, aiming to preserve, to perpetuate and to hand down this tradition, which dates back to the origins of this small community, expression of an older-day subalpine culture.

Special focus has to be placed on the deeply free and independent spirit of this genuine local culture and on the great involvement of the modern heirs of this tradition, who face the various aspects of the staging merely through local human resources and techniques: overall organization, costumes and setting making, scenery plan, direction, drama school, stage setting.

## Calendar of plays



### La stagione 2021 | The 2021 season

### IL TERRITORIO IN SCENA

#### Giugno | June

12 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
13 Domenica   Sunday	h 16.00
19 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
20 Domenica   Sunday	h 16.00
25 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
26 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
27 Domenica   Sunday	h 16.00

#### Luglio | July

02 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
03 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
09 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
10 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
16 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
17 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
23 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
24 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
30 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
31 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00

#### Agosto | August

01 Domenica   Sunday	h 21.00
13 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
14 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
20 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
21 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
27 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
28 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
29* Domenica   Sunday	h 16.00



#### Settembre | September

03 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
04 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
05* Domenica   Sunday	h 20.00
10 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
11 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
12 Domenica   Sunday	h 16.00
17 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
18 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
19 Domenica   Sunday	h 16.00
21* Martedì   Tuesday	h 10.00
24 Venerdì   Friday	h 21.00
25 Sabato   Saturday	h 21.00
26 Domenica   Sunday	h 16.00

\* Rappresentazione Passione dei bimbi

  [www.passionedisordevolo.com](http://www.passionedisordevolo.com)





Presents

# The Italian Shrines & Sordevolo

*SPECIAL FEATURE: The Passion Play of Christ - Sordevolo*

**13 DAYS/11 NIGHTS**

## **ROMA (3) – S. GIOVANNI ROTONDO (2)– ASSISI(2) – PADOVA (1) - SORDEVOLO (3)**

Day 1 (Monday)

Overnight flight from JFK to Rome

Day 2

Arrive Rome. Meet tour escort.

Transfer to hotel. Balance of the day at leisure. Evening dinner at hotel

Day 3

Breakfast. Morning transfer to St. Peter's Square for Papal Audience.

Afternoon Imperial Rome tour including the Coliseum and Forum. Dinner at hotel

Day 4

Breakfast. Morning tour of the Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Basilica

Afternoon tour of Christian Rome including St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran and to the Catacombs. Dinner at hotel

Day 5

Following breakfast, we will head south and travel through the Roman countryside with its villas and vineyards. During your drive, your tour escort will explain the spiritual, historical, and cultural overview of Italy, which will help to orient you to this beautiful country and prepare you for all that you will experience in the days to follow. We stop at Montecassino, a beautiful town founded by Saint Benedict. Continue through the countryside heading east to Padre Pio's town, San Giovanni Rotondo, our base for the following two nights.

## **TOUR FEATURES**

- ❖ 11 nights' accommodations at indicated 3 and or 4 star hotels or similar with private bath or shower
- ❖ Buffet breakfast daily
- ❖ Dinner daily (beverages included)
- ❖ Professional English speaking Tour Director throughout
- ❖ Private deluxe motorcoach for all included services
- ❖ Sightseeing as indicated, including local guide and all entrance fees where applicable
- ❖ Papal Audience tickets
- ❖ Passion Play tickets preferred seating
- ❖ Porterage of 1 piece of luggage per person at hotels
- ❖ Stay Tax included
- ❖ Tips to restaurant personnel for all included meals
- ❖ Hotel taxes and service charges



#### Day 6

Breakfast. We tour the sanctuary, with the old church and the crucifix from which Padre Pio received the stigmata in 1918. You will see the confessional where he spent so many hours with a multitude of pilgrims, directing them on their journey towards God. Enjoy a breathtaking view of the Gargano Peninsula and a visit to the Grotto of Michael the Archangel. Return to San Giovanni for dinner and overnight.

#### Day 7

We will have breakfast at our hotel before we make our way to Lanciano, and visit the Church of St. Longinus where we will see the Eucharistic Miracle. After some free time, we will continue on toward the Adriatic coast to the great Marian shrine of Loreto to visit the Holy House of Nazareth and the beautiful Madonna of Loreto. Enjoy lunch (on own) before we make our way to Assisi, the hometown of St. Francis, the saint Patron of animals and of the environment, and the founder of the Franciscan Order. Dinner at hotel.

#### Day 8

Breakfast. Following breakfast, we will begin a tour of Assisi. Visit the tomb of St Francis. Explore the quaint hilltop birthplace of St Francis that still retains something of the atmosphere of the early 1200s, the period when St Francis began his ministry. Contained within the huge 13th-century Basilica are many of the saint's possessions and a series of frescoes depicting his life. You may kneel before the crucifix from which Jesus spoke to St Francis, asking him to rebuild His church. It was in St Mary of the Angels Basilica where St Francis spent most of his life. Here we visit the Chapel, Porziuncola, the rose bush, and the cave where the saint retired for prayer. Stroll the medieval streets of the compact little town. You will have some free time to shop or eat lunch at an outdoor cafe with a view of an ancient Roman temple. Our tour continues with the Church of St. Clare to see the saint's incorrupted body. The foundress of the Order of Poor, Clare followed the teachings of St Francis by living a life of poverty and humility. We will visit these two saints' tombs before returning in the evening. Dinner at hotel

#### Day 9

Breakfast. Morning travel to Padua, to render respect to the great St. Anthony. Visit his basilica, built in 1232, where his tomb lies in the north transept. Afterwards, head to the Basilica of St. Justina, a 4th century martyr and another of Padua's patron saints. It enshrines relics of St. Matthias the Apostle and St. Luke the Evangelist. Finally visit the splendid Cappella degli Scrovegni, with beautiful frescoes painted by Giotto. Dinner and overnight in Padua.

#### Day 10

Breakfast. Morning departure for Oropa. Stop in Milan for orientation tour. Continue to Oropa. The Sanctuary here is the most important and largest Sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to be found in the Alps. It is located in a unique, natural and unspoiled setting at 1200 mt. Dinner and overnight

#### Day 11

Breakfast. This morning depart for Turin. Explore the city's major monuments and Piazza Castello with its beautiful buildings. A highlight of the day will be to view the Holy Shroud at the Cathedral and a visit to the museum of the Holy Shroud. Time at leisure to shop and explore on your own. In the afternoon, return to the Sanctuary and enjoy dinner.



Passion Play, Sordevelo

#### Day 12

Breakfast. Morning tour of the Sanctuary. The sanctuary walls are lined with stories, photos and paintings depicting accounts of people reportedly receiving help from the Virgin Mary. The most frequent are incidents from World War II. Two churches keep the sanctuary active: a basilica that holds daily Mass and La Chiesa Nuova, a huge cathedral. The basilica is home to a famous statue in the region, "The Black Madonna," so named for the color of wood used to carve it. La Chiesa has an immense interior and, like most European cathedrals, large paintings and ornate iconography. Some time at leisure. Enjoy an early dinner before departing for Sordevelo, the village where, every 5 years, a Passion Play is performed, with all the actors being local village people. We will attend this remarkable performance of "The Passion of Christ". Return to Oropa for overnight

#### Day 13

Transfer to the airport for return flight home.

For information and reservations please contact

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# ROME/ASSISI/OROPA

*SPECIAL FEATURE: The Passion Play of Christ - Sordevolo*



## TOUR FEATURES

- 6 nights 3 star hotel accommodations: 2 nights Rome, 1 night Assisi, and 3 nights Oropa Sanctuary
- Buffet breakfast daily
- 5 dinners
- Private English Speaking Tour Director throughout
- Sightseeing as indicated, including local guide and all entrance fees
- Touring and transfers by deluxe air-conditioned motorcoach
- Portorage of 1 piece of luggage per person at hotels
- Passion Play ticket
- Hotel taxes and service charges



**Day 1 Depart USA** Evening departure. Meals and refreshments served on board.

**Day 2 Rome** Arrive in Rome, meet your English speaking tour escort who will stay with the group until the end of the trip, and transfer to your hotel. This afternoon enjoy a visit of the Christian Catacombs. Dinner and overnight in Rome.

**Day 3 Rome** After breakfast we depart for this morning's panoramic tour of Rome, as you pass by many of the city's most important sights including the Coliseum. This afternoon you are at leisure to enjoy this Eternal City. Overnight in Rome. (B)

**Day 4 Rome/Assisi** This morning we will return to Vatican City to participate in the Pope's weekly audience in St. Peter's Square. Afterwards, we depart Rome and travel north to Assisi, the town of the beloved St. Francis. We will tour the important sites of the area including the beautiful Basilica of St. Francis, the Church of St. Clare, which houses her incorrupted body, and the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. Dinner and overnight in Assisi. (B,D)



Shroud of Turin



Passion Play, Sordevolo

**Day 5 Assisi/Oropa Sanctuary** Depart Assisi and travel to the beautiful region of Piedmont. Arrive at the magnificent Sanctuary of Oropa which is located in an incredible setting below the Alps. It is one of the nine Sacred Mountains of Piedmont and Lombardy and is on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The 12 chapels (plus another seven nearby) create a devotional path. Inside each chapel scenes of the Virgin Mary's life are depicted. The path culminates on top of the hill with the Crowning of Mary. Dinner and overnight at the Oropa Sanctuary. (B,D)

**Day 6 Oropa Sanctuary** Enjoy a morning visit of this magnificent sanctuary. In the late afternoon we depart for Sordevolo, the village where, every 5 years, a Passion Play is performed, with all the actors being local village people. Dinner will be at a local restaurant in Sordevolo before we attend this remarkable performance of "The Passion of Christ". Return to Oropa for overnight. (B,D)

**Day 7 Oropa/Turin/Oropa** This morning we will travel to Turin, the capital city of Piedmont, to view the extraordinary "Holy Shroud" which will be on display. We will return to Oropa for dinner at the local restaurant in Oropa and savor delicious treats of the regional cuisine. Overnight in Oropa. (B,D)

**Day 8 Oropa/Milan/USA** After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home. (B)

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# SORDEVOLO & THE LAKE

*SPECIAL FEATURE: The Passion Play of Christ - Sordevolo*  
**9 DAYS/7 NIGHTS**



## TOUR FEATURES

- ❖ 7 nights accommodations at indicated First Class hotel or similar with private bath or shower
- ❖ Professional English speaking tour director throughout
- ❖ Buffet breakfast daily
- ❖ \$25 lunch voucher for Eataly
- ❖ Rice tasting
- ❖ Cheese tasting
- ❖ 5 Dinners at local restaurants including wine (1/4 bottle pp), mineral water (1/2 bottle pp) and coffee:
- ❖ Sightseeing as indicated, including local guide and all entrance fees
- ❖ Passion Play ticket
- ❖ Touring and transfers by deluxe air-conditioned motorcoach
- ❖ Porterage of 1 piece of luggage per person at hotels
- ❖ City Tax included
- ❖ Hotel taxes and service charges



## Day 1

Depart USA on overnight flight to Milan.

## Day 2

Arrive Milan. Meet Tour escort and transfer to hotel in Biella. Check in. Enjoy some free time to begin exploring or relaxing. Welcome dinner at local restaurant (WD)

## Day 3

Breakfast at hotel. This morning we depart to enjoy a city tour including a visit of the Cathedral where the Holy Shroud is kept and to the National Cinema Museum. The Museum is more than a museum and whoever enters it isn't just a visitor but also an explorer, an author, an actor, a spectator... t

We continue with a visit to Eataly Torino. Walking into Eataly is like entering the Land of Oz . You will receive a voucher which you can exchange for lunch at one of the many food stands. Have some free time to walk around before returning to the hotel. Balance of the day at leisure

## Day 4

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning visit of a local cheese factory. We will have the chance to see how they produce the cheese of the Piemonte region and also get a chance to taste it. We then continue to Desana to visit the Agricultural farm where many types of rice are produced. After the visit of the fields, you will have a chance to taste the different Rices.

Return to Biella and afternoon walking tour of the town. Enjoy dinner at the hotel

## Day 5

Breakfast at the hotel. An exciting day of discovery awaits you as we will drive to the Sacro Monte di Oropa (Sacred Mountain of Oropa). It is one of the nine Sacred Mountains of Piedmont and Lombardy and is on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The 12 chapels (plus another seven nearby) create a devotional path. Inside each chapel are scenes of the Virgin Mary life. The path culminates on top of the hill with the Crowning of Mary. We also have a chance to visit the old Basilica. Return to Biella.

Early evening we depart for Sordevolo. Sordevolo is the village where, every 5 years, a Passion Play is performed, with all the actors being local village people. Dinner will be at a local restaurant in Sordevolo before we attend this remarkable performance of "The Passion of Christ" Return to Biella for overnight

## Day 6

Breakfast at hotel. Morning departure for Stresa by Lake Maggiore. Stresa has skyrocketed from being a simple village of fisherman to a first class international resort. After check-in enjoy an afternoon boat ride to visit the Borromeo Islands in the center of Lake Maggiore. We will visit Isola Bella (Beautiful Island) to see the 17th century Borromeo Palazzo, and the largest island Isola Madre (Mother Island) to see its Botanical Garden. Return by boat to Stresa. This evening enjoy a lovely dinner at a local restaurant (B & D)



Passion Play, Sordevolo

## Day 7

Breakfast at hotel. Full day excursion to Milan. Enjoy a guided tour including a visit of Last Supper (subject to ticket availability) On your guided tour you'll visit the glamorous Galleria Vittorio Emanuele shopping gallery and the medieval Sforza Castle. Next, you'll tour the breathtaking Duomo, one of the world's largest, most striking Gothic cathedrals.

You'll also see the fabulous La Scala, one of the world's best known opera houses. Enjoy some free time before returning to Stresa

## Day 8

Breakfast at hotel. Excursion to Como. Como is at the southern tip of the lake and is known for its silk industry. We have some time to stroll around and see what Como has to offer. Return to Stresa for overnight. This evening enjoy a lovely Farewell Dinner. (B & D)

## Day 9

Breakfast at hotel. Morning transfer to the airport for return flight home

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# SORDEVOLO & PIEDMONT

*SPECIAL FEATURE: The Passion Play of Christ - Sordevolo*

**10 DAYS/9 NIGHTS**



## TOUR FEATURES

- ❖ 9 nights accommodations at indicated First Class hotel or similar with private bath or shower
- ❖ Professional English speaking tour director throughout
- ❖ Buffet breakfast daily
- ❖ \$25 lunch voucher for Eataly
- ❖ Wine tasting and lunch at local winery from Torino
- ❖ Rice tasting
- ❖ Cheese tasting
- ❖ Lunch at local restaurant in Lugano
- ❖ 5 Dinners at local restaurants including wine (1/4 bottle pp), mineral water (1/2 bottle pp) and coffee:
- ❖ Sightseeing as indicated, including local guide and all entrance fees\
- ❖ Play ticket
- ❖ Touring and transfers by deluxe air-conditioned motorcoach
- ❖ Porterage of 1 piece of luggage per person at hotels
- ❖ Stay Tax included
- ❖ Hotel taxes and service charges



**Day 1**  
Arrival in Milan. Meet Tour escort and transfer to your hotel in Biella.  
Check in. Enjoy some free time before an afternoon tour of Biella.  
Welcome dinner at local restaurant.

**Day 2**  
Breakfast at your hotel. An exciting day of discovery awaits you as we will drive to the Sacro Monte di Oropa (Sacred Mountain of Oropa). It is one of the nine Sacred Mountains of Piedmont and Lombardy and is on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The 12 chapels (plus another seven nearby) create a devotional path. Inside each chapel scenes of the Virgin Mary life. The path culminates on top of the hill with the Crowning of Mary. We also have a chance to visit the old Basilica. Return to Biella.  
Early evening we depart for Sordevolo.  
Sordevolo is the village where, every 5 years, a Passion Play is performed, with all the actors being local village residents.  
Dinner will be at a local restaurant in Sordevolo before we attend this remarkable performance of "The Passion of Christ" Return to Biella for overnight

**Day 3**  
Breakfast at the hotel. Morning visit of a local cheese factory. We will have the chance to see how they produce the cheese of the Piemonte region and also get to taste it. After the tour the balance of the day is free to do as you wish.  
Shop, walk around exploring on own. Have some delicious gelato!

**Day 4**  
Breakfast at hotel. Depart for Torino. Stop en route in Desana to visit the Agricultural Farm where many types of rice are produced. After the visit of the fields you will have the chance to taste the different types of Rice. After the tasting we continue to Torino. Check in to hotel.  
Enjoy an orientation tour of the city.  
Dinner at your hotel.

**Day 5**  
Breakfast. We continue our Torino tour including a visit of the Cathedral where the Holy Shroud is kept and also entrance fee to the Nation Cinema Museum. The Museum is more than a museum and whoever enters it isn't just a visitor but also an explorer, an author, an actor, a spectator... to whom the Museum offers



We continue with a visit to Eataly Torino. Walking into Eataly is like entering the Land of Oz the emotions of an experience we hope won't be easily forgotten. You will receive a voucher which you can exchange for lunch at one of the many food stands. Have some free time to walk around before returning to the hotel. Balance free (B & LV)

**Day 6**  
Breakfast at hotel. Enjoy the morning in Torino for some shopping or visit one of the many museums. Late morning we depart for the Barolo wine area. We will stop to visit one of the many wineries for wine tasting and lunch.  
Return to Torino for overnight (B, WT & L)

**Day 7**  
Breakfast at hotel. Morning departure for Stresa on the waters of Lake Maggiore. Stresa has skyrocketed from being a simple village of fisherman to a first class international resort. After check-in enjoy an afternoon boat ride to visit the Borromean Islands in the middle of Lake Maggiore. We will visit Isola Bella (Beautiful Island) to see the 17th century Borromeo Palazzo we will also visit the largest island Isola Madre (Mother Island) to see its Botanical Garden. Return by boat to Stresa.  
This evening enjoy a lovely dinner at a local restaurant (B & D)

**Day 8**  
Breakfast at hotel. Full day excursion to Lugano, Switzerland. Lugano, the largest town in the holiday region of Ticino, is not only Switzerland's third most important financial centre and a conference, banking and business centre, but also a town of parks and flowers, villas and sacred buildings. With Mediterranean flair, Lugano offers all the advantages of a world-class city, combined with the cachet of a small town. Enjoy lunch before we depart for Como. Como is at the southern tip of the lake and is known for its silk industry. We have some time to stroll around and see what Como has to offer. Return to Stresa for overnight (B & L)

**Day 9**  
Breakfast at hotel. Full day free for last minute shopping, swimming or simply relaxing.  
This evening dinner included at a local restaurant (B & D)

**Day 10**  
Breakfast at hotel. Morning transfer to the airport for return flight home (B)





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# SORDEVOLO & SOUTH OF FRANCE

*SPECIAL FEATURE: The Passion Play of Christ - Sordevolo*

## TOUR FEATURES

- ❖ 9 nights accommodations at indicated First Class hotel or similar with private bath or shower
- ❖ Professional English speaking tour director throughout
- ❖ Buffet breakfast daily
- ❖ 5 Dinners at local restaurants including wine (1/4 bottle pp), mineral water (1/2 bottle pp) and coffee:
- ❖ Sightseeing as indicated, including local guide and all entrance fees
- ❖ Touring and transfers by deluxe air-conditioned motorcoach
- ❖ Porterage of 1 piece of luggage per person at hotels
- ❖ Passion Play ticket
- ❖ City Tax included
- ❖ Hotel taxes and service charges



## Day 1

Depart USA on overnight flight to Milan

## Day 2

June 18 – arrive Milan meet tour escort and transfer to Biella. Some free time to relax and unwind. This evening enjoy a lovely Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant (D)

## Day 3

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning departure for guided tour of Torino, starting at the Museum of Holy Shroud, in which, according to tradition, the body of Christ was wrapped after he was lowered down from the cross. Time at leisure to shop - and explore on your own. Return to Biella (B)

## Day 4

Breakfast at hotel. Departure for Oropa to visit the Sanctuary. The Oropa Sanctuary is found near Biella in the northern part of Piedmont. It is a very important Italian pilgrimage destination with a reputation for providing relief to the sick and also now a UNESCO listed heritage site. More than 800,000 pilgrims visit Oropa each year. You will see the 12 chapels that create a devotional path. Inside each chapel are scenes of the Virgin Mary's life. The statue of the Black Madonna, brought to the Santuaria d'Oropa by the founder of the sanctuary in the 14th century, is kept in the church, in a chapel that predates the current (17th century) church by several centuries. Other highlights at the Oropa sanctuary include the Royal Gate and Royal Apartments, while to the rear is a second, 19th-20th century church. After some free time at the Sanctuary, our next stop will be a local "Grappa Distillery" for a tasting including their home made sweets.

Return to Biella

Late afternoon we depart for Sordevolo, the village where, every 5 years, a Passion Play is performed, with all the actors being local village people. Dinner will be at a local restaurant before we attend this remarkable performance of "The Passion of Christ".

## Day 5

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning departure for Nice.

Check in at a 4\* hotel in Nice.

Meet your English speaking guide at your hotel for a late afternoon tour of Nice (duration 4hours) ;

Capital and queen of the Riviera, discover the "Promenade des Anglais", the old town with the flower market, the Castle Park overlooking the Bay of the Angels.

3 course dinner – drinks included in a local restaurant near your hotel.

Overnight.



Passion Play, Sordevolo

## Day 6

Breakfast at the hotel.

9.00 am : Departure from your hotel with an English speaking guide

Full day guided excursions to Monaco to see the famous Casino, and the Prince's palace. Visit Eze, a medieval french village perched up high on the middle cornice with craft shops and excellent views of the Mediterranean coast, you will have a guided tour of the traditional perfumery.

6.00 pm : Drop off at your hotel in Nice

Dinner on your own. Accommodation.

## Day 7

Breakfast at the hotel.

9.00 am : Departure from your hotel with an English speaking guide

Go to the picturesque village of Saint Paul de Vence where the great impressionists used to gather with easel and canvas and sample the regional flower sweets at a perched medieval village that has stood guard since the 9th century. Next stop will be in Grasse, for a tour of the perfume factory.

6.00 pm : Drop off at your hotel in Nice Dinner on your own.

Accommodation.



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## Day 8

Breakfast at the hotel.

9.00 am : Departure with your luggage for a tour transfer to Arles via Aix en Provence.

Walking visit of Aix en Provence en route (duration 3 hours). Walk with your guide on the Cours Mirabeau lined with 17th and 18th centuries private mansions, where large trees give shade on hot summer days. The old town is packed with shops, architectural and religious sites, bustling squares and refreshing fountains. Take a stroll through one of the numerous markets taking place everyday in the center of the city.

Arrival in Arles surroundings.

Check in at your 4\* hotel in Arles

Dinner in a restaurant in Arles center (you will have to take your coach to drive to Arles center). Back to the hotel for accommodation.

## Day 9

Breakfast at the hotel.

Departure with your own coach to Avignon

9.00 am : Meet an English speaking guide in Avignon center for a walking and guided tour of Avignon, the majestic city of the Popes. Visit Pont d'Avignon, also called Saint- Benezet bridge, famous for the children's song "Sur le Pont d'Avignon", and visit the Popes' Palace which is the biggest gothic style palace in Europe (entrance tickets included).

Lunch on your own.

Continue to Chateauneuf du Pape.

Sightseeing in the vineyards, explanations about "terroir", grape varieties, vinification and aging cellars. Discover 2 different appellations and enjoy the visit and the wine tastings of the 2 wine estates. End of the service of the guide at 6.00 pm in Avignon

Back to the hotel in Arles with your own coach.

Dinner on your own.

## Day 10

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning : Tour

Meet your English speaking guide for an half day tour to Arles and St Rémy de Provence.

Visit the ancient city of Arles (UNESCO World Heritage). On the footpaths of Van Gogh, you will discover the roman remains with the amphitheater called "Arenas" and the ancient theater, Saint- Trophime church (carved doorway from 12th century), the Forum Square and Van Gogh's Café.

The tour continues toward the Alpilles mountain range. Stop at the Antiques in Saint Rémy de Provence (Triumphal Arch and mausoleum) located in an olive-tree field. Landscape painted several times by Van Gogh.

Visit St Paul de Mausole mental hospital were Van Gogh stayed for a year. Discover the reproduction of his bedroom.

Farewell diner in a nice restaurant located in Arles center (you will have to take your coach to drive to Arles center).

Back to the hotel for accommodation. Accommodation.

## Day 11

Breakfast at the hotel and then transfer to the airport for your return flight





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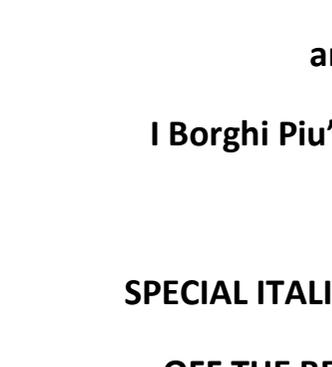
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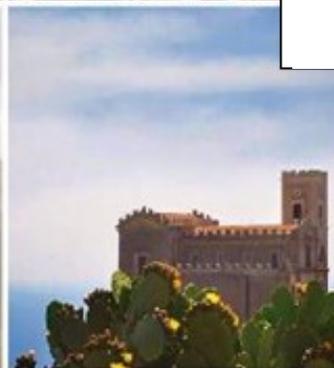
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**The Passion Play of Sordevolo**  
**and**  
**I Borghi Piu' Belli d'Italia**  
**SPECIAL ITALIAN ITINERARY**  
**OFF THE BEATEN PATH**



Italy plus Borghi: Where small is better and tourism is large

## Tour “Orta Lake and the Castles of Duchy of Parma and

## Piacenza”

### Day 1 > BIELLA

Arrive in Milan - meet tour escort and transfer to Biella. Some free time to relax and unwind. This evening enjoy a lovely Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant (D)

### Day 2 > BIELLA

Breakfast at the hotel. This morning we depart to enjoy a tour in the area of Biella including the visit to the Beer museum, the cheese factory with tasting and the old city of Biella Il Piazza. Lunch on your own and then we will continue the tour visiting the Viverone Lake and the Roppolo Castle. Return to the hotel for a dine around on your own. Overnight in Biella



### Day 3 > BIELLA

Breakfast at hotel. Departure for Oropa to visit the Sanctuary. The Oropa Sanctuary is located near Biella in the northern part of Piedmont. It is a very important Italian pilgrimage destination with a reputation for providing relief to the sick and also now a UNESCO listed heritage site. More than 800,000 pilgrims visit Oropa each year. The statue of the Black Madonna, brought to the Sanctuary of Oropa by the founder of the sanctuary in the 14th century, is kept in a chapel that predates the current (17th century) church by several centuries. Other highlights at the Oropa sanctuary include the Royal Gate and Royal Apartments, while to the rear is a second, 19th-20th century church. After some free time at the Sanctuary, our next stop will be a local Grappa (liquor) Distillery for a tasting including their home made sweets. Return to Biella. Late afternoon we depart for Sordevolo, the village where, every 5 years, a Passion Play is performed, with all the actors being local village people. Dinner will be at a local restaurant before we attend this remarkable performance of “The Passion of Christ”.



#### Day 4 > RICETTO DI CANDELO – ORTA SAN GIULIO

Departure from Biella area to Ricetto di Candelo (*approx. 15min, 6km*)  
Guided visit of the borgo  
Tasting of typical products (salami, chesees, red and white wine)  
Time at disposal for lunch (on your own)  
Departure to Orta San Giulio area (*approx 1h, 54 km*)  
Accommodation in 4\* hotel  
Free time at your disposal  
Welcome dinner  
Overnight



#### Day 5 > ORTA SAN GIULIO – SAN GIULIO ISLAND

Breakfast  
Guided visit of the borgo of Orta San Giulio  
Departure by ferry boat to the Island of San Giulio  
Lunch in a typical restaurant  
Guided visit of the Island  
Back to Orta San Giulio by ferry boat  
Free time at your disposal  
**Optional: ferry boat cruise from Orta San Giulio to Omega (round trip - approx. 50 min.)**  
Back to the hotel  
Dinner  
Overnight

## Day 6 > PAVIA

Breakfast and check-out

Departure to Certosa di Pavia (*approx. 1,40 h, 110 km*)

Guided visit of the Carthusian monastery of Pavia and of its museum

Time at disposal for lunch (*on your own*)

Departure to Vigoleno area (*approx 1,30 h, 110 km*)

Accommodation in an ancient village of XI century

Dinner

Overnight



## Day 7 > PARMA/FONTANELLATO

Breakfast

Departure to Fontanellato (*approx 30 min, 22 km*)

Guided visit of the borgo and of its castle

Lunch in a typical restaurant

Departure to Parma (*approx.30 min, 25 km*)

Guided visit of the city HD

**Optional: possibility of a visit in dairy and tasting of the famous Parmigiano Reggiano**

Back to the accommodation

Dinner

Overnight



## Day 8 > VIGOLENO

Breakfast

Departure to Vigoleno (*approx 28 min, 18 km*)

Guided visit of the borgo and of its castle

Departure for a farm and visit of the vineyards with wine tasting and local products

Time at leisure

**Optional: Departure to Fidenza Outlet village and time at leisure for shopping (approx 27 min, 23 km)**

Back to the accommodation

**Optional: time at leisure for wellness and relax in the Spa Center**

Dinner

Overnight

## Day 9 > AIRPORT

Breakfast and check-out

Transfer to the airport

(*Milano Malpensa Airport approx. 2h, 170km / Bologna Airport approx. 1,30h. 125km*)

End of services





## THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS TOUR

### **RICETTO DI CANDELO**

The Ricetto di Candelo is a fortified structure built between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by impulse of the local inhabitant in order to preserve and defend the most valuable assets of the community, a "castle" of the people built to protect the treasures of the earth, as wine and grains. Today the Ricetto is considered the "medieval Pompeii of Biella's area". The borgo is an unicum in Italy: this is a cultural and tourist "place of excellence", where the cultural itinerary will let you discover the authentic and exciting Middle Ages.

### **ORTA SAN GIULIO AND ORTA LAKE**

The Orta Lake will enchant you with breathtaking and romantic views and its artistic and historical heritage of great cultural interest. The little borgo of Orta San Giulio has just over a thousand inhabitants, because of the characteristic lanes of the center and the banks surrounded by splendid buildings is considered a little jewel. In the heart of the lake rises the island of San Giulio, a mystical and cozy place, reachable in a few minutes by boat. It hosts a female monastery (in fact it is also called the island of silence).

### **CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY OF PAVIA**

This is a magnificent complex, with a private chapel and a family mausoleum too. The foundation stone was laid in 1396 during the late Gothic period, but only in the mid- 15th century, the building was achieved in its rich Renaissance decoration, which makes it one on the most prestigious monuments of the Italian art. Its façade is remarkably decorated with white and polychrome marble. It is worth visiting the ivory triptych in the old vestry, the superb frescoes by Bergognone in the transept, the amazing wooden carving in the choir and the rich terracotta decorations in the two cloisters.

### **FONTANELLATO**

Fontanellato has preserved intact its original features and the typical low and narrow houses with multicolored facades which surround the wide square and seem built to protect the ancient fortress. The Rocca, which belonged to the Sanvitale family from the end of the fourteenth century to 1948, combines the austere and a rather rude appearance of its military origin with the elegance and sophistication of a stately home. The fortress of Fontanellato contains works and historical evidences of absolute value, among which the room decorated by the young Parmigianino before his departure for Rome in 1524 is worth noting.



## PARMA

The guided tour of Parma, beautiful town built on the ancient route of the Via Emilia and crucial junction during the Middle Ages, starts with an itinerary into the heart of this elegant capital. The old town center of Parma is still livable and it can be pleasantly walked across. It's hard not to be fascinated by the elegance of its churches, squares and buildings, which evoke its ancient splendour, and the innate passion for food, wine, music and opera which is in the air. There are many surprises that this tour has in store for the curious visitor! A visit to Parma can not exclude the monumental complex of Piazza Duomo, where the Cathedral, the Baptistery and the Bishop's Palace create a medieval corner of rare beauty.

## VIGOLENO

Vigoleno is one of the most beautiful medieval villages in Italy, a castle-village which retains, despite the transformations undergone during the centuries, a great evocative power. What impresses most of the small village, perched on a spur, are the large expanses of stone, the defensive walls, the battlements, the towers, the ramparts and then the short and narrow streets, which make it similar to a labyrinth. The light reflected on this rock, during the various moments of the day, creates indefinable atmospheres. The castle of Vigoleno, with its fortified medieval village, dominates the valley of Stirone Park, offering views of nature of rare beauty.



## OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### **Ferry boat cruise from Orta San Giulio to Omegna (round trip - approx. 50 min.) ON REQUEST**

Cruise about 50 minutes starting and finishing in Omegna - Orta San Giulio and vice versa . Ideal for those who want to immerse themselves right in the atmosphere of the lake and for those who want to arrange a viewing alternative stages

### **Visit in dairy and tasting of the famous Parmigiano Reggiano and other typical products ON REQUEST**

Seeing the born of the King of cheeses is a fascinating experiences for children and adults, so it's recommended to everybody. The cheese-factory is waiting for you to join in a trip that will allow you to see our master cheese maker transforming the milk in cheese with the traditional and ancient gesture. It'll be a very special way to introduce you to the productive culture of the territory and to discover how is made one of the most important product of our country.

### **Fidenza outlet village and time at leisure for shopping ON REQUEST**

Many shops and many brands are inside Fidenza Village: womens, mens and children, shoes & accessories, jewellery, home & lifestyle, lingerei and beauty.

It has the biggest and brightest brands in fashion, at prices reduced by up to 70%, whether you are looking for elusive must-haves or simply the reassurance of quality.

### **Wellness and relax in the Spa Center ON REQUEST**

In the village there are two wellness centers; one located in a natural cave and the other in a house in the woods in the secret garden under the walls. Both are equipped with turkish bath, jacuzzi, sauna, sensory shower and relaxation area. The main building also houses several rooms for massages and different types of treatments for singles and couples - see sections massages and treatments.



### Package includes:

- Bus for the whole tour
- English speaking tour leader for the entire itinerary
- 3 overnights in double/twin standard room in 4\* hotel in Biella- HB treatment – **HOTEL AGORA' PALACE 4\* OR SIMILAR**
- 2 overnights in double/twin standard room in 4\* hotel in Orta San Giulio area, HB treatment – **HOTEL L'APPRODO 4\* OR SIMILAR**
- Guided visit of Biella
- Guided visit of Sanctuary of Oropa
- Dinner at local Restaurant on day of arrival in Biella
- Dinner in Sordevolo before the Passion Play performance
- Entrance ticket to the Passion Play – Gold Ticket
- Drink during the performance
- Cheese tasting in Biella
- Guided visit of Ricetto di Candelo (2 H)
- Guided visit of Orta San Giulio and of the Island of San Giulio (3 H)
- Ferry boat ticket Orta San Giulio/San Giulio Island (round trip)
- Lunch In a typical restaurant in Orta San Giulio Island (drinks not included)
- Guided visit of the Carthusian Monastery of Pavia (HD)
- 3 overnights in double/twin standard room in ancient village of XI century in Vigoleno area, HB treatment - **ANTICO BORGO DI TABIANO CASTELLO – RELAIS DI CHARME OR SIMILAR**
- Guided visit of Fontanellato and of the castle (2H)
- Entrance fee for the castle of Fontanellato
- Guided visit of Parma HD
- Lunch in a typical restaurant in Fontanellato (drinks not included)
- Guided visit of Vigoleno and of the castle (2H)
- Entrance fee for the Castle of Vigoleno
- Visit of a farm in Vigoleno with tasting of typical products



**Package does not include:**

- City tax (to be paid locally where applies- approx. Euro 1.5 per person per day)
- Drinks at meals
- Entrance fees (unless otherwise specified)
- Extra, tips and anything else is not listed under "Package includes"



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