

Liguria and Piedmont, May 1-11, 2009

This northwest corner of Italy is far less known and frequented than the regions of the Veneto, Tuscany, Lazio and Campania, and often suffers a fleeting glimpse in passing enroute to the French Riviera or the Swiss Alps. Liguria and Piedmont offer great riches, as we will discover during this ten-night journey which will take us from the dramatic coast of Liguria to the gastronomic and enological mecca of Alba, and will offer extended stays in the great capitals of Genoa and Turin. In addition to savoring natural beauty, and gastronomic highs, cultural highlights will include one of the world's greatest collection of Egyptian antiquities, and some of the most unusual and geometrically complex architecture of the Baroque masters, Guarini, Vittone and Juvarra.



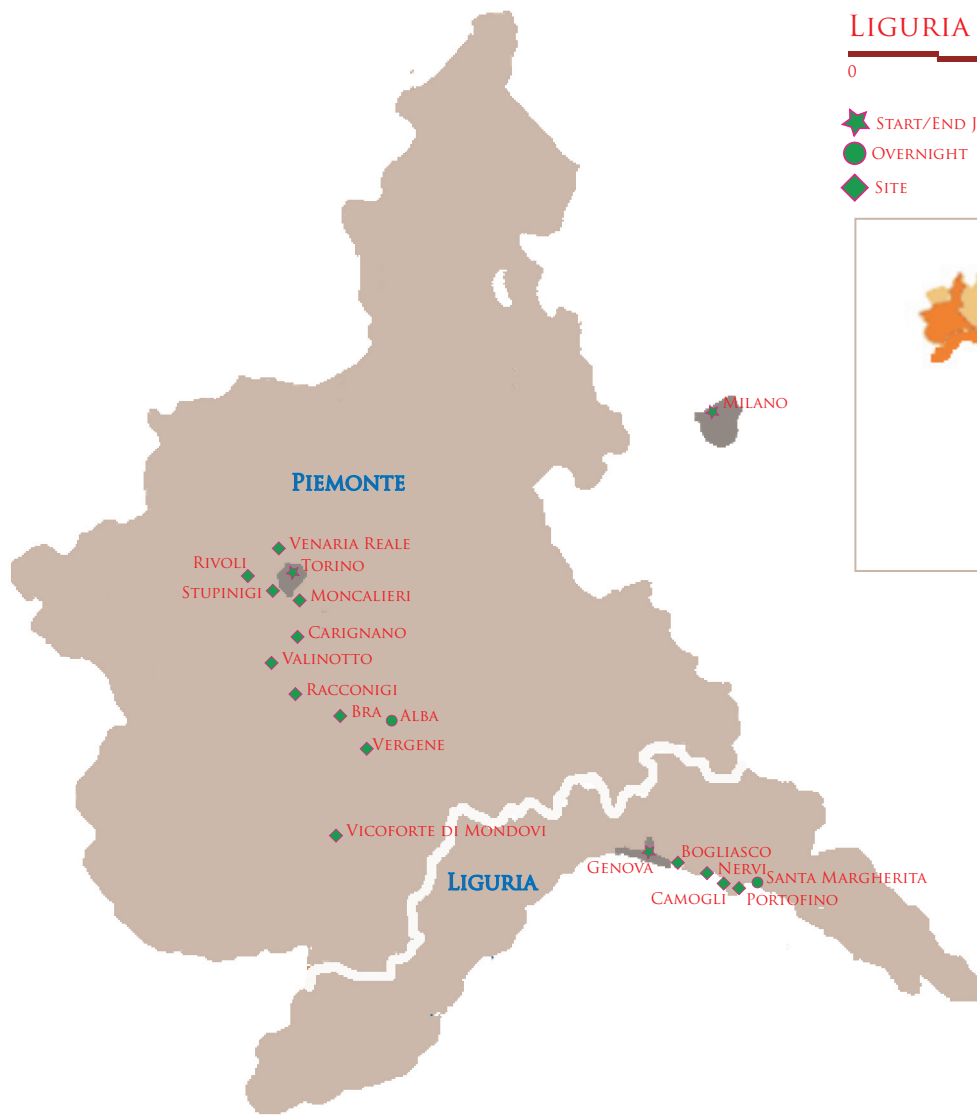
Our trip will begin in the resort of Santa Margherita di Ligure (south of Genoa on the coast). After three nights in Genoa we will stop for two nights in the wine growing region south of Turin, where Alba is the truffle capital of Italy (the world?) and nearby Bra calls itself the “slow capital of the universe”! Things will pick up again with a finale in Turin, home of Fiat and vermouth of Martini and Cinzano!



LIGURIA AND PIEDMONT

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- ★ START/END JOURNEY
- OVERNIGHT
- ◆ SITE



Itinerary

Day 1. Friday, May 1, 2009

Arrival Genoa—Santa Margherita,

Hotel Continental (2 nights)

Participants should arrange to arrive at Genoa's Cristoforo Colombo Airport where they will be met and from where they will be driven to Santa Margherita Ligure, less than an hour to the south. We have chosen to begin our trip here, as the beautiful and restful position on the Italian Riviera will be a good place to unwind and is well situated to explore the nearby coastal watering holes of Portofino and Camogli. These old fashioned resorts seem to survive

from a bygone era. The day is free for walks and individual exploration, and we will gather together for aperitivi and dinner on the hotel's veranda.

Day 2. Saturday, May 2, Santa Margherita

After a leisurely breakfast, we will walk the short distance to the docks to catch our 10:15 ferry for San Fruttuoso via Portofino. The abbey of San Fruttuoso di Capodimonte was constructed and active between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. Reachable by water or by a foot path only (the hardy can hike and meet us there!), it clings to the rugged coastline along with the adjacent fishing village. We'll visit the monastic complex and

then have lunch by the water. We'll catch a ferry to continue on to the village of Camogli, which in dialect means "houses close together" and indeed they are! We'll be amazed by the height and density of the multicolored buildings as we stroll towards the Duca del Cernobbio hotel for refreshments before driving back to Santa Margherita. Dinner tonight will be at the hotel.

Day 3. Sunday, May 3

To Genoa, Bristol Palace (3 nights)

Departing after breakfast, we will drive the short distance to the coastal town of Bogliasco in the direction of Genoa.



Here, we may (permission pending) visit the Bogliasco Foundation's Liguria Study Center, a scholarly retreat that welcomes a small number of fellows doing creative and scholarly work in the arts. Slightly further up the coast is Nervi, where the Wolfsoniana museum is. This houses Mitchell Wolfson's highly eclectic collection of objects and works of art from 1880 to 1945. After lunch in a nearby café, we'll continue on to Genoa to check into our centrally located hotel, the Bristol Palace.



After getting settled, we'll re-board our bus for an orientation tour of the city, taking advantage of the lighter Sunday traffic. Genoa is remarkable for its topography—it clings to and is strung out along the coast, climbing up its steep slopes. Nineteenth century formal urbanism takes advantage of the few flat areas, the formerly (and perhaps still) seedy port areas occupy a maze of narrow alleys, and elegant residential districts climb up the slopes with piazzas and streets forming terraces on top of buildings below. After some time to ourselves, we'll have dinner in Antica Osteria di Vico Palla in the old port area beside the new aquarium.

Day 4. Monday, May 4 Genoa

Today's explorations will involve some of the outlying areas of the city. Starting with an elegant nineteenth and early twentieth century residential quarter, we will visit the Castello Mackenzie, designed by Gino Coppedé between 1896 and 1904 for a Scottish insurance magnate. This castle, which blends medieval with art nouveau details was owned and restored by Wolfson, and now belongs to an auction house. Also on a dramatic hillside site is the studio of architect



From top: San Fruttuoso, Camogli (sketches by Stephen Harby), Left: Hotel Continental, Santa Margherita; right: Hotel Bristol, Genoa.

Renzo Piano, which we are arranging to visit and whom we will hope to meet if he is in town. Following lunch in a convenient café, we have set aside the afternoon for independent exploration and shopping, with these two shops of note: Romanengo's, a sweet shop that is over two hundred years old famous for its marrons glacés, and Luigi Codevilla, an exclusive jewelry store with reproductions of 17th century Genoese silver. Dinner tonight will be at the Circolo Artistico del Tunnel, a private club housed in one of Genoa's grand palaces.

Day 5. Tuesday, May 5 Genoa

Today is devoted to the "centro storico" of Genoa which we will explore on foot. We'll begin with Piazza de Ferrari, just down the street from our hotel, where we will visit the Teatro Carlo Felice by Aldo Rossi, reconstructed in 1991, following world war II damage. From there we will visit the largely Gothic cathedral of San Lorenzo and then wind our way



through narrow streets to Strada Nuova or via Garibaldi. This was laid out in the mid-sixteenth century to provide building sites for suitable palaces for the families of the aristocracy. These palazzi are known for the way in which they adapt to the sloping conditions on either side of the street: their courtyards and gardens beyond are filled with complex stairways and many linked levels. Of the over a dozen palaces several have been turned into museums, and two, the Palazzo Bianco and Palazzo Rosso have been since the nineteenth century. We will visit them along with a private visit to the Palazzo Lomellino with its frescos by Bernardo Strozzi (1581-1644). From there we will continue on to via Balbi, where the University and Palazzo Reale offer more solutions to the challenge of arranging courtyards and gardens on a hillside. There may be the option of getting tickets to the Bejart Ballet's performance of *Bolero* and *Firebird* in the Teatro Carlo Felice for either an afternoon or evening performance. Also, there will be a chance to return to Piazza dei Ferrari to visit the Museo Ligustica, founded in 1751 and in this location from 1831. Dinner is planned for the Michelin starred restaurant La Bitta della Pergola with its renowned and inventive seafood.

Day 6. Wednesday, May 6 Alba, Palazzo Finati (2 nights)

We travel today the short distance up over the mountains from Liguria to Piemonte, making a stop along the way at the rather stupendous oval pilgrimage church at Vicoforte di Mondovi (Vitozzi and Francesco Gallo) built from 1596 to 1740. Nearby in the picturesque town of Mondovi Piazza is a Jesuit Church from 1679 with beautiful frescos by Andrea Pozzo.

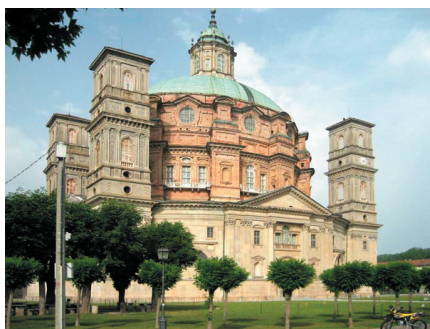
Left: Genoa, Strada Nuova. Right: Castello Mackenzie, Gino Coppede (watercolors by Stephen Harby)

After lunch on the piazza we will continue on north to the Barolo region and on to the small town of Alba. If there is time we will stop to see the intricate and geometrically fascinating baroque church of Santa Chiara (1742-48) by Bernardo Vittone in Bra, or we'll save it for the next day. After settling into our hotel, near the center of this small town, there will be time to explore, looking at the unfinished façade of Vittone's S. Maria Maddalena (1749) and taking part in the evening passeggiata. Dinner will be in one of the restaurants in town.

Day 7. Thursday, May 7 Alba

Today will be spent exploring the nearby towns, churches and palaces of this region rich in agriculture and wine. The Castello di Racconigi of the Carignano family evolved from a medieval bastion and then was given a succession of makeovers to keep up with the times, including one by Gaurino Guarini in 1674. To the north in the town of Carignano is the





From top, left: Vicoforte di Mondovi, Pozzo's frescoes in Mondovi Piazza, Santa Maria Maddalena, by Vittone, in Alba.

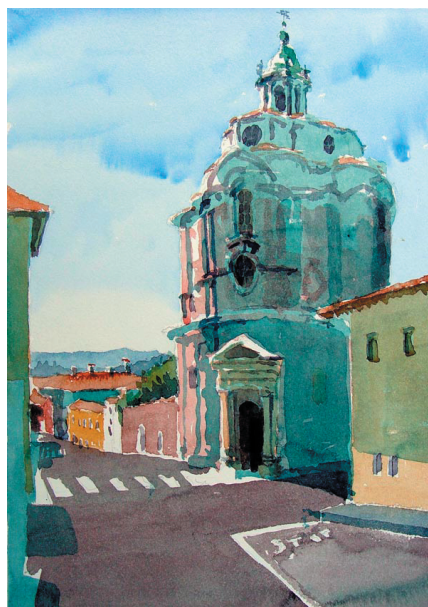


church of SS. Giovanni and Remigio (1757-67) by the architect Alfieri and designed in an unusual semi-circular plan. Nearby in the fields is a jewel of a little chapel at Valinotto, designed by Vittone. We'll try to arrange to get in! For dinner tonight we will venture to the small agricultural hamlet of Vergene in the heart of the Barolo region for dinner in the restaurant Buon Padre organized around the enjoyment of an extraordinary wine!

Day 8. Friday, May 8

To Turin, Hotel Victoria (3 nights)

On our way to Turin today we will make several stops outside of the city, including the Royal Hunting Lodge at Stupinigi, Castello di Rivoli, (a ruined castle converted to a museum of contemporary art), and the Venaria Reale, another ex-urban hunting and pleasure palace worked on by Filippo Juvarra in the late 17th century. We will be able to see a special traveling exhibition "Egypt: Sunken Treasures" showcasing recent finds brought up from the deep off Alexandria. We will repair to the cozy and club-like atmosphere of the Hotel Victoria near the center of Turin.



Above: Vineyards in Barolo, Santa Chiara, Bra, Bernardo Vittone, Below: Palazzo di Racconigi.

Day 9. Saturday, May 9 Turin

We will devote today to understanding



the urban plan and discovering a selection of the great religious and secular monuments of the city. Our walk will be structured by the axial spine of via Roma which leads from the station to the Royal Palace complex to the north. Along it are many of the great Baroque monuments of Guarini and Juvarra. We will start at the twin churches of San Carlo and Santa Cristina which frame Piazza San Carlo. Next we'll admire Guarini's façade of Palazzo Carignano (1679-) before continuing on to Palazzo Madama (1718-21) by Juvarra. Our walk will conclude in the square of the Royal Palace, where Guarini's two master-works, San Lorenzo (1666-92) and the chapel SS. Sindone, the shrine of the holy shroud stand. Unfortunately, the latter's interior was irreparably damaged by a fire during reconstruction some years ago. The afternoon will be free for independent exploring, visiting museums and shopping.

Day 10. Sunday, May 10 Turin

Taking another cross-section through the city, today we will dedicate to exploring its great museums. The 17th century Palazzo dell'Accademia delle Scienze by Guarini is home to three of them. Turin's Egyptian Museum, is the only museum other than that in Cairo devoted exclusively to Egyptian antiquities, and it is considered, depending on one's allegiances, the world's third or fourth in significance (among Cairo, the Louvre, the British Museum). The decipherer of



Egyptian hieroglyphs Jean-François Champollion, who came to Turin in 1824, spent much time pouring over the collections. It was Champollion who famously wrote, "The road to Memphis and Thebes passes through Turin". The collection was started by King Carlo Felice in 1824, with the purchase of the great collection amassed by Bernardino Drovetti, a Piemontese, who served under Napoleon as the French consul, and in that capacity liberated Egypt of 5,268 objects!

The museum of antiquities is here as well, and upstairs is the Galleria Sabauda, Turin's excellent fine arts museum with collections of both local schools and some of the best representations of Dutch and Flemish painting in Italy. Assuming we have made it this far, it may be time for lunch!

We will move out from the center of the city, devoting the afternoon to the legacy of Turin's great industrial dynasty, the Agnelli family. We will stop first at the former Fiat factory at Lingotto, which has been converted to a shopping and conference complex. On its roof above the oval auto test-track, Renzo Piano has designed a futuristic appendage which houses the Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli containing masterpieces from the family's private collection. Following that, we are hoping to be able to visit two remarkable gardens belonging to the Agnelli family outside of the city: Villar Perosa and Villa Silvio Pellico. These are both the works of the noted twentieth century landscape architect Russell Page. To end on a grand note, we will visit the basilica of Superga, Juvarra's grandest work from 1717 to 1731, perched on a promontory to the

Left: The Pinacoteca Agnelli, by Renzo Piano; Right: Interior of San Lorenzo by Guarino Guarini.

northeast of the city.

Day 11. Monday, May 11 Departure

Flights may be booked from Turin's Caselle airport, 15 km to the north, and individual transfers will be arranged. Buon Viaggio e Ben 'tornato!

