

ICOM EXCURSION DAY – July 8

MONFERRATO: UNESCO WORD HERITAGE LANDSCAPE

Monferrato is an area that nestles between the provinces of Alessandria and Asti in the northern Italian region of Piedmont. Its breathtaking landscape, renowned for its gentle hillsides and traditional vineyards, is today listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. This scenic territory is made of different sub-divisions: Upper Monferrato, Monferrato Astigiano, Eastern Monferrato and Lower Monferrato which is bordered by the rivers Po and Tanaro and has as its main urban center Casale Monferrato, a small historic city, with a rich artistic and cultural heritage.

Lower Monferrato, with its rolling hills, is famous for its vineyards which produce well-known wines such as Barbera and Grignolino. This is the part of Italy which is home to two world-famous special products: truffles and hazelnuts. Impressive are the many magnificent castles that dominate the nearby hills.



Monferrato landscape | © vpardi/fotolia

08.00 a.m.: Departure from Milan – Piazzale Lotto (close to Lotto underground station)

We kindly recommend you to arrive at least 30 minutes in advance.

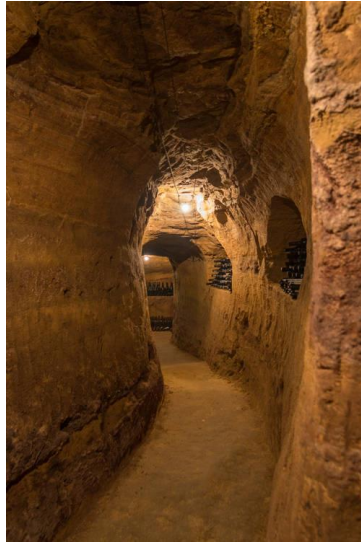
10.00 a.m.: Arrival in Serralunga di Crea. The morning is dedicated to visiting Crea, famous for its sanctuary, chapels and natural park. The Sacred Mount here is a UNESCO World Heritage site and is one of the highest hills in Monferrato.

01.00 p.m.: Cocktail lunch with local wines and gastronomic specialties in the wonderful Palazzo Gozzani Treville, a richly frescoed palace of the noble Gozzani Treville family, designed in 1711.

For the afternoon we propose two options:

1. After a short visit of Casale Monferrato (Palazzo Gozzani Treville, Cathedral of Saint Evasio, Church of Saint Michel), the tour includes a visit to an *infernòt* in the tiny village of Cella Monte, situated in the heart of the hilly countryside of Lower Monferrato. An interesting type of architecture which is typical of this area of

Piedmont and inextricably linked to its wine-producing tradition is the *infernòt*, a dark underground cavern which is dug by hand from a particular type of sandstone known as “*pietra da cantoni*”. It was invented by the local folk as an addition to their existing cellars to provide a pitch dark environment for storing bottled wine.



Infernòt | © AndreaChiesa/fotolia

2. The afternoon is dedicated to visiting the city of Casale Monferrato, the main center of business for the area. The Palaeologus dynasty ruled Monferrato from here before it came under the control of the Mantua-based Gonzaga family. The tour includes a visit to the Cathedral of Saint Evasio, patron saint of the city and the seminary library, established by Bishop Peter Jerome Cavaradossi in 1738, settled in its current location in 1838 and designed by Tommaso Audisio (1789-1845). As a special exception, the Church of Saint Micheal will be opened for this tour which concludes with a visit to the Church of San Domenico.



Casale Monferrato, Duomo | © ClaudioColombo/fotolia

The afternoon concludes with the visit to the Sannazzaro Castle, a wonderful historic mansion inhabited by the owners, the heirs of those who 900 years ago founded the castle.

06.00 p.m. Departure for Milan.

08.00 p.m. Arrival in Milan – Piazzale Lotto.