

## THE OTHER LAKES ISEO & GARDA WITH BRESCIA & BERGAMO

TUESDAY 24 – SATURDAY 28 APRIL 2018 (5 DAYS)

LECTURERS: LOCAL SPECIALISTS

£1790

- Explore the ‘undiscovered’ Lake Iseo, surrounded by stunning scenery, together with nearby Lake Garda
- Discover two of north Italy’s most handsome towns – Bergamo & Brescia
- See fine Romanesque, Renaissance & Baroque art & architecture, including several private visits
- Enjoy excellent food & the wines of the Franciacorta
- 4\* lakeside hotel on Lake Iseo



Lake Iseo

### OVERVIEW

Lake Iseo is relatively unknown and undiscovered, sitting between the more popular Lakes Como and Garda. It has a beauty which captures the spirit with its silver-blue waters overlooked by alpine peaks and garlanded with pretty villages. Nearby, Lake Garda is Iseo’s larger, easterly neighbour endowed with imposing villas of the *Belle Epoque*, often surrounded by fine terraced gardens. Combined with the wonderful art towns of Brescia and Bergamo, this is an enticing five-day visit offering a relaxing and unhurried experience in lovely surroundings.

Following intensive growth under the Romans, as the *Pax Romana* faded and Christianity set strong roots in nearby Milan, northern Italy saw waves of invaders – Huns, Vandals, Goths, Lombards and Franks – arrive from beyond the Alps, sweeping down towards the Po with their sights set on Rome. However, some stayed as the wealth of this region was irresistible, made possible and indeed still maintained by the industry and energy of towns such as Bergamo and Brescia, coming to prominence as part of the rise of the free urban cities of Medieval Italy.

Situated at the eastern edge of Lombardy, the combined history of Bergamo and Brescia has placed them close to the cutting edge of great events, endlessly involved in the struggles between their more famous neighbours to west and east, the Duchy of Milan and Venice. After an uncertain period in Medieval times, Bergamo and Brescia were reorganised and re-established at the western edge of the newly land-focused Venetian Republic. Under Venice’s rule, trade, civic and artistic life flourished, reflected in the marvellous palimpsest of Medieval and Renaissance architecture and superb Lombard and Venetian pictures we shall discover in both towns.

In contrast, nearby Franciacorta is a small, gently undulating hill range to the south of Lake Iseo where the villas and gardens of Brescia and Bergamo’s “great and good” were built and created from the eighteenth century onwards. There are excellent red and white wines produced here, above all sparkling whites, an aspect of our visit which we shall discover. All in all, the marvellous churches, palaces and picture collections of Bergamo and Brescia will form the perfect compliment to the exquisite location and gentle pace of our lake-side stay.

We shall be based at the 4\* **Hotel Rivalago**, situated in the village of Sulzano, overlooking Lake Iseo and the island of Isola Monte. All bedrooms are lake-facing and there is a swimming pool and a restaurant.

### ITINERARY OUTLINE

**Day 1:** Tuesday 24 April – We fly from Heathrow to Milan Linate arriving mid-afternoon and drive eastwards to **Sulzano** on the eastern shores of Lake Iseo. After check-in at the 4\* **Hotel Rivalago** we have dinner in a local restaurant - wine, water and coffee are included with all our group lunches and dinners.

**Day 2:** Wednesday 25 April – We drive to nearby **Brescia** - Celtic in origin, it was urbanised by the Romans who quickly developed its trading potential. After Rome’s fall, waves of invasions from north of the Alps culminated

in the arrival of the Lombards who brought stability and prosperity. However, tensions between successive foreign lordships and the now free cities or *comune* were followed by the arrival of the Venetians, under whose rule the town experienced fundamental administrative and architectural changes. These are reflected in the fine urban spaces surrounded by civic and private buildings from the renaissance and baroque periods.

We begin with the Roman era and a visit to the striking **Capitoline Temple**, complete with its intact *cella* and the adjoining **Theatre**. After coffee, we visit the **City Museum at Santa Giulia**. Housed in a restored Benedictine convent, we focus on a range of displays and objects charting the city's origins up to the present day, with a particular emphasis on the Roman and Lombard periods. We complete our morning with the small **Picture Gallery**. After a group lunch in a nearby restaurant we continue with a visit to the Romanesque **Old Duomo**, also known as the 'Rotunda', modelled on the Frankish Palatine Chapel at Aachen. The Baroque **New Duomo** is complimented by a handsome group of medieval buildings known as the **Broletto**, while **Piazza della Loggia** is entirely Venetian in appearance. We end our day with a private visit to a city **Palazzo** to see a remarkable sixteenth century frescoed room. We return to Lake Iseo where the evening will be free.

**Day 3:** Thursday 26 April – We have a gentle day in the **Franciacorta**, a charming hill range located to the south of Lake Iseo, where we shall visit the vineyard of **Ca' del Bosco**, one of the most distinguished vineyards in the country concluding with a tasting of its famed sparkling white wines. After a group lunch in a nearby restaurant, we return to the hotel where the remainder of the afternoon and evening will be free for private explorations, both on and around the lake.

**Day 4:** Friday 27 April – We drive westwards to explore the stunning city of **Bergamo**. Its historic Medieval centre is raised upon a hill (Bergamo Alto) joined to its lower, newer counterpart (Bergamo Basso) via a panoramic funicular which we shall take! Our morning will focus on the handsome buildings in and around **Piazza Vecchia**: the **Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore** is a very fine Romanesque church whose many highlights include intarsia panels designed by Lorenzo Lotto set into the choir screen. The adjoining **Cappella Colleoni**, named after the famous fifteenth century *condottiero*, is a renaissance addition to this marvellous architectural composition. We end the morning at **Palazzo Moroni** for a private visit. Amidst a series of frescoed interiors we shall be shown the family's collection of pictures, including some fine portraits by the sixteenth century Lombard painter, Giambattista Moroni. There is also a truly lovely terraced garden behind the palace.

After some free time for lunch, not included, we visit the newly re-arranged **Accademia Carrara**. Rich in Venetian and Lombard pictures there are gems by Mantegna, the Bellini family and many others – it is generally agreed to be the best small picture gallery in northern Italy. We return to the hotel from where later in the evening we travel by private boat across the lake to **Isola Monte** for our final group dinner. We return by boat to the hotel.

**Day 5:** Saturday 28 April – On our last day we drive eastwards to the western shores of **Lake Garda** to make the short journey by boat to the privately-owned **Isola di Garda**. Countess Cavazza Talbot will welcome us as we visit her fine terraced garden, arranged around a striking neo-Gothic villa dominating one end of the island. We continue to our final group lunch at the pretty lakeside town of **Desenzano** after which we drive to Milan Linate airport and our early evening flight to Heathrow.

## PRACTICALITIES

**Price** £1790                      **Without Flights** £1640                      **Deposit** £250  
**Single Supplement**            £225 (Double/Twin Room for Sole Use)  
Option for two rooms on request with no lake view and no Single Supplement

**Please note that there is a £300 discount if The Italian Lakes is taken with The Other Lakes**

**Hotel** 4 nights with breakfast, Lake-facing rooms, at the **4\* Rivalago**, Sulzano – Lake Iseo  
Upgrade £175 (from Lake-facing room with balcony to Junior Suite)

**Flights** British Airways

Outward:            **BA562** Departs London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1200** arrive Milan Linate **1500**  
Return:              **BA569** Departs Milan Linate **1910** arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **2010**

**Price includes** 2 dinners & 3 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, City Tax, entry fees & gratuities, services of two local specialist guides and Tour Manager James Hill

**Not included** Travel to/from Heathrow, 2 dinners & 1 lunch



**CICERONI TRAVEL**  
**2 The Square, Aynho, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 3BL**  
Telephone **+44 (0) 1869 811167**                      Fax **+44 (0) 1869 811188**  
Email **info@ciceroni.co.uk**                      Website **www.ciceroni.co.uk**

