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IVREA, INDUSTRIAL CITY OF THE 20TH CENTURY

“The new economy we are imagining contributes to material progress and accompanies individuals while perfecting their personalities and vocations. However, it does not prevent turning the soul towards a higher destination, not an individual end or for personal profit, but a contribution to the life of all on the path of civilisation.”

Le fabbriche di bene, Adriano Olivetti

In the heart of the Canavese at the foot of the mountains, at the beginning of the last century, the provincial town of Ivrea entered into deep symbiosis with the Olivetti family. In 1908, Camillo Olivetti opened a factory of typewriters which in 1932 he handed down to his son Adriano. Thanks to some legendary products like the Divisumma mechanical calculator and the Lettera 22 typewriter, followed by the Programma 101, forerunner of the personal computer, and to the attention given, as well as to profit, to the well-being of the employees, Adriano Olivetti promoted a project with a unique purpose. Between 1930 and 1960, this project turned Ivrea into a model of town planning and an innovative experience of industrial production oriented towards the community's well-being; this included constructing buildings not only for production and administration, but also for residential purposes and social services. The reflection on architecture and on the industrial processes and the social theories of Olivetti and his collaborators influenced the destiny of the area for almost a century, giving it a cultural heritage which was impossible to ignore. It is precisely for this profound identity as an “industrial city of the 20th century” that in 2018 Ivrea was inscribed in the list of sites protected by UNESCO.



CULTURAL HERITAGE

UNESCO DOSSIER: 1538

PLACE OF INSCRIPTION: MANAMA, BAHRAIN

DATE OF INSCRIPTION: 2018

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION: Ivrea represents the material expression of a modern vision of manufacturing dynamics and aims to be a model for an industrial city that meets the fast evolution of the industrialisation processes of the early 20th century. The value of the site lies in the bond between the new expressive capacity of modern architecture and the recognition that it is part of an exemplar social and economic project, permeated by proposals for the community.





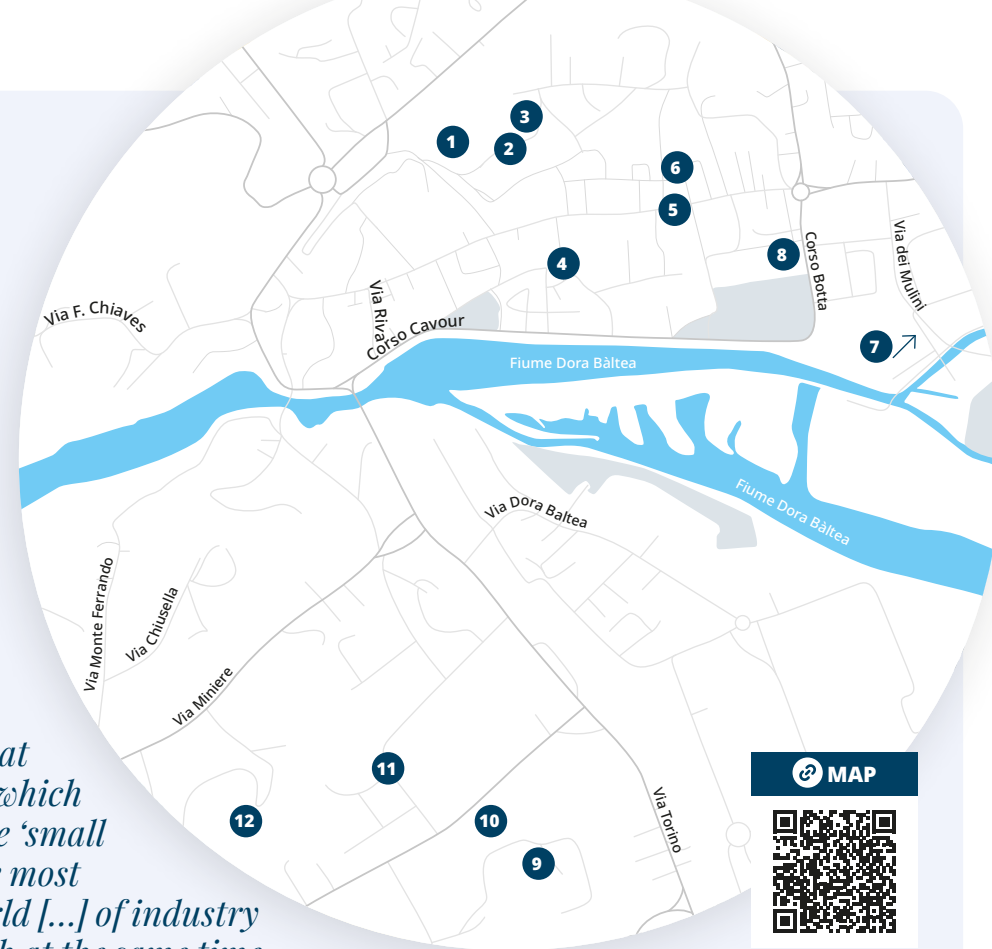
“Take a fleeting glance at the ‘red towers’; we will have to recognise that today’s Ivrea is above all industry, which aims to include in it the whole of the ‘small homeland’ of the Canavese. It is the most remarkable case existing in the world [...] of industry governed by industry [...]; but which at the same time almost wants to be a State; the incarnation of a religious, moral, social and political idea.”

This is what Guido Piovene wrote in his *Viaggio in Italia*; even today, knowing Olivetti means knowing Ivrea and visiting Ivrea means understanding the meaning of Olivetti, who shaped the 20th century identity of the city and still “dialogues” with it.

The **1 Castle of Ivrea** has dominated the city since 1358 with its square towers, first as a defensive stronghold and then as a prison: to visit it, go to **2 Piazza Castello**, where you will admire the neoclassic façade and the treasures in the **3 Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta**, one of the most interesting sacred buildings in the Canavese. Then be welcomed by **4 Piazza Ferruccio Nazionale**, a stop not to be missed on the walk down Via Palestro and Via Arduino, the pedestrian heart of the **5 historic centre**. The route takes you to the **6 Municipal Museum Pier Alessandro Garda**, where you can learn more about the history of the

city and then, continuing eastwards, to the **7 Roman Amphitheatre** of the 1st century A.D. Going down towards the Dora Baltea river, here is one of the incarnations of the urban utopia of Olivetti: the building that housed **8 Hotel La Serra**, designed at the end of the 1960s, with its surprising giant typewriter shape. After crossing the river, the must-see cycle of frescoes on the Life and Passion of Christ in the 15th century **9 Church of San Bernardino** is waiting for you; the splendid complex that the church belongs to was purchased in 1907 by Camillo Olivetti, who made it his home, to then be further developed by Adriano Olivetti in the 1950s as the head office

of social services and recreational activities for the employees. The **10 MaAM**, or the Open-Air Museum of Modern Architecture will lead you to discover the buildings (including the Works, the Canteen and the incredible semi-underground apartment block of Talponia) and the Olivetti architectonic experimentation along the 2 km of the surroundings of Via Jervis, while the **11 Laboratorio-Museo Tecnologico@mente** will gratify the desires of every fan of technology and industrial design (and others as well!) Do not leave the city without popping over to the **12 Olivetti Historical Archives**, where all sorts of documents regarding the company are kept.



ADRIANO OLIVETTI

“[...] I was very impressed by the idea that the advertisement posters I saw on the street depicting a typewriter on railroad tracks speeding past a locomotive, sheets of paper flying from its carriage, were directly linked to the Adriano in the graygreen uniform who shared our bland broths in the evening.”

Family Lexicon, Natalia Ginzburg

As well as a factory, Olivetti was the engineer Adriano. Camillo's eldest son, who in Ginzburg's memory had a “very melancholic air about him, which was perhaps because he didn't like being a soldier in the least”, did far more than create a company. His project involved architecture, which became an instrument of growth and social protection, and above all he wanted literature, art and culture to play leading roles and to actively support human dignity. The ambitious programme included intellectuals joining the industry's reality, alongside personnel with a technical and scientific background. Some were employees, or close collaborators, like the journalist Pampaloni, the writers Volponi and Soavi, the poets Sinisgalli, Fortini, Bigiaretti and Giudici. Others influenced or interacted with the initiatives put forward in Ivrea (including Ginzburg, Calvino, Noventa, Pavese and Moravia). In the many works published by the Edizioni di Comunità, the publishing company he founded in 1946, Adriano exposed his ideas on economy, social justice and culture, bequeathing a *corpus* of reflections on all subjects.



“ADRIANO STILL WANTED, DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES, EVERYONE TO HAVE THE BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES THAT HAD BEEN HIS DUE TO HIS BIRTH, HIS WAS AN UNPRECEDENTED PROJECT IN WORLD HISTORY: A PROJECT THAT REQUIRED A GREAT DEAL OF TIME AND PATIENCE. IN THE MEANTIME, HE DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE COMPANY. HE TOOK BACK HIS ROLE AS CHAIRMAN OF OLIVETTI [...]”

AND FOR THE UMPTENTH TIME INNOVATED THE FACTORY'S PRODUCTION.”

It is never too early to get to know the exciting story of Olivetti and its president, Adriano; children can start by reading *Adriano Olivetti: l'industriale del popolo* by Luca Azzolini, with illustrations in colour before setting off for Ivrea. The first stopping place on the route is the 14th century **1 castle** which dominates the panorama of Ivrea; then, walking along the pedestrian street that goes through the small and elegant **2 historic centre**, you reach the **3 Giusiana Gardens**, the green

lungs of the city, where youngsters can let off steam before concentrating on the typewriters, the calculators and the personal computers on display in the **4 Laboratorio-Museo Tecnologico@mente** and discover the revolutionary inventions of the Olivetti company. There could be nothing better than to visit Ivrea during the period of **Carnival** and take part in a unique event: the famous Battle of the Oranges has aspects that are not completely suitable for children, but they will love at least watching it; if they are big enough, they can even take part in it! On the other hand, if you happen to be in the city in June, the reading festival **La Grande Invasione** organises presentations, lectures and workshops that are always interesting, many of which are dedicated to children, and with authors from all over the world. For a change of scenery and a little relaxation in nature, leave the city and in ten minutes by car you reach the area of the **Five Lakes**. There are **5 Lake Sirio** (where bathing is possible, the most popular one), the **6 Black Lake**, **7 Lake Campagna**, **8 Lake San Michele** and, above all, **9 Lake Pistono**: your children will not easily forget the emotion of walking on the **10 Terre Ballerine**, a wooded area nearby, where the ancient presence of a lake has left a peat soil and it is like walking on a mattress as the plants sway under the steps. Another half hour by car and you will be at **11 Lake Candia**, a natural reserve very popular with birdwatchers and home to **12 AntharesWorld**, an adventure park on the shores of the lake where you can put yourselves to the test with pulleys, hanging bridges and various routes.



IVREA AND OLIVETTI in books

Reading suggestions to get to know the city, the factory and Adriano Olivetti better.

- **The Life of Henry Brulard**, Stendhal (1890). In his memoirs, the great French writer describes his stay in Italy and in Ivrea to see the opera *The secret marriage* by Domenico Cimarosa.
- **Piemonte**, Giosuè Carducci (1890). In this patriotic ode published in *Rime e ritmi* in 1899, Ivrea is “the beautiful woman who the red towers/reflect dreaming of the pale blue Dora/ in the wide breast”, while “the shadow of/King Arduin casts darkness all around”.
- **Olivetti di Ivrea. Visita a una fabbrica**, Franco Fortini, Carlo Brizzolaro, Albe Steiner (1949). A “graphic” book, an exceptional document of the time and a work of artistic value.
- **Società Stato Comunità. Per una economia e politica comunitaria** (1952); **Città dell'uomo** (1959); **Le fabbriche di bene** (1945, 1951); **Il dente del gigante** (2020). Some of the most important writings of Adriano Olivetti.
- **Viaggio in Italia**, Guido Piovene (1957). A journey of three years in

Italy to write this unique and detailed reportage, considered a classic of Italian travel literature. From the Alps to Sicily, stopping also in Ivrea, the author's gaze is an invitation to discover our wonders.

- **Tempi stretti** (1957); **Donnarumma all'assalto** (1959), Ottiero Ottieri. Two novels which are inspired by the work experience of the writer and sociologist Ottieri in the Olivetti factory in Pozzuoli.
- **Memoriale**, Paolo Volponi (1962). The first novel by Volponi revolves around the figure of a factory worker in northern Italy after World War II and the topics of alienation and the oppressive condition of work.
- **Family Lexicon**, Natalia Ginzburg (1963). The moving memories of the author include Adriano Olivetti, his friendship with the Levi family and antifascism.
- **Adriano Olivetti: un'idea di democrazia**, Geno Pampaloni (1980). A collection of writings by one of the greatest intellectuals of the Italian 20th century.

- **Il conte**, Giorgio Soavi (1983). The hero Alessio Donati is a protégé of Adriano Olivetti. *Adriano Olivetti: una sorpresa italiana* (2002) is also by the same author.

- **Con i tempi che corrono**, Libero Bigiaretti (1989). Asked by Olivetti to direct the Press Office, the writer looks back over the stages of his career in this conversation with Gilberto Severini.

- **L'impresa responsabile. Un'intervista su Adriano Olivetti**, Luciano Gallino (2001). The sociologist reflects on the entrepreneurial project and on the cultural impact of the work of Adriano Olivetti.

- **Adriano Olivetti. La biografia**, Valerio Ochetto (2013). A complete portrait of the man and the industrialist, published by the Edizioni di Comunità.

- **Ivrea: guida alla città di Adriano Olivetti**, Marco Peroni (2016). Stories, anecdotes, photos, maps and documents to get to know Ivrea and the founder of Olivetti.

- **La letteratura ai tempi di Adriano Olivetti**, Giuseppe Lupo (2016). Major intellectuals and writers discuss the ideas of Olivetti and the experience of the Ivrea company.

Children's books:

- **Adriano Olivetti: l'industriale del popolo**, Luca Azzolini (2019). So that even children can get to know the life of Adriano Olivetti.