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THE COLLINE DEL PROSECCO DI CONEGLIANO E VALDOBBIADENE

“The vineyards are tapestries woven with gold when the grapes are plump and after these have been picked and the vines are lighter, the leaves blush everywhere before falling to the ground.”

Veneto felice, Giovanni Comisso

An earth that is generous and difficult to work, with steep slopes on which the vineyards are perched and which still force men today to work the vines by hand. It is in a privileged position, between the Dolomites and the Adriatic Sea, which offers a constant breeze and the right thermal excursion: the Colline di Conegliano e Valdobbiadene are evidence of the bond between humans and the landscape and how they have shaped one another. This love story is told by Giovanni Comisso in *Veneto felice*, when he writes: “That landscape was for everyone like their mother’s face which is unquestionably beautiful because it is loved.” It is not easy to decide where to begin exploring the Hills: there are panoramas with spectacular views over the landscapes moulded by human hands over centuries set in a sensational natural environment, roads which criss-cross in an infinite web of bends and straight lines, churches and abbeys, hamlets nestling among the rows of vines and castles which dominate the land from the hilltops. Then there are the wineries, where one of the best known and most popular wines in the world comes from, and the restaurants, where traditional dishes are accompanied by a perennial good mood and a convivial and festive atmosphere.



CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

UNESCO DOSSIER: 1571

PLACE OF INSCRIPTION: BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

DATE OF INSCRIPTION: 2019

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION: The Colline del Prosecco di Conegliano e Valdobbiadene are a vine-growing landscape produced by the interaction between nature and man over the centuries. The adaptation to the hilly ridges and their transformation required the development of specific practices of ground use: man has been able to perfect the cultivation of vineyards on steep slopes and create grassy terraces, known as “*cigliani*”, which follow the contours of the landscape and help stabilise the soil. The result is a landscape characterised by vineyards which contribute to creating its aesthetic features, with perpendicular rows of tall vines, with intervals of rural settlements, forests and small woods.





“In the landscape it is the first sign of the hands of God and I justify certain sensitive beings who in the middle of the loveliest landscapes attest having seen the apparition of the divinity. The other sign is man, but man is formed and grows in relation to the landscape; he is a mirror of the landscape.”

The words of Giovanni Comisso in *Veneto felice* celebrate these hills and alongside offer a perfect synthesis of what is meant by “Cultural Landscape”, the UNESCO category which they are inscribed in.

Set off to explore them from **1 Vittorio Veneto**, where fine food and wine is only one of the reasons to go through the walls of the historic centre: the others are architecture, art and history. Then go towards **2 Revine Lago** and **3 Tarzo**, where you will start being plunged into the landscape of the hills. Next go through **4 San Pietro di Feletto**: stop at the ancient frescoed church on the hilltop, which peacefully dominates the surrounding morainic hills, and admire the Sunday Christ painted next to the entrance. Return to the route to reach **5 Refrontolo** and stop at the Molinetto della Croda, where you will feel as though you are travelling in time, to discover ancient trades and traditions. From here, climb up to **6 Rolle**, a small village that has become one of the symbols of this

area, with the bell tower that soars above the vineyards and the few houses that surround it. Continue to **7 Cison di Valmarino**, dominated by the large castle, today a hotel, and carry on to **8 Follina**, where the marvellous abbey, a place of silence and spirituality, is waiting for you with its splendid cloister. On the road you will find **9 Combai**, the village of chestnuts, where the wood becomes steeper. The panoramic ups and downs start from here and will accompany you to **10 Valdobbiadene**: go up and down hills to reach Guia and Guietta and then other hills to get to San Pietro di Barbozza, where sculptures can also be admired between the vines. Cross Valdobbiadene to arrive in Sinistra Piave, where you can get back on to the road home, but without missing

a stop in **11 Vidor** and **12 Farra di Soligo**, with the necessary detours to see the **13 Church of San Vigilio**, the **14 Church of San Lorenzo**, the **15 panoramic balcony of the Collagù Sanctuary** and the **16 Hermitage of San Gallo**, from where you can enjoy a magnificent view over the whole of the plain of Treviso and, on a clear day, even as far as the lagoon of Venice. Continue for **17 Pieve di Soligo** and then take the road back via **18 Conegliano**. Although the sight of the landscape is already gratifying on its own, remember that you are in the kingdom of Prosecco di Conegliano e Valdobbiadene: so stop at one of the many wineries for a wine tasting and at a restaurant to savour the excellent local dishes, from spit-roasts to radicchio, from Treviso piglet to asparagus and tiramisù.



ON FOOT IN THE HILLS

“Everything that extends from Valdobbiadene as far as Conegliano is nothing but one enormous vineyard. The boundaries divide and the landowners can have times and reasons for disagreement, but ideally the vineyards are all linked with one another. Cultivating your vineyard well is essential, because the care of your property also keeps your neighbour’s in good condition.”

Un paesaggio tutelato, Ginevra Lamberti

The best way to appreciate the work of man and admire the beauty of the landscapes of the Colline and of the Treviso Prealps is to take the Way of the Colline del Prosecco which starts from Vidor and arrives in Vittorio Veneto, plunging into the vineyards and going through places that are full of history and culture. Along the way, there are churches, monuments, castles and abbeys, trenches, galleries and military posts from the Great War. It takes four days to cover the 50 km route (which can be reduced to two or three prolonging the stages), a backpack and hiking boots. This itinerary is a unique way to discover the appeal of the area protected by UNESCO: an outdoor adventure that combines the physical effort with the warm welcome in the local restaurants, where a glass of Prosecco, a dish of *bigoli* (pasta), spit-roast meat and tiramisù are never wanting.



'PIERO KNOWS ONLY VAGUELY WHAT THE HOMETLAND OR ITALY IS, FOR HIM, OUTSIDE BIADENE, FAR FROM MONTELLO, THE EARTH IS ALL FOREST.'

In *Piero fa la Merica*, Paolo Malaguti tells the story of a boy who, at the end of the 19th century, leaves Veneto setting off to seek his fortune in Brazil. Today, thanks to the success of Prosecco and the many entrepreneurial activities, the area enjoys a flourishing economy. Even though the area is known all over the world for wine and business, there is no lack of activities for children:

with curious museums, grottoes and pile dwellings, the occasions to arouse their curiosity and spend carefree moments of fun will be many. Start the itinerary with an easy but adventurous excursion, in the bowels of the Earth: a few kilometres from Vittorio Veneto, Fregona is famous for the **1 Caglieron Caves**, cavities which in part are natural and in part artificial (sandstone was extracted here) which via steps, paths, walkways and bridges will lead you into a system of grottoes accompanied by the gurgling of the waters of the Caglieron stream. Once back in daylight, go to the **2 Museum of the Silkworm** in Vittorio Veneto, where your children can discover one

of the driving economic activities of this area from the end of the 18th century to the first decades of the 20th one. From here, continue to Tarzo, to visit one of the most curious and original museums in the area: the **3 Bonsai Museum of Serenity** created by Armando Dal Col, who has dedicated a lifetime to cultivating bonsai.

The itinerary continues following the shores of the lakes of Revine Lago to reach the **4 Livelet Educational Archaeological Park**: visiting the three rebuilt pile dwellings on this archaeological site of the Neolithic Age is an interesting and formative experience, which can also be organised at night, possibly with a walk in the moonlight. The next stage is the **5 Molinetto della Croda**: a real institution for the inhabitants of Treviso and its area, this mill built in the 17th century against a *croda* (rocky crag) is a timeless postcard spot. Leave the heart of the Colline for a walk between the sources and the waters of the **6 Oasi Fontane Bianche di Fontigo** in Sernaglia della Battaglia.

The circular route (about an hour and a half) is also interesting for the flora and fauna: migratory birds often stop here, attracted by the abundance of water and the trees they can rest on. The last two unmissable stops are the **7 Jonathan Collection Foundation** in Nervesa della Battaglia, where a hangar houses many vintage aircraft, like biplanes, triplanes and fighter planes from the First and Second World Wars, all restored and capable of flying and the **8 Tipoteca Italiana** in Cornuda, a very fascinating museum which will project you into the universe of typography and printing: movable characters, machines, presses, printing presses, stamps, the history of the book and communication which are mixed here in a dialogue between present and past, which tells the story of typography and, both artistic and graphic, design.



THE COLLINE DEL PROSECCO in books

Reading suggestions to get to know better the Colline del Prosecco di Conegliano e Valdobbiadene.

- **Veneto felice**, Giovanni Comisso (1984). "I live on the landscape, I recognise the source of my own blood in it." Comisso confesses at the start of his journey in Veneto, where the Colline del Prosecco and the villages at the foot of the mountains play an important role.
- **Sull'altopiano e altre prose**, Andrea Zanzotto (1995). Chronicles and stories set between Pieve di Soligo and the first rock faces of the Prealps.
- **Angeliche colline**, Emilia Salvioni (2003). Scents and colours of the hills around Soligo from the pen of the prolific author of children's books.
- **Colloqui con Nino**, Andrea Zanzotto (2005). While portraying his friend Nino, a multifaceted local genius who inspired his poetry, Zanzotto tells the story of the area and its changes. Nino expresses himself in mottos, jokes and prophecies, for the country people and famous guests of his sumptuous feasts in the feud of Rolle, of which he was the lord and master.

• **Piave. Cronache di un fiume sacro**, Alessandro Marzo Magno (2010). The author goes on a journey from the sources of the Piave, on Mount Peralba, to the Adriatic Sea, to relate the history and traditions of the areas through which the Great River flows, which on its routes also flows by the Colline del Prosecco.

• **La parabola degli eterni paesani**, Luciano Cecchin (2018). The story of a village in the Hills of Prosecco and the mountain on the shore of the lake, where an ancestral community is crumbling to pieces, under the clumsy blows of modernity.

• **Là dove si coltiva la vite** (2019). A book of photos which also contains 50 stories written by various authors, to tell the stories of the Colline di Conegliano e Valdobbiadene.

• **Boschèra. Dai vini selvatici al nobile Torchiato del Cansiglio**, Angelo Costacurta, Enzo Michelet (2021). A solitary and little known grape that gives rise to a wine that is the nectar of the gods like few others, on the sidelines of the world of the Colline del Prosecco.

• **Vini proibiti. Clinton, Fragolino, Bacò e gli altri vitigni ribelli**, Michele Borgo, Angelo Costacurta (2022). Clandestine varieties coexist with

the noble Glera and company, with a durable and fascinating history.

• **Piero fa la Merica**, Paolo Malaguti (2023). The moving story of a boy who leaves his home village in the province of Treviso to seek his fortune in Brazil.

• **Un paesaggio tutelato**, Ginevra Lamberti, Filippo Romano (2024). A book of photos enriched by a story full of poetry, from the lively pen of Ginevra Lamberti, an author born in Vittorio Veneto.

Children's books:

• **La storia del barba Zhucon**, Andrea Zanzotto, Marco Nereo Rotelli (1997). An illustrated book for children which tells the story of the "stupid uncle", the hero of a popular legend in the Colline del Prosecco together with Mazariol, a little elf dressed in red and with pointed shoes who wanders through the woods.

• **Il Regno dei Palù**, Terenzio Gambin, (2020). An illustrated story, for children, on the genesis and genealogy of the Palù del Quartier del Piave, wetlands which are an integral part of the hill system and an almost unique example in Europe as to their conservation and extension.