

MONZA: ROYAL PALACE, MONZA CATHEDRAL, MOTOR RACING CIRCUIT

“a day as a Queen”

THE ROYAL PALACE.

Hosting some of the delegations attending EXPO 2015, the palace (“Reggia di Monza”) has been restored to its former beauty and is now open to the public for exhibitions and special events.

The Royal Palace, Royal Gardens and Park. The palace complex was designed by architect Piermarini in 1777 as a summer residence for Ferdinand of Habsburg-Lorraine, Governor General of Lombardy, son of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria. With the arrival of Eugène de Beauharnais and his consort Augusta Amalia of Bavaria, an extensive park was added to the Royal Villa. Its designer was Luigi Canonica, who took over from Piermarini as Royal Architect, creating the first and largest enclosed park in Europe.

In the 1870s, the complex became the summer residence of the Savoy dynasty.

THE MONZA CATHEDRAL

A visit to Monza Cathedral – originally founded by Theodolinda, legendary Queen of the Lombards – is an enriching experience, taking in fourteen centuries of art and history. The basilica also bears witness to a dense web of international relations, making it one of the most significant ecclesiastical buildings in Italy, or indeed in Europe.

The Monza Cathedral. The original church grew on the site of the ancient oratory sponsored by Queen Theodolinda in the 4th century, before it was rebuilt and enlarged in 1300. The majesty of this basilica and its paintings, executed by artists such as Arcimboldo and Carloni, has awed visitors right down to the present day.

The Chapel of Theodolinda. A splendid and unique example of the International Gothic style, the chapel is decorated with 45 scenes covering 500 square metres of wall space. Dedicated to Queen Theodolinda, it is the magnum opus of the Zavatteri family of painters and can now be viewed in its original splendour thanks to a thorough-going restoration project.

The Iron Crown of the Lombards. The “Iron Crown”, a striking example of the jeweller’s art, is the most significant artefact of its kind in the history of Western Europe. It has graced the heads of the kings of Italy, from Charlemagne to Napoleon.

The Museum and Treasury of Monza Cathedral. In this Museum is conserved the “Treasury”, a priceless collection of reliquaries and other examples of the jeweller’s art donated by sovereigns and archbishops between the 7th and 11th centuries. The Museum also houses artefacts added to the church’s heritage since it was rebuilt in 1300.

THE MOTOR RACING CIRCUIT

Laid out in the former Royal Park, the circuit was built by the Milan Automobile Club in 1922. Its 5,793-metre track is regarded as the fastest in Europe. It has been the scene of some of the most exciting episodes in the history of motor and motorcycle racing. The finest drivers, the most famous cars, the greatest events have created a legend now almost 100 years in the making.