

# EVENTS

## CONCORSO D'ELEGANZA VILLA D'ESTE



The Concorso D'Eleganza Festival is possibly the most prestigious classic car event in the world. Held in the latter half of May, the festival is renowned as a plethora of prosperity, refinement and mechanical wonders. The event divided itself between two stunning hotels situated on the shores of Lake Como.

The grounds of the first, the Grand Hotel Villa d'Este, showcases an array of Historic Cars which have been built between 1920 and 1980. Although some elements of this part of the festival are exclusive to invited guests, the public also play a huge role; their applause and votes will be the deciding factor in the most traditional prize of the Concours, the Coppa d'Oro, awarded to the most beautiful vehicle.

The exclusive panel of experts, led by President Lorenzo Ramaciotti, decide the Best in Show Prize, which is rewarded with the BMW Group Trophy; this award is judged on the criteria of an 'extraordinary automobile which expresses beauty, passion and uniqueness.' As a result, it's pretty well-respected! In 2002, a Prize to the Contemporary Concept Car was introduced, which rewards the meshing together of archaic concepts and vibrant prospects. Other BMW awards involve the most sensitive restoration, the car driven from furthest away and the most exciting design.

The Historic Cars are initially organised into several categories. The Kings of the Road have included a 1928 Mercedes Benz 680S, a Hispano-Suiza and a Rolls Royce Wraith. Then you have the Aston Martin class, followed by the Thoroughbred class which has before hailed the presence of the BMW 328 and an Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 Gran Sport, whilst the Transition class has seen the likes of the Bentley R-Type Continental, the Ferrari 500 Superfast and the Jaguar MK V11.

The Prancing Horse Vs Trident class is full of Maseratis and Ferraris, whilst California Dreamin' says hello to Jaguars, Porches and Siatas. Finally, the Fiat 8 V and BMW M1 feature in Speed and Style, whilst the Lamborghini class speaks for itself and the MG Magnette K3 finds its home in the Racing Improves the Breed

Class. As if this bounty of vehicular brilliance wasn't enough, there are also shows for Concept Cars and Prototypes which have featured the Touring Superleggera before now, as well as a Motorcycle Concours for two-wheeler fans. Just like the Historic Car competitions, Motorcycles can be entered and judged by a jury of world class calibre.

The festival itself has been running since 1929, but after the post-war extravaganza in 1949 it sadly waned for many years. However, in the late 1990s the event was saved by BMW, as the brand whose automobile production was also born in '29 became partners with the Concorso.

Nowadays the Concorso prides itself on its stunning setting, impeccable hospitality, perfect preservation of valuable vehicles, as well as its enthusiastic audience and international exposure. Above all, elegance is a priority for the event which sells itself on an essence of 'authentic aristocracy.' 'Originality' is another word which is repetitively and feverishly uttered in relation to the festival, as it really does stand in its own league compared to other historic car events, by replacing commercial interest with a 'spirit of nobility.'

On the Friday evening, the gates of Villa Erba, another exquisite Como hotel, will traditionally open with a screening at the open-air cinema. The 'Days of Elegance', involving themed exhibitions of important vehicles (Germany's oldest aircraft, the Klemm L25 has even headlined before), will take place on Saturday and Sunday at the same location. In addition, the entrants and their cars will parade in front of the public at Villa Erba on Sunday. Things also get spiced up with a 'Street Run' of historic motorcycles! For those with plushly lined purses, there is a spectacular auction of vehicles which also takes place over the course of the weekend. Finally, a Gala Dinner with a 'Dance the Night Away' event crowns the weekend's entertainment with iridescent glamour.

Cernobbio leaps to life every year for the Concorso D'Eleganza Festival, which boasts an enviable spectacle of classic wealth which any car lover would jump to indulge in. With the results of the 2013 Roll of Honour having been very recently announced, it's time to look forward to the 2014 edition of a festival which identifies itself by Andre Malreux's famous quote 'If you want to design the future, you must leaf through the past.'



## SAGRA DI SAN GIOVANNI



If you are planning to head to Lake Como in June, you may be treated to the oldest festival on the Lake; the Sagra de San Giovanni is held on the last weekend of June and celebrates the vibrant heritage of Como.

The historic weekend involved folk, art and tasters of the old world Italy. The focal point of the festival occurs after sunset, when hundreds of floating lamps are pitched onto the lake alongside an iridescent display of fireworks.

The festival of light ensues into the small hours of the morning, soaking Lake Como in dewy opulence. As the sun begins to rise, an early morning parade of decorated boats bedecked with flowers begins, setting the tone for a day filled with folk dancing, traditional music, flag throwing competitions and delicious food.

The firework display itself takes place in front of Comacina Island at the height of Tremezzo, in an area known as Zoca de l'Oli, or 'Oil Basin.' This name is representative of the area's waters, which are as smooth as oil, as well as the presence of several oil trees on the foot of the surrounding mountains.

The island itself is on Ossuccio, the only island on the lake. As such it was inhabited in ancient times and home to several wars during the Middle Ages. The island was the last refuge for Berengario II and in 1169 it was the capital of battle between the Milan and Como. After ten years of fighting, Como's inhabitants razed the island to the ground, as a severe punishment for supporting Milan. Thus the fireworks of the festival symbolise the fiery battle, which even burned the island's nine churches to the ground. During the display, religious silence pervades the audience. For optimum views of the event, it is worth hiring a boat on the Lake or seating yourself directly in front of the island on the mainland.

The events are held the weekend closest to Saint John's Day. The origin of the name of the festival of 'lumaghitt' is based on an ancient legend, wherein the locals were able to rid themselves of wild June hail storms which destroyed the harvests by imploring the aid of Saint John the Baptist and make a solemn

procession by boat to Comacina, where there was a small church dedicated to the saint. After this modest pilgrimage the storms ceased and consequently the procession is repeated every year with the floating illuminations. Traditional fare for the occasion is polenta and snails and as a result someone decided to use the empty shells of molluscs as wick candle holders, to be cast across the lake, hence 'lumaghitt.' Today village folk even revert to wearing period costume for the occasion and, later in the day, Holy Mass is respectfully conducted in memory, among the ruins of the ancient basilica of Santa Eufemia.

This year the fireworks will take place on Saturday 22nd June, with St John's Feast the following day on Sunday 23rd June. The tribute to San Giovanni is a wonderful insight into the history of Lake Como.

For more informations please see the links below:

[http://www.lagodicomo.com/english/sagra\\_sangiovanni.php](http://www.lagodicomo.com/english/sagra_sangiovanni.php)

<http://www.comacina.it/en/island.php>

### THE BELLAGIO FILM FESTIVAL



The **Bellagio Festival**, which takes place in and around Lake Como, usually runs from late June to early September. The premise of the festival is an international contest of musical performance, ensuring an electrically competitive atmosphere pervades the venues. Each year sees a variety of entertainment, but visitors will often enjoy twentieth century contemporary music lessons in July along with the Pianist Awards in August. In addition, Bellagio and another twenty towns within the provinces of Como and Lecco, come together to provide conferences, projections and even wine and food initiatives.

Envisage exquisite light projections staining the historic walls of an Italian town, whilst you simultaneously learn about the history of the music you are also listening to; Bellagio Festival offers a carnival of sensation. The festival focusses on music but spreads its wings far beyond the conventional definition of a concert, instead immersing its attendants into various walks of Italian life. Arts, music and literature combine in an

event which enjoys the company of stars such as Franz Liszt, Verdi Wagner and Toscani alongside literary personalities such as Stendhal, Flaubert, Alessandro Manzoni and many others.

Bellagio Festival aims to be representative of an historic moment in which Italy was seen as the destination for intellectuals. The events allow people to revel in cultural refinement, whilst relaxing with a glass of wine whilst they go about it. However, don't be put off if you aren't a classical music expert, as the atmosphere of Bellagio is one which can be enjoyed by all and is perhaps one of the best inductions into musical spheres you could have.

This year, Bellagio Festival will celebrate 200 years of Verdi and Wagner. Events which form part of this celebration include a Contemporary Music Festival, a Cinema and Arts Festival and finally a Hungarian Culture Day in Bellagio itself.

With the event schedule due to be realised in a few days, Bellagio Festival continues to keep tourists on tenterhooks. Summer in Bellagio should be brimming with musical class.