



**LIGURIA**  
ITALIA

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 Seaside emotions

 Art Settings

 History Trail

 Scents and flavours

 Sports itineraries

 A sea of gardens

A holiday that is a work of art among archaeological sites, museums, abbeys, churches, and medieval little towns.



**Publishing Info**

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## Genoa for us.

To discover the secrets of Genoa one would need a special map, an audio-guide complete with the songs of Italian songwriters like Fabrizio De André, when crossing Via del Campo, or Gino Paoli, when getting closer to sea garrets, and the music of other famous singers such as Ivano Fossati, Paolo Conte, Bruno Lauzi and Luigi Tenco.

Genoa is music for the heart, a music that slips along the shiny frosted marble of the steps and noble balconies, clammers up, stumbles and gets up again along the alleys called *caruggi of Sottoripa*, and then expands into infinite African and Oriental echoes. Like a ballad, Genoa slowly goes up, on the sly, along a labyrinth of alleys, medieval arcades, towers, and streets bearing the names of ancient professions, to finally mystically explode like an angelic choir in front of the **Cathedral of San Lorenzo**. Opera music echoes around the **Carlo Felice Theatre**, a majestic temple for opera enthusiasts. And it's the same all over the aristocratic area of **Strada Nuova**, which embraces the museums of **Palazzo Bianco**, **Palazzo Rosso** and **Palazzo Tursi**.

Genoa seems split between two beating hearts - the triumphant rhythms recalling a 15th century Golden Age, with its wharf door **Porta Siberia**, Palaces like **Palazzo Ducale** and **Palazzo Andrea Doria**, and the villas outside the ancient walls; and the sadness of the blues beat resounding across fishermen villages.



Piazza De Ferrari - Genoa





Overview of the Old Harbour- Genoa

#### Stella Maris: the Old Harbour.

IT IS a proper window on the Mediterranean, the gathering point of the whole city, and starting point to travel towards far away countries. But it is also a meeting and discovery point, with its **Aquarium**, its **Antarctica Museum**, and the **Magazzini del Cotone** Conference Centre, with the **City of Children**, the **Galata Maritime Museum** and the **Luzzati Museum**, located at Porta Siberia, which has been turned into an exhibition gallery in memory of the recently deceased scenographer.

For an overview of the area after the restoration project by architect Renzo Piano, one can dock from the sea, or get into the so called **Bigo**, the rotating lift reaching 40 metres of height above the city.

An unusual aerial perspective from where to see the coast of Corsica, far in the horizon, and the towers, bell towers and slate roofs emerging from the labyrinth of streets and alleys of Genoa.

#### The Rolli Palaces: UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**42 buildings**, with beautiful yards, arcades and enchanting gardens, mostly built along two streets, **Via Garibaldi** and **Via Balbi** as residences for noblemen and politicians, merchants and bankers, kings and clergymen when stopping in Genoa at the times of Admiral Andrea Doria. 42 treasures of the 16th century hospitality, the names of which were once enclosed in rolls, and drawn to define which one should be offered to which

illustrious visitor. Some lotto game of the ancient times, where the prizes to be won were the best residences of the Maritime Republic.

The vast and spectacular spaces, which at the time symbolised a high degree of hospitality, today are at the service of art - hosting famous national galleries which boast canvas of big master painters like **Van Dyck** and **Rubens**.

**Nervi, the Riviera inside the city.**

Beautiful residential neighbourhood and unmissable museum centre, **Nervi** is a huge exhibition gallery, from the **Modern Art Gallery** in **Villa Saluzzo Serra**, to the **Frugone Collections** in **Villa Grimaldi Fassio**, to the **Luxoro Museum**, and the over 18,000 art pieces of the collection **Collezione Wolfsoniana**.

**Following in the footsteps of “historic personalities”.**

You can follow the footsteps of Genoese personalities who contributed to the eternity of this city.

Starting from the small **house of Christopher Columbus** at the entrance of **Porta Soprana** to reach the place where **Giuseppe Mazzini** once lived, which today has been turned into the **Museum of the Risorgimento**, passing through the significant places dear to **Nicolò Paganini**, **Andrea Doria**, and **Simone Boccanegra**, the first Doge of the Republic.



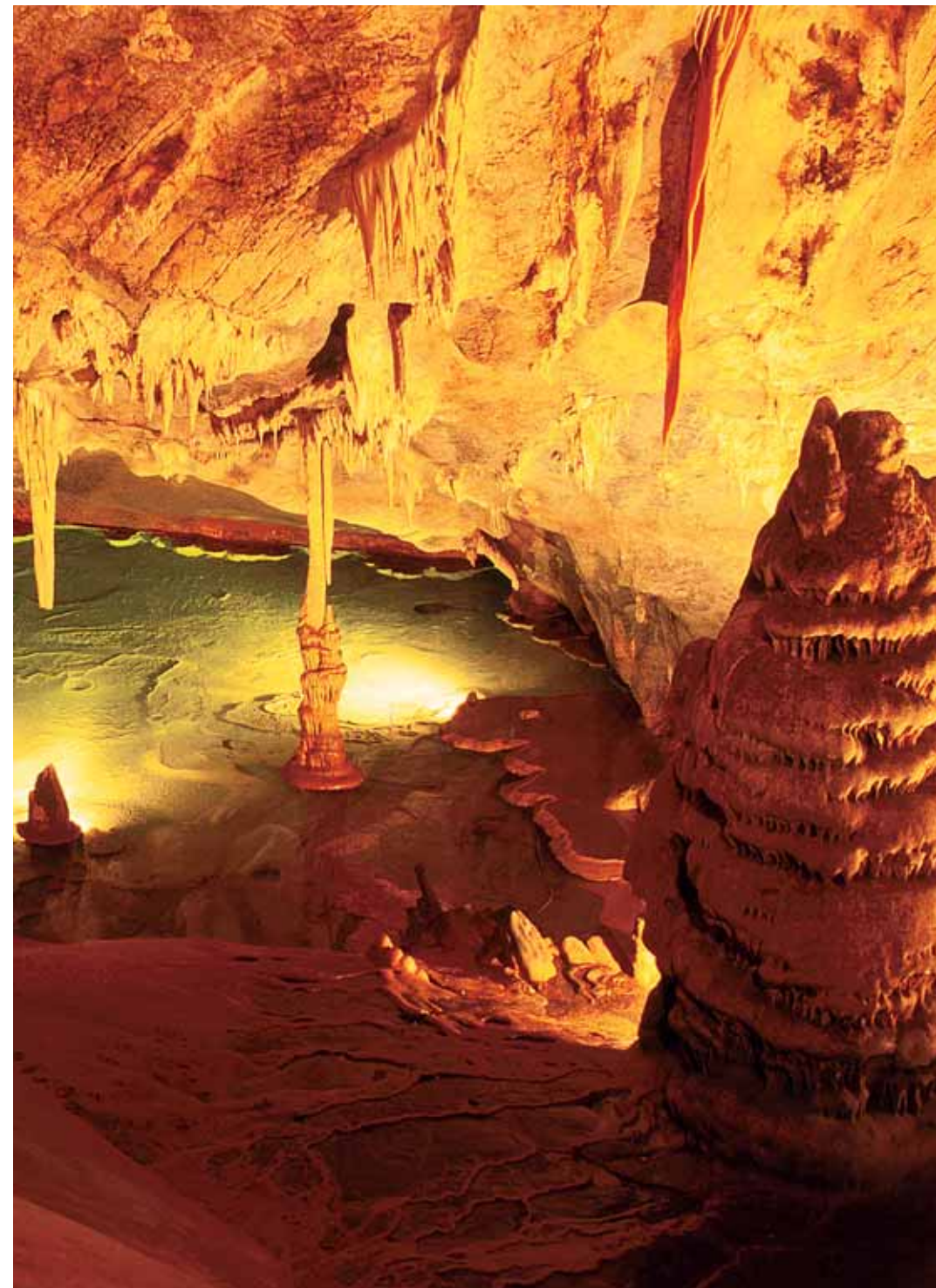
## Not just Genoa.

### A Historical Odyssey: from caverns to strongholds.

Liguria, like Jurassic Park: the region finds its ancient memories in stone engraved graffiti in the **Caves of the Balzi Rossi** dating back to the Upper Palaeolithic, in the **Caves of Borgio Verezzi** and **Toirano**, and the **Cavern of Madonna dell'Arma** located in **Bussana di Sanremo**. A leap in time to find memories of Roman Civilisation, having defeated the Ligurian population and built viaducts, theatres, streets - like the well known Aurelia -, churches such as **San Paragorio** in **Noli**, and many buildings, which are today partially visible in the archaeological sites of **Albenga**, **Ventimiglia** and **Luni**. To those who would like to have an overview of Ancient Liguria, the **Archaeological Museum of Finale**, enclosed in the monumental complex of Santa Caterina, offers a complete vision of the history of the Finale area, with its prehistoric and archaeological collection, boasting unique pieces.



Fortezza del Priamar - Savona





Today the remains of towers, walls and castles are devoted to tales of “knights and ladies, of love and arms, of courtly chivalry”, like the **Pietra Castle** in **Vobbia**, made unique by the perfect junction of two natural bastions. Also important are the **Doria Stronghold** in **Porto Venere**, the **Doria Castle** at **Dolceacqua** and **Villanova d’Albenga**, a significant example of a defensive city protecting the outlet of the Valleys Arroscia and Lerrone. A synthesis of the history of Savona can be found in the **Fortezza del Priamar** which boasts within its walls a pre-Roman, Medieval, and Renaissance past history. A careful restoration has transformed the whole complex in an important exhibition centre where the **Archaeological Museum**, and the **Renata Cuneo** and **Sandro Pertini** Museums have their premises.

The **Civic Picture-Gallery**, which was recently installed in the ancient and prestigious building of **Palazzo Gavotti**, located in the historic centre, and originally built in the second half of the 16th century, now hosts one of the most important art collections of the whole region, comprising paintings, sculptures, and pottery.

#### **Modern Pilgrimages among Sacred Treasures.**

Italians are known as a people of saints, poets, and sailors. Liguria is the most representative of this triple nature: homeland to writers such as Montale and to the most famous of explorers, Christopher Columbus, the region displays its own spirituality in a number of churches and abbeys.

130 sanctuaries were built to honour



Abbey of San Fruttuoso of Capo di Monte

miraculous events and apparitions of the Virgin Mary; furthermore, in the hinterland, many religious buildings bear witness to monastic orders that were able to convert even the wildest islands.

The **Abbey of Borzone** and of **San Pietro in Varatella**, as well as the **Badia del Tiglieto**, owned vast lands. The essential Romanesque style, with pointed Gothic ornaments and the Baroque volutes is the result of both faith and skill.

The visitor is also stricken by the location of some churches, which are in close contact with the surrounding landscape, blessing valleys and mountaintops.

Two magnificent examples are the **Sanctuary of Montallegro**, only a short distance from **Rapallo** - from where it can be reached via cableway - and the **Abbey of San Fruttuoso of Capo di Monte**, set in a narrow little bay between the rocks, the docking point for a daily ferry. Divine architecture.

#### **Culture within the Walls: from a Museum to Another.**

Will you ever forget the never-ending mornings spent in front of pictures and sculptures with your teachers describing them? A holiday in Liguria is all you need regain back the pleasure of culture, discovery, playing with your own origins, on the field, far from

commonplace. The exhibition spaces are wonderful buildings surrounded by precious gardens or futuristic installations, and offer visitors art pieces that range from lace to puppets, from contemporary art to tools of ancient cultures.

The **Lia Museum** in **La Spezia**, for example, is worth a detailed visit. Once you've gone through the monastery door of the friars minor of S. Francis of Paola, the first piece of art on display is the Virgin with Child by Sassetta, and a series of jewels, enamel, and invaluable crosses. The various rooms show an archaeological collection, panels dating back to around the 13th-15th century, as well as portraits and paintings by Titian, Tintoretto, Bellini, Raphael, Canaletto, Bellotto, and Guardi. **Imperia**, is a true open-air museum. This city has two original cores - **Oneglia** and **Porto Maurizio**, famous for the wide historic centre called Parasio.

From the seafront, which runs among big African palm trees, you will enjoy evocative views and wonderful landscapes; whereas on the promontory you will find medieval buildings, huge Baroque churches, arcades and concentric alleys. And of course **Palazzo Doria**, the birthplace of the famous Andrea, the **Church of San Giovanni Battista** and, in the nearby rural villages, the 17th century rural oratories of **Diano Arentino** and the **Clavesana Castle** are all worth a visit.



## Winds of events: Liguria: live 365 days a year.

Silence please, the curtain rises, Liguria comes on stage. With an extraordinary events calendar the entire region always offers theatre performances, especially since 1992 when Genoa was in the spotlight for the 500th anniversary of **Columbus**, and afterwards, in 2004, with its nomination as **European Capital for Culture**.



Blossomed Avenue - Sanremo





#### Genoa cruising speed.

For those who like to dream about transoceanic crossing, or want to find out all about the sector, the **Boat Show**, which takes place in the Genoa Exhibition Centre, is the right place. It is hard not to get enthusiastic about the sparkling stems, radiant dream yachts, sails ready to weigh anchor, instruments and equipment to make even NASA envy. IT IS a show for both experts and outsiders; in fact this exhibition goes beyond the actual spaces of the fair, and involves the entire city, with theme art and cultural events.

**Genoa teaching.**

Could you imagine a school where Margherita Hack taught astronomy, Piergiorgio Odifreddi taught algebra and geometry, and Umberto Veronesi was the biology teacher?

At the annual **Science Festival**, Genoa turns hypotheses into certainties, and brings back to school young children, boys and girls, science enthusiast, and researchers. A festival of curiosity that from the harbour reaches the streets and the historic buildings where interactive workshops, photo and art exhibits, conferences, round tables, and much more are organised, along with theatre and music performances. Science is then revisited as a real and accessible subject, at hand, to play with.



Science Festival



Euroflora

**Genoa in Bloom every Five Years.**

Like a precious plant blossoming once in its life cycle, or a rare plant with sporadic but intensely coloured blossoms: **Euroflora** blossoms in Genoa once every five years, in over 100,000 sq.m. of exhibition spaces and in the external areas that are

arranged as a window for the best exhibitors from all over the world. A spectacular setting with evergreen and ornamental plants to create a soft and relaxing environment, a sensory itinerary for sight and smell.



#### Genoa on the hook.

Once every two years, the city that boasts the most famous aquarium in Italy hosts **Slow Fish**, an event sponsored by Slow Food and the Liguria Region. The subject of sea ecosystems is discussed through meetings, workshops, tasting, and conferences. Culture tastes like sea salt, and it's nice to unveil it while shopping in the market areas, or while enjoying nice dishes in the many restaurants and bistros. The options are so many it's hard to know what to chose!



Genoa Exhibition Centre



Chamber Music Festival - Cervo

#### Liguria in the movies.

The Liguria region leans towards cinema, and hosts important events dedicated to it, like the **Genoa Film Festival** organised by the Daunbailò association. But cinema does not only mean acting, in fact **Voci nell'ombra** in the city of **Sanremo**, and **Voci di Cartoonia** in **Albenga** are dedicated to the world of dubbing.

Other unmissable appointments in the rich calendar are the **Missing Film Festival**, the **Paolo Rocchi Award**, **Febbre Gialla - yellow fever-** and **Quinzaine** from the young French production.

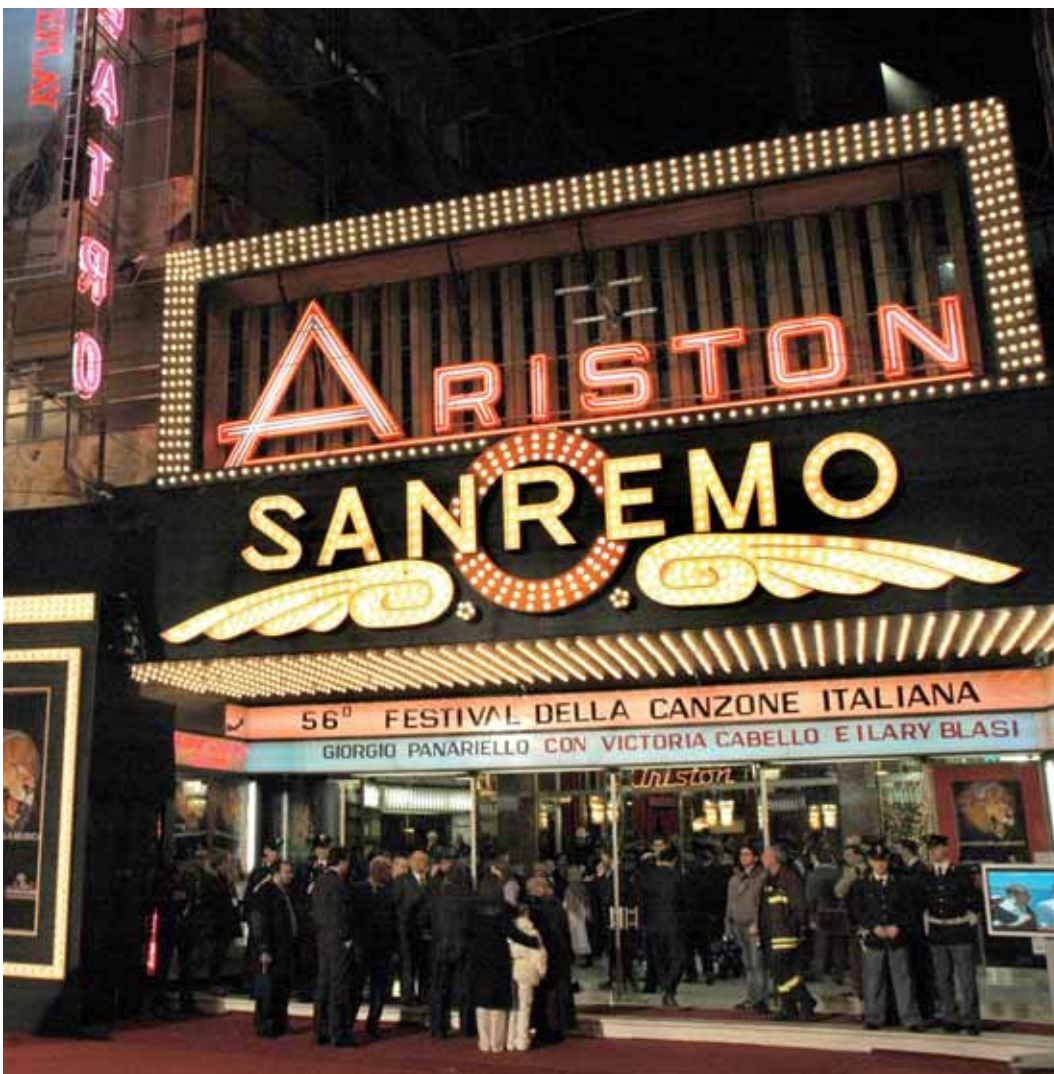
#### A stage across the city streets.

Free your imagination! You can easily meet clowns, mimes, magicians, jugglers, and acrobats along the streets while the **Circumnavigando Festival** is on. And then, in the summer, the historic little towns, perched on

the mountains, provide the setting for performances under the stars, like those organised during the Festivals of **Villa Faraldi** and **Borgio Verezzi**, where the **Veretium Prize** is awarded to the best drama performance. The **Andersen Awards** in **Sestri Levante**, along with events like : **Porto Venere Teatro Donna**, dedicated to women, **Strada sul Palco**, where the stage goes across the streets, the **Festival della Mente** of **Sarzana**, and other Festivals such as the **Diano Castello Festival**, the **Chamber Music Festival** organised at **Cervo**, on the church courtyard of the Church of the Corallini, the **Miss Muretto** beauty contest, and the **Sand Castles Competition** in **Allassio** are the most important appointments of a very rich calendar.

Miss Muretto - Allassio





Festival of Sanremo

#### Art performances.

February turns **Sanremo** into a metropolis crammed with tourists and famous singers competing in the most famous **Song Festival** in Italy. The province of Imperia, also called “Flowers Riviera”, offers a vast range of events, like **Sanremo in fiore**, the **Bonsai Festival** and the **Flower Battle** that takes place in **Ventimiglia**.

The Bajardo **Druwid Fest** proposes meetings, music, games, and Celtic rituals, whereas the scary **Autunnonero** involves five medieval little inland towns in the Imperia province. The **Palio del Golfo** offers a historic contest in the open sea of La Spezia.



## Museums and the Sea.

“It's found you see. - What? - Eternity.  
It's the sun, free to run with the sea.”  
Reads an impressive poem by Arthur  
Rimbaud. The poem reminds us of the  
eternal history of Liguria, inevitably  
stressed by the rolling waves.

These people have roots made of coral and  
a soul full of wind, their past and present  
is intertwined with the Mediterranean sea,  
deeply present in the tradition of the  
coastal small towns, in the complex boat  
building techniques, in the local festivals,  
and in the faces of the fishermen.  
Museums adequately honour such  
tradition, telling about the identity and  
the belonging, that identify the people  
across the entire region.





Galata Maritime Museum

Figureheads, relics of battles, medals, decorations, anchors and Chinese junks are on display at the **Naval Technical Museum of La Spezia**, whereas **Camogli** dives into its ancient routes in the exhibition rooms of the **Civic Maritime Museum Gio Bono Ferrari**, among nautical instruments, documents and images of sailing ships, ordered by ship-owners to complement the furniture of their offices: memories of tormenting and glorious

daily life. But there's plenty of history inland too, the **Maritime Museum Tommasino-Andreatta** in **Chiavari**, tells stories of crossings and odyssey, through scale models, fishing tools, uniforms, and photographs. **Genoa** has the best museums. Starting from a true cruise in 17 rooms for those who visit the **Galata Maritime Museum**, with its 6,000 metres of

exhibition in the heart of the Old Harbour. And again, in the heart of **MuMa**, sits the **Naval Museum of Pegli**, arranged inside the Renaissance villa which belonged to Gio Andrea Doria, now a display of nautical charts, underwater archaeological finds, and 17th century landscapes.

Not far from Genoa, in the city of **Renzano**, the **Muvita** Museum presents many ideas on environmental subjects. In **Albenga** the **Roman Naval Museum** has a section dedicated to the underwater world, which was first installed in 1950, after a boat dating back to the beginning of the 1st century B.C. was found in the depths of the Isle of Gallinara. And finally the **International Naval Museum of the West Coast**, founded in 1980 in **Imperia** by Captain Flavio Serafini, is divided in 14 theme sections. A hymn to the sea.



## The Ancient Melody of Daily Life.

In Liguria, even daily life is an attraction. You just need to stop to watch the carpenters and caulkers working in big sites on the restoration of antique yachts, or to follow the ancient practices of joiners in the city of *Chiavari* when they steam-bend wood and press-mould it, the way Mr. Gaetano Descalzi, called "il Campanino", used to do. This 19th century master manufacturer produced chair models like the "three arches" and "Parisian" and invented the characteristic "chiavarina" chair, with its light joint structure and straw cover in Indian Cane draw.



Ancient Oil Mill - Olivetta





Mending fishing nets

#### A Velvety Embrace.

Liguria is a land of stone and flowers, of the roughness of the mountains and the tenderness of the sea, with a soul made of rock and lace. The lace of Rapallo tells of women's history: women started to weave dreams of thread and imagination using the fibre remains left by their husbands after mending their fishermen's nets. A typical example of recycling art which then become actual art: in the year 1800 there were more than 8,000 lace makers, perfectly skilled in the use of bobbins and lace pillows, who manufactured the beautiful Rapallo lace, with its characteristic thick weft and seed or leaf shapes, often in relief. Along this textile itinerary you can meet Zoagli, the town of velvet, and Lersica, the town of Silk Damask, fabrics that originated from the poverty of little towns perched in rough ridges, where the land was too hard to cultivate. The thread used to weave Damask fabrics comes from spinning and ropery, techniques used to manufacture fishing nets, ancient craft professions that still exist for example in the town of San Fruttuoso where coconut fibre is commonly used.

#### Strong like Stone.

In Liguria, even stone is sweet, like the Tigullio landscape, like the sun kissing the coasts of the region. The characteristic stone these lands are made of is slate, which fuels the economy of towns like Orero, Cicagna, and Monleone. This black stone, very resistant to the worst climatic conditions, is used to build garrets, roofing tiles, and floors, not to mention the much appreciated slate furnishing.

As precious as slate is the Stone from Finale. Either cutstone or paving stone, it is so beautiful and versatile that it was exported to New York to support incredible artistic sculptures. A very important and unique technique, used to build these rural areas, is

linked to the working of **dry dwarf walls**, the so called "**majèi**". The method consists of building without using any binders, and it is still taught in schools of craftsmanship like in **Arnasco** for example, in the province of Savona.

#### Glass Treasures.

Once upon a time, a Flemish abbot, while walking across the woods of the current province of Savona, realised how that huge amount of wood would have provided the ideal solution to fuel glass furnaces. Once back home, he suggested to his fellow citizens to move south to Liguria, importing their fine techniques and know-how. This is just one of the many legends told about the origin of the **glass working tradition of Altare**, which is also on display at the **Museum of Villa Rosa**, a wonderful Liberty Style building, with plenty of stucco, decorations, and windows of course.

#### From clay comes the gold of Albisola.

Walking across the historic centre of **Albisola**, an ideal itinerary leads through majolica workshops, art galleries, culture clubs, and of course the **Pottery Museum** with its blue decorated vases -dating back to the 17th-18th century -, its yellow terracotta and about fifty Christmas crèche figurines.

#### Filigree History.

A tradition with all the taste of the East, of the mercantile trades beyond the Pillars of Hercules. The filigree technique for the working of precious metals made the city of **Campo Ligure** extremely famous. Golden and silver threads intertwine to create floral patterns and superb decorations, part of which are sold and part is kept in the **Filigree Museum**, with its vast collection of filigree pieces from all over the world.





*Sanremo - Imperia*

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