

Romantik Newsletter

Romantik Regions

Romantik tour - The unknown northwest of Italy

Just in time for the beginning of the warmer season we present a new Romantik tour to you. The tour takes you along various Romantik Hotels, which are good starting points to discover the respective region. The time you need for the journey, whether you add some days before or after or how long you stay at each hotel - there are no limits to your holiday creativity.



The Italian northwest comprises the regions Aosta Valley, Piedmont, Lombardy and Liguria. Besides the Lake Como, made famous by George Clooney, and the various regional delicacies that are by now available in every average supermarket in Europe, there is a lot more to discover. This is proven by our tour suggestion:



The starting point is the [Romantik Hotel Baita Fiorita di Deborah](#) in S. Caterina Valfurva. Located in the heart of the national park Stilfser Joch the family of the former Italian downhill skier and three time Olympic champion Deborah Compagnoni welcomes you. At the restaurant mainly dishes typical for the region Veltlin are served, for example the delicious Pizzoccheri, pasta made from buckwheat. Many of these specialities go back to very old recipes that are adapted to modern times with care. By the way, the area of 'Veltlin' also gave its name to various wines, like the 'Veltliner'.



Since the 19th century the village Santa Caterina is a famous spa due to its water which is rich in iron. Since the middle of the 20th century it has become a famous winter sport destination as well. But even if there is no snow, the **national park Stilfser Joch** with the Ortler massif offers a lot of possibilities for sports activities. A well developed street infrastructure and well sign-posted hiking trails make it possible for you to discover the lebensraum of chamoises, capricorns, marmots and eagles. Here you can leave the everyday stresses behind.



On a trip to the nearby **Bormio** - another famous winter sports resort - you should visit the local museum. The exhibited objects create a lively image of the life, the culture, the people. Among other things there is an interesting collection of skis or a stagecoach which was in use until 1915.

The journey continues for 76.6 km (approximately 1 hour, 33 minutes driving time) to the [Romantik Grand Hotel della Posta](#) in Sondrio. A stay at this hotel is like a private visit to a museum. Besides Italian sculptures by Arturo Martini from the 19th century there is an extensive collection of famous paintings from, among others, Paolo Punzo, Peter De Witte and Patrizia Guerresi. Admire the frescos from the 19th century decorating the staircase.

On the weekends the **Masegra castle** high above Sondrio opens its gates to visitors. The history of this strategically well-positioned fortress is difficult to understand because of various destructions, renovations and extensions. The still existing rooms with their wonderful wooden ceiling and coats of arms dating back to the year 1491 give a feeling for the magnificence of the building.



On the spot in **Tirano**, where on September 29th, 1504 an apparition of Mary took place, today you find the most beautiful example for a Renaissance church in the region. It is decorated with numerous stuccos, sculptures and copper engravings and a popular destination for pilgrims.



For 130 km (approximately 2 hours, 24 minutes driving time) the journey continues to the [Romantik Hotel Relais Mirabello Iseo](#) in Iseo. High above the Lake Iseo in the heart of the wine region Franciacorta the hotel resort covers approximately 70 hectare. Spacious flower beds and numerous olive trees dominate the overall picture. The self-produced olive oil serves as central theme on the menu at the restaurant, for example with the dish typical for the region Royato 'Beef in olive oil' or 'Tortelli with olive mousse with herbal cream and crispy Parmesan'.

Monte Isola in the Lake Iseo is the largest island in a Southern European inland water and can easily be discovered on foot or by bike. The local handcraft has specialised in the production of fishing nets and rowing boats with a double bow - these special boats do not have to reverse to change the course. Every five years - **this year from September 14th to 19th** - the village of Carzano celebrates the festival **Santa Croce** that goes back to the Middle Ages. Back then the whole region - except Carzano - was devastated by the plague. A gipsy brought her sick son to the village who was cared for until he was healthy again. As gratitude the gipsy donated a sea of flowers. Today the whole of Carzano is decorated with more than 100,000 deceptively genuine paper flowers on the occasion of Santa Croce. A festival you should not miss.

Equally worthwhile are the **rock drawings in Valcamonica**, the largest collection of pre-historic rock drawings in the world and first UNESCO world heritage in Italy. The latest estimations amount to 300,000 objects in all that are to be found in a valley of 25 km between 20 and 1,400 metres above sea level.

The Romantik tour continues via the motorway passing Milano for 238 km (approximately 2 hours, 58 minutes driving time) to the [Romantik Hotel Jolanda Sport](#) in Gressoney. Thanks to the wood panelling on the walls and the use of numerous natural materials in the guest rooms, you feel like entering a typical 'Walser-Stadel' (building typical for the region). Foodies and sweet teeth are looking forward to the weekly confectionary buffet with a large number of tempting sweets and alluring desserts.

The superfluous pounds can be lost in the Monte Rosa mountains around Gressoney easily. 17 peaks are higher than 4,000 metres and on the 4,554 metre high peak of the Signalkuppe you can find the **Capanna Regina Margherita**, the highest building in Europe. From mid of June until mid of September the refuge is open for service and only reachable via glacier trails. But mountain lovers will find something suitable for every level of difficulty in the Monte Rosa mountains. Although the **castle Savoia** in Gressoney is built in a medieval style, it originates from 1904. It was erected for the former Italian queen Margherita, who loved the region and also gave her name to the aforementioned refuge. Take a stroll through the richly decorated rooms of the castle and do not miss the grand flair.



The journey continues for 122 km (approximately 2 hours, 32 minutes driving time) to the [Romantik Hotel Villa Novecento](#) in Courmayeur. The popular boutique hotel is located in a historical patrician villa. Each guest room is named after a certain year and tells stories from this era. The view from the windows onto the mountains offers time and again surprises and is unforgettable. At the restaurant you might enjoy local specialities, prepared according to old recipes and fitted to modern tastes.

Viewed from the city centre of Courmayeur the highest peak of Europe, the Mont Blanc (4,801 m), is hidden by much smaller, but closer Mont Chétif (2,343 m). Mussolini disliked this so much that he, in his megalomania, planned to cut it short to get a free view. The area around Courmayeur at the foot of the Mont Blanc is ideal for numerous sports activities like trekking, climbing, rafting and mountain-biking. Visit the **Giardino Botanico Alpino Saussurea**, the alpine botanical garden that is thought to be the highest botanical garden in Europe. Take a stroll between the plants and enjoy the healthy, aromatic mountain air. Thanks to various chair-lifts - starting with the Funivie Monte Bianco - it is possible to 'travel' in approximately two hours from Courmayeur to **Chamonix**. Of course, there is also the possibility to use the Montblanc tunnel - with 35.10 Euro for the single and 43.70 Euro for the return trip not a cheap suggestion.

The journey through the northwest of Italy continues across the Little St. Bernard Pass with a detour into France for 220 km (approximately 4 hours, 20 minutes driving time) to the [Romantik Hotel Furno](#) in San Francesco al Campo, close to Turin. The origins of the hotel are a large dairy farm of the 18th century, which was converted into a summer hunting lodge at the end of the 19th century. In some of the guest rooms the old brick walls and wooden ceilings still exist. The spacious garden with its numerous flowers, fanciful fountains and old trees is unique and invites you to let go the everyday stresses and hectic pace to find calm and peace.

The nearby **Turin** is the capital of the Piedmont. The city's landmark is the **Mole Antonelliana**. Originally begun as a synagogue it today houses the most important film museum of Italy. An elevator made of glass takes you up on the inside of the building to the visitor platform where you might enjoy an unforgettable view of the city. The **Duomo di San Giovanni** is not only for believers a point of interest, after all it houses the famous **shroud of Turin**. The cloth, of which many believe it is the one Jesus was buried in after his crucifixion, is going to be exhibited after ten years **from April 10th to May 23rd, 2010** (You have to pre-order a free ticket!). Very impressive is a visit to the Palazzo Reale, the royal palace from the 17th century. You can have a look at the richly decorated grand apartments and marvel at the collections of clocks, porcelain, silver and furniture.

We are nearing the end of our journey by driving for 192 km (approximately 4 hours, 16 minutes driving time) to the [Romantik Hotel Villa Pagoda](#) in Genova-Nervi. Just a few steps from the shore the villa was built by a rich merchant in the early 19th century. On one of his travels he had fallen in love with a Chinese girl. Since then the exotic Asiatic building with its impressive chandeliers made from Murano glass and its floor made of Carrara marble has seen many extravaganzas. You can get to the famous promenade on the sea shore directly from the hotel ground.

For many **Genoa** is only the port, where cruise ships for the Mediterranean or ferry boats for Sardinia, Corsica or Sicily depart. But it is worthwhile to stay longer in the city. Nevertheless a number of sights are connected to the sea: for example the **aquarium** with 71 tanks, where more than 800 species are to be found, or the innovative and spectacular **MUMA Galata Museum des Mares**, that deals with the topic 'sea' on more than 10.000 sqm. Among the many superlatives of Genoa is the **cemetery Staglieno**, one of the most impressive and most important monumental cemeteries in Europe, or the **city wall 'Mura Nuove'**, with 13 km the second largest wall in the world after the Chinese Wall. The **old town**, world heritage site by the UNESCO, is one of the largest in Europe and invites you to extensive strolls. During the last years a lot of money was invested into the renovation and restoration of the quarter, but still some areas have their morbid charm.



Here ends our journey through the northwest of Italy that started in Lombardy and took us to the Ligurian shore of the Mediterranean. Make OUR tour suggestion YOUR inspiration and create your own journey to the unknown beauties of this Italian region.

Nearby Airports: Bergamo, Milano, Turin, Genoa (e.g. Air Dolomiti, Lufthansa, Alitalia, Ryanair)