



Villa Passalacqua

Constructed in the early 17th century, the villa is located where the ancient Humiliati monastery used to be. The initial building was commissioned by the Odescalchi family. Giovanni Battista Lucini Passalacqua, Decurione of Como (the commander of a cavalry unit), acquired the villa in 1756. He belonged to an illustrious family of landowners in Moltrasio, who were already owners of a villa on the edge of the lake.

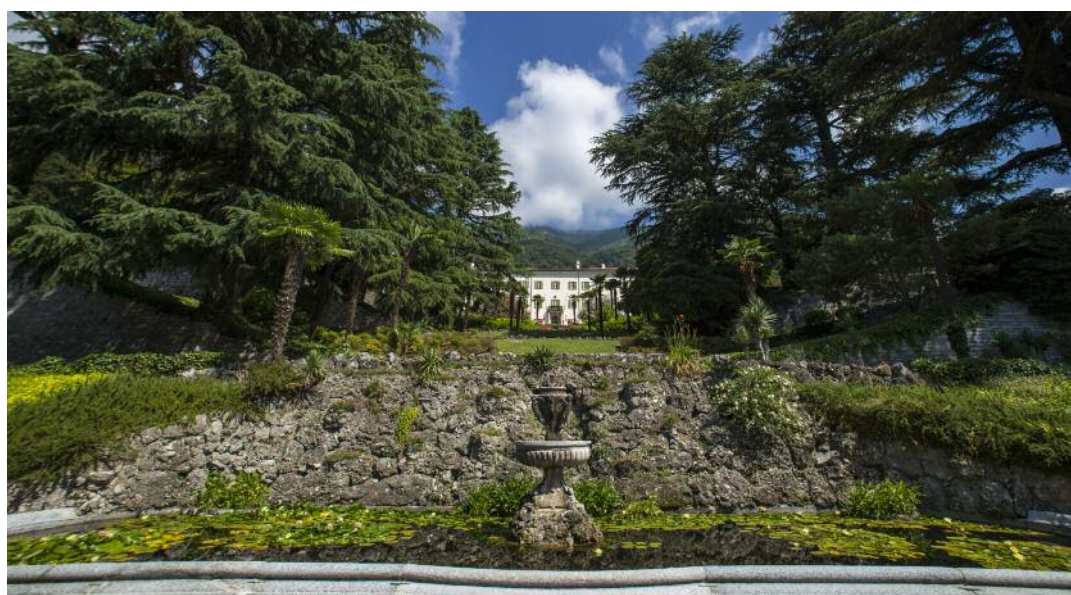
In 1787, his son Andrea commissioned the architect Felice Soave to draw a new design for the property. It included the complete restylement of the whole the territory by adding staircases, water facilities and garden terraces supported by a subterranean structure with tunnels that reached its private port. One of these tunnels shares one of its walls with the "Holy Staircase".

*Views of the
Villa.*

*The staircase in
the hall has a
special feature:
once, the water
flowed in the
stony handrail
creating natural
sounds, before
flowing in the
fountains that
accompany you
from the entrance
by the lake.*



Pictures of the terraced garden below the Villa: an Italian-style garden, a rose garden with a tank and water lilies, an olive grove, an orchard; even large plants such as deodar trees and cedars of Lebanon surrounded by azaleas and palm trees.





The villa has several adorned rooms. In the hall, there is a majestic double staircase that leads you to the first floor of the building. The staircase features an eminent bronze sculpture by Auguste Rodin. Andrea Appiani, Napoleon's court painter, painted the

frescos on the ceilings and the 1790 Virgin with Child. Giocondo Albertolli painted the frescos in the music room and the monochrome paintings in the Neoclassical dining hall which has a cloister vault supported by sixteen marble columns.



foto p.g.c. Direzione Villa Passalacqua

In 1820, Moltrasio witnessed the period of maximum splendor of the villa, called at that time "Palazzo", during Alessandro Lucini Passalacqua's ownership, who inherited the villa in 1804 after his father, Andrea, died.

The young Count Alessandro, due to his passion for literature, art and music, embellished the villa with valuable objects and with an extraordinary library, which was available for the Milanese society. He surrounded himself with artists and members of noble families from Lombardy. In this context, he met Giuditta Cantù Turina, Ap-piani's great-niece. In 1828 he invited the opera composer Vincenzo Bellini, who felt in love not only with Giuditta but also with Moltrasio. In fact, he would live in Villa Salterio with his muse until 1833.

After Alessandro's death in 1861, his son, Giovanni Battista jr., an art expert, inherited

the villa. He also was an adventurous man and became the most important Oriental art collector in Italy. His collection was inherited by the City of Milan, as per his will. Giovanni Battista was the last Sir of the so-called palace, where he died in 1890.

The villa was sold by his niece, Alessandra Negrotto Cambiaso. During the decade of the 1920s, the villa belonged to three different memorable foreign personalities: the Swedish Baroness Ruby Nalder von Soderhoelm, the Hungarian philosopher Oscar Kiss-Maerth and the American James Cantwell. The latter gave back the villa and its gardens their original splendor by means of a historically accurate restoration. In 2018, the property was auctioned and the palace of Moltrasio was acquired by the Italian businessman Paolo de Santis, who happens to be from Como.

