

GRANDI GIARDINI ITALIANI

Grandi Giardini Italiani is a network of **86 gardens open to the public in 13 Italian regions**, with the addition of Malta and the Ticino Canton in Switzerland.

This network of the most beautiful gardens open to the public was founded in 1997 on the initiative of **Judith Wade** using private capital. Over the years it has become a seal of prestige which attests and distinguishes historic and contemporary gardens: five hundred years of the history of Italian garden art and landscape representing one of the most prestigious embodiments of 'made in Italy' and Horticultural Tourism in the universal collective imagination.

The eighty-six Great Italian Gardens are not merely a list or an itinerary, but rather constitute a network creating an **exemplary economic circuit**. In fact the **Mission of Grandi Giardini Italiani** is to help private and public gardens make an income by means of **Marketing and Communications services** which give visibility and promote the gardens belonging to the network at home and abroad. To this end the network uses both traditional and innovative marketing methods: the website (www.grandigiardini.it) is one of the most frequently consulted in the Horticultural Tourism sector in Europe communicating online with a constantly increasing community through the **Social Networks** (Facebook, Twitter, You Tube...). The network also has a **Publishing House** which produces an official guide to the Grandi Giardini Italiani every year and has launched the "Garden Books" series in 2009, a new editorial project of pocket guides to accompany visitors "behind the scenes" in Italy's most beautiful gardens open to the public. Furthermore, since the first years of activity, Grandi Giardini Italiani has instigated **promotion events for the network** every year, such as the Martini Prize for young Landscape Architects (from 2001 to 2005). This year in particular the network participated in the Fuori Salone in Milan (Milan's prestigious Fringe Fair during Design Week), creating an evocative installation of the circuit in the heart of the city, the centre of the Brera Design District; it took part in Euroflora 2011 (one of the most important European Horticultural Tourism events); and launched the "**Grandi Giardini Italiani Prize for the highest level of maintenance, good management and administration of gardens open to the public**" to mark the 150th anniversary of Italian Unity. The first prize went to the Sigurtà Garden Park (in the province of Varese), second prize to Villa Poggio Torselli (Florence), third prize to the Flowering rooms of Canalicchio (near Catania) and the three winners each received a magnum of champagne offered by the maison Laurent-Perrier and a commemorative plaque.

In 2010 the gardens belonging to the network recorded over **seven and a half million visitors**: Horticultural Tourism is an important expanding resource in economic terms for the tourist sector. At this moment of economic crisis, a network such as Grandi Giardini Italiani acts as a driving force towards recovery in the country, since it bolsters an exemplary economic circuit. An increasing number of Great Italian Gardens provide refreshments and accommodation and neighbouring tourist structures benefit wherever the gardens do not supply these facilities. Furthermore, the network records a significant increase in staff employment, which grows in proportion to the number of visitors, reconstruction and access work undertaken by gardens belonging to the network.



From its foundation to the present day the work of Grandi Giardini Italiani has been accredited not only by the growing number of members and the preference shown by an increasing number of visitors from Italy and abroad, but also the trust shown by the **official sponsors** of the calibre of **Credit Suisse, Bayer Garden, Bosch, Claber, Corradi, Torsanlorenzo** and **Visit Italy**. These firms have launched many projects with the network in the understanding that Grandi Giardini Italiani is not only an instrument of communication with a select public but also an excellent means of compensating environmental impact and conducting initiatives of corporative social responsibility.

If, as Goethe wrote, Italy is the garden of Europe, Grandi Giardini Italiani is using this heritage as a driving force for the economy and cultural tourism in Italy.

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