



**CULTURE AND ART IN PARMA,**  
**”THE ATHENS OF ITALY”**

**PARMA**  
**PALAZZO DELLA PILOTTA**

**The aristocratic and refined traditions have been maintained in the numerous events of music, dance, theatre and literature taking place in Parma every year. With the recent awarding of a major Community Agency by the European Union, the city is going to reassert its ancient tradition of small capital**

**LA CITTA' DI PARMA**

Parma, a town rich in charm and culture, lying along Via Emilia between the river Po and the Apennine ridge, offers tourists many treasures dating from different periods, such as the splendid Renaissance Church of Santa Maria della Steccata, located in the historical centre; Piazza Duomo, a truly fascinating medieval place overlooked by the Cathedral - an example of the Romanesque and Po valley architecture; the Baptistery, rich in sculptural decorations by Benedetto Antelami, and the Bishop's Palace, which hosts the Diocesan Museum. We would also recommend the fresco by Correggio “Camera di San Paolo”, housed in the ancient monastery of the Benedictine Nuns of St. Paul. A short distance away there is the Palazzo della Pilotta, built by the Farnese fami-

ly. The refined richness of the town is due to the valuable contribution of excellent artists, poets, painters and musicians, such as Antelami, Correggio, Parmigianino, Bodoni, Verdi and Toscanini, just to name some of those who, over the time, have left an indelible mark in the art and cultural traditions of Parma, arts and culture that also characterize the whole province. There are still many structures of old territory of the Duchy of Parma, an extended circuit of real jewels: fortresses, castles, palaces that are home to treasures of valuable works of art and especially fresco cycles introducing into the context of the historical and artistic Renaissance period in Parma. Not to be missed the Rocca Sanvitale in Fontanellato (Diana and Actaeon's Hall painted by Parmigianino), the Castle and the Benedictine Abbey at Torrecchiara, the Palace of Colorno, considered to be the little Italian Versailles. Surrounded by a beautiful garden, the Royal Palace, the former summer residence of the Farnese family and later of the Borbones, was the home of Marie Louise of Austria until 1747. Between a visit and another, you can enjoy a gastronomic break: Parmesan cheese, salted pork, ham, salami and excellent wine are inviting entries for a pleasant stay.

## **PALAZZO DELLA PILOTTA**

The Palazzo della Pilotta is the historical and cultural centre of the city. It overlooks Piazzale della Pace, a vast green lawn just rearranged, which hosts a monument dedicated to Giuseppe Verdi and a monument dedicated to Italian Partisans. The plan of the redevelopment of the area, designed by the Swiss architect Mario Botta, was realized between 1986 and 2001. The Palazzo della Pilotta was built by Ottavio Farnese around 1580 as a set of service buildings annexed to Palazzo Ducale (a great hall, stables, riding stables, coach-houses, etc.); however its construction works were interrupted in the middle of the seventeenth century, leaving the structure without the façade and unfinished as it is today. The Pilotta owes its name to the Basque game of pelota, which was practiced in the courtyards of the palace itself; it stands around the Corridore - a long straight arm on pillars, which used to join Palazzo Ducale with Rocchetta Visconti, on the banks of the stream. Today the palace is home to the National Archaeological Museum, the Biblioteca Palatina, the National Gallery, Teatro Farnese and the Museo Bodoniano.

### **NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM**

Founded at the will of Filippo di Borbone in 1760, to preserve the finds of the area of Parma, especially those of the Roman city of Velleia, over the time the museum has been enriched with objects from the collections of the Farnese and Gonzaga families.

A process of renewal of the building was undertaken, thanks to the intervention of Maria Luigia d'Austria.  
Tel 0521 233718  
Biblioteca Palatina

### **BIBLIOTECA PALATINA**

The Biblioteca Palatina was founded in 1761 by Filippo e Fernando di Borbone; it was the first library to adopt the author card catalogue system, in Italy. Opened in 1769 on the site which had previously hosted the Farnese Library, it developed under the reign of Maria Luigia, who enriched it with Gian Bernardo de Rossi's collection, formed by precious ancient Jewish books, and also added a new wing to the south of the palace, according to a plan by Alexandre Petitot.

Today it is a state library,

Opening Days:

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday  
from 9.00 am To 1.00 pm

### **MUSEO BODONIANO**

Beginning from the editions of Giambattista Bodoni, director of the Stamperia Ducale in the second half of the eighteenth century the Museo Bodoniano - unique of its kind in Italy, has provided valuable evidence of publishing up to the modern era. It preserves punches, dies, presses, papers and editions by Bodoni, who started an important workshop in Parma.

## **TEATRO FARNESE**

The Teatro Farnese, today part of the National Gallery museum, is a wooden work by Giovanni Battista Aleotti - called "l'Argenta" after his birthplace. Built as the court's theatre between 1616 and 1618, it occupies a huge hall originally used as the salle d'armes of the Palazzo della Pilotta; its U-shaped cavea with fourteen big steps could accommodate approximately 3,000 spectators. At the center of the cavea they used to set a "box of honour" for the duke's family, forerunner of our "royal box". Two painted triumphal arches, dominated by the equestrian statues in plaster, representing Alessandro and Ottavio Farnese, connected the cavea to the stage 40 meters long with an aperture of 12 meters. One of the first permanent theatre with movable scenery and a large audience, the Teatro Farnese was inaugurated in 1628, on the occasion of the wedding between Duke Odoardo Farnese and Margherita de' Medici, with the mythical-allegorical play "Mercurio e Marte" with musics by Monteverdi, culminating in a spectacular nauma-

chia. However, only very few plays were performed there for the court's amusement. In 1732 the theatre fell into a state of disrepair and was almost completely destroyed during the second world war. It was rebuilt in the middle of the last century according to the original design.

Tel 0521 233309

## GALLERIA NAZIONALE

The Teatro Farnese, today part of the National Gallery museum, is a wooden work by Giovanni Battista Aleotti - called "l'Argenta" after his birthplace. Built as the court's theatre between 1616 and 1618, it occupies a huge hall originally used as the salle d'armes of the Palazzo della Pilotta; its U-shaped cavea with fourteen big steps could accommodate approximately 3,000 spectators. At the center of the cavea they used to set a "box of honour" for the duke's family, forerunner of our "royal box". Two painted triumphal arches, dominated by the equestrian statues in plaster, representing Alessandro and Ottavio Farnese, connected the cavea to the stage 40 meters long with an aperture of 12 meters. One of the first permanent theatre with movable scenery and a large audience, the Teatro Farnese was inaugurated in 1628, on the occasion of the wedding between Duke Odoardo Farnese and Margherita de' Medici, with the mythical-allegorical play "Mercurio e Marte" with music by Monteverdi, culminating in a spectacular naumachia. However, only very few plays were performed there for the court's amusement. In 1732 the theatre fell into a state of disrepair and was almost completely destroyed during the second world war. It was rebuilt in the middle of the last century according to the original design.

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## *Getting to Parma*

**By car:** Motorway A1 Milano-Bologna-Firenze-Roma. Motorway A15 Parma-La Spezia

**By train:** Parma Station: Milano-Bologna-Roma railway line

**By plane:** Parma, Giuseppe Verdi Airport

## **PALAZZO DELLA PILOTTA**

P.le della Pace, Parma

Tel. 0521 233309

Apertura: martedì – domenica  
dalle ore 8.30 alle ore 13.30