



This walk starts at Menaggio, leads through its historical centre and the lovely hamlet of Loveno and continues through the Val Sanagra Park to the splendid village of Cardano. From here an easy cart track leads along the Val Menaggio and reaches the cycle foot path which follows the traces of the ex-railway line Menaggio – Porlezza, through the Natural Reserve Lake Piano. The stretch between La Santa and Castel S. Pietro is suited for children.

**ITINERARY:** Menaggio, Loveno, Cardano, Gonte, La Santa, Lago di Piano, Castel S. Pietro

**TOTAL WALKING TIME:** 4hrs

**ASCENT:** 200 m

**DIFFICULTY:** Some brief steep ascents

**TRAIL SIGNS:** See the description

**CONNECTIONS:** To Menaggio: by bus - C10, by boat or hydrofoil  
from S. Pietro: by bus - C12



**ROUTE:** At **Menaggio** from Piazza Garibaldi you pick up via Calvi. At the end of it you cross the main road and turn into via Caronti, along the left side of the Parish church St. Stefano. At the end of the street turn right and after 30 m turn left into via Castellino da Castello. This cobble stone alley leads to the upper part of the town called Castello. The “Castello” of today gives only a faint idea of how it was in the Middle Ages. In fact it was completely destroyed in 1523 by the communities from the Swiss canton Graubünden. Left intact are parts of its enormous perimeter walls which you can admire at various points. Just past the church S. Carlo (1614) the alley ends into via N. Sauro, which you follow to the right. Go up the steps on the right side of the Hotel Loveno and, back on the road, follow it to the left. At the next bend, pick up the continuation of via N. Sauro to the left. You are now in the hamlet **Loveno** with its splendid villas. To begin with, on the left at the beginning of the street, there is the Villa Bel Faggio and after 200 m you pass Villa Garovaglio Ricci and Villa Vigoni now owned by the German Federal Republic which hosts an Italian-German cultural



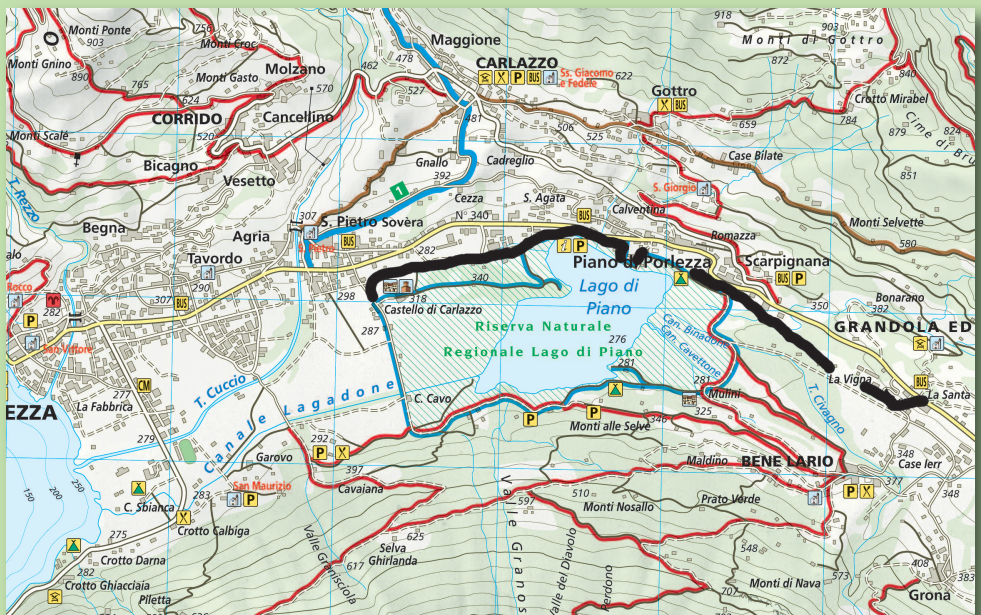


Villa Bagatti Valsecchi

centre. The villa and its park can be visited on Thursday afternoon at 14.30 (tel. 0344 361232). You pass the church San Lorenzo with its baroque façade and the sport centre and then, after a brief ascent, you reach **Piamuro**, a big pasture (40 min. from Menaggio). From here go straight on following trail n°4 of the Parco Val Sanagra. After a few hundred meters you skirt a small pine wood on your left where you ignore the deviation for Tobi / Torre Galbiati and proceed another 100 meters. At the limit of the pine wood, near a gate, take

left following the indication for Tobi / Cardano / Belvedere. You enter a clearing with big chestnut trees and before continuing to Tobi, we suggest a small deviation (10 minutes) to the **Belvedere** from where you have a splendid view of the gorge of the Sanagra river, the garden of Villa Bagatti Valsecchi, and of the town of Cardano with Monte Crocione in the background. Back on the clearing follow the indications for Tobi. The path leads down in bends in the valley of the Sanagra river past a picturesque bench that offers a nice view of the Villa Bagatti. At the fork continue straight on and after a brief descent you reach the beautiful stone bridge of **Tobi**. You can notice the remains of the antique water captivation that used to conduct water to the brick and iron ovens. The vegetation in this area is typical of the river gorges. You ascend the

### Map 1



mule track on the other side of the bridge that leads up to **Cardano**. It finishes on a field with a row of linden trees. Turn right in order to reach the historic centre of Cardano built around the Villa Bagatti Valsecchi. The origins of the Villa Bagatti Valsecchi go back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century; it was enlarged between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The villa is built around two court yards on two different levels. One faces the gorge of the river Sanagra that flows 90 m below; the other court yard faces the historical centre of Cardano.

Continue along via Galbiati, past the church dedicated to the Saints Caterina, Bernardo and l'Apostolo delle Indie, till you end up on the road that leads up to Naggio. Cross it and pick up via Milano in the direction of **Gonte**. At the end of this street you enter the historic centre of Gonte and arrive at the Piazza Guata Salici where the church S. Giovanni Battista stands. Continue on the right side of the church along via alle Vigne. The cart track runs along the Val Menaggio flanked by the Monte Crocione and Monte Galbica on the left and Monte Grona and Monte Pidaggio on the right. You continue to advance into the valley with a view of the town of Bene Lario on the slopes of Monte Galbica on the opposite side of the valley. You pass a small chapel on your right and after 500 meters you arrive at a fork where you



Tobi waterfalls (© T. Tassoni)

## Map 2



go left, past a farm house. As soon as you get past a barrier, turn left and descend the paved road which in a few bends leads down to the state road near the Church **La Santa**. Cross it and skirt the church on the left side. Then go down the cobblestone steps and turn left. You arrive at a crossroads where you pick up the small paved road following the indication for **Lago di Piano**. We are on the traces of the ex-railway line Menaggio – Porlezza, closed in 1939. It is now being converted into a cycle footpath and has been completed between Porlezza and Bene Lario. The continuation to Menaggio is scheduled for 2013.

After an half hour's walk you enter the nature reserve Lago di Piano. You pass behind the campsite Ranocchio and just past its entrance you continue along the lovely Lake Piano. Soon you reach the Casa della Riserva with an information office and a small ecomuseum (tel. 0344 74961). In front of the office there are some nice picnic tables with view of the lake. Next comes a short unattractive stretch among some small industrial buildings. The path becomes untarred and on the left you notice the hillock called Brione with the **Castel S. Pietro** at its top. At the end of the untarred track turn left in order to pay a visit to the old settlement with its houses clustered close to each other and with only one entrance. The stone wall, the small arched windows, the narrow passages give the idea of a fortress, which is what it used to be in the Middle Ages. You return down the sloping entrance and the walk to the main road on your right where you will find the bus stop.

If you wish you can continue the walk along the cycle – footpath and in 40 minutes reach the town **Porlezza** on Lake Lugano that is connected with bus line C12.



*Lake Piano (© J. Bents)*