Brescia in a glass

Six tours showcasing the region's finest wines

BRESCIA

Your (kind of) tourist guide



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Wine is always the product of history and a landscape. In Brescia, history is layered and the landscape is ever-changing. It can open out onto the shores of Lake Garda, wind its way through the moraine hills, stretch across the plain, or climb up to the walls of the ancient castle that watches over the town.

This variety is reflected in the wines.
You can try a rosé that's made in a single night. Italy's most famous fizz, whose bubbles have spent months or years in silence before rushing to the surface. A white wine whose roots lie in the compact clay of the areas surrounding the lake. Reds that have grown alongside stone. And even a rare grape variety that ripens right in the city.

To try them all, we've chosen six tours.
You can follow them by bike, tackle them on foot, or use them as a guide to plan your own trip. These routes don't just lead to the wineries: they tell the story of the soil, the light, the climate and the people who make each wine unique.

Where pink is the landscape

VALTÈNESI AND ITS ROSÉ

1



Lonato del Garda: your journey through the hills and vineyards of Valtènesi begins here.

The Valtènesi Cycle Route links Lonato del Garda to Salò, passing through the moraine hills of the Brescia riviera. This stunning route, about 24 kilometres long, does include a few ups and downs that require a bit of preparation (...we did warn you).



Senator Pompeo Molmenti, who in 1896 turned red wine into rosé, creating the 'wine of one night'.



You can travel along it in either direction. From Lonato, the lake gradually comes into view, heralded by the hills and the first glimpses of the horizon. From the elegant town of Salò, on the other hand, you set off from the water and head inland. The road climbs, descends and winds its way through vineyards and olive groves. You pass Padenghe Castle, the old town of Polpenazze, small rural villages and scenic spots where you will simply have to stop and take some pictures.

No bike? No problem. You can get about by car and go for some shorter walks. You can stroll around the castles of Padenghe, Moniga and Soiano, wander through the villages, or choose the footpaths between Puegnago and Polpenazze. You don't need to complete the whole route in a single day. The landscape does not award medals to those who cross it the fastest. You have to enjoy everything at your own pace.

And that's precisely the lesson conveyed by a fine glass of what was once known as

'chiaretto' – due to its rosé colour – and is now called **Riviera del Garda Classico**. A wine born of these lands.

This 'pink' isn't just a trend that came about last summer. It is an identity built around Groppello, a grape variety closely linked to the Brescia side of Lake Garda, and a tradition that reached one of its defining moments in the late nineteenth century, when Pompeo Molmenti – a Venetian senator who had moved to Moniga following his marriage to Amalia Brunati – put to good use the knowledge he had gained during his travels in France.

It was he who, in 1896, established a winemaking system based on the must remaining in contact with the skins for only a very short time. Just a few hours – the time it took to extract a subtle colour before it became too intense.

The space of one night.

The methods have changed, but the principle remains the same: gently pressing the grapes, allowing the must to absorb colour and aromas from the skins, and separating it at just the right moment. You have to seize the moment. A little too early, and the wine isn't quite what it should be. A little too late, and it has already become something else.

The perfect pairing?

Freshwater fish, pike with polenta or fried aole, of course! But we'd also recommend trying it with a good pizza.

Would you have guessed that Riviera del Garda Classico wine pairs perfectly with pizza, too?



Perfect for an aperitif, Riviera rosé wine can be enjoyed at any time of the day!



Italy's most famous fizz

FRANCIACORTA AND 'THE' FRANCIACORTA

2

There is a cycle route that crosses northern Italy, linking the Western Alps with the Adriatic. It's called AIDA, Alta Italia Da Attraversare, and it also passes through Brescia.



Admiring the historic monastery of San Pietro in Lamosa, overlooking the Torbiere del Sebino nature reserve.

You can set off from the city, head to Gussago and Rodengo Saiano, and continue through Paderno Franciacorta, Passirano and Bornato, and from there turn off to reach the southern shore of Lake Iseo. Alternatively, you can create shorter loops by choosing country roads and local trails between Erbusco, Adro, Corte Franca, Monticelli Brusati and Ome.

It's up to you!

Here, cycling is mainly about travelling from one winery to another. These are the places where, with patience and skill, Italy's most famous sparkling wines are



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↑ Two glasses of Franciacorta frame a view over the prized vineyards of the morainic hills.

produced: those of the **Franciacorta DOCG** region.

The 'classic method' involves secondary fermentation in the bottle and a mandatory period of ageing on the lees. The non-vintage version requires at least 18 months; Satèn and Rosé at least 24. The vintage wines are aged for 30 months, and the Reserves for 60. When the bubbles finally start to dance in the glass, they seem to be in a great hurry. Before this, however, they waited a long time.

This contrast is what accompanies you throughout the journey.

Outside, the bikes race along between the rows of vines. Inside the cellars, the bottles lie undisturbed as they age. Outside, the light, the wind and the seasons change. Inside, time works unseen.

The base blend for Franciacorta comprises Chardonnay and Pinot Noir; Pinot Blanc and Erbamat may also be included within the limits set out in the production regulations. Satèn, on the other hand, is made from white grapes, predominantly Chardonnay, and has a lower pressure

↓ A table surrounded by nature, accompanied by local sparkling wines. An al fresco aperitif, or a sophisticated picnic?



© CONSORZIO FRANCIACORTA

in the bottle than the other varieties. It is precisely this reduced pressure that contributes to a softer, silkier mouthfeel.

The Rosé is also subject to specific rules: Pinot Noir must account for at least 35 per cent of the blend, and the rosé colour must be present before 'tirage', the first stage of the wine's bottling process.

It's not just about fizz.

The same region also produces **Curtefranca DOC**, a designation reserved for still wines, both white and red. This is the side of Franciacorta that is least immediately recognisable. It's the one that makes the least noise, but it serves as a reminder that, long before sparkling wine became famous, these hills had already been a land of wine for generations upon generations.

What are some good pairings for Franciacorta sparkling wines?

It's hard to choose from a range that spans everything from aperitifs to desserts.

Our advice is to be bold and try a good bottle of Millesimato with local cheeses, including the finest varieties.

The elegance of the lake

LOWER LAKE GARDA AND LUGANA WINE

3

An enchanting glimpse of Lake Garda: what is a glass of wine without a view to go with it?

To discover Lugana, you need to head to the southern part of Lake Garda and then venture just a little way from the shore. You can set off on your bike from Desenzano, cycle through Rivoltella and head towards Sirmione. From here, the route can continue inland, passing through Pozzolengo, San Martino della Battaglia and the countryside stretching towards the Veneto border. There isn't just one set route, and even car trips combined with short walks are a great idea.



Any advice?

The great classic is Sirmione, with its walls, the old town, the Scaligero Castle and the Grotte di Catullo. But there are also many other, lesser-known gems. In Pozzolengo, for example, you can walk through the village and reach the castle. In San Martino della Battaglia stands a monumental tower which overlooks the countryside and commemorates the battles of the Risorgimento in 1859. These are lands of great beauty. The lands that produce **Lugana**, an extremely elegant white wine.

The base is a grape variety called Turbiana, which grows on soils characterised by stratified clays of moraine and sedimentary origin, predominantly calcareous and rich in mineral salts. In the hillier areas, the clay gradually gives way to a higher proportion of sand. It is a complex terroir, from which – almost by contrast – a fresh and immediately drinkable wine emerges, with its floral and citrus aromas and that characteristic note reminiscent of almonds.

So, is it just immediacy?

No, far from it.

The Superiore and Riserva versions, as well as the wines designed for longer ageing, can develop greater complexity over time.

A superb pairing is with the delicate whitefish from Lake Garda.

Sirmione, on the shores of Lake Garda, is the birthplace of Lugana DOC and a destination renowned for its breathtaking views.



Reds towards the East

BOTTICINO, GARDA ROSSO AND GROPPELLO, ALONG THE PEDEMONTANA

4



The hills of Botticino, amongst vineyards, woodland and marble.

Gazing into ruby reflections, surrounded by the aromas of wine and countryside.

Now, head east from Brescia. You can cycle along the foothills through Rezzato and Botticino, then carry on towards Nuvolera, Nuvolento and Gavardo. The route is the Pedemontana Alpina, which is linked to the local cycle network and the Gavardina route. On foot, however, it's best to focus on individual areas. The hills of Botticino offer trails through vineyards, woods and the quarries from which a fine marble is extracted, which for centuries has lent its pure white colour to the town's façades... but has even found its way to the White House in Washington.





The perfect wedding? Traditional wines, cured meats and cheeses from Brescia.

It is these very hills that produce a red wine that is attracting increasing attention from wine enthusiasts.

The wine is **Botticino DOC**, which includes the Rosso and Riserva varieties. The production regulations stipulate a blend comprising Barbera, Marzemino – also known locally as Berzemino – Sangiovese and Schiava gentile. A unique character born of this blend.

Botticino is a full-bodied red with an intense ruby colour; as it matures, it develops more garnet-coloured hues and fruity and spicy aromas. This is a wine that really comes into its own when paired with Brescian cuisine: meat, braised dishes, game, mature cheeses and dishes that can easily stand up to a bold pairing.

As you continue towards Gavardo, the landscape gradually approaches the Lake Garda area. The appellations expand, introducing **Garda Rosso** and **Groppello** into the narrative.

The **Garda DOC** covers a very large area and includes a variety of wines. In its red expression, it brings together grape varieties and traditions that vary depending on the distance from the lake. Groppello, on the other hand, immediately brings to mind the Brescia riviera, and produces light, spicy and distinctive red wines.

We've already encountered the rosé version in Valtènesi. Here you can see its other, bolder side.

In this case, the recommended pairing is with local cured meats and fresh or medium-aged cheeses.



A small mountain in the middle of the plain

CAPRIANO DEL COLLE ON MONTE NETTO

5



© CANTINA LAZZARI, CAPRIANO DEL COLLE (BS)

↓ Sunlit landscapes and vineyards amid the tranquillity of the Brescia countryside.

To the south of Brescia, the plain rises unexpectedly, though not by much. Monte Netto is of modest height compared with the mountains that frame the northern horizon. And yet it is enough to change the terrain, the aspect, the landscape and what is grown there.



© LM0052 / CC BY-SA 4.0

↓ Wine rests in silence. Remember not to make too much noise when visiting a winery.



© CONSORZIO FRANCIACORTA



↑ Monte Netto wines are produced amongst fields and small villages.

The Monte Netto Regional Park covers the municipalities of Capriano del Colle, Poncarale and Flero. You can explore it by bike or on foot, following farm tracks, local paths and circular routes past vineyards and farmhouses, through fields and small villages. The elevation gain is modest, making the area suitable even for those not looking for anything physically demanding.

Here, everything seems close to the horizon: the bell towers, the farmhouses, trees, rows of vines. The irrigation channels and fields bear witness to the agricultural heritage of the Bassa Bresciana. The city is just a few kilometres away, but the hustle and bustle already gives way to a more leisurely pace.

The production area for **Capriano del Colle DOC** comprises Capriano del

Colle, Poncarale and Flero. Both red and white wines are produced here.

In the red wines, Marzemino plays a particularly prominent role, complemented – depending on the specific type – by other permitted grape varieties. In the white wines, Trebbiano di Soave or Trebbiano di Lugana plays an important role. The specifications set out different compositions and characteristics for the various types.

It is truly fascinating to see how a seemingly minor change in the landscape has given rise to a distinct appellation. Just a few metres are enough to completely change the perspective and the flavour.

Cured meats and cheeses are the perfect accompaniment to local red wines.

The local reds pair perfectly with cured meats, meat dishes, braised dishes and cheeses. The whites pair well with starters, first courses, fish and more delicate dishes.

White wines are best paired with more delicately flavoured dishes.





A vineyard in the city

PUSTERLA ON CIDNEO HILL

6

We bring our tour of the wine wonders of the Brescia area to a close... without leaving the city. Follow this advice: start from Brescia's old city centre, cross Piazza della Loggia, head to Piazza Paolo VI, or walk along the UNESCO Corridor between the Capitolium and Santa Giulia. Then look up towards the Castle. Cidneo Hill is the point where the city begins to climb and, almost without you realising it, turns green. From there, you can carry on towards Ronchi, following the paths and roads that wind their way up the hills. With a bit of time and improved fitness, you can carry on towards Monte Maddalena, the hill overlooking Brescia, with its woods, clearings and an extensive network of trails.



The Pusterla vineyard flourishes at the foot of the Castle, in the heart of Brescia...

FOTO DI WOLFGANG MORODER



↑ Nestled on the slopes of the Cidneo hill, it is the largest productive vineyard in Europe.

↻ Bunches of Invernenga, the white grape grown in the Pusterla vineyard.

Your first encounter with wine comes sooner than you might think.
At the foot of the Castle, in fact, lies the **Pusterla vineyard**: almost four hectares of vine rows nestled within the urban landscape. You are standing in front of Europe's largest productive urban vineyard, the only large-scale vineyard dedicated entirely to Invernenga, a rare white grape variety native to the Brescia area.

The Invernenga variety has tough skins. The grapes ripen slowly. The name refers to the fact that the grapes could be stored until winter (*inverno*), when they would appear on festive tables. For centuries, this grape variety was grown primarily for domestic consumption, before becoming the basis for a wine capable of reaching a wider audience. It is said that Winston

Churchill was among its many admirers.

Today, this vineyard overlooking the city rooftops produces **Pusterla**, a still white wine that restores prominence to a variety that had almost disappeared.

It is a wine that begins gently, then reveals its true character. It's a description that could also apply to Brescia. A city that rarely makes itself heard, despite all the stories it has to tell.

And if you're keen on even more off-the-beaten-track stories, head up past the vineyard, where the wine-growing landscape stretches out to the Ronchi. These slopes were once entirely cultivated, consisting of terraces, vegetable gardens and vineyards. The city's expansion has changed its appearance, but it hasn't wiped everything out. In some places, the rows of vines still stand amongst villas, woods and scenic roads. Elsewhere, you can trace their memory through the names of places.

You don't need to leave the city to find the countryside. It's already here. All you have to do is look up.

Pusterla: a wine born in the city, outside the walls of the Castle, so that it might know no boundaries.



Ma tu guarda,
Brescia to listen to!

A podcast that takes you on a journey of discovery of the many cities within the city, revealing what's hidden in plain sight.

A Wine Made Overnight



In the hills of Valtènesi, red turns to rosé in a matter of hours. One night is all it takes for grapes from Lake Garda to become a fresh, savoury and bright wine.

In this episode of Ma tu guarda, Brescia da ascoltare!, we uncover the story of Valtènesi rosé as we cycle through vineyards, villages and landscapes overlooking the lake.

Scan the QR code and listen to the episodes. Click 'follow' to make sure you don't miss a single episode – you'll get a notification every time a new one is released.

INFOPOINT

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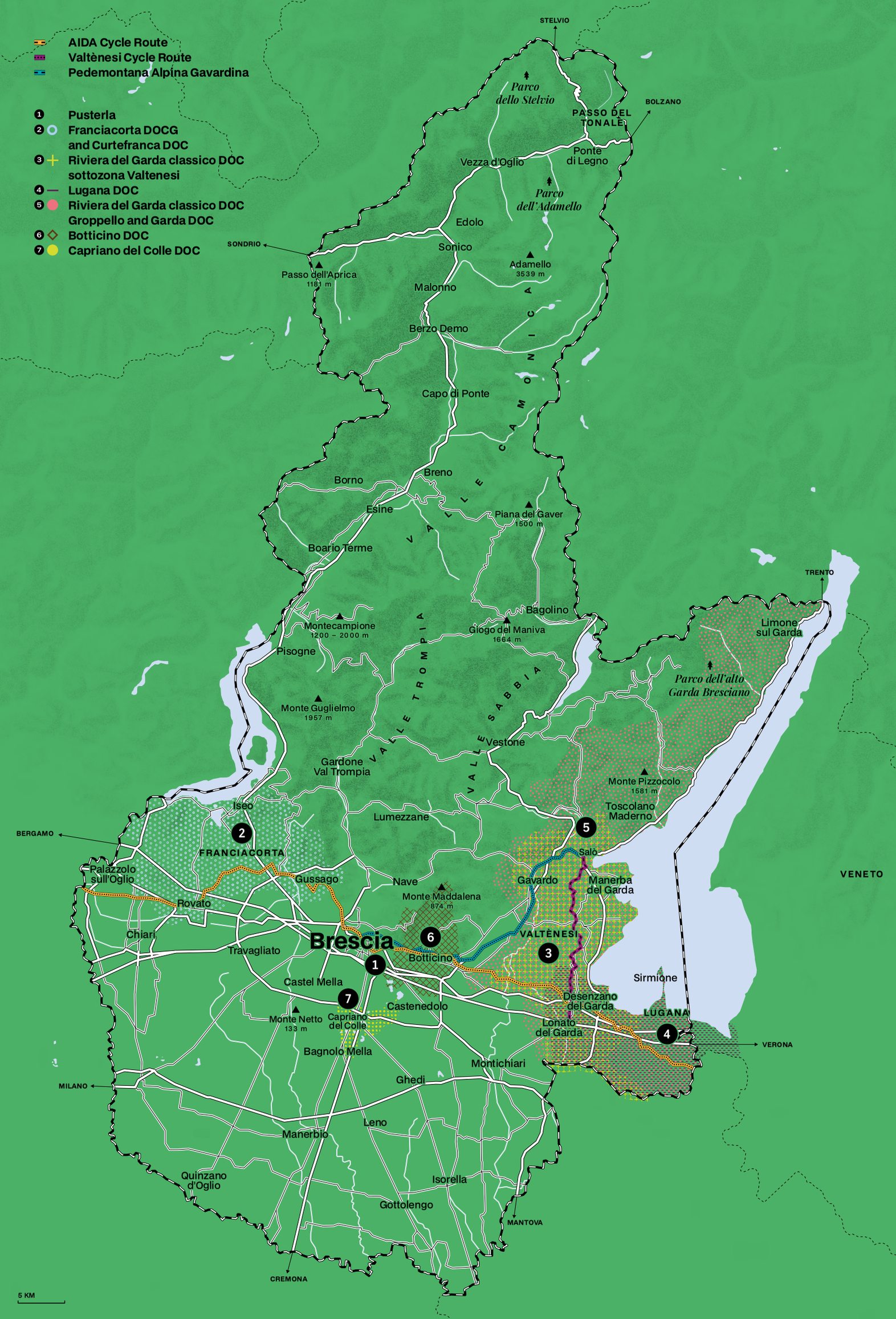
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BRESCIA

Your (kind of) tourist map

Brescia in a glass

Six tours showcasing the region's finest wines


AIDA Cycle Route
Valtènesi Cycle Route
Pedemontana Alpina Gavardina
1 Pusterla
2 Franciacorta DOCG and Curtefranca DOC
3 Riviera del Garda classico DOC sottozona Valtenesi
4 Lugana DOC
5 Riviera del Garda classico DOC Groppello and Garda DOC
6 Botticino DOC
7 Capriano del Colle DOC
STELVIO
Parco dello Stelvio
PASSO DEL TONALE
BOLZANO
Vezza d'Oglio
Ponte di Legno
Parco dell'Adamello
Edolo
Sonico
SONDRIO
Passo dell'Aprica 1181 m
Adamello 3539 m
Malonno
VALLE CAMONICA
Berzo Demo
Capo di Ponte
Breno
Borno
Esine
Piana del Gaver 1500 m
Boario Terme
VALLE TROMPIA
VALLE SABBIA
TRENTO
Bagolino
Montecampione 1200 – 2000 m
Giogo del Maniva 1664 m
Limone sul Garda
Pisogne
Parco dell'alto Garda Bresciano
Monte Guglielmo 1957 m
Vestone
Gardone Val Trompia
Monte Pizzocolo 1581 m
Toscolano Maderno
Iseo
Lumezzane
BERGAMO
FRANCIACORTA
Salò
Palazzolo sull'Oglio
Gussago
Nave
Monte Maddalena 874 m
Gavardo
Manerba del Garda
VENETO
Rovato
Chiari
Brescia
Travagliato
Botticino
VALTÈNESI
Castel Mella
Sirmione
Desenzano del Garda
Castenedolo
LUGANA
Monte Netto 133 m
Capriano del Colle
Lonato del Garda
VERONA
Bagnolo Mella
Montichiari
MILANO
Ghedi
Leno
Manerbio
Quinzano d'Oglio
Isorella
Gottolengo
MANTOVA
CREMONA
5 KM