

The 'Erbe Danzanti' Park

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A park is recently born on Lake Iseo's shores; it harmoniously conjugates the requirements of a recreational area open to the public, with the need to emphasize the beauty of the lacustrian environment, as well as restoring traces of the location's past. The premises overlooking the lake, which were once Ferrovie dello Stato property, were actually used for a rail and barge service until 1998, for ore transportation (scrap iron). After being subsequently neglected for more than ten years, they were in a state of disrepair, albeit conserving precious material evidence tied to the industrial past. There were several signs of human activity, such as railway segments, both above ground in some spots, and buried in others, after having been swallowed by the terrain; stone piers, known as "tongues", which allowed barges to unload the material they were carrying; last but not least, two mobile jetties moved by a chain system, supported by a metal turret system. The Town Council officially acquired the area in 2008, with the purpose of using the whole terrain for a park, as well as providing town inhabitants with green spaces for the recreational area they enjoy every day, and underlining Paratico's calling as a tourist area. Landscape designer Cristina Mazzucchelli actually followed several project guidelines, such as respecting the location's heritage, relating harmoniously to the surrounding environment, highlighting the ornamental value throughout the year, as well as using a wide range of botanical species, and opting for low-maintenance plants, not to mention optimizing water consumption. The park develops, uninterruptedly, along the lake's shores with a sequence of "rooms" or sections.

Two lengthwise routes cross the park: the first path follows the shore, whereas the second one cuts right through the park, as it purposefully retraces the old railway lines. It is indeed a host of pleasant environments, each of which is meant to express one of the location's many souls. So you find hedges in bloom, made of large metal tanks brimming with graceful plants placed in a diagonal section, leading the eye towards the lacustrian environment; the room where the gravel draws a pattern of waves, reminding one of the waves rising from the lake's rippled waters, alongside spacious fields with their beautiful ears of grass; and then the room dominated by a large wooden arbor, covered in American grapevine embracing scented roses, hinting at the farming tradition of those Franciacorta hills, cultivated for their grapes crop; the final landmark, a room containing numerous seatings stemming from oval shaped design, two rectangular stone tanks with white water lilies, thus recalling the different sceneries the lake offers along its shores. In front you can find the stone "tongues", strips of land used as piers by bathers, which have been cleaned and reinforced, whilst preserving resistant and hardy spontaneous plant species, which have always been providing shelter for water fowls. The restored jetties enclose the park, becoming cornerstone of the last room; only fields and grass surround the jetties, so they are the key element as far as the eye can reach, to remind you of their history, and of the crucial role they play. There are two buildings inside the area: one is the result of the restoration of the old coal cellar, a historical warehouse known as "La Modina", which was used to stoke up trains, and subsequently turned into a bar and restaurant; whereas the other building right at the other end of the park was built from scratch according to environmentally harmonious modern architectural design, in which the most common building materials are actually glass stones.

Several features make this park on the lake so interesting: how successfully the project fits in the surrounding landscape, the way in which so many vestiges of industrial archeology have been restored, using contemporary sober design and preserving a harmonious relationship with recent building, by employing cheap materials such as wood and iron. The botanical choices are quite original for a public park: in fact, apart from offering several trees and shrubs, there are many plants of the grass family, as well as herbaceous perennials. Combinations of colours, shapes and patterns give a feeling of great spontaneity to an overall view of the park, hinting at harmony, gracefulness and movement, by the way this is how the park got its name. The park offers visitors crossing it changing scenes and sensations, not only during different seasons, but also at different times of day: when a breeze starts blowing over from the lake, ever so slight movements from ears of grass and flowers provide the visitor with a pleasant picture, that reminds him or her, despite the well thought out and planned artificial nature of the project, of sceneries from the rural landscape of the surrounding hills.



1. Raised beds contain plenty hairy plants and flowers moving by the wind. The eyes are simultaneously captured by the lake view, the mountain scenery and the cheerful iron sculpture



2. The park room where the gravel draws a pattern of waves, alongside fields with ears of grass which softens the mineral effect. The rounded seating placed in a scenographic point invite people to rest



3. The lake view is enriched by a rectangular stone tank with white water lilies and fishes, producing the sceneries the lake offers along its shores. The restored stone piers allows bathers to enjoy water