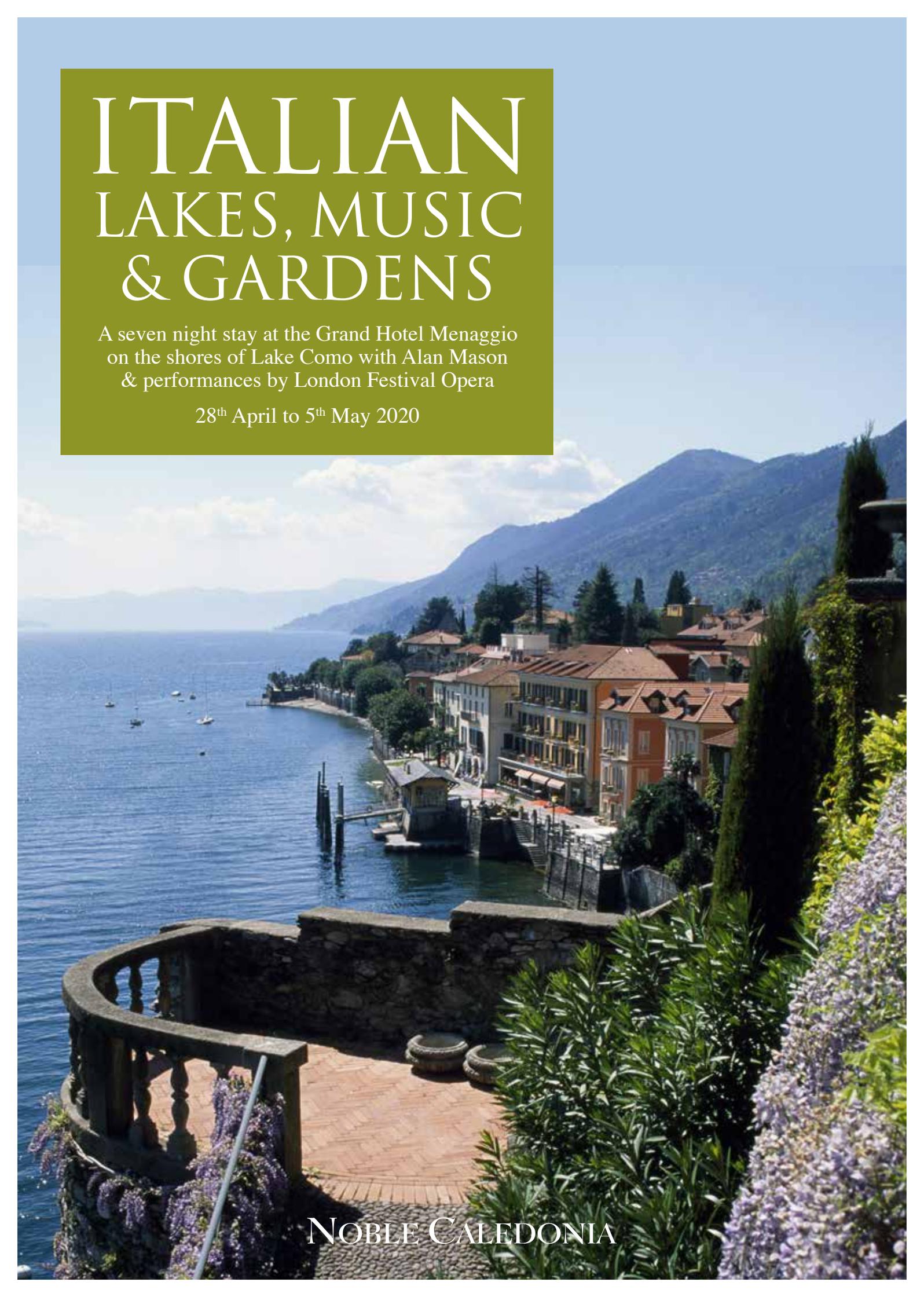


# ITALIAN LAKES, MUSIC & GARDENS

A seven night stay at the Grand Hotel Menaggio  
on the shores of Lake Como with Alan Mason  
& performances by London Festival Opera

28<sup>th</sup> April to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Come with us and enjoy some of the most beautiful Italian gardens at their springtime best as we explore Lake Como and Maggiore from our delightful lake-side base at the Grand Hotel Menaggio. During our week's stay we will visit some of the finest gardens and villas and be joined by London Festival Opera who will perform some marvellous opera in wonderful settings.

Italy has more than its fair share of beautiful places, but few would argue that the lakes that nestle in the foothills of the Italian Alps are one of its finest assets. The images stay with you forever. The early mist rising off the lake, church bells resonating off the water, flower-filled gardens reflected in the still, deep waters and numerous craft going about their business, crisscrossing the lake.

Our programme will include comprehensive sightseeing excursions, and some free time to relax and enjoy the lovely facilities of the hotel and appreciate the dramatic scenery of Lake Como. We will be joined by horticultural expert Alan Mason, who will provide talks and briefings during the week and accompany us on excursions.

## OUR VIEW

*"We are delighted to be repeating our hugely successful visit to the stunning shores of Lake Como. What could be more enchanting than a combination of wonderful music from London Festival Opera, beautiful gardens, magnificent views and delicious Italian food? Lake Como has seen many illustrious guests grace its shores over its long history including Queen Victoria and the locals today will almost certainly casually drop into their conversation that George Clooney is amongst many actors who own a villa there. Our base for our week-long visit, The Grand Hotel Menaggio, has an enviable location with unforgettable views. Despite the grand exterior of this 19th century Palazzo the atmosphere is friendly and relaxed and offers the ideal spot to totally unwind."*

## Guest Speaker – Alan Mason



Alan Mason is one of the most experienced and best qualified garden designers and consultants in Europe. He is a founder member of The Professional Gardener's Guild

and the founder of Senior Garden Advisors consultancy group.

Alan started his garden design consultancy business in 1987 following a period where he was the youngest Head Gardener in the country, at Bramham Park and Garden Manager to the Queen's cousin Lord Harewood at Harewood House in Yorkshire. Here, he and his team elevated the gardens into the top ten most visited gardens in the country. During the 80's and 90's he presented television programmes from around Europe, including "Le Manoir" the making of his own garden in Brittany and the long running "Gardens without Borders" from around France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Holland.

Alan is also a judge of the show gardens at the prestigious Sandringham Flower Show and a garden design lecturer for The Royal Horticultural Society.



Villa Melzi and gardens



Colourful streets of Bellagio



The Villa Carlotta on Italy's Lake Como

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London Heathrow to Menaggio, Italy.** Fly by scheduled flight from Heathrow to Milan and transfer to the Grand Hotel Menaggio on the shores of Lake Como for a seven night stay.

**Day 2 Bellagio & Villa Melzi.** Our launch will take us across Lake Como to Bellagio where colourful gardens line the shore. Enjoy a visit to the Villa Melzi, a fine neo-classical villa. The garden is splendid with a Moorish temple, Japanese garden and watergarden at the edge of the lake. There will be some free time in Bellagio before returning back to the hotel by boat.

**Day 3 Villa Balbianello & Villa Carlotta.** Morning at leisure. Depart in the early afternoon by boat to the Villa Balbianello. See the interior and gardens of this lovely lakeside villa. Continue to the Villa Carlotta, built in 1747 with a superb garden laid out in 1850 by Princess Carlotta. The setting is idyllic and the gardens are full of contrast, particularly in the spring. Enjoy a performance by London Festival Opera at Villa Carlotta.

**Day 4 Como & Villa Medici.** Morning departure by coach to Como where there will be some free time for sightseeing. In the early afternoon, depart by coach to Villa Medici Giulini where hopefully the alternating colour of the azaleas will be at their best. Enjoy a piano recital with a musician at the Villa followed by an aperitif.

**Day 5 Villa Bagatti, Lugano & Villa Cicogna Mozzoni.** Depart by coach to visit Villa Bagatti's garden. After your visit continue to Lugano for some time at leisure. In the early afternoon visit Villa Cicogna Mozzoni, a 16th century villa surrounded by exquisite gardens. Enjoy a performance by London Festival Opera at the Villa with an aperitif after the performance.

**Day 6 Lake Maggiore.** Full day excursion to Lake Maggiore. Our private launch will take us to the Borromean Islands of Isola Bella and Isola Madre. On Isola Bella, once a barren rock, see the vast palace built from the island's rock and its surrounding terraced gardens, inspired it is said by the Hanging

Gardens of Babylon. The palace is decorated with fine furniture and some interesting paintings, but it is the ten terraces of the gardens with their English Garden, Italian Garden, Azalea Garden and Mosaic Garden which capture the imagination. In the afternoon we will sail across to the larger of the two islands, Isola Madre. Here, five gardens connect in a peaceful woodland setting.



London Festival Opera

**Day 7 Lake Como.** Day at leisure to relax and enjoy your surroundings or perhaps take the ferry to Varenna. There will be a late afternoon performance by London Festival Opera at the hotel followed by a farewell dinner.

**Day 8 Menaggio to London Heathrow.** Transfer to Milan airport for your return scheduled flight to London.

*NB: It must be noted that this tour will involve being on your feet for long periods and navigating many cobblestoned streets and steps. We therefore do not recommend this tour for those with walking difficulties.*

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

CATEGORY	DOUBLE OCCUPANCY	SINGLE OCCUPANCY
Standard Land View Twin Room	£2395	£2695
Standard Lake View Twin Room	£2695	£2995
Lake View Room with Balcony	£2895	N/A

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class scheduled air travel • Seven nights hotel accommodation including breakfast and dinner daily • Excursions with guide • Three music performances by London Festival Opera • Gratuities • Entrance fees • Guest speaker • Tour Manager • Transfers • Airport & tourist taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, lunches.

# GRAND HOTEL MENAGGIO



Hotel Room



Terrace Restaurant



Lounge

The Grand Hotel Menaggio is situated on the most elegant of Italian Lakes, Lake Como. This comfortable and relaxed hotel features 94 rooms and offers a high level of comfort, good food and service. The atmosphere is peaceful and the accommodation and public rooms stylish and comfortable. However, its greatest asset is its position. Situated in the most attractive central lake area, it is ideally placed for day excursions to some of the loveliest villas and gardens of Lombardy.

## Your Accommodation

There are three choices of room type, the Standard Room, the Standard Lake View which overlooks the swimming pool and lake, and the Lake View Room with Balcony with views of the lake and the added advantage of a balcony. All the rooms are equipped with telephone, satellite television, safe deposit, air-conditioning, fridge, hairdryer, private bath or shower and complimentary Wi-Fi.

## Your Space

The Grand Hotel Menaggio features a heated outdoor pool with pool towels provided and comfortable sun-loungers, a fitness room, lakeside garden area, large bar and terrace, comfortable lounge as well as complimentary Wi-Fi in all rooms and public areas. The lawns and swimming pool on the water's edge are perfect for relaxing, reading a book or watching the waterborne activity.

## Your Dining

Our stay at the Grand Hotel Menaggio includes breakfast and dinner daily. The restaurant offers beautiful views and dishes feature many local specialities. There is also a bar at the hotel where you can enjoy a pre or post dinner aperitif.



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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.  
Cover image: Lake Maggiore.