

## Villa della Pergola

*An elegant retreat, enchanting gardens and a gourmet restaurant*

Set within a luxuriant garden, Villa della Pergola is a charming hotel offering to its guest 15 different suites divided between the Villa, Villino, Casa del Sole and Casa Wisteria.

The buildings are masterpieces of architecture and have a quite unique history that is in fact intimately bound up with this English community that chose to stay on this coast and specifically Alassio in the years between 1800 and 1900 as one of their favourite wintering holiday spots, to escape the cold, wet English climate, in pursuit of warmth, beauty and genuine Italian food.

A place where history, luxury and nature blends together.

A place of peace serenity, far enough to the crowds of the Riviera, Villa della Pergola distinguish itself by offering the perfect synthesis between the concept of a house and the highest standards in hospitality.

Due to its beautiful location overlooking the Gulf of Alassio it is able to offer its guests a truly unforgettable experience with the refined and welcoming hospitality provided by its retreat, the quality of the restaurant and the extraordinary flower displays that colour and perfume its gardens for many months of the year.

A lot has changed since then, but Villa della Pergola still retains the unique ambiance from that period.

Surrounded by refined collections of watercolours, Victorian and Eduardian paintings, memorabilia and antiques our guests will experience and be immersed in the fin de siecle atmosphere. It is a location full of history and has provided inspiration to artists as Carlo Levi and directors such as Alfred Hitchcock and Oscar Guy Green.

In a secluded corner of the luxuriant garden stands the Casa del Sole, which owes its name to its fortunate position which ensures it is constantly flooded by natural light..

### **Suites and Rooms**

The suites and the rooms were developed to make you feel like home.

Lovely restored by architect Ettore Mocchetti, rooms are different in atmosphere, color palette, furniture; each one dedicated to the many characters who have stayed at Villa della Pergola or who were part of the British community in Alassio.

Refined collections of watercolors, Victorian and Edwardian paintings, memorabilia and antiques, will make you experience the fin de siècle taste and atmosphere. **Restaurant “Nove”**

Nove is the refurbished Restaurant of Villa della Pergola, managed by Chef Giorgio Servetto.

Three tasting menus, one entirely vegetarian, and our "A la carte" menu will guide our guests through a Journey of discovery of traditional flavours of Liguria and Piedmont with a contemporary and refined approach.

The attention to detail and imagination will create an unforgettable journey of the region. By making use of "Villa della Pergola Botanical Garden"'s herbs, citrus fruits, and edible flowers, the Chef and his team have created a truly unique tasting experience of traditional flavours. NOVE wants to put at first place the quality of raw materials, researching authentic local products and giving complete importance to seasons.

Chef Giorgio Servetto's cuisine wants to narrate his story, made of flavor and taste which tell about his childhood, strictly connected with traditional Ligurian cooking, influenced by Piemonte and France, reviewed into a modern tone.

Nove Ristorante is nestled inside Villa della Pergola, with a breathtaking seaview of the Gulf of Alassio, surrounded by the botanical garden Giardini di Villa della Pergola.

Nove Ristorante has two main dining rooms, seating up to 35 guests, and an outside area for up to 45 guests.

One of the two dining rooms, separated from the main dining room and at the heart of our Restaurant, can be fully reserved - the perfect place to host a bespoke event for up to 16 guests. An ambiance of tranquility where you can choose whether to dine around one big imperial table or have the option of separate tables.

[www.noveristorante.it](http://www.noveristorante.it)

## **Breakfast**

Our pastry chefs, coordinated by Executive Chef Giorgio Servetto, freshly bake every day pastry, bread, focaccia and cakes for your breakfast. Our marmalades are home made with the best seasonal products, picking as much as we can from our Gardens. Savoury, surely can not be missed: local cheeses, cold cuts, eggs from our farmers.

A selection of Fortnum & Meason teas, hot drink and freshly pressed juices are at your disposal. We do pay particular attention to guests with food allergy or intolerance, preparing ourselves products for your diet requirement.

The research of the best products, make our breakfast an unforgettable experience.

## **Ila della Pergola Gardens**

Villa della Pergola Gardens were created at the end of the nineteenth century and facing the Gulf of Alassio and it is a unique example of an Anglo-Mediterranean park that has preserved its original size.

It is also one of the rare examples of the English garden in Italy and has been careful restoration by the landscaper Paolo Pejrone who has skilfully brought together typical Mediterranean vegetation and exotic and rare flora from further afield.

The grounds cover an area of 22,000 square metres and are home to important botanical collections such 34 varieties of wisteria and a unique collection for Europe of almost 500 varieties of agapanthus.

Maritime pines, Carob trees, Olive trees, Almond trees, Cypresses, Cedar from Lebanon, Holm oak and an unexpected collection of citrus, wisely arranged near Eucalyptus, Jacaranda, Araucaria, giant Strelitzia, Diksonie, Palms, Cactaceae from every latitude, seasonal blossoming of Thunbergia, Spireae, oak leaf Hydrangea, Oleander, Pelargonium, Bougainvillea, Datura, Bignonia, Solanum and Jasmine astonish the visitor through a path of scents and colors.

It was created in the late 1870's, to fulfill General Montagu McMurdo and his wife Lady Susan Sarah Napier's desire to restore a private villa on the Italian Riviera that was intended to be their winter and spring retreat. Originally, the Villino della Pergola was the summer residence of the Counts of Lenguiglia.

The 18th century estate was surrounded by terraced citrus, olive and carob groves - whose fruits were used to feed pack animals - and featured pergolas for the growing of grapes.

By adding ornamental plants and terracotta balustrades to border the most appealing vantage points, the McMurdos' creative gardening turned a typical Ligurian farmland into a true pleasure park.

In 2006, a group of friends headed by Silvia e Antonio Ricci purchased the estate to save it from property speculation. Under the enthusiastic direction of landscape designer Paolo Pejrone, they began a diligent and accurate restoration of the park.

The park has now regained the splendor exhibited during the Dalrymple and Hanbury eras and is one of the botanic marvels of the Riviera and the Mediterranean.

[www.giardinidivilladellapergola.com](http://www.giardinidivilladellapergola.com)

## **Historical notes**

General McMurdo built Villino della Pergola on the pre-existing residence of the counts of Lenguiglia, which he called "Casa Napier" in honour of his father-in-law, General Sir Charles Napier, whose statue can be seen in Trafalgar Square in London.

The Villino, designed and constructed according to the Anglo-Indian principles and taste found in the architectural style so loved by the British who had lived most of their lives in the military in India, or as civil servants or businessmen, was built over three levels and given a spacious loggia following the custom at that time for British houses built in India and Malaysia for officials of the British Empire.

In 1880 the McMurdo family began work on Villa della Pergola. This building was larger in size than the Villino and in a slightly less elevated position. The Villa was instead built following a rather eclectic taste, again setting out a spacious loggia but at the same time including elements of greater prestige and opulence such as the dome clad in polychrome majolica from Albisola, the array of marbles and the fountain near the grand staircase.

In the early years of the twentieth century the grounds and the Villa della Pergola passed into the hands of Virginia Woolf's cousin Sir Walter Hamilton Dalrymple.

In 1908, William Scott in his art historic travel guide "The Riviera" explained, "A worthy rival to the botanical gardens of Thomas Hanbury in Mortola can be found in the magnificent property of Villa della Pergola, belonging to Sir Walter Hamilton-Dalrymple. Here a genuine love for nature, an intimate knowledge of the art of gardening and a perfect taste in design, combined with a careful and generous budget, have produced one of the marvels of the Riviera".

The Dalrymples maintained ownership of the villa for a further 20 years until 1922, when Sir Hew Clifford Hamilton-Dalrymple, 9th baronet, sold the residence to Daniel Hanbury, second child of Sir Thomas Hanbury of Mortola.

In 1922 the new owner Daniel Hanbury, second-born of Thomas, designer and owner the celebrated Hanbury gardens of La Mortola, Ventimiglia, began the work of developing the collections of plants in the grounds, drawing on the resources of the family's own botanical gardens.

The Hanbury family clearly gave a major boost to the completion of the Villa's garden, transferring varieties of South American cactuses, collections of cycads and Australian eucalyptuses as well as various other types of species from the Mortola botanical garden, significantly increasing the variety of exotic plants in the park at the Villa.

In 1940, at the outbreak of the second world war, the Hanbury family returned to the UK, like the majority of British on the Italian Riviera. The widowed Daniel married his second wife Ruth Hardinge, also from a British family in Alassio. In 1946 the Hanburys returned to Alassio.

Ruth went to live in Villa della Pergola assembling around her a small and meagre community of 'Anglo-Alassians', now a shadow of the thousand pre-war British residents. Her spring parties during the flowering of the wisteria were renowned.

For a while the Villas and the Garden were largely abandoned and so deteriorated.

In 2006 a string of friends guided by Silvia and Antonio Ricci, always well aware of the story of these lands and eager to safeguard, protect and restore the landscape, purchased the property at auction to save it from the developers.

### **Curiosities**

Guests often included author Cecil Roberts, who would dedicate his book "Portal to Paradise" to Alassio, and the Bishop of Gibraltar, who every spring went to visit the Anglican communities on the Riviera, staying as Ruth's guest

In 1925 Alfred Hitchcock filmed scenes from his first film "The Pleasure Garden" on the beach in Alassio and in the park of the Villa and in 1957, the Oscar winning filmmaker Guy Green set "The Snorkel" with Betta St. John, Peter Van Eyck and Mandy Miller in Villa della Pergola. Author and artist Carlo Levi used the Villino as an annex for his nearby villa in the 1960s and 70s, immortalizing the Alassio scenery in countless paintings.

Inside the Villa there is a little museum to tell the history of the Villa and Alassio through memorabilia, pictures, paintings, objects and books.

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### **For information and bookings:**

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## **Press Office and Communications**

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