



COMUNE DI CENTO



Centò

CONFETTI
CULTURE
AND GASTRONOMY

Ferrara
UNIVERSITY OF THE EMILIA

A guide to Cento – city of art, city of Guercino

Introduction	3
Guercino's square Governor's Palace City Hall	4
The Jewish Ghetto, the Pannini Home	5
The Fortress	6
The Civic Theatre and Pandurera Multifunctional Centre	7
Libraries	8
Churches: San Biagio, San Pietro, Rosario, S. Maria Maddalena, Servi, Ss. Sebastiano e Rocco, S. Lorenzo, S. Filippo, Oratorio Crocetta	10
Municipal Art Gallery Aroldo Bonzagni Modern Art Gallery Sandro Parmeggiani Museum	14
Villages	20
Gastronomy	22
Green Cento	24
Cento Events	26
Restaurants Hotels	30

Cento...History



The **name Cento** is a reference to the centuriation of the Po Valley: the reclamation, deforestation and subdivision of the land by the Romans in the second century BC. But Cento's growth from its origin as a little fishing village in the marshes (revealed in the *city's coat of arms* featuring a *red shrimp*) to an established farming town

took place in the first few centuries after the year one thousand. In this age of extensive land reclamation and donations by the Bishop of Bologna and the Abbot of Nonantola the **Partecipanza Agraria** was established: an institution in which land was redistributed every twenty years among the male heirs of the families who constituted the initial core of the community in the twelfth century.

Always a borderland, Cento, though owned by the Church of Bologna, repeatedly found itself in the sights of bordering states over the centuries, especially the Dukedom of Ferrara. In 1502 Pope Alexander VI took it away from the dominion of the Bishop of Bologna and made it part of the dowry of his daughter Lucrezia Borgia, promised in marriage to Duke Alfonso I d'Este. Returned to the dominion of the Holy See in 1598, in the 17th and 18th centuries Cento experienced a golden age of architectural and urban renewal and a flowering of culture and the arts: this was the context in which the great Baroque painter **Guercino** was born and worked.

This rebirth was officially recognised in 1754, when Pope Benedict XIV assigned Cento the rank of "city".

**Wheelchair
accessibility
symbols**



Wheelchair accessibility symbols



Partially wheelchair accessible
Accessible with accompaniment



Not wheelchair accessible

POPULATION AS OF
TERRITORIAL EXTENSION:
ELEVATION ABOVE SEA LEVEL:

31/12/2004: 31,475
64 KM²
MIN. 10 M, MAX. 20 M

Guercino's Square



Governor's Palace: built in 1502 at the time of the wedding of Alfonso I d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia and Cento's annexation by the Dukedom of Ferrara. It was built to offer a worthy residence for the commissaries of Ferrara in charge of governing the city. The building's current neo-medieval look dates back to the radical restoration of 1919, while the *central tower, known as the Clock Tower*, was built in elegant classical forms by Cento architect Francesco Giraldini around 1550. *The palace interior hosts A. Bonzagni Modern Art Gallery.*



City Hall: Built beginning in 1612 on the site of a number of private homes, the city hall was decorated with frescoes by Guercino on the exterior. The facade is now divided in half by a marble balcony that cuts it in two along its entire length: the upper part is crowned by a scenographic structure bearing the city's coat of arms, while the lower part has a portico with three arcades supported by octagonal columns. *The Council hall* is worthy of note for its decorations.



THE PULSATING HEART OF THE CITY'S LIFE, THE THERMOMETER OF THE POPULAR MOOD, GUERCINO'S SQUARE IS CENTO'S LIVING ROOM, SITE OF THE TOWN'S MOST IMPORTANT CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS, ECONOMIC AND SPORTING EVENTS. TWO IMPORTANT PORTICOED BUILDINGS OF GREAT HISTORICAL AND ARTISTIC VALUE FORM THE BACKDROP TO THE SQUARE.



The Jewish Ghetto

The presence of a Jewish settlement in Cento is documented as early as 1390, but it was not until the sixteenth century, referred to as the "century of Este", that the Jewish community rose to its peak, thanks largely to the arrival of a Sephardic group fleeing Spain. When the Dukedom of Ferrara was devolved to the Holy See, in Cento as in Ferrara the Jews were isolated from the Christian population: in 1636 the papal governors set up a ghetto right in the heart of the city, which remained operative until 1859, the year when the gates were knocked down and the Jews acquired the same rights as other Italians.

In the late nineteenth century economic crisis hit the Jewish population as well as the rest, leading to the dissolution of the Cento community, which joined that of Ferrara. The vestments and objects of worship of Cento's synagogue are in fact kept in the one in Ferrara. The old ghetto, now completely restored, takes the form of a close group of houses overlooking three connected courtyards, the central one of which is decorated with a number of gracious little eighteenth century *balconies* XVIII secolo.



Cento's active Jewish community was the birthplace of the grandparents of Benjamin Disraeli, prime minister of England during the reign of Queen Victoria

The Pannini Home

One of the *oldest patrician homes* in Cento, dating back to the first half of the fifteenth century. Its particular characteristic is the wooden portico, while the Gothic facade is a product of twentieth century restoration. The rooms in the palace were frescoed by Guercino and his school between 1615 and 1617. About half of the frescoes are now kept in the Municipal Art Gallery.



CENTO IN FILM

Cento has been used as the set for a number of important films such as:

Guercino (1950, directed by Adelchi Bianchi)

Permette? Rocco Papaleo (1971, directed by Ettore Scola)

La mazurka del barone, della santa e del fico fiorone (1974, directed by Pupi Avati)

Tutti defunti...tranne i morti (1977, directed by Pupi Avati)

Gli occhiali d'oro (1987, directed by Giuliano Montaldo)

La settimana della Sfinge (1990, directed by Daniele Lucchetti)

Le Barzellette (2004, directed by Carlo Vanzina)

The Fortress



A monument to *Guercino* by sculptor *S. Galletti* (1832-1904) used to stand in the courtyard in front of the Fortress. It was recently moved back to its original location in *Guercino's square*



Beata Vergine della Rocca Sanctuary

Built in 1609 and rebuilt in the nineteenth century. It houses the venerated *Image of the Blessed Virgin of the Fortress*, a fresco removed from inside the Fortress dating back to 1597: a drop of blood falls from the Madonna's nose which tradition holds to be due to an act of sacrilege.



“Giuseppe Borgatti” Theatre



The decoration of the facade continues just the same on the sides of the building, forming an impression of great plastic and chromatic impact

Below, the elegant foyer of the theatre, decorated with nineteenth century frescoes



The Civic Theatre was built between 1856 and 1861 to plans by Antonio Giordani and Fortunato Lodi. The outer facade is characterised by showy decoration of orange and yellow stripes and eclectic terracotta ornamentation featuring cornices, candelabra, medallions with portraits of illustrious people, busts of artists, figured friezes and bas reliefs. Particular emphasis is given to the three arcades at the entrance to the theatre, with a number of windows above them crowned by a monumental gable. The interior is in the typical style of the “Italian theatre”, a horseshoe-shaped hall with boxes on three levels, a gallery and the stalls. The foyer is decorated with nineteenth century frescoes, and the theatre's two museums are very interesting. The one dedicated to Giuseppe Borgatti contains a collection of documents, objects and records of the life of the famous tenor from Cento, while Arrigo Tassinari Museum collects mementoes and honours illustrating the outstanding artistic career of the “*bead-master of Italian flautists*”.

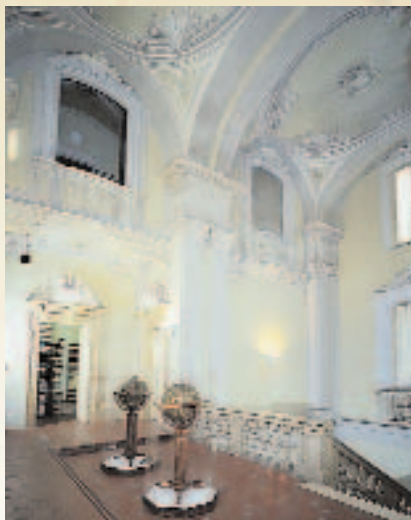
PANDURERA MULTIFUNCTIONAL CENTRE

A welcoming, up-to-date facility built on the site of a former tomato processing plant) providing the ideal setting for congresses, conventions, seminars, courses and meetings, with its comfortable rooms and sophisticated lighting and technical facilities. The centre has a 500 seat auditorium, a classroom, a meeting room and a number of offices as well as a large meeting point and a bar and restaurant.



Libraries

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING AND WRITING SEEMS TO HAVE STRONG HISTORICAL ROOTS IN THE CENTO AREA: THE OLDEST DOCUMENT KEPT IN THE GENERAL ARCHIVE DATES BACK TO 1185. EVER SINCE THEN THE PEOPLE OF CENTO HAVE CONTINUED PRODUCING AND READING TEXTS AND DOCUMENTS WITHOUT INTERRUPTION. THE CITY NOW HAS 3 LIBRARIES AND A HISTORICAL ARCHIVE.





"Mappamondo" (Roma 1632) e "Planetario" (Roma 1636) di Hans Greuther, al piano nobile della Biblioteca Civica


"Patrimonio Studi" Municipal Library is located in Palazzo Scarselli Tassinari, a splendid example of eighteenth century architecture rich in paintings and sculptures with a dramatic staircase enriched with vaults, little choirs and elegant decorations. Today's library contains volumes from a number of different libraries which were merged: in 1798, following the Napoleonic suppression of the religious orders, the collections of the Municipal Library (opened in

1760 thanks to a donation by notary G. Cariani) was combined with that of the Clementine Seminary (which had taken over the books of the Society of Jesus in 1772), with the further addition of the Capuchin Library in 1805, with its wealth of manuscripts and precious volumes.

Today's Municipal Library boasts a collection of 55,000 volumes (46,000 in the Modern Collection and 9,000 in the Antique Collection), a newspaper library, an audio collection and a photo collection. It also has a large children's section, an exhibition room and a classroom used in the many reading projects organised with the involvement of young readers.

 **The General Archive**, which also includes the Municipal Historical Archive, consists of a rich collection of documents providing continuous testimony to the historical vicissitudes of Cento (from 1185 to 2002) in all its many aspects: administrative, social, economic, agrarian, cultural, religious and charitable. Like the Municipal Library, the Archive organises educational projects for local schools every year. Cento also has a library called

 **Biblioteca Capitolare di San Biagio**, housed in Girolamo Baruffaldi Study Centre, with a valuable collection consisting primarily of religious volumes. Casumaro is home to

 **Ileana Ardizzoni Library**, comprising 2 different library collections, from the library of the parish and that of the town library. It now includes 5000 volumes.



Palazzo Rusconi

The Civic Library was housed in Rusconi Palace from 1972 to 1998. The residence built for Captain G. Tavecchi in 1776 is one of the most important expressions of eighteenth century Bolognese architecture, with its imposing facade and majestic double staircase, featuring allegorical female figures and pairs of putti on its balustrade. The palace now houses the *Ancient Art Collection* of Cento's oldest and most important bank, the Cassa di Risparmio, including important works by *Guercino* and his school.



allegorical sculpture of a woman on the staircase of Rusconi Palace



Churches

THE CITY OF CENTO CHANGED RADICALLY IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES, WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF ARISTOCRATIC PALACES FRESCOED AND DECORATED WITH GRAND STAIRCASES, CHOIRS AND BALUSTRADES. CHURCHES WERE RENOVATED IN BAROQUE STYLE AND NEW CHURCHES WERE BUILT WITH DRAMATIC INTERIORS ORNAMENTED WITH PAINTINGS AND STATUES. CENTO'S MOST IMPORTANT CHURCHES FEATURE MASTERPIECES BY GUERCINO AND HIS SCHOOL.

In the imposing hollow of the apse, where Fra Vincenzo Rossi created his refined wooden choir in the eighteenth century, Antonio Rossi's canvas "Madonna with Child in glory and saints Blaise and Michael the Archangel" triumphs (1751)



Basilica Collegiata di San Biagio

The origins of the church date back to the eleventh century, but its current appearance is the fruit of a complete reconstruction of the Collegiata by Bolognese architect A. Torreggiani between 1730 and 1745. The interior, in the form of a Latin cross with an elliptical dome where the transept meets the central nave, features important canvases by painters such as Bartolomeo Cesi, Domenico Mona, Marcello Provenzali, Guercino (*San Carlo Borromeo in prayer*, c. 1614), Lorenzo Zucchetta, Benedetto Gennari (*Madonna with Child in glory and saints Gaetano, Francesco da Paola and Rosa*), and Antonio Rossi. In the piazza in front of the Basilica sculptor Mauro Mazzali recently created a monumental fountain depicting St. Michael the Archangel killing the dragon.



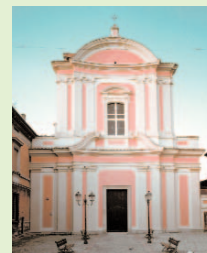
Church of the Rosary

Inaugurated in 1645, it was the favourite place of Guercino, who designed its facade and created a number of works of art for its interior. While the outer facade blends in with the look of the city (with its sobriety, the sunny colours of its masonry and its portico), the interior amazes with its masterpieces of art. In the centre of the vault, suspended from the ceiling, is Guercino's canvas "The Assumption" (about 1622) with its illusionistic perspective "seen from below". The Cento native also painted the four paintings in the 2nd altar on the left, his own chapel: "The Crucifixion", "The Eternal Father in Blessing", "Saint Francis", "Saint John the Baptist".

The high altar designed by Bolognese architect Ferdinando Galli Bibiena has great dramatic impact. It encloses a statue of the Madonna of the Rosary made in Piacenza and then painted by Guercino in 1627.



Above "the Crucifixion" are three canvases in the *da tre tele* in the vault of the chapel alluding to Guercino's name: Giovanni Francesco (St. Francis, St. John) Barbieri (the beard of the Eternal Father)



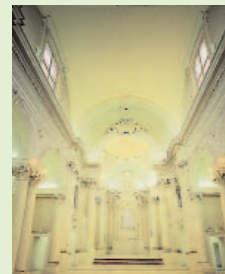
The Baroque church of San Lorenzo was designed by Cento architect P.A. Cavalieri

There are two churches in Corso Guercino of great historical importance now used to host art exhibitions and concerts:

San Lorenzo (1765-1773), whose concave facade, set up on two orders, is the backdrop for the piazza before it, was the church of the Jesuits. Inside, the high altar hosts "The martyrdom of St. Lawrence", a copy of a work by Guercino.



San Filippo Neri, was built in 1680 and expanded later on. The interior is dominated by the marble decoration of the high altar, produced in 1753-54 to a design by Ferdinando Galli Bibiena.



The brightly lit interior of the church of San Lorenzo has a single nave with a dome over the transept and a presbytery with protruding columns

San Pietro

One of the oldest churches in Cento (fourteenth century), it has been heavily remodelled, especially in the mid-nineteenth century, and preserves numerous canvases by seventeenth century artists from the schools of Carracci: (Lucio Massari, "Crucifixion and Saints") and Guercino (Benedetto Zallone, "Assumption with Saints Bonaventure, Frances and donor" and Matteo Loves, "Madonna with Child, Saints and Guardian Angel").

San Sebastiano and San Rocco

Built in 1552, it was renovated and expanded between 1764 and 1770 by architect P. A. Cavalieri. The facade features a loggia which allows the building to fit perfectly into the porticaded sequence along the road. The interior houses such precious canvases as Matteo Loves "Guardian angel" and Orazio Lamberti's "The Crucifixion of Saint Roche and Saint Sebastian" (1578-80), as well as a cycle of frescoes by M. Cremonini (1603) in the oratory.

At the base of the bell tower of San Biagio, rebuilt in the late eighteenth century by architect P. A. Cavalieri, a plaque records Goethe's words immortalising "the land of Guercino" in his "Travels in Italy"



Matteo Loves' "Guardian Angel" in the church of S. Rocco and S. Sebastiano

Below: The Madonna of St. Luke and Saints Gregory the Great, Paul, Anthony the Abbot and Sebastian" by Benedetto Zallone (about 1620) in the Church of San Pietro



"The shroud born by the angels", a youthful fresco by Guercino (about 1615) preserved in the church

Santa Maria Maddalena

Though repeatedly remodelled in the eighteenth century, the facade still preserves the sober, linear architecture it acquired in 1661-1662. The church's precious, intimate interior, is shaped like a Greek cross with a vaulted roof: it is enriched with the addition of two side chapels preserving the canvas "Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint Apollonia" by Benedetto Gennari junior and a seventeenth century statue of the "Madonna of Loreto". The high altar preserves a copy of a canvas by Cesare Gennari entitled "Saint Mary Magdalene in the desert".

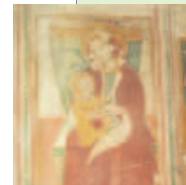


The church of Santa Maria Addolorata or dei Servi

Though of sixteenth century origin, this church was rebuilt in the seventh century and again in the nineteenth century; the simple interior preserves important works of art including: a portion of a Guercino fresco entitled "The shroud born by the angels" and the canvases "Michael the Archangel" by Denijs Calvaert and "Saint Francis receives the stig-mata" attributed to Lorenzo Gennari. In addition, one of the four side chapels preserves a copy of a Guercino painting: "Saint Carlo Borromeo in prayer".



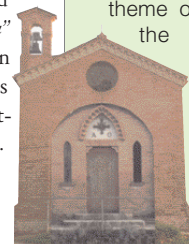
Oratorio della Crocetta



It was probably built before the end of the fourteenth century at a crossroads (hence the name "Crocetta").

The oratorio seems to have been built over the bed of an old road travelled by pilgrims. The interior, with a single nave and a Gothic apse with five arcades, features figured decoration in devotional squares dating back to 1491-1503:

in addition to the image of the Madonna, to whom the oratory is dedicated, the frescoes represent saints whose figures are linked with the theme of pilgrimage or the plague (the Oratorio probably was probably originally a hospital chapel).



Municipal Art Gallery

THE MUSEUMS OF CENTO ARE NOT ONLY A TREASURE CHEST OF GREAT MASTERPIECES BUT THE SITE OF EVER CULTURAL ACTIVITIES. TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS, CONFERENCES, CONCERTS, THEMATIC EXHIBITION ROUTES, EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS AND THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES MAKE THE ART COLLECTIONS COME TO LIFE, KEEPING THEM UP TO DATE AND ATTRACTING A VAST PUBLIC .



The Municipal Art Gallery opened in 1839 to bring together works of art recovered after Napoleon's requisitions in the *Palazzo del Monte di Pietà* (1782). The original group of artworks retrieved from France was expanded with many more paintings purchased by the City and donated by institutions and individuals.

The museum is still growing with the addition of valuable works of art donated by numerous benefactors (*Cassa di Risparmio di Cento Foundation*, Sir Denis



Mabon, "*Amici della Pinacoteca Civica*" Association).

The Municipal Art Gallery of Cento contains the world's largest collection of works by *Guercino* and his *School*, including drawings and engravings. They allow us to trace the evolution of the great master's style: from the impetuous, dramatic painting with plenty of *chiaroscuro* of his youth to the classicism of his maturity, with its aristocratic, idealised images. His youthful works are characterised by strong use of *chiaroscuro*, intense colour contrasts and use of patches of colour descending from Venetian tonalism (and Titian above all). *Guercino* was strongly

On the left: "*Putto squeezing a wineskin*" (1869 by *Stefano Galletti*) and "*Working hemp*" (1615-17) by *Guercino*, a fresco removed from the Landscape Room in the Pannini Home.



Interno ed esterno della Pinacoteca Civica

More than Guercino

The Municipal Art Gallery is more than just *Guercino*: the building's two floors offer a variety of different works, themes and historical periods.

- The popular art of the "Mourning over the Dead Christ" represented by a fifteenth century wooden group of Nordic origin.
- The sixteenth century, represented by painters of Emilia (*Marcello Provenzali*, *Domenico Panetti*, *Bagnacavallo junior*, *Orazio Sammachini*, *Denijs Calvaert*, *Ludovico Carracci*) and Nordic mannerists.
- Still lifes in the two styles of the seventeenth century in Emilia: the rustic-popular still life and the aristocratic-decorative still life.
- The eighteenth century, represented by the scenographic perspective painting of *Galli Bibiena*, the light, discrete colour combinations of *Ubaldo Gandolfi* and the soft plasticism of *Ercole Graziani*.
- The sculptures of local sculptor *Stefano Galletti*, who worked all over Italy in the late nineteenth century.

influenced by the art of Ludovico Carracci, and was particularly fond of a canvas now kept in the Municipal Gallery, the so-called “Carraccina” (1591), from which the Cento native derived his view of art as popular communication, humanisation of the divine, a language of gestures and looks, the simple and naturalistic representation of the affections.

His works prior to 1621 (“*Landscape with rider*”, “*Frescoes from the Pannini Home*”, “*The Madonna with Child, Saint Peter and Saint Carlo Borromeo*”, “*The Madonna del Carmine with Saint Albert*”, “*Saint Bernardino in prayer before the Madonna of Loreto*”, “*The giving of the keys to Saint Peter*”, “*The Sybil*”) reveal his highly skilled use of colour, his dynamic composition, his original sensibility in representing the relationship between the figure and space, the popular realism of his faces and gestures and the atmospheric vibrations of Guercino’s characteristic landscapes.

In 1621 the new Pope Gregory XV invited Guercino to Rome: during his two years in the Eternal City he produced works characterised by daring compositions, unusual perspectives, dynamic gestures and illusionistic visual effects, but was nonetheless profoundly affected by the suggestions of classicist painting, above all Domenichino. The fruit of this influence appeared in his works of the late ‘20s, what is referred to as his transitional period: “*The Madonna with Blessing Child*” (1629) and “*The Apparition of Christ before the Madonna*” (1628-30) present simplified compositions, more controlled gestures, serene and harmonious spaces, aristocratic features. These works reflect the idealism of Guido Reni and anticipate the last phase in the Master’s painting, the classicist phase which began in the thirties. In his last period the contrasts of chiaroscuro, the “big stains”, are gone, gestures are noble,



Above and below: Guercino’s frescoes removed from the Pannini home
The frescoes in the Pannini home, produced by Guercino and Lorenzo Gennari between 1615 and 1617, were detached and applied to canvas. In 1945 just under half of the works were donated to the Municipal Art Gallery. The various themes treated (stories of Ulysses, stories of Rinaldo and Armida, hunts, the seasons, landscapes, horses) reveal Guercino’s love of landscape painting, an interest which is apparent in all his paintings and graphic works. Giovavanni Battista nel deser-
to “*Saint John the Baptist in the Deser*” (1650) di Guercino



sober and composed, faces are perfect, and grace, idealisation and serenity dominate solemn, monumental compositions.

The death of Guido Reni (1642) was the main reason for Guercino’s move to Bologna: the Cento painter intended to fill in the void which Guido had left behind and inherit his commissions. One work exemplifying the rarefied refinement of his Bolognese period is “*Saint John the Baptist in the desert*” (1650). Guercino died in Bologna in 1666 and was buried in the church of San Salvatore, where he still rests today, next to his brother Paolo Antonio.

Paolo Antonio Barbieri was an active member of the school of Guercino along with other painters, all of whose works are included in the Municipal Gallery’s collections: *Benedetto Zallone, Lorenzo Gennari, Bartolomeo Gennari, Benedetto Gennari junior, Cesare Gennari, Matteo Loves*.

One beautiful canvas illustrating the highly organised teamwork of the Cento school is “*The Supper at Emmaus*”: Guercino painted the face and hands of Christ, Paolo Antonio Barbieri the still life, and another assistant, probably Matteo Loves, painted the rest of the canvas.

The Municipal Art Gallery includes a noteworthy collection of drawings by Guercino and his school and a series of seventeenth to nineteenth century engravings based on works by Guercino.



“*Madonna with Blessing Child*” (1629): this work, admired by Goethe, is one of Guercino’s few signed and dated works. The back of the canvas bears the text JOOVANES FRANCISCUS [BE]RIVS CENTENSIS FECIT ANO 1629.

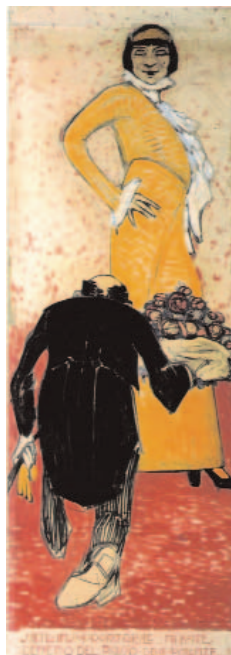
The “*Sibyl*,” (1620-21), an icon of Guercino’s golden age, reveals the dramatic chiaroscuro light effects and the concentration of forms within the space of the canvas typical of Guercino’s youth. In 2004 Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Cento donated the canvas to the Municipal Art Gallery.



Modern Art Gallery



Dedicated to Cento artist **Aroldo Bonzagni** (1887-1918), “an elegant but vigorous painter, an assiduous, penetrating cartoonist, capable of producing good social and political satire, a successful inventor in the still almost new field of advertising”. This rich collection of modern art, housed in the Governor’s Palace since 1988, is a product of the passionate commitment of Aroldo’s sister Elva Bonzagni, who wished to institute a prestigious art collection in memory of her brother. The existing installation at the Gallery covers two floors, arranged in chronological order, beginning with the works of the Cento painter and featuring the rich documentation of the Bonzagni Archive, and continues with the works of painters who knew him and shared the cultural climate of the early decades of the twentieth century, such as *Dudreville*, *Balla* (who took Bonzagni’s place in the futurists’ group), *Russolo*, *Sironi*, *Bucci*, *Carpi*, *Dudovich* and *Wildt* (who made Aroldo’s funeral monument), enriched with works from the ‘50s and ‘60s on the second floor by *Sassu*, *Annigoni*, *Cantatore*, *Tassinari*, *Treccani*, *Guttuso*, *Birilli*,



A. Bonzagni “*You are unbearable... (or Lady in Yellow)*” (c. 1912)



A. Bonzagni “*Molinari with violin*” (1918)

Morlotti, *Pomodoro*, *Fontana*, *Capogrossi* and *Reggiani*, and continuing with a highly representative group of the most recent avant-garde movements.



Sandro Parmeggiani Museum



Sandro Parmeggiani,
“*La rosa e la candela*”
(1935)

The museum is housed in the Renazzo City Hall, built in 1927 to plans by Giuseppe Costa. The Museum was established by donation of painter **Sandro Parmeggiani** (Milan 1910 - 2004) of a significant number of his works, representing the evolution of twentieth century Italian art, to the Cassa di Risparmio in Cento. Starting with this original core, the museum’s collection expanded with the

addition of numerous paintings and sculptures by prominent contemporary Italian artists.

The museum has a busy calendar of exhibitions, conferences and meetings with artists, and works to protect local artworks and promote new works.



Centopievese School of Arts and Crafts

Established in 1978, the school plays an active role in safeguarding the wealth of local craftsmen’s skills and recovering and making the most of local arts and crafts traditions. Every year it offers courses in intaglio, wooden restoration, classic violin-making, drawing, papier-mâché, printing, engraving, painting and decoration, pottery, embroidery, sculpture and painting on silk.

The villages

ALBERONE Stands on land involved in the traditional local land-sharing scheme known as Partecipanza Agraria and is named after a great oak marking the border between the territory of Finale Emilia and the lands of Bologna or, more likely, derives from the Latin word "albareum" (treed place, poplar grove). *Church of Santa Maria del Salice*: built in neo-gothic style beginning in 1899.

BUONACOMPRA Originally known by the name Malacompra, modified to today's more positive-sounding name.

Church of San Martino di Tours: its existence is documented as far back as 1399, but it was reworked in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Contains a canvas attributed to Bartolomeo Gennari, "*La Madonna del Carmine*".

CASUMARO There are a number of theories as to the historical origin of this village's name, all bordering on legend. The best-known story is that the Countess Matilde di Canossa called the place "caso amaro" (bitter chance) because she lost a child there, who tragically drowned in a ditch. But it is more likely that the name derives from "casamari", the term used to identify a number of poor farmers' huts in the valley. The **Church of San Lorenzo** was founded in 1449 by the bishop of Modena. The exterior and the bell tower were rebuilt in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The interior conserves a number of precious artworks: the wooden ceiling with its lacunars painted with "*Saint Lawrence in glory*", the vault of the presbytery frescoed in the early eighteenth century with "*The Trinity in glory*", part of a fresco on the right wall of the nave representing "*The resurrected Christ*" (fifteenth century) and, finally, a painting by Carlo Bononi, "*The glory of the martyrdom of Saint Lawrence and Saint Pancras*" (1608).

BETWEEN THE RENO AND PANARO RIVERS, THE CENTO COUNTRYSIDE IS A UNIQUE LANDSCAPE IN WHICH THE COUNTRY VILLAGES SHARE THE SAME LOCAL IDENTITY AS THE CITY, DOMINATED BY THE FERTILE PLAINS AND WATERS.



The countryside with its fields and orchards.



CORPORENO The name illustrates the village's close relationship with the Reno river. At one time it flowed to the west of the village, but in the sixteenth century it was deviated to the east after a flood.. The *Church of San Giorgio* dates back to the fourteenth century but was rebuilt in the eighteenth century. It conserves "*The Mysteries of the Rosary and Angels*" by Guercino and "*Saint George killing the dragon*" by Matteo Loves.

XII MORELLI According to the legend, the name of this village refers to the twelve dark horses ("morelli") of the Countess Matilde di Canossa, but it is more likely that it actually derives from a local unit used to measure land, the morello (from the Greek "more": lot, portion). **Church of the Santissima Trinità**: already in existence in the sixteenth century, it was completely rebuilt in 1970.

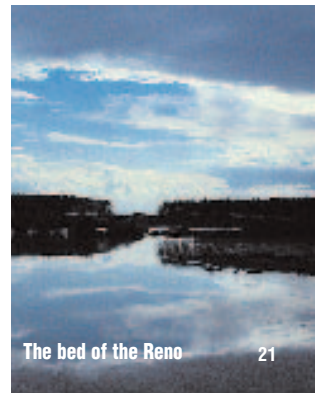
RENAZZO The origin of the village is linked with the course of the Reno (whose repeated floods gave rise to the name "Renaccio" with its negative connotations) and the Partecipanza Agraria land-sharing system. **Church of San Sebastiano**: dating back to the fifteenth century, it now appears in the eighteenth century form designed by Bolognese architect C. F. Dotti. Its harmonious interior preserves three canvases from Guercino's youthful period ("*Miracle of Saint Carlo Borromeo*", "*Madonna with Child and Saints Pancreas and Claire*", "*Madonna enthroned with Saints Francis, Anthony the Abbot and Bovo*") and one attributed to Benedetto Gennari junior depicting "*Saint Sebastian*".

RENO CENTESE The name is a direct reference to the capricious course of the Reno river, whose floods formed the soils on which the first farmers settled after the land reclamation project. **Church of Sant'Anna**: built in 1772 as a simple oratory, it became a parish church in the mid-nineteenth century, when it was almost entirely rebuilt.

"*The Mysteries of the Rosary and Angels*" (detail) by Guercino, preserved in the church of San Giorgio in Coropreno



Detail of a painting in the Church of San Sebastiano in Renazzo, "*A miracle of Saint Carlo Borromeo*" 1613-14 c.) by Guercino



The bed of the Reno

Gastronomy:

old inns and country festivals

The traditional dishes and wines of the Cento area owe a lot to the three neighbouring cities: **Bologna** (tortellini, ricotta tortelloni, nocino liqueur), **Modena** (cotechino, salame alla brace and zampone sausages, lambrusco wine) and **Ferrara** (bread, snails, salama da sugo, squash-filled tortelloni, tagliatelle pie). Its position on a border promoted contamination with dishes and recipes which were copied, reworked or created out of nothing. The basic ingredients of the local cooking come from the earth and from animals. Flavours are strong to make up for the absence of costly, refined ingredients. **Homemade pasta** reigns supreme in the local cuisine. Made with flour, eggs and... "hands with just the right amount of heat", homemade pasta symbolises the evolution of traditional peasants' mainstays into rich, elaborate dishes thanks to revision in the Renaissance by the cooks at the Este court and in the vil-

las of Bolognese nobles. If homemade pasta is the queen, the king of the local gastronomic tradition is without a doubt **pork**, which is used not only as a filling for tortellini but to prepare sausages of all kinds (cotechino, porchetta, salame alla brace, zampone, salama da sugo). With its rich, full-bodied first courses and highly flavoured second courses of meat, the local cuisine goes best with red wines such as those of the Bolognese hills, Colli bolognesi, or Bosco eliceo, Lambrusco or Sangiovese. A good meal is always topped with a local liqueur, nocino, still made at home with green walnuts gathered on the feast of Saint John, June 24. Where to enjoy this wealth of flavours and aromas? Cento's traditional restaurants and inns faithfully continue the local gastronomic tradition. And in summer, 14 different festivals held in different parts of the area offer more opportunities to sample the local specialities.

Cento in Tavola Association



An association of restaurateurs, hotel operators and shop owners specialising in traditional local foods which organises initiatives promoting Cento's local gastronomic traditions year-round. Established to promote local food and wines and protect consumers with a guarantee of quality food and hospitality.

SAGRA DEL CASTRATO MUTTON FESTIVAL

(Renazzo – first half of June)

SAGRA DELLA PORCHETTA ROAST PORK FESTIVAL

(Corporeno – second half of June)

SAGRA DEL TORTELLINO TORTELLINI FESTIVAL

(Reno Centese – end of June – beginning of July, winter edition: middle of October)

FESTA D'ESTATE SUMMER FESTIVAL

(XII Morelli – early July)

SAGRA DEL PORTELLONE TORTELLONE FESTIVAL

(Bevilacqua – middle of July)

FIERA DELLE PERE PEAR FESTIVAL

(Renazzo – middle of July)

BUONACOMPRA SAUSAGE FESTIVAL

(Buonacompra – second half of July)

SAGRA DI SANT'ANNA FESTIVAL OF SAINT ANNA

(Reno Centese – end of July)

SAGRA DELLA LUMACA SNAIL FESTIVAL

(Casumaro – first half of August)

SAGRA DEL SALAME ALLABRACE GRILLED SAUSAGE FESTIVAL

(XII Morelli – middle of August)

SAGRA DEL BUE OX FESTIVAL

(Cento – middle of August)

SAGRA DELL'ANATRA DUCK FESTIVAL

(Pilastrello – second half of August)

SAGRA DEL COTECHINO COTECHINO SAUSAGE FESTIVAL

(Alberone – end of August – beginning of September)

SAGRA DEL PRIMO PIATTO PASTA FESTIVAL

(Bevilacqua – middle of September)



Green Cento

The Cento area offers numerous parks, favourite destinations for children in particular, who enjoy festivals, games, snacks, stories, shows and expeditions in search of local wildlife:

- **Parco del Reno** (Cento), with a children's playground and a little pond.
- **Parco "I gorghi"** (Renazzo) is a 20,000 m² nature reserve, home to a dozen native tree species. Every July a two-day rock music festival called "Woodstock" is held here (visitors can camp in the park).
- **Parco di Malaffitto** (Renazzo): one of a very few areas (2880 m²) where nature, habitat and the rural landscape have remained unchanged over time.
- **Giardino del Gigante** (Cento): an environmental work of art featuring gigantic interactive sculptures by artist Marco Pellizzola.

• **Legambiente Botanical Garden** (Torrespada): created as an environmental education project for children in nursery school and elementary school, who have planted trees in the park for 8 years in a row.

A variety of sports facilities are available for leisure and exercise.

As well as numerous gyms and playing fields, Cento offers track and field, tennis

THE MULTICOLOURED COUNTRYSIDE OF THE CENTO AREA OPENING UP ON THE HORIZON IS IDEAL FOR OPEN AIR ACTIVITIES, CYCLING, JOGGING, BIRDWATCHING, ORIENTEERING AND HORSE-RIDING. THE BANKS OF THE RENO ARE THE PERFECT PLACE FOR PRACTICING ALL THESE SPORTS, AND THERE ARE MANY MORE SPOTS IN THE CENTO COUNTRYSIDE WHERE THE LANDSCAPE TAKES OVER AND ALLOWS US TO LOSE OURSELVES IN CONTACT WITH NATURE.

courts, a football stadium, a fitness circuit, a velodrome, a sports complex and a swimming pool.

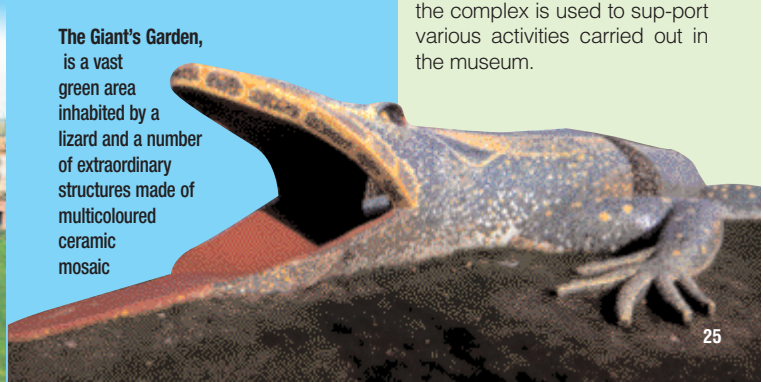
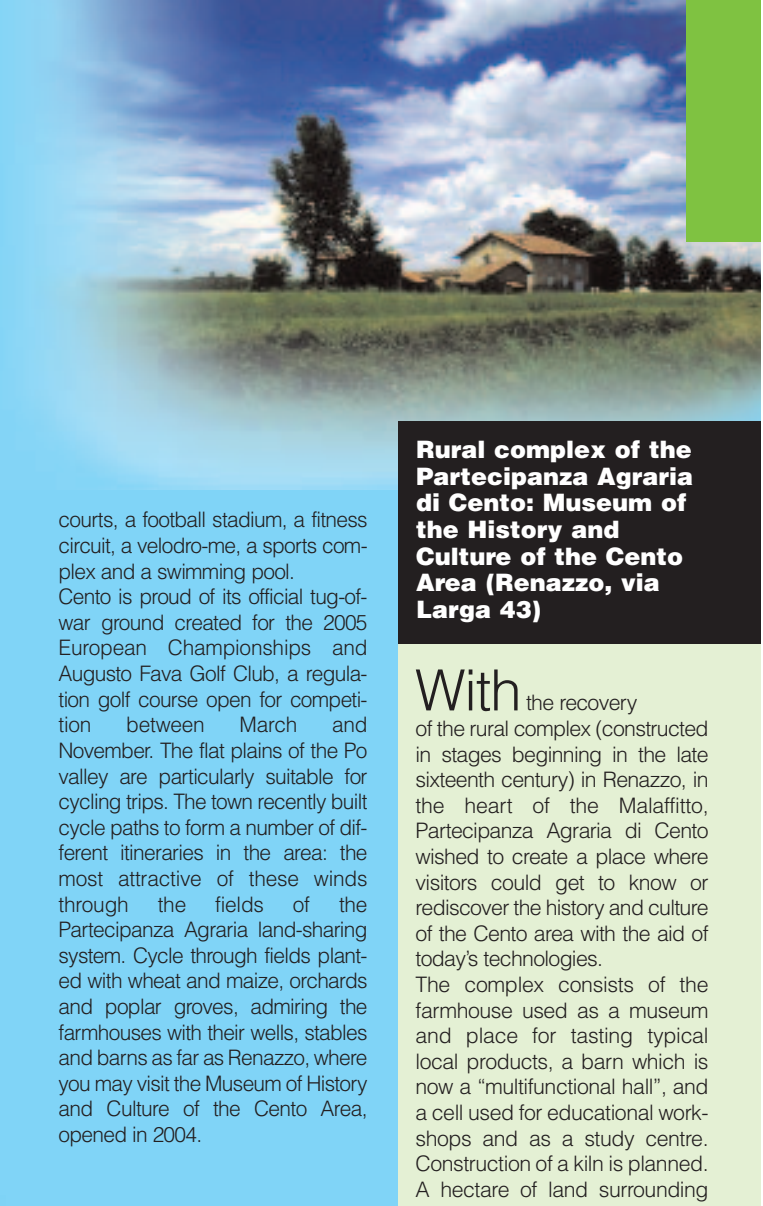
Cento is proud of its official tug-of-war ground created for the 2005 European Championships and Augusto Fava Golf Club, a regulation golf course open for competition between March and November. The flat plains of the Po valley are particularly suitable for cycling trips. The town recently built cycle paths to form a number of different itineraries in the area: the most attractive of these winds through the fields of the Partecipanza Agraria land-sharing system. Cycle through fields planted with wheat and maize, orchards and poplar groves, admiring the farmhouses with their wells, stables and barns as far as Renazzo, where you may visit the Museum of History and Culture of the Cento Area, opened in 2004.

Rural complex of the Partecipanza Agraria di Cento: Museum of the History and Culture of the Cento Area (Renazzo, via Larga 43)

With the recovery of the rural complex (constructed in stages beginning in the late sixteenth century) in Renazzo, in the heart of the Malaffitto, Partecipanza Agraria di Cento wished to create a place where visitors could get to know or rediscover the history and culture of the Cento area with the aid of today's technologies.

The complex consists of the farmhouse used as a museum and place for tasting typical local products, a barn which is now a "multifunctional hall", and a cell used for educational workshops and as a study centre. Construction of a kiln is planned. A hectare of land surrounding the complex is used to support various activities carried out in the museum.

The Giant's Garden, is a vast green area inhabited by a lizard and a number of extraordinary structures made of multicoloured ceramic mosaic



Events in Cento

VISIT CENTO AT ANY TIME OF YEAR TO ENJOY THE MANY CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL EVENTS HELD IN THE AREA.

Il Rogo delle Befane e dei Befanoni **The Witches' Bonfire**

(January 5-6 and 16-17)
Bonfires are lit in the piazzas of Cento and the surrounding villages and giant witches and warlocks (*Vciòn*) are burnt before the delighted eyes of the children, as they enjoy biscuits and traditional local sweets.

Crafts market

(third Saturday of every month)
Held in the evocative setting of Piazza Guercino.

CENTO EUROPEAN CARNIVAL

(5 Sundays from January to March).

In 1615 the painter Guercino immortalised the carnival celebrations held in the piazza in Cento in a fresco in the Pannini home. Almost four centuries later, the people of Cento still celebrate their carnival for five Sundays in a row of music and dancing. Six *carnival societies* vie for first place in a parade of enormous papier-mâché floats

up to 20 metres high, while wild groups of figures in costume

accompany the parade, pouring gifts and prizes onto the public from the top of the floats. In addition to the Sunday parades, the city comes alive every day during carnival, with artistic itineraries, wine and food tastings, games, dramatic performances, con-

certs, arts and crafts workshops and exhibitions, in a truly unique celebration.

Patron Saint's Festival

(February 3)

The people of Cento celebrate the day of Saint Blaise or San Biagio, protector of wool carders and "helpful" saint invoked to protect the throat. Religious celebrations and the ritual of the blessed cord are accompanied by a fair of local foods and crafts.

Musica Coelesis

(April to May)

A concert series held in one of Cento's most beautiful churches, with the participation of famous soloists and internationally renowned chamber music ensembles.

Culture Week

(May)

A whole week dedicated to the discovery of Cento's artistic heritage: guided tours of palaces and archives which are normally closed to the public, thematic itineraries, debates and conferences, presentation of new studies and discoveries.





PASQUA ROSATA IL PALIO DI CENTO (MEDIEVAL RE-ENACTMENT)

(May-June)

June 8, 1443, the eve of Pentecost: the battle rages on the ramparts of the Fortress. Just as the Cento army is about to surrender in the heroic battle to defend its lands against the Viscount's troops led by Luigi Dal Verne, Michael the Archangel appears, reviving the courage of the fighters for Cento and leading them to victory. The Palio of Cento goes on for an entire weekend in memory of this miraculous event.

The evocative re-enactment includes historical games, street performers, displays of arms,

costumed parades, traditional dances, narration of historical events and a traditional re-enactment of the armed assault on the Fortress.

Sogni d'Estate Summerdreams

(June and July)

A series of open-air performances is held in Cento's historical courtyards and piazzas.

August holidays in the land of Guercino

(August)

A cycling tour with stops to try local food and wines in traditional restaurants.

SETTEMBRE CENTESE

(September)

A month of culture, sports, folklore and shows. At the heart of it all, the historical Fair that the people of Cento have held in connection with the celebrations of Mary on September 8 for more than 400 years. The Fair now lasts five days and is above all a presentation of the area's typical produce, cuisine and crafts. It closes with a magnificent night of fireworks.

Lungo le Strade dell'Alto Ferrarese

Along the roads of the upper Ferrara countryside

(September)

A historical and artistic itinerary for discovery of Cento and the surrounding area, culminating in an international exhibition and exchange of collectors' sugar packets.

Italian flag-throwing choreography championships

(second Sunday in October)

Italy's most important historical flag-throwers come together for competitions of great choreographic complexity, throwing their flags and forming figures and combinations in synchrony with the rhythmic accompaniment of the drums.

Theatre season

(October to May)

A packed calendar of events of various different genres: Cabaret, Prose, Operetta, Musical, Dance and Ballet, Opera and Symphony, Theatre in Dialect, Shows for children. Every Saturday afternoon, "Momenti Musicali": free concerts in the Theatre Foyer.

Arte e Bacco Art and Bacchus

(November)

A series of interesting visits to artists' studios and wine-tastings, scheduled to coincide with the opening of the new wine.

"Far salotto in Galleria" art appreciation sessions

(December to May)

Evenings of art and ideas in the Modern Art Gallery. Key figures on Cento's cultural scene offer their highly personal reading of a work and a theme, involving the public in an exercise in interpretation.

Cassa di Risparmio di Cento Foundation International Children's Literature Award

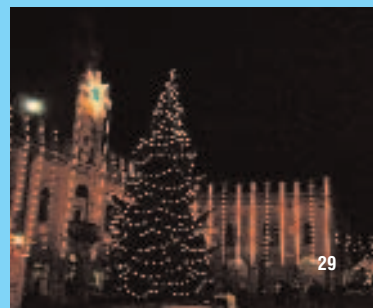
(December)

A competition for writers and illustrators combined with a series of encounters aimed at encouraging children to read.

Christmas in Cento

(December)

A month of shows for children, Christmas crafts markets, concerts and Christmas music, and an important exhibition of artistic and mechanical Christmas crèches (Biennale dei Presepi).



Restaurants and Pizzerias

OSTERIA DA CENCIO

Via Provenzani 12/d, Cento
Tel. 051/6831880

OSTERIA VINO E...

Via O. Malagodi 8, Cento
Tel. 051/902663

PIZZERIA-RISTORANTE SAMANTA

Piazzale Ferrarese 100, Cento
Tel. 051/6836953

PIZZERIA-RISTORANTE AL PORTICETTO

Via Meucci 7, Cento
Tel. 051/6836551

PIZZERIA VESUVIO

Via Cavour 15, Cento
Tel. 051/902478

PIZZERIA GREEN PARK

Via XX Settembre 33, Cento
Tel. 051/6830229

RISTORANTE LA GRIGLIATA

Via Risorgimento 15, Cento
Tel. 051/6831878

RISTORANTE AL CASTELLO

Via Giovannina 57, Cento
Tel. 051/6836053

RISTORANTE EUROPA

Via IV Novembre 16, Cento
Tel. 051/903319

RISTORANTE CINESE NUOVA SHANGAI

Via I Maggio, Cento
Tel. 051/6836616

RISTORANTE CINESE DRAGONE

Via Donati 14, Cento
Tel. 051/6831491

RISTORANTE CARACOLES

Via Casumaro 28, Casumaro
Tel. 051/6849952

RISTORANTE-PIZZERIA DEL TIGLIO

Via Correggio 41, Casumaro
Tel. 051/6849801

RISTORANTE IL CENACOLO

Via Casumaro-Bondeno 381/F, Casumaro
Tel. 051/6848130

TRATTORIA CANTONE II

Via Bondenese 138, Casumaro
Tel. 051/6849861

RISTORANTE VALENTINA

Via Boschetti 11, Casumaro
Tel. 051/6849862

LA VECCHIA OSTERIA DI BIGHI ENRICO

Via Correggio 509, Casumaro
Tel. 051/6846049

RISTORANTE PER BACCO

Via del Lavoro a/b, Casumaro
Tel. 051/6849991

RISTORANTE LA PALLIDA LUNA BRASSERIE

Via Molino 27, Corporeno (località Molino
Albergati) Tel. 051/6842107

RISTORANTE - PIZZERIA PALLADIO

Via Statale 143/B, Corporeno
Tel. e Fax 051/972090

OSTERIA DEI LAGHI

Via Monsignore di Sotto 5, XII Morelli
Tel. 051/6841011

LA CASA DI CAMPAGNA

Via Nuova 9, XII Morelli (località Torre Spada)
Tel. 051/6851122

PIZZERIA CIRO

Via Maestrola 6, XII Morelli
Tel. 051/6841075

RISTORANTE-PIZZERIA I TRE MOSCHETTIERI

Via Renazzo 48, Renazzo
Tel. 051/900017

RISTORANTE LE PARIS

Via di Renazzo 109, Renazzo
Tel. 051/900094

TRATTORIA I PORTOGHESI DUBISI

Via Maestra Monca 16, Renazzo
Tel. 051/900650

TRATTORIA CAVALIERI DUCATI

Via Maestra Grande 47, Renazzo
Tel. 051/900713

PIZZERIA - RISTORANTE LA PERGOLA

Via Tassinari 30, Renazzo
Tel. 051/909124

PIZZERIA CONDOR

Via Alberelli 7, Renazzo
Tel. 051/900154

RISTORANTE PIZZERIA AL SOLITO POSTO

Via Riga 66/a, Renazzo
Tel. 051/900725

TRATTORIA PIZZERIA CANTAGALLO

Via Chiesa, 24/a Alberone di Cento
Tel. 051/6841764 Cell. 347/1421985

Hotels, Residences, Pensions, B&Bs, Farm Holidays

ALBERGO AL CASTELLO ****

Via Giovannina 57, Cento
Tel. 051/6836053 - 6836066
Fax 051/6835990
www.halcastello.it
info@halcastello.it

AL CASTELLO DEPENDANCE ***

Via Giovannina 57, Cento
Tel. 051/6836053 Fax 051/6835990
www.halcastello.it
info@halcastello.it

HOTEL EUROPA ***

Via IV Novembre 16, Cento
Tel. 051/903319 Fax 051/902213
heuropacento@tiscali.it

HOTEL RESIDENCE WHITE PALACE ***

Via Bologna 15/2, Cento
Tel. 051/6832754 Fax 051/6832385
www.whitepalace.it info@whitepalace.it

HOTEL LUNA BLU ***

Via del Lavoro 1/b, Casumaro
Tel. 051/6849994 Fax 051/6846091
www.hotellunablu.it info@hotellunablu.it

ALBERGO I TRE MOSCHETTIERI ***

Via Renazzo 48, Renazzo
Tel. 051/900017 Fax 051/909814
www.hoteltreroschettieri.it
hoteltreroschettieri@libero.it

ALBERGO SOLE *

Via Donati 28/1, Cento
Tel. 051/6831892 Fax 051/904240

RESIDENCE WELCOME

Via Mazzini 11, Cento
Fax 051/6831122 Cell. 339/7229573
www.residencewelcome.it

RESIDENCE LA CORTE

Via D. Coraini 6, Cento
Tel. 340/9764781

BED & BREAKFAST RIGHI

Via A. Righi 13/1, Cento
Tel. 051/6830609 Cell. 340/5464625
rosariocanno@tiscali.it

AFFITTACAMERE DO RE MI

Via Meucci 7, Cento
Tel. 051/6836551 Cell. 335/5419741

PENSIONE CORPORENO

Via Statale per Ferrara 73, Corporeno
Tel. e Fax 0532/350547 Cell. 339/7838054

AGRITURISMO LA LEPRE BIANCA

Via Renazzo 88, Renazzo
Tel. e Fax 051/6850102 Cell. 328/7858407
biancalepre@aliceposta.it

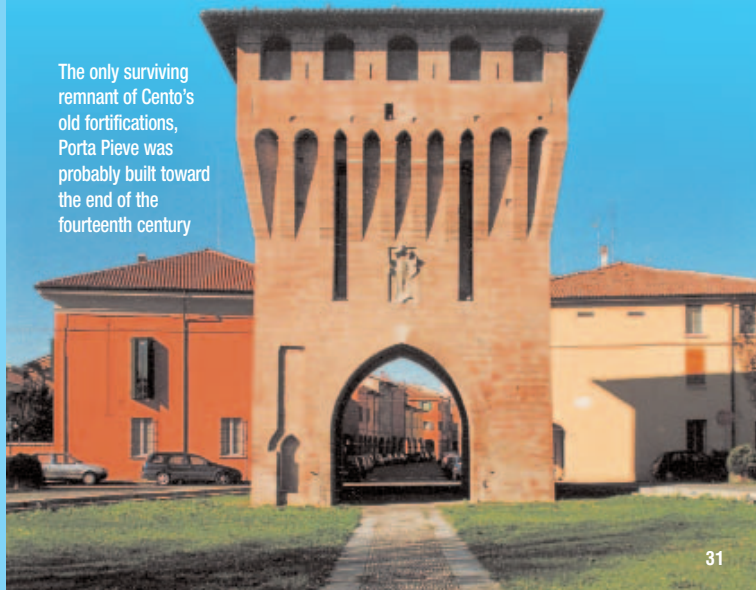
AZIENDA AGRITURISTICA LA CASA DI CAMPAGNA

Via Nuova 9, Renazzo Tel. 051/909005

RESIDENCE AGRITURISTICO CORTE GALVANA

Via 2 Ponti 9, Loc. Pilastrello
Tel. e Fax 051/6842217 Cell. 340/4873423
galvana@libero.it

The only surviving remnant of Cento's old fortifications, Porta Pieve was probably built toward the end of the fourteenth century





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