

**Milano**  
City of  
Literature



# MILANO

## *Across the pages*

*Curiosities, spots and characters that have left their mark on the city's literary history*

[#milanotralepagine](#)





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Welcome to

**MILANO  
CITY OF LITERATURE**

In 2017, Milan was designated a **Creative City of Literature by UNESCO**, in recognition of its long and rich literary tradition and dynamic publishing scene.

The birthplace of great authors, Milan has hosted Nobel Prize winners, welcomed writers from all over the world and seen the birth and development of major publishing houses and national newspapers. Strolling through the streets of the city, one comes across many spots that bear witness to the lives of authors and publishers and tell the story of the city and the professions that are traditionally linked to the publishing industry.



Following its designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Literature, Milan began **rediscovering and enhancing** these spots, starting with **Milano editoriale**, an initial mapping of the most significant institutions for the promotion of reading – libraries, bookshops and publishing houses – carried out in 2018.

Every Sunday, the Facebook page **Milano City of Literature** shares curiosities about places and people who, in the most diverse ways, have left their mark on the city's literary history. This brochure collects a selection of these curiosities, which tell of the publishing and literary vocation of Milan's neighbourhoods, one of the aspects that is still less known, but which has a greater impact on the history and cultural tradition of the city.

# HISTORIC CENTRE

## Montale's Red Oak



It is said that **Eugenio Montale** (1896–1981), Nobel Prize winner for Literature, used to go to the foot of an old red oak tree, in the **Indro Montanelli gardens**, to relax or find inspiration, during the years when he worked at *Il Corriere della Sera* newspaper. In the collection "La bufera e altro", Montale dedicates a poem to an oak tree. In 2019, the oak tree collapsed due to a heavy storm. Today, an enormous trunk remains, which has become functional for the gardens' biodiversity.

## Marinetti's house

It was **Filippo Tommaso Marinetti** (1876–1944), poet and writer, who coined the term '**Futurismo**' to indicate the movement that saw the light of day in 1909 with the publication of the '**Futurist Manifesto**' in *Le Figaro*. At Corso Venezia 21, a plaque marks his home where he founded the magazine 'Poesia' in 1905 to which, among others, authors such as Pascoli, Trilussa, Gozzano collaborated.



## Fashion, publishing and literature



Milan has a long tradition linking fashion, publishing and literature. Milan's fashion publishing adventure is the subject of a number of library collections: the **Milano fashion library**, a documentation centre entirely dedicated to the world of fashion, and **Palazzo Morando Costume Moda Immagine**, aimed at enhancing the extraordinary heritage of clothes and accessories of the City of Milan.

## The bow of the brig Otago

At the **Museo Nazionale Scienza e Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci**, there is a section of the bow of the brig Otago, which was commanded by the famous Anglo-Polish writer **Joseph Conrad** (1857–1924). The brig Otago plied the Australian seas until it was abandoned in Tasmania. The publisher **Ugo Mursia** learned of the existence of the wreck, and managed to buy its prow, giving it to the Museum, where it can still be seen today.



# CENTRALE STATION, GORLA, TURRO, GRECO, CRESCENZAGO



## *The Centrale Station in the eyes of Anna Ortese*

in the short story “**Una notte alla Stazione**”, part of the 1958 collection “**Silenzio a Milano**”, the poet **Anna Maria Ortese** (1914–1998) talks about Milan's Centrale Station, where she had gone on assignment for the newspaper *L'Unità*. At night, the train station appears to her as a mysterious, evocative and at times inhuman place. The narration of that time spent inside it becomes a way to reflect on the transformations of the city.



## *The Dante in via Padova*

In via Padova, intersection with via Bassano del Grappa, is a colourful portrait of **Dante Alighieri**, unveiled on 14 September 2021 to mark the 700th anniversary of the supreme poet's death. Instead of the red cassock Dante wears a colourful poncho, a traditional South American garment. The portrait is in fact the work of Ecuadorian artist **Boris Veliz** and celebrates the union between our country and Latin America.



## *The Cassina de' Pomm*

Along the **Naviglio della Martesana** is the oldest ‘Cascina’ (farmstead) in Milan that has remained intact. In chapter 33 of “**I Promessi Sposi**” by Alessandro Manzoni, Renzo arrives in Greco in the evening, where he spends the night sheltering under a farmhouse porch – precisely the Cassina de' Pomm – on top of a pile of hay. In the 18th century, the Cassina became a guesthouse, where, among others, **Stendhal** and **Carlo Porta** stayed, who refer to it in their works.



## *Bianciardi's torraccione*

“**La vita agra**” (1962) is **Luciano Bianciardi's** most successful novel, and his autobiography. The protagonist leaves the province to go and live in Milan with the intention of avenging the miners who died in an accident at work and takes refuge in the Torraccione (**Torre Galfa**), which he describes beautifully, making it the symbol of modern alienation in the economic boom years. Carlo Lizzani made a film of it in 1984 with Ugo Tognazzi.

# CITTÀ STUDI, LAMBRATE, VENEZIA

## *The history of the 20th century in via Trentacoste*



The project "Or.Me. Ortica Memoria" since 2017 has led to the creation of numerous murals in the Ortica district. The protagonist of the depictions is the **history of the 20th century**. In via Trentacoste, on the wall of the Pier Paolo Pasolini Institute, there is a mural dedicated to the women who made the 20th century great. Designed by the **Orticanoodles** collective, the mural represents, among others, writers, poets and journalists such as **Camilla Cederna, Alda Merini, Antonia Pozzi and Ersilia Majno**.

## *“Miracolo a Milano” in via Peroni*



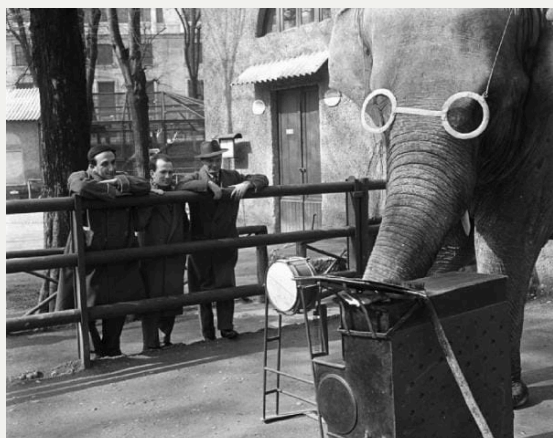
In via Valvassori Peroni 21 is a mural dedicated to the famous film "Miracolo a Milano", taken from the novel "Totò il buono" by **Cesare Zavattini** (1943). Unveiled in 2022, the work is the result of a project supported by Fondazione Cariplo and other organisations in the area, and constitutes an important new piece of the MUM, Museo Urbano Diffuso Miracolo a Milano. The mural brings back to life the atmosphere of the set, in a 1950 Milan still wounded by the bombings of World War II.

## *The balcony of Antonietta Fagnani Arese*



**Ugo Foscolo** (1778 – 1827), one of the leading writers and poets of Neoclassicism and Pre-Romanticism, loved many women, but few as intensely as the noblewoman **Antonietta Fagnani Arese**. The woman, who is said to have been particularly charming, lived in **Palazzo Arese in Corso Venezia**, now demolished, except for a balcony. Here, legend has it that Antonietta's ghost still hangs out, on nights when the moon is not hidden by clouds.

# VITTORIA, FORLANINI, ROGOREDO, CALVAIRATE



## *Via Alfonso Gatto*

In the Forlanini district, a street is named after **Alfonso Gatto** (1909 – 1976), poet, art critic and journalist, who was born in Salerno but lived in Milan for twenty years. A protagonist of the Hermeticism movement, he was also a painter and art critic. His relationship with the city resurfaces in the pages of his **“Guida sentimentale di Milano”**.

## *Piazzale Libia in Giampiero Neri's eyes*

In the collection of poetic fragments in prose **“Piazza Libia”**, the poet **Giampiero Neri** (1927 – 2023) recounts, from his personal observatory of Piazza Libia, the stage of everyday life in Milan, through the characters that populate and pass through it every day. The protagonists of his cameos are **the ‘defeated’**: homeless, restless and lonely souls, through whom Neri examines the deepest sentiments of our lives, dwelling in particular on pietas towards the last.



## *Oreste Del Buono Garden*

Eclectic and avant-garde, **Oreste Del Buono** (1923–2003) was among the first to clear customs for comics and mystery literature. Director of the magazine *Linus*, of the *Giallo Mondadori* series and author of an *Encyclopaedia of Comics*, Del Buono immortalised Milan in **‘La talpa di città’**, the successful anecdote column inaugurated in the 1980s. To commemorate him, in 2015 the Municipality of Milan named the public garden in viale Campania, next to **Wow Spazio fumetto**.

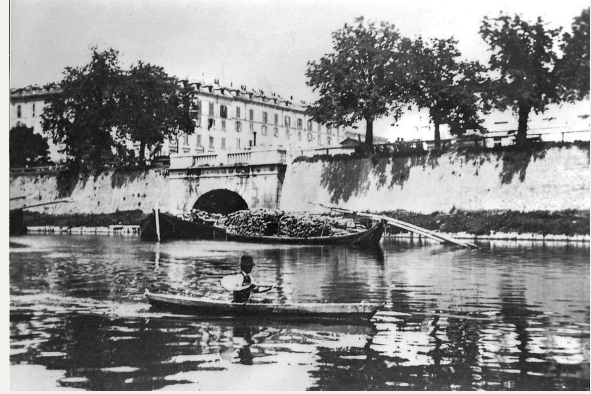


# TICINESE, VIGENTINO, CHIARAVALLE, GRATOSOGLIO



**The former Baravalle Park**

The Resistenza Park was built on an area that from 1919 until the 1960s was occupied by a working-class neighbourhood, the **Quartiere Villaggio giardino Baravalle**, named after **Carlo Baravalle** (1826 - 1900) a Milanese educator and writer. He was expelled from the University of Padua because he took part in the revolutionary uprisings of 1848; in 1860 he became a middle school teacher. His fame is mainly due to the writing of the **Satires**, written under the pseudonym Anastasio Buonsenso.

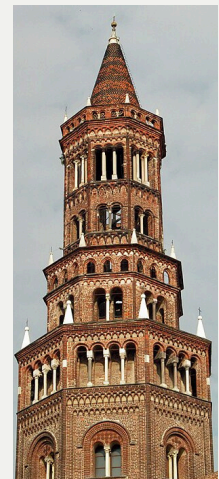


**El barchett de Boffalora**

Until the 1920s, the Darsena was used as the last station by the '**barchett**', the courier boats that carried mail and passengers. One of these 'barchett', the one from Boffalora, became famous thanks to "**El barchett de Boffalora**" a play from 1870 by **Cletto Arrighi**, (1828 - 1906), a Milanese writer and one of the leading exponents of the **Scapigliatura** movement. This barchett was in operation from 1645 (date uncertain) until 1913, when it was replaced by tram routes. In 2013, the centenary of the last ride, a 'barchett' was built based on old testimonies and photographs.

## **Demetrio Pianelli in Chiaravalle**

**Emilio De Marchi** (1851-1901) was one of the most important storytellers of the second half of the 19th century in Italy. In his works, he concentrated on the description of the Lombard peasants and the Milanese petty bourgeoisie. In one of his most famous novel, '**Demetrio Pianelli**', he gives a detailed description of Milan, and of what was then the outskirts of Chiaravalle, with its Cascine Boazze and bell tower, where Demetrio used to go for a breath of fresh air on Sundays.



# BARONA, LORENTEGGIO

## *The Giussani sisters and Diabolik around district 6*



In 1962, **Diabolik**, the work of sisters **Angela and Luciana Giussani**, hit the newsstands. To celebrate the memory of the two Milanese authors who revolutionised the Italian comics scene, a garden in **Piazza Grandi** was named after them. In addition, in **via Pesto**, a colourful mural created by the artists of **'We run the Streets'** recounts the exploits of **Diabolik and Eva Kant**, depicting them in some of the iconic locations of district 6.

## *Renzo and Lucia under the Bridge Crepax*



After celebrating literature through street art in honour of Dante, in January 2024 the City Hall 6 unveiled a mural dedicated to **Alessandro Manzoni 150 years after his death**. The new mural stretches along the side of the **bridge dedicated to Guido Crepax**, an important Italian comics artist. The project is by **Mario Jin**, who is part of the cultural association **We run the streets**, and depicts the main characters of **"I Promessi Sposi"** Renzo and Lucia, inspired by 'The Kiss' by Francesco Hayez; the nun of Monza and the Unnamed with Don Rodrigo next to her.

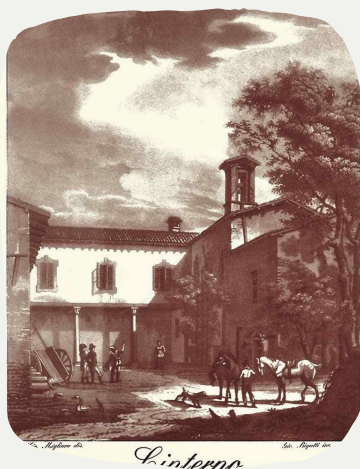
## *The Navigli of Alda Merini*



The Navigli is the place that most evokes the figure of **Alda Merini**, Milan's best-loved and best-known poetess. In Ripa di Porta Ticinese 47 is the house where she lived for years and which commemorates her with a plaque and a stone bridge named after her. At via Magolfa 32, in what used to be her tobacconist's shop, is the **Spazio Alda Merini**, a museum and cultural space in which her bedroom has been faithfully reconstructed. In the garden, you can admire a mural depicting some of the poet's famous verses and a portrait of her.

# BAGGIO, DE ANGELI, SAN SIRO

## *Cascina Linterno*



In a letter to his friend Guido Sette di Genova, the poet **Francesco Petrarca** describes the wonders of the then Contado Milanese, a landscape that has almost completely disappeared, but which is still preserved in the Baggio district, immersed in the Parco delle Cave. Here is the **Cascina Linterno**, the only place where Francesco Petrarca lived with certainty during his eight years in Milan (1353-1361), spent under the protection and benevolence of the archbishop and city lord Giovanni Visconti. The Cascina is also a true ethnographic museum of Milanese rural civilisation.

## *Raboni at San Siro*

**Giovanni Raboni** (1932-2004) was a Milanese poet, translator and critic. At the centre of his production was always the city of Milan, to which he dedicated poetry collections such as '**Le case della Vetra**' and '**Barlumi di Storia**'. Not everyone knows that Raboni was also a great football fan. He started attending the San Siro stadium when he was very young to watch Inter team's matches, and he dedicated a small but precious part of his poetic and journalistic production to football, collected in the recently published volume, "**Si è tifosi della propria squadra perché si è tifosi della propria vita. Scritti sul calcio 1979-2004**".



## *The trams' parade from the Baggio depot*

Baggio is a unique tram depot, from which 45 trams depart every morning to cross the city. As a tribute to **Roberto Brivio** (1938-2021), who contributed to the creation of musical cabaret in Italy, using the Milanese dialect, a parade of trams leaving the depot in Baggio was organised in 2021. They were just the ones he wanted: the 29, the 7 barred, the 5, the 18 'and no 33', a procession as sober and dignified as the final stanzas of his song: ... I morti non voglion lamenti/ Nessuno mi deve seguire/ Ma voglio soltanto dei tram.../Io voglio i tranvier di Milano/ Che suonano sempre den-den-den-den-den-den».



# FIERA, GALLARATESE, SAN LEONARDO, QUARTO OGGIARO



## Il ponte della Ghisolfa

The work of **Giovanni Testori** (1923–1993) allows us to explore the industrial architecture and suburbs of the city during the economic boom of the 1960s. **“Il ponte della Ghisolfa”** (The Ghisolfa bridge) is a collection of nineteen short stories published in 1958 in which the extraordinary tale of a Milan that has now disappeared is depicted, and which inspired the screenplay for **“Rocco e i suoi fratelli”**, the famous 1960 film by Luchino Visconti.

## Villa Scheibler



## Via Sarpi, Milan's Chinatown

Milan has been home to a large **Chinese community** since the 1920s. The Milanese dialect poet **Sergio Gobbi** (1931–2020) tells the story of Mr Wang Sang, the first to open a silk workshop for the production of ties. There are many images of Milan that he gives us in his book **“Ministori foeura da l'isóla : A storyteller at the cantine isola**, some of them set in the very district of **Paolo Sarpi**, Milan's Chinatown, that was so dear to him.

In **Quarto Oggiaro** district one can find **Villa Scheibler**, owned by the family of Prussian origin that made its fortune from the silk trade. The last of the Scheiblers, **Felice**, was a well-known adventurer, explorer and hunter and author of **“Sette Anni di Caccia Grossa e Note di Viaggio in America, Asia, Africa, Europa”**, which contains 250 engravings reproduced from his photographs. Felice was even cited by **Emilio Salgari** (1862 – 1911), Italian writer of popular adventure novels, as a model from which he drew inspiration for some of his characters.

# GARIBALDI, PORTA NUOVA, NIGUARDA

## Via Angelo Brofferio



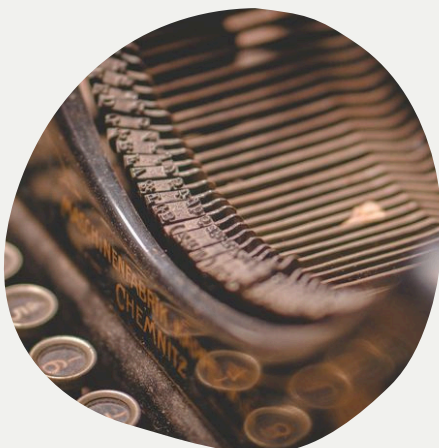
In the **Dergano-Bovisa** district, a street is dedicated to **Angelo Brofferio**, a 19th-century Piedmontese poet, politician and playwright. Brofferio travelled in Italy and abroad, taking his plays to European stages, without renouncing his political commitment that led him to hold institutional positions in pre-unification governments. His literary production also includes many songs in Piedmontese dialect, linked to the concept of the Italian homeland and independence from foreigners.

## Condominium Sito S. Gioachimo



Walking in the **Porta Nuova** area, you may happen to read, carved on the gables of the **Sito S. Gioachimo condominium**, a building occupying the block between Viale Monte Santo, Via Gino Bramieri, Via Marco Polo and Via Galileo Galilei, a quotation by **Alberto Savinio** (1891–1952), which reads 'Ascolto il tuo cuore città' (I listen to your heart city). The writer, who explored various artistic forms throughout his career, was brother to the famous Giorgio De Chirico. His reportage dedicated to Milan and the Veneto region, "Ascolto il tuo cuore, città", accompanies the reader on a slow urban wander and is at the same time a homage to Milan.

## Museo della macchina da scrivere



There is a place in Milan where you can find traces of Camilla Cederna, Matilde Serao, Hemingway, Cossiga and Montanelli. We are talking about the **Museo della macchina da scrivere**, (Typewriter Museum), a small museum in the Isola district, founded in 2006 on the initiative of a passionate collector, Umberto Di Donato. The museum retraces the global history of writing, from the development of rock engravings to Gutenberg's movable typefaces, and then on to the first typewriters of the late 19th century. On display are unique and rare pieces of machines that belonged to writers, journalists and celebrities, as well as true rarities.

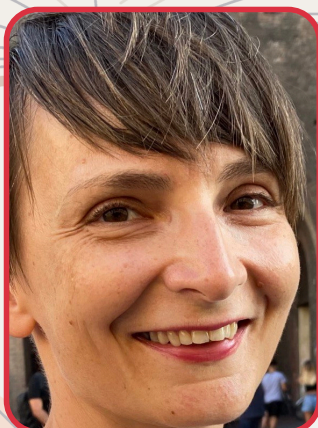
# Thank you!



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