



The entrance, through the stableyard, draws you into a small wood to discover, little by little, every secret corner of the garden: a stream with little waterfalls which accompanies the avenue of camellias, bridges and ponds; a spiraling pathway up the hillside; the little gazebo "della musica" imbued with the fragrance of wisterias and lilies and the lake, which at the lowest point of the park reflects the perfect dimensions of the villa and the theatrical setting formed by the grassy slopes and clusters of trees. Back up the hillside is the Bishop's villa with an Italian-style garden. A little further on the nymphaeum decorated with stones, glass and lumps of cast iron where the fountains spray, invokes the atmosphere of a natural grotto, inviting you to linger. A staircase leads to the liberty garden and finally to the villa, where the route is enriched by a rapid sequence of features, one gateway after another, delightful, unforeseeable perspectives: the fishpond, bay avenues and lemon garden, the "teatro di verzura" carved out of box hedges, the fountain and the "teatro dell'acqua" and finally the villa.

### Villa Reale

5

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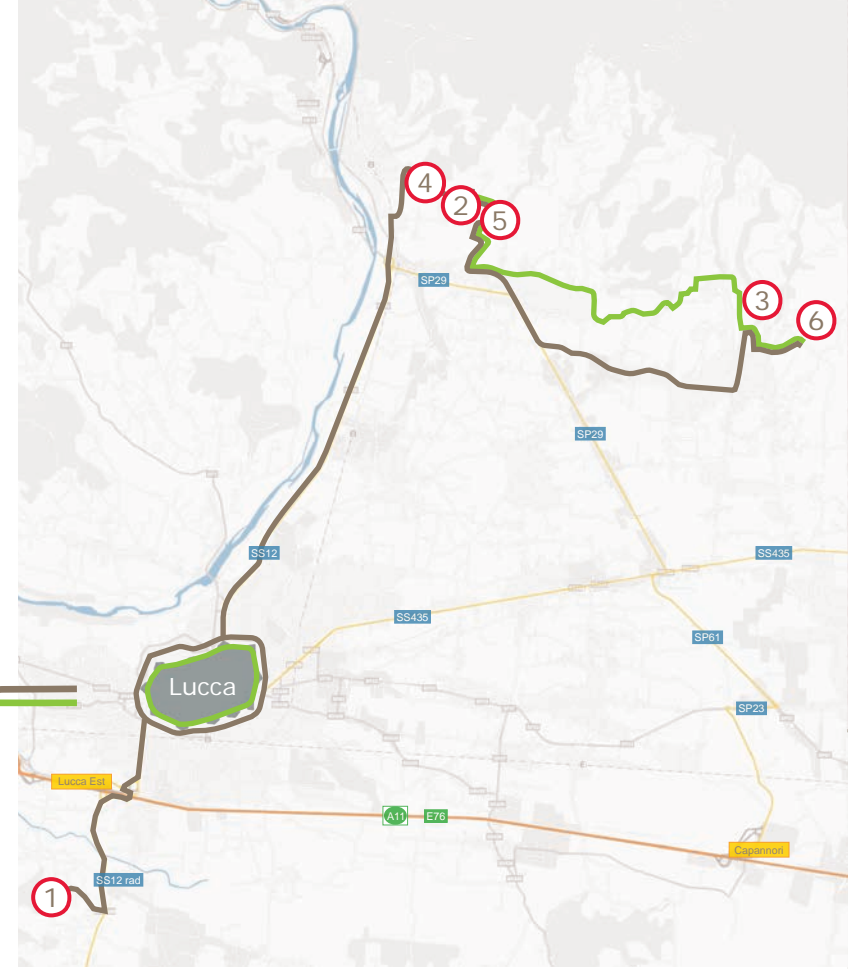
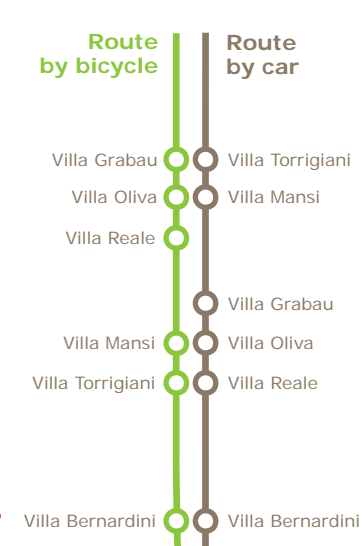
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### Villa Torrigiani

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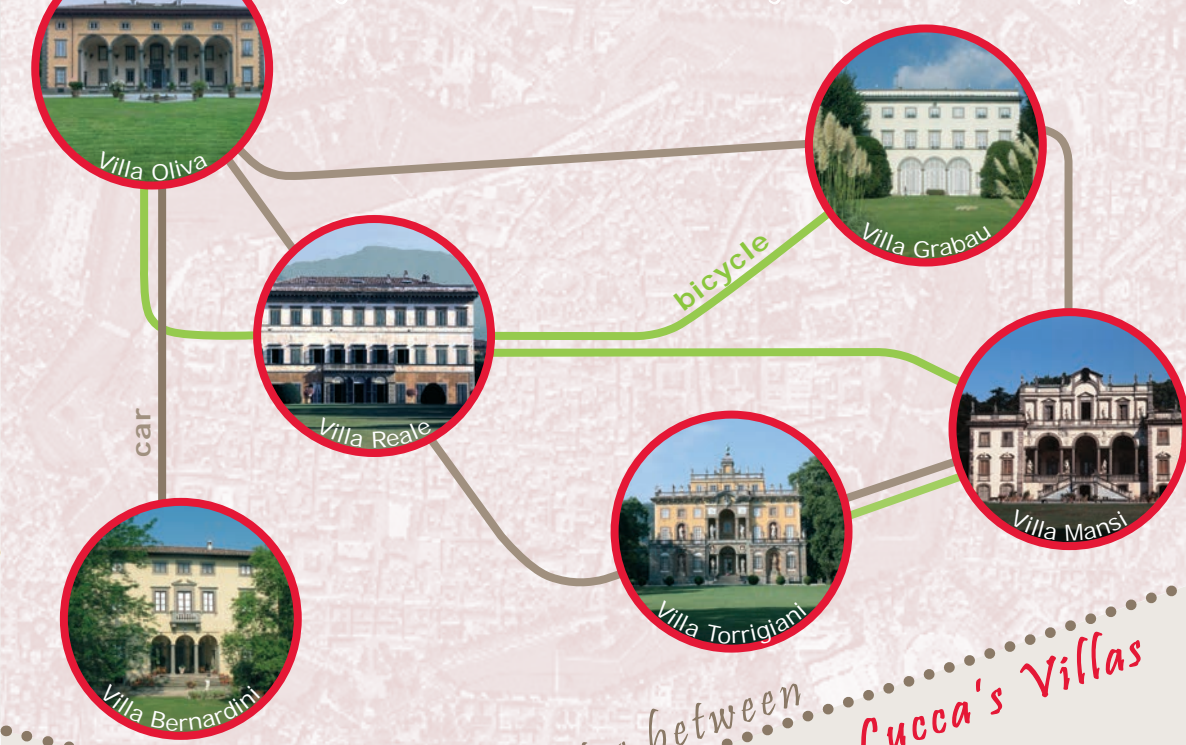
In 1636 Marquess Nicolao Santini, Ambassador for the Republic to the court of Louis XIV, bought the sober 16th century villa from the Buonvisi family, transforming it into a small palace, inspired by Versailles and advised by Andre LeNotré. A long cypress avenue is the theatrical entrance to the Villa di Camigliano, one of Lucca's most remarkable monumental villas, which captures the attention even from afar, defined by the exuberant 'chiaroscuro' play on the façade with 'serliane', on the many allegorical statues, on the ashlar works and on the rustic stone moldings. A fan-shaped stairway leads to the interior, the main hall and adjacent rooms are sumptuously decorated with fine silk tapestries, the pride and fortune of Lucca's merchants and artisans and evidence of the aristocracy's courtly lifestyles. The *trompe l'oeil* frescoes bring to mind the park, elegant and refined, alike to the French royal gardens, the classical allegories and the exotic plants. Even today the descendants of the Ambassador, who have also created the Parigi village and the large painted Chapel, preserve the estate.

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### Routes between Lucca's Villas



The Villas' Gardens, their farms' hills of olive groves and vineyards, characterise the landscape of Lucca's Province: an unusual mix of art and nature created in the 1500s by the wise and flourishing economy of the rich and independent Republic of Lucca. A heritage standing out in Italy for all that can still be seen and experienced thanks to the owners' sustained care, who through the centuries have introduced new styles without completely changing the shape nor the sober Lucchese character. Visiting the Villas is to retrace the history of Lucca's people, their economy and art, inspired by many European contacts, but strong in its own roots.



Villa Bernardini

1

In 1645 Bernardino Bernardini, Ambassador for the Republic to various Princes and the Holy See, had the villa at Vicopelago built as a welcoming residence for both family and guests, a place for study and rest. The garden with its flourishing trees, shrubs and flowers blooming throughout the year, emphasises this wish to be inviting. At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Secret Garden was created for the household's ladies, a place in which to rest and converse. Four limestone statues around a grand fountain in the shade of centuries-old trees, at the end of the garden is the 'Limoniaia' embellished with ancient *figus repens*, and behind the villa, perched on the natural slope of the hill is the theatre, sculpted from box hedges. The interior of the villa is comfortable and attractive. From the central hall an elegant staircase leads to the main floor, the spacious ballroom is surrounded by bedrooms, reception rooms and studios, all featuring original furniture commissioned by the family through the centuries. Each room contains surprises from every age and place, portraits of ancestors, collections of ceramics, a working water clock and an entire bedroom in the Empire style.

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Villa Grabau

2

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The "palace", appeared for the first time in a real estate appraisal from the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the middle of a vast estate bought by the Diodati brothers. Two gates lead to the centre of the park where the villa appears. On one side, the unique and refined red gate has magnificent mosaics made up of terracotta fragments, the other pillars and portals in wrought iron, which frame the balanced composition of the garden and villa. Light archways open onto the ground floor's main hall painted with trompe l'oeil motifs, whilst all around is an impressive park which boasts both native species of plant and examples from all over the world. Groves with shaded avenues, large open spaces with trees and shrubs introduced at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, thanks largely to Lucca's Botanical Garden which contributed to making the villas' gardens true organic wonders. Among the finest species are the Atlas cedar, Arizona cypress, sweet osmanthus, California fan palm and Canary Island date palm. On one side of the building are the elegant little theatre and sumptuous 'limoniaia' carpeted with lush *figus repens*.



Villa Mansi

3

The Benedetti were the first owners of the villa in the 16<sup>th</sup> century which then passed to the Cenami at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and finally to the Mansi family. The park's side entrance, passes a high dry stone wall then, through the stable yard, we cross a small bridge to arrive at the water architecture to one side of the garden. Small waterfalls lead to the wider fishpond area, with its balustrade protected by statues of woodland creatures, and the last remaining element of the garden designed by Filippo Juvarra in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The expanse of the villa, an elegant design accentuated by the delicate chromatic alternations and subtle 'chiaroscuro' created by the architect Mauro Oddi, appears in the background of the English style garden between the many large trees which border the lawn. The main floor is a series of interconnecting rooms surrounding the central hall, featuring frescoes by the Lucchese Stefano Tofanelli. In these halls and the garden, according to a popular local legend, the ghost of the beautiful Lucida Mansi wanders in torment victim of an infamous pact with the devil.

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Villa Oliva

4

Alessandro Buonvisi, in his 1539 will left all his worldly goods to his son Ludovico, except the villa in San Pancrazio, which he bequeathed to his wife. The building probably dates back to a century before and is attributed to Matteo Civitali, questioning spirit of the delicate harmonies in architecture. The design is original and complex, with renaissance origins and traces of Florentine and 'manierista' influences. Situated on a slope, the villa and the space around it are a balanced play on levels, 'chiaroscuro', perspectives and volume. The complete façade facing the valley contrasts sharply with the enormous double porch contained within towering columns. The play on levels which intersect and chase one another is also present in the garden, where the slopes of the grounds offer many surprises, terraces, stone walls, grassy knolls, small box hedges, a large staircase protected by hornbeams, the "stanza di verzura", and a panoramic viewpoint, sheltered by a cluster of yew trees, which offers prospects of the surrounding garden, hills and city.

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