

Museimpresa – Italy’s Industrial Museums from Ferrari to Campari and Beyond

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May 18th 2017, Salvatore Ferragamo Museum: 1927 The return to Italy.

Credit: Guglielmo de' Micheli per Salvatore Ferragamo

Museimpresa – Italian Industry Museums

Italian museums offer much more than portraits of beatific Madonnas and

maleficent Medicis hung along dusty corridors with dim lighting. Italy's industrial history has created the backdrop for a special category of museum, the Museimpresa, that appeals to visitors interested in food, health, design, society, fashion, transportation, even children's toys.

Museimpresa – 11 regions + 60 museums

Would you like to eye Italian shoes worn by Marilyn Monroe? Stroke a vintage Ferrari? Admire a trend-setting chair designed by Vico Magistretti?



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Or mix and sip the best-known Campari cocktails of the last half-century? All these experiences await you at Italy's [*"musei impresa"*](#) (industrial museums), a collection of more than 60 museums, archives, and libraries that represent Italian companies from northern Piedmont to southern Calabria, spanning 11 of the country's 20 regions. When you plan your Italy itinerary, make sure to add some Museimpresa on your things to do list.

"Our members' museums are not dull and remote but alive and interactive with strong ties to the world around us," explains Francesca Appiani, a member of the organization's board of directors.

History of Museimpresa

Museimpresa was founded in 2001 with the support of the Milan business community. To become a member, a company or institution must have an articulated mission, a curator, and an organized program of exhibitions and education. It must be open to the public, either posting regular hours or requiring prior arrangement and should not operate on a profit-making basis. These criteria exclude some well-known industrial museums in Italy; the Museimpresa website lists more than 180 total, about one-third of which are members of the organization.

Some *Museimpresa* are free of charge, some have guided tours in English, and all will be participating in the 10th annual *Settimana della Cultura d'Impresa* (week of corporate culture) between November 10-24, 2017, with special activities and exhibits. But visitors can tour these unusual destinations any time of year.



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Il Museo del Cavallo Giocattolo (Museum of the Toy Horse)

Around the holidays, *Il Museo del Cavallo Giocattolo* (Museum of the Toy

Horse) near Como is perfect for children and equine enthusiasts of all ages.

The collection includes more than 680 toy horses dating back to the 18th century.

The setting is an actual stable not far from the [Chicco factory](#) (Chicco is a well-known Italian maker of toys, accessories, and clothing for children). No real horses to ride, but the museum organizes special hands-on activities for its younger visitors, such as workshops, theatrical programs, and laboratories that change from month to month.



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Ferrari Museum

Horses of a different color (rigorously red) appeal to a decidedly different age group at the [Ferrari Museum](#) near the fabled racetrack of Maranello (Modena). This museum is not a member of Museimpresa because it is so profitable for its parent company. Tour groups arrive by the busload depositing Ferrari fans who come from all over the world to this motor Mecca so they can eyeball myth-making Ferraris of Formula One history, learn more about the brand through special exhibits, sample race car driving in an F1 simulator, and – with advance planning– tour the actual Ferrari factory nearby.



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Ducati Museum & more

Members of Museimpresa with a penchant for speed include the [Ducati Museum](#) near [Bologna](#) (yes, you can listen to the patented Ducati sound), the [Piaggio Museum](#) near Pisa (the history of the Vespa is like a cultural synopsis of Italy's postwar development), and the [Museo Fratelli Cozzi](#) (the Cozzi Brothers' Museum) north of Milan, displaying 50 Alfa Romeos from 1950 to the present, plus vintage posters, books, films, and photographs.

Museimpresa in Milan

Sports are front and center at Museo Mondo Milan (Museum of the World of Milan) in the eponymous city. Milan (the soccer team, not the city) arouses the same kind of passion as Ferrari aficionados, and the [AC Milan museum](#) tries to satisfy these emotions with photos, videos, and digital exhibits depicting the club's greatest victories, with the jerseys of its greatest players, and with displays of some of its most important cup wins.

If you prefer your oils in edible form, how about collections dedicated to pasta, gelato, beer, caffè, grappa, liquors, wine, and – yes – olive oil itself?

Campari Gallery



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Upon prior group arrangement, the [Campari Gallery](#) in [Milan](#) will hold a “master class” in cocktail making for a minimum of 10 people. It’s recommended to visit the museum before the class; after cocktail sampling, the mediatic assault of 15 wall screens, eight projectors, and an interactive table of 12 more screens may generate sensorial overload.

Fashion Museums of Museimpresa

A certain sobriety and dietary restraint are recommended if you want to visit the fashion museums: the less you eat, the more likely you are to admire the mannequins flaunting expert tailoring by Armani, Brioni, Ferragamo, Max Mara, and Zegna, among many luminaries. There are also museums featuring jewelry (the Museum of Jewelry), shoes (Foscarini Rossi), and sporting goods (Benetton and Fila).

How to find a Museimpresa

The cleanly-designed [Museimpresa website](#) allows you to search for museums by geographic location and by theme, with an interactive map to guide you. (Use google to translate since the website is not yet available in English; many member sites already are). Each museum's web page describes the facility, address, costs, a brief history, availability of guides in English and other languages, and contact information. In addition, each page lists upcoming events and activities to which visitors may be invited. Because a relationship with the local community is part of each institution's *raison d'être*, the website also offers suggested "itineraries" for sightseers. These include the museum as a starting point and point the way to nearby architecture, institutions, attractions, and natural beauty spots.

Museimpresa in Venice

For example, if you are visiting [Venice](#), where the [Archivio Aziendale Rubelli](#) (Rubelli company archives) are located, you could pay a visit to the Grand Canal palazzo where Rubelli displays some of the 6,000 textile samples in its collection. Then follow its suggested itinerary to the main bridges of Venice and to the 16th-century house and workshop of Tintoretto nearby.

Treviso is a short train ride from Venice, where [Benetton](#) suggests a tour of two historic palazzi, before or after visiting its archives in nearby Castrette di Villorba.

A few miles west of Venice is the small town of Stra and the [Museo della](#)

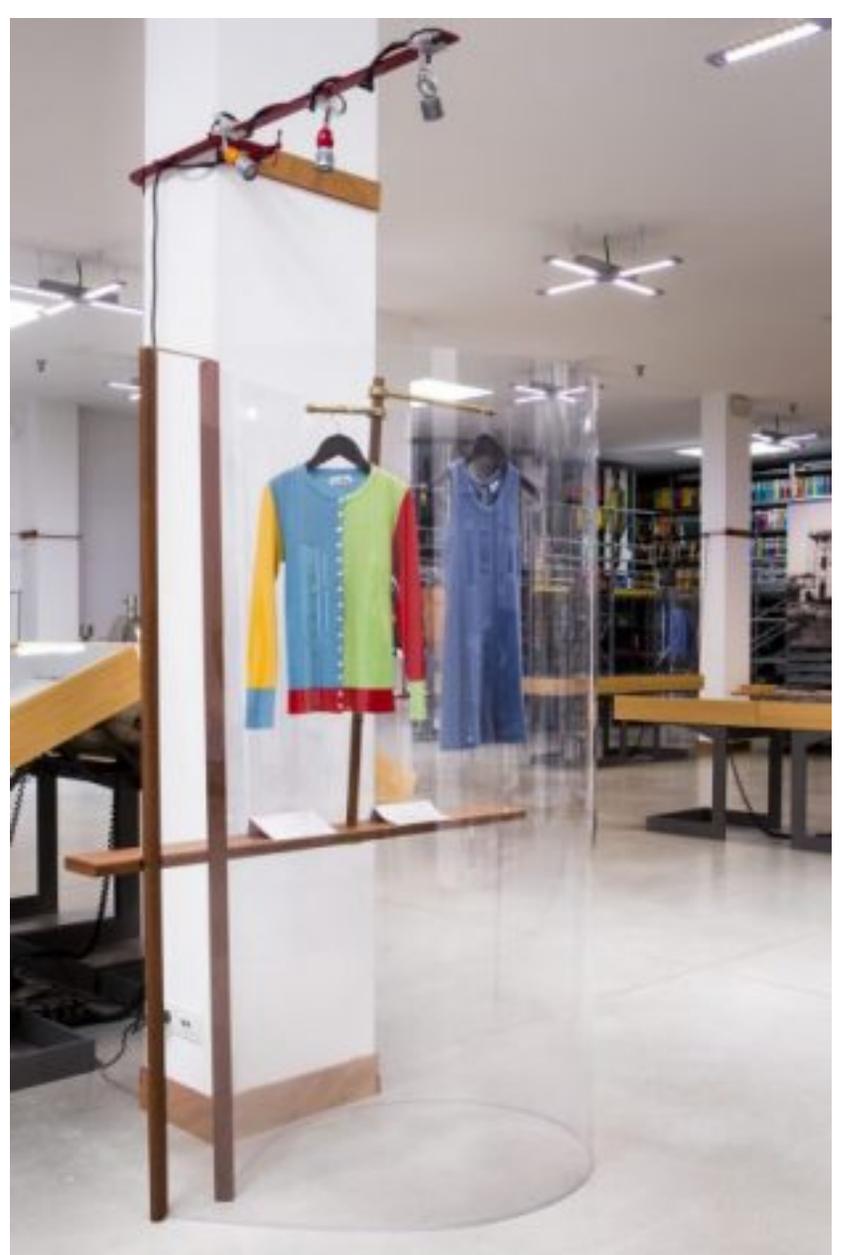
Calzatura di Villa Foscarnini Rossi

(Museum of Shoes of Villa Foscarnini Rossi) with its 1,500 models. Their suggestion for sightseeing is a ride on the Burchiello, a small historic vessel sailing the Riviera del Brenta from Padua back to Venice.

A complete tour encompassing five centuries of architecture, art, and industrial history, and all on the museum [Museimpresa website](#) without a single dusty corridor.

Museimpresa was written and photographed by [Claudia Flisi](#).

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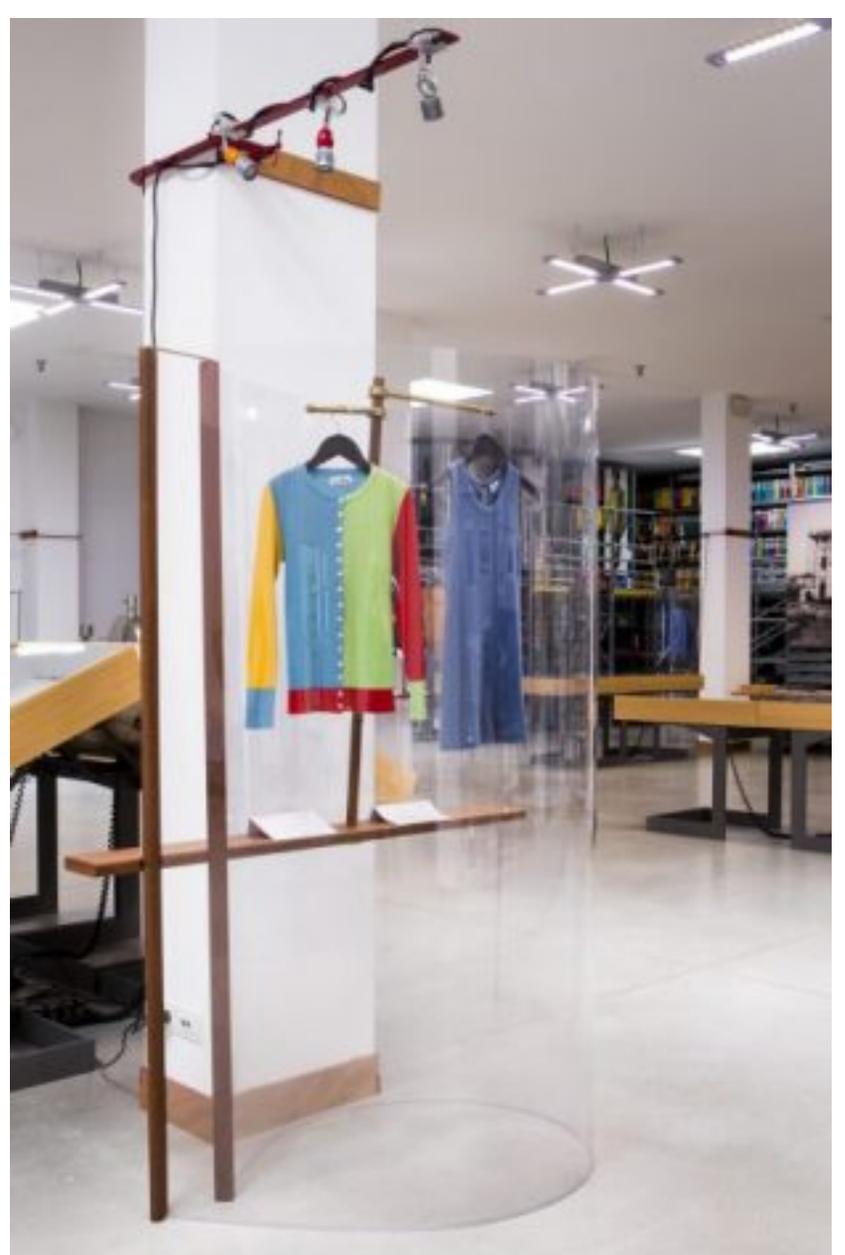
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