

## FINAL RESULTS OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION OF “I LUOGHI DEL CUORE”

### SURVEY OF NATURE SPOTS THAT MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN

**First place to *Brolo del Monastero di San Giacomo di Veglia, Vittorio Veneto (Tv)***  
**Second place to *Parco della Rocca Borromea, Arona (No)***  
**Third place to *Lago Azzurro in Campodolcino (So)***

**120,000 Italians have large and generous hearts, so large as to find room within their hearts for gardens, beaches, lakes, parks and forests.** Countless natural beauties that are also the physical and true representation of the feelings, memories and emotions that fill our own internal geography, which we all carry inside of us.

Since 2006, this sentimental atlas is represented by the survey “**I luoghi del cuore**”, organised by **FAI in collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo** and now in its third year.

As in the past, **FAI** once again asked Italians to indicate a favourite place to save or protect, or even just to remember and share. **And this year’s survey included a big change:** the choice was limited to **nature spots**, a very precious asset of our country that is often most at risk, subjected to the attacks of pollution, speculation, and negligence.

**The response to this 3<sup>rd</sup> “I luoghi del cuore” survey was even more overwhelming than previous editions: 119,222 Italians**, through 2,000 branches of Intesa Sanpaolo, by post and via Internet, participated in this initiative personally (**for an increase of 30% over the previous edition**), a clear demonstration of the growing sensitivity in our country as regards the protection of our heritage, so much so that it often crosses over into downright militancy. In fact, once again, the **FAI** referendum was an occasion for **spontaneous and collective manifestations to defend a common asset**. Moreover, Italians took advantage of the manifestation to listen to their innermost feelings, freeing their imaginations. Many voted for **places that are in danger**, indicating real situations in need of protection; others simply gave in to sweetness of their memories and to the joy of their emotions, indicating **places dear to them for sentimental reasons**. And proof of this is provided by the long list of places nominated: **waterfalls, reefs, stretches of sea, forests, beaches, gardens, refuges, paths**. Places that are in some cases not well-known, but full of significance for those who have “adopted” them and which will always be part of their lives.

The surprise win went to a *brolo*, a garden or section of land enclosed by a wall, in the province of Treviso: that of the **Enclosed Monastery of Saints Gervasio and Protasio in San Giacomo di Veglia, near Vittorio Veneto**, voted by **13,060 Italians**. Today, the monastery’s large garden, which has become a symbol of peace and devotion for the community over the years, risks being lost to a building project. Consequently, a unique and spontaneous committee has formed to protect this garden, and it includes the participation of citizens, enclosed nuns, and intellectuals, like the poet Andrea Zanzotto.

**Very few votes** separate the gardens of Vittorio Veneto from the **second most favourite place** voted by Italians (**12,987**): the **Parco della Rocca Borromea**, a 100-metre high spur of rock that dominates the Novara side of Lago Maggiore, behind **Arona**, open to the public until 2002 and now closed due to safety and maintenance issues.

Also included by Italians among the favourite spots is **a non-existent lake. Or rather, a lake that no longer exists**. In fact, with 9,072 votes, **third place** goes to **Lago Azzurro di Campodolcino**, in

the province of Sondrio. This lake has been without water for two years now, for inexplicable reasons.

The emotional creativity of those who responded to the **FAI** survey emerged in the **126 different types** of places that resulted from the referendum. There were **municipal gardens** (20,849) and **parks** (16,317) but also **lakes** (11,714) and **rivers** (5,795). And there were **trees** like the ancient olive trees of Puglia (4,598) or **paths** like those of the Walser borough of S.Gottardo a Rimella, in the province of Vercelli (2,776) or **beaches** like that of Sant'Andrea dell'Apostolo dello Ionio in Calabria (4,598) or that of Forno on the island of Elba (240). And we mustn't forget the **waterfalls**, like those of Valgrosina in the province of Sondrio (5,624) or the very famous ones of Gorello in Saturnia (1,580), with the hot thermal waters in which to bathe all year-round, the beauty of the **starry sky** (241), entire **valleys** like Val di Chiana (710) or a **single tree**, like the ficus bengalensis in the historical centre of Siracusa (78).

**Men and women** (respectively, **46.4%** and **53.6%**) of all ages participated in the survey, carried out through postcards distributed in **Intesa Sanpaolo branches**, distributed by newspapers, present in **FAI** properties and sent to supporters, and shown on the Foundation's web site: **the youngest participant was 5 years old, the oldest 99**. In terms of numbers, **Lombardy** had the most participants, followed by **Piedmont** and **Veneto**. The most active branch of Intesa Sanpaolo was the branch in **Chiavenna**, in the province of Sondrio.

**FAI, therefore, is essentially the spokesperson for the concerns of Italians** and, through the far-reaching actions of its one hundred provincial delegations, will solicit the relevant authorities to examine and promote the parts of Italy most loved by its people. The survey's high participation rate is, in fact, a sign of a real and justifiable role that can be adopted by **FAI** before institutions and private citizens. **Indeed, the places indicated will be "adopted"**. Some with direct intervention, others through a commitment to promote awareness and apply pressure for their protection by authorities: Mayors, Superintendency Offices, and the Presidents of Provinces and Regions: **so far, letters have been sent to the Mayors of the 2,519 municipalities from which the reports originated and to all of the Regional Presidents and Regional Directors of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture**. In upcoming months, therefore, the places indicated by the survey will be examined, in order to intervene concretely, **thanks to the contribution of Intesa Sanpaolo** with respect to several of the top ten positions, with announcement of the places selected to be made at the beginning of the summer.

The strength of this initiative, therefore, lies not only in the huge mobilization at all levels, both institutional and personal, involving people from every part of Italy, every social class and every age. In fact, viewing this initiative merely as an event to promote the protection and safeguarding of certain environmental assets is restrictive: there is something more, and something more important in the "Luoghi del cuore" or favourite places; namely, the incentive for all of us to become **more aware and more directly involved in the environment that surrounds us**, and to accept **responsibility for the destiny of our natural heritage**. This exactly summarises the deeper aspect of **FAI's** work: to transform every citizen into an active subject, into a force able to intervene in order to change and improve things, armed with two extraordinary tools: **one's intelligence and, more importantly, one's heart**.

FAI Press Office

Simonetta Biagioni – print – tel. 02.467615219 e-mail: s.biagioni@fondoambiente.it

Novella Mirri – radio and tv – tel. 06.32652596 e-mail: ufficiostampa@novellamirri.it

Intesa Sanpaolo Media Relations

Costanza Esclapon – tel. 02.87963531 e-mail: stampa@bancaintesa.it

Monica Provini – tel. 02.87963010 e-mail: stampa@bancaintesa.it