



## 2022 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Time to ReWined: an innovative eco-museum concept brings an ancient castle back to life to revive local culture, traditions, and products

Destination Name: Castelvetro di Modena, Emilia-Romagna

Country: Italy

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Position: Consultant & Museum Curator

Submission category: *(Please check one of the boxes that indicates the focus of your story)*

*Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.*

- Governance, Reset & Recovery
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

*Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".*

*Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact [top100@greendestinations.org](mailto:top100@greendestinations.org)*





## DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

*Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.*

### Issues faced

*What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice?*

Castelvetro is a municipality of about 11,000 inhabitants located in the North of Italy, on the green hills that mark the transition between the plains and the mountains. It enjoys a particularly favourable climate and is home to globally renowned food and wine products: Lambrusco, the world's best-selling Italian wine; the Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena; and Parmigiano Reggiano, one of the most famous Italian cheeses.

For several years now, Castelvetro has been concentrating its efforts on attracting 'slow' tourists to its territory: visitors curious to get to know small Italian municipalities, lingering longer in places to come into contact with the communities that inhabit them. For this reason, the municipality combines its extraordinary offer of zero-kilometre food and wine experiences with proposals for walking and cycling routes through the winding landscape of its countryside.

In this context, a difficult problem arose concerning the Levizzano Castle. An architectural treasure of extraordinary value and an integral part of the community and territory since the Middle Ages, the castle is owned by the municipality of Castelvetro. During the 20th century it was used for a variety of purposes (school, dance hall, shelter) and suffered gradual degradation and abandonment. The situation improved considerably with the completion of major restoration work in 2009 and the reopening of the castle, whose use, however, remained limited to occasional private events such as parties and weddings.

It went on like this until everything changed in 2017 thanks to an ambitious project born from the ideas of two people who work for the municipality: Giorgia Mezzacqui, Deputy Mayor and Councillor for Culture and Tourism, and Alessandra Anderlini, officer of the Culture Department.

They asked themselves a very difficult question: how to return the castle to the community, making it accessible and liveable for all and part of the daily life of residents and tourists?

The responses to this challenge have given rise to a visionary project: an innovative museum to revive the traditions of the past by linking them to the experience of the present, to educate and help people discover how the steps we take today walk the paths created by those who came before us yesterday. A place that would not remain closed within its own walls but would embrace the territory by expanding into the countryside and connecting people through a rich offer of itineraries, events, and initiatives. This is how the Rosso Graspa - Museum of Wine and Rural Society was born.





## Methods, steps and tools applied

*How was the good practice implemented?*

The vision had to be clearly defined. Alessandra has deepened and updated her long experience with museums through the study of numerous publications and studies, as well as the participation in dedicated training courses. This has allowed her to draw inspiration from the outstanding examples of other museums such as MET (Ethnographic Museum of Romagna); MUVIT (Wine Museum of Torgiano) and NMAI (National Museum of the American Indian), while following ICOM (International Council of Museums) standards and guidelines, notably those related to cultural landscapes and the Charter of Siena. At the same time, Giorgia worked to clearly define what the museum would not be, thinking outside the box in order to break down the stereotypes that are often associated with museums: places that generate tiredness, heaviness, that are old and outdated, steeped in nostalgia, that look only to the past and not to the present. How to succeed in this?

Original ideas came to the surface with the intention of recounting the rural society of a hundred years ago, whose traditions were gradually disappearing in the rapid industrialisation of Italy, radically transformed by the economic boom of the 1950s. It was decided to give a dynamic and multi-sensory dimension to the museum, so that the visitor can have an immersive experience: touch, listen, see, and walk. How? By displaying the original objects and tools from a century ago, used by the inhabitants of that time, collected thanks to the spontaneous donations of the many citizens who have kept them until today. So, unexpectedly, those who visit the museum not only get to touch the exhibits by hand but are strongly encouraged to do so!

The objects have a valuable companion that shows their practical use in everyday life at the time: the original photos from that era, a living testimony to the world of the ancestors. The use of 'public history' recreated authentic characters who recount their daily lives in first-person narrative to convey the experience with immediacy, in a language also designed for children. Recorded voices speaking the dialect of the time and the sounds of the countryside are transmitted into the rooms in the form of 'sound showers' and complete the sensory experience, which can finally continue outside the castle walls thanks to the eco-museum. A network of 20 km of trails divided into three thematic routes allows you to discover twenty selected points of interest and invites you to scan the landscape around the castle, and to think that this walking among the fields can become a practice of sincere and engaging knowledge. In fact, the intersection of past and present is clearly revealed along those paths: it suddenly becomes clear how the history witnessed within the museum walls has been fruitful and has generated a rural landscape that is different, but not deprived of charm, innovative forms of work still linked to tradition, visionary projects with deep roots... and it is all there... in front of our eyes!





## Key success factors

*What helped you tackle the issues?*

The enormous community involvement. The community spontaneously acted to donate the objects inherited from their ancestors and give them a new life (donations continue to this day), as well as quickly spreading the project's requests for help through a participatory word-of-mouth campaign. It was through this spontaneous network that it was possible, for example, to find experienced and elderly local carpenters who were still able to restore objects from a century ago, because they still retained knowledge of their use and function. Many new relationships were created between community members that almost certainly would not have happened without the development of the project. For example, many young carpenters, who usually face the option of continuing a difficult career with insecurity, joined an association together with older carpenters, which allowed for a valuable intergenerational exchange of knowledge. This enabled them to discover the traditions of the past and gave a boost to their future projects with new job opportunities generated by this experience. Similar situations have also occurred with the sound project.

Visits have been organised for thousands of students of all ages who have thus deepened their ties with their local area, often accompanied by their grandparents who have experienced these objects at first hand. Experiences that foster the development of a healthy sense of belonging. The municipality has always included local farmers in the museum's initiatives by promoting their products and organising events and exchanges between them and the visitors. In addition, an interactive totem has been installed in the museum, which not only provides orientation for the museum visit and play functions for children, but also serves as a promotional platform for local producers. Visitors to the museum can thus get to know the various realities where they can go (on foot, why not?) to try and buy local delicacies. This is made possible by the municipality's participation in the Castelvetro V.I.T.A. Consortium, an organisation that coordinates over 60 local businesses (wineries and farms, accommodation facilities, restaurants, shops) to promote the area's tourist offer in a unified manner. All this, of course, implies an important enhancement of zero-kilometre products and quality food and wine, in favour of more sustainable and healthy lifestyles.

The Consortium has recently contributed to an important project for environmental sustainability. A collective brand with some unprecedented requirements: the wine must be 100% organic and made from 100% local Grasperossa grapes. Finally, the grape harvest must be manual: preferring traditional methods to the detriment of machines means also creating more employment opportunities for local labour. Official recognition of the Montebarello 155 sub-zone is expected in 2023, marking a new era in the preservation of local traditions under the banner of innovation.





#### Lessons learned

*While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome?*

Choosing a shared path by involving the community and stimulating its continuous participation, instead of dropping projects with a top-down approach. Getting to know those who already take care of the territory and involve them. Avoid being convinced that you are 'the one who knows best', instead always be humble and respectful of others. But make sure to be stubborn and carry your ambitious idea through to the end, the results will gradually convince others.

#### Results, achievements and recognitions

*What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice?*

The museum was inaugurated in April 2019, with as many as a thousand people attending the opening day. Since then, there has been a succession of successful, highly educational, and social initiatives, as well as events on the theme of slow tourism, such as the Tempo Lento festival, whose second edition in May 2022 brought at least 1,300 people to the castle to take part in meetings with nationally renowned authors of travel literature, focusing on slow travel, discovering small villages and their communities under the banner of sustainable tourism and healthy lifestyles in contact with nature. In 2019, at least 5,200 people visited the museum, which is open about sixty days a year with free admission. These figures do not consider the thousands of people who take part in frequent events and students who visit with their schools. Visits dropped considerably due to the pandemic, but are recovering, with around 2000 visitors in 2021. Importantly, in only two months (October-November 2021) as many as 900 pupils visited the museum with their schools. September 2022 marks two important news. The opening of a bookshop and the introduction of an audio guide in English. The bookshop offers museum catalogues for sale, one of which is exclusively dedicated to children, thus creating a new source of financial support for the municipality and the community for future projects. The audio guide also allows the museum to be visited by foreigners for just under an hour. Finally, 2023 will see the launch of the English website and a series of new initiatives and projects that you're invited to discover... by connecting with and following Castelvetro from all over the world!

#### Additional references

*Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from YouTube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL (not WeTransfer).*

<https://www.visitcastelvetro.it/en/>

<https://www.castellolevizzano.it/> (in Italian)

