

# The Park of Miramare

The park of Miramare, which at one time had no vegetation, and has now a surface area of 22 hectares, stands on a rocky promontory overlooking the Adriatic Sea.

The site was planned and arranged by Carl Junker, according to the wishes of the Archduke Maximilian of Hapsburg who carefully followed the building of his residence.

As far as the botanical aspect was concerned, a gardener, Josef Laube, was called in but was replaced in 1859 by Anton Jelinek, a Bohemian who had taken part in the frigate 'Novara's' expedition around the world.

The park, on which work began in 1856, represents a classical example of a mixed, artificial implantation of ligneous forest-trees and bushes and it succeeds in blending the charm of a typically Northern environment and a Mediterranean context. In contrast to the baroque garden, the English one – on which Miramare is modelled – introduces a new relationship with nature, resulting from a different sensibility towards the material world. This is why, when strolling along the paths in the park, you can breathe in an atmosphere that is tightly bound up with the life of its owner and his romantic relationship with nature, which was typical of his epoch.

Before 1856, the park area was bare, with only some shrubs and thorny bushes. Today, on the other hand, there is a group of different arboreous species that are, for the most part, of non-European origin or in any case, that are not native to the area. Within a period of ten years, cedars of Lebanon, North Africa and the Himalayas were planted, along with firs and spruces from Spain, cypresses from

California and Mexico, various species of pine from Asia and America, to which some exotic specimens, such as the giant sequoia and the ginkgo biloba, were added. Miramare was conceived as a private garden and not as a park. In fact it doesn't have a monumental entrance or a driveway up to the Castle. It was a garden of wonders, not intended for public use, even though the Archduke opened it to the public a few days per week. Watercourses, pools, twisting paths, trees placed according to natural models, some grassy areas, are typical



*The Park of Miramare;  
The Parterre*

of English gardens. The roughness of the ground favoured the irregular lay-out of the promontory, combining the artificial transformation with the natural environment.

The park is also characterised by the presence of some buildings included in Junker's project: the Castelletto – inhabited off and on by Maximilian and Carlotta – on which work began at the same time as work on the Castle; the greenhouses, intended for the growing of the plants to be placed in the park; the ruins of the chapel dedicated to Saint Canciano, in whose apse is preserved a cross made from the wood of the frigate 'Novara', which was laid up in 1899; and lastly a little house, used nowadays as a coffee-shop, the 'Swiss house', placed at the edge of the swans' lake.

Up until 1954, Miramare became the headquarters for German, New Zealand, English and American forces of occupation respectively. Finally in 1955, the complex was reopened to the public under the official name of the Park of Miramare whose management was entrusted to the 'Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici ed il Paesaggio e per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico' of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region.



*Miramare in una foto d'epoca*