



## 1. IN VIGNA OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

**Keywords:** cultural heritage; open-air museum; UNESCO site; wine tourism.

**The aim of the project** “In Vigna Open-air Museum” aims to display the life of the vineyard, in-between harvests taking visitors through an emotional and educational journey along the vine rows, immersed in the “Vigna del Conte”.

**Partners:** Regione Piemonte; Enoteca Regionale Piemontese Cavour; Ente Turismo Langhe Monferrato Roero

**Project implementation time:** 2017-2021

**Budget:**[ the whole INTERREG ALCOTRA AMPELO budget € 637.670, 00, not mentioned the specific budget for the museum itinerary]

**Granted by:** European Union (INTERREG ALCOTRA AMPELO); Region Piedmont.

**Priority line/Specific objective:** Innovation in rural and cultural tourism (national frame); cross-border cooperation in the rural development strategies (INTERREG).

### Context

The castle of Grinzane Cavour lies on the top of a hill not far from Alba, overlooking the landscape of the Langhe hills, a UNESCO heritage site. It has a long history, marked by continuous changes of ownership between nobles and wealthy local families during a millennium, since its construction. The castle and the town are entitled to Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, a statesman who led the Italian unification during the second half of nineteenth century. The Count started to administer the estates and the land of the castle (180 hectares overall) on behalf of his father, becoming the Mayor of Grinzane. He has held this position for many years, even during his political activities in the Kingdom of Savoy when he became Prime Minister. The Castle was donated to the Municipalities of Grinzane and Alba in the first half of the twentieth century and “Cavour” was added in honour of Count Camillo.

In 1967, the Piedmont Regional Winehouse Cavour (Enoteca Regionale Piemontese Cavour) was inaugurated: one of the first wine shop in the region and in Italy: its aim is to promote the knowledge and image of the best wines and food products of the territory. The castle houses the Langhe Museum, an ethnographic museum, dedicated to the rural civilization with its farming traditions and the memory of Count Cavour.

The castle has been chosen as one of the six components of the Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato UNESCO serial site for its excellence for the knowledge and the promotion of the wine growing culture for the whole district of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato.

### Description

“In Vigna” is an innovative open-air museum, curated by historian and museologist Daniele Jalla and designed by illustrator Luigi Piccatto. It has been designed as an emotional and educational journey along the vine rows – immersed in the “Vigna del Conte” (Count’s Vineyard) at the foot of Grinzane Cavour Castle – and is conceived to reveal the life of the vineyard from one harvest to another. In this sense, visitors could grasp the whole cycle from the vine to the wine.

Completely free of architectural barriers, equipped with a lighting system that makes it accessible even in low light conditions and creates an evocative scenic effect. The museum itinerary is composed of 65 panels and 110 illustrations, which tell the story of the vegetative cycle of the vine and the work of the vine-dresser, an





expression of the rural wisdom – halfway between art and craft – that has been handed down from generation to generation over the centuries, on these hills. The long process begins in the vineyard where the fruit of the farmer’s labour is enhanced by a long and patient wait.

## Results

The creation of “In Vigna Open air Museum” responds to the need of developing a larger vision of perspectives on wine tourism. It began with identification of a lack in the communication of the wine production process that in Langhe, Roero and Monferrato is, together with the truffle, the main “pull factor” for attracting a large international audience.

The general frame is a strong innovation in the technique of welcoming the tourist, a scientific and effective narration of the landscape, no longer intended only as a “backdrop” of the wine display, but rather as a tool for a guided tour of the backstage of a world of scents and colours closed in a bottle. And, even more, for visitor there is a complex of knowledge comprehend a tradition of cultivation of the vine that sinks into the centuries and continuous research that allows to constantly improve the well-known wines all over the world. Three “heritage objects” are here interpreted: the vineyard (where the visitor is going through), the cultivation of vines, and the wine landscape.

It illustrates the collaboration between winegrowing and tourism experts, ampelographers, oenologists, geologists, museologists, architects, illustrators, graphic designers, local administrators who were all motivated by the common desire to make the Langhe, Roero and Monferrato area known and appreciated.

## Success factors

The pandemic situation due to Covid-19 has risen the tourist demand for outdoor and open-air experiences: this is claimed by all the stakeholders in the case study area. The open-air museum provides a scientific narration about the landscapes, the vine, and the specific product wine.

The choice of settling the open-air museum at Grinzane Cavour Castle is highly strategic: being one of the most visited historic monuments of the case study area, it enriches the present supply of both educational and emotional experience. The museum itinerary can be enjoyed independently and freely, walking in Cavour’s Vineyard, around the perimeter ramparts of the Castle.

## Limiting factors

The pandemic situation postponed the completion and inauguration of one year. As any museum itinerary, it should be promoted and enlivened by various events and incorporated into the guided tours traditionally brought about in the area.

## Applicability and upscaling

A limiting factor of many open-air museums is the risk to be quickly neglected if few visitors are attracted, continuous maintenance is not done and/or vandalism actions are committed. In this case, the itinerary has been linked to an important historic monument, part of the UNESCO site, and is well representing the link between landscape, land under vines, local history, and the product wine.

It demonstrates to have been conceived to enhance not only the visitors’ experience, but also the community awareness. It is a good practice to be replicated in other similar contexts, where rural vocation made specific products.

## Others:





- **Website Museum:** In Vigna Open-air Museum Website: <https://www.castellogrinzane.com/en/in-vigna-open-air-museum/>
- **Website project INTERREG ALCOTRA AMPELO:** <https://www.interreg-alcotra.eu/it/decouvrir-alcotra/les-projets-finances/ampelo>

