

A vintage black metal hanging scale is the central focus, featuring a large, rounded, dark metal weight suspended from a chain. A small, dark metal rooster-shaped weight is perched on top of the main weight. The scale is set against a blurred background of a workshop or museum, with various tools and objects visible on the walls and a wooden table in the foreground.

Cascina Farisengo  
*Memories of past time*



## *Cascina Farisengo*

### Cascina Farisengo

A old family farmstead (cascina)  
with wonderful gardens of 12,000 sqm.  
A very long history to be discovered,  
memories of a past time  
and of a peasant civilization  
preserved and transmitted with passion....

## Summary

### *Cascina*

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## THE HISTORY OF FARISENGO



Farisengo, first documented in 965 b.C, was already a point of reference in Roman times. And from its fields started the Etruscan Master embankment that runs up for hundred of kilometers.

### *The name*

The name “*Farisengo*” has Lombard origins. Its meaning come from 3 words: fara (the Lombard clan or tribe) engo (the camp) and is (iron, that for extension means warrior). That is why we should read the full name as: camp of a warrior tribe.

### *The Roman battle*

In this area of the Po valley took place one of the greatest civil battles of antiquity. A Roman battle which took place for the succession to Nero in 69 b.C.



According to the writings of historians like Tacitus and Plutarch, the battle took place in the territories of Farisengo, where a temple has now been erected in memory of the event. During the first Roman Civil War, the bloody Roman battle took place between the supporters of Otone and those of Vitellio. It happened on April 14th, 69 b.C. causing over 40,000 deaths.

The 69 b.C. was called “*the year of the four emperors*”, because in his turn Galba, Otone, Vitellio and Vespasiano fought with arms the imperial succession to Nero.

Cremona, then a thriving center of cereal production and livestock trade, was identified by the contenders as a key city for the domination of the Roman world.

In the months that followed the battle and the victory of Vitellio over Otone, the great military maneuvers of that year, which involved over one hundred thousand Roman legionaries, continued near Cremona. The decisive clash culminated with the victory of Vespasiano and the devastation of Cremona.

## THE LOMBARD CASCINA

Cascina Farisengo is a typical Lombard “cascina”, a farmstead with enclosed courtyard in the typical style of the territory. The farmhouse once housed up to 13 families (a community of around 120 people) and its territory represented one of the two districts of Bonemerse, near Cremona.

The large farmyard that unfolds in front of the visitor recalls how cascinas were once small villages: everything overlooked this wide space which was occupied in the summer time by the yellow of the wheat left to dry and in the autumn time by children’s games.

On the north side, below the barns, the old stables that housed cattle and horses have now been transformed into an elegant room for weddings and company events under a vaulted ceiling supported by stone columns.

Those that once formed the peasants’ houses between the service stables and the forge are now home to a charming agrotourism with 11 accommodations. On the opposite side, the square courtyard is dominated on the south side by the Mansion House while on the eastern side twelve arches were once used for different functions, from wine cellars to woodshed and barns.





## THE MANOR HOUSE

The historic Manor House of Farisengo has a fifteenth-century layout and presents, on the left, a small closed courtyard of an older construction (XII century).

In the central part of the house, the “bocchirale” (typical of Lombard palaces) is the main room and gives access on one side to the farmhouse and on the other to the gardens.



The room has four still original side doors dating back to the eighteenth century; the walls and ceiling present beautiful frescoes with architectural and floral elements. The pavement presents a XV century Venetian mosaic.

Going up from the staircase to the upper floor, the recovery intervention brought to light, as in the original design, a “loggia” which has a wooden ceiling and opens through three symmetrical windows on the courtyard of the farmhouse.

The house was enlarged in the nineteenth century by the Anselmi family with the construction of some rooms and the external greenhouse (orangerie).



## THE HISTORIC GARDENS

**A**mong the historic gardens of Cremona, that of Farisengo, following extensive restoration in 1951, is certainly one of the most well kept gardens in the area thanks to continuous maintenance work which has allowed the preservation of the garden's natural initial design. As such it is protected by "Fine Arts".

Featuring a lake covering around 2,500 square meters fed by it's own spring water, the garden has two fountains, a fisherman's cottage, a Swiss cottage, an aviary and an ice-house. All the characteristic elements of a nineteenth century Italian garden.

*"The Farisengo Park, in excellent condition, is a fine example of romantic style in which the Po valley landscape is modified to suggest the illusion of a mountain... As other gardens of the time, even that of Farisengo offers pleasing color combinations studied with asymmetries that rise against the backdrop of grassy meadows."*

(Source: Cremona Gardens - Ed Mile)

### *The origins of the viridarium*

From numerous documents, archived in the Cremona State Archives, we have discovered that Benedetto Fodri, owner of the famous palace in Cremona, owned numerous lands in Farisengo in the sixteenth century. The Fodri's family listed among their properties also a "viridarium", that is a botanical garden annexed to the Farisengo farmhouse.

The "viridarium" or home garden was recorded at the time of Charles V in 1551.

The "botanical" history of this beautiful place spans the centuries starting from the "viridarium" and then becoming the romantic garden of the 19<sup>th</sup> century we can now admire.





## POINTS OF INTERESTS

### *The greenhouse or orangerie*

The greenhouse or orangerie presents a neo-gothic taste on the sides and a Renaissance-style arches in the center. The structure has some painting decorations. Now the roof that covers it is stable while once the greenhouse was uncovered from spring to autumn and in winter it was covered and heated by a stove to keep the most delicate plants sheltered from possible frosts, as well as for the traditional lemon house/orangerie.



### *The fisherman's house and the bridge*

On the banks of the small lake there is a little fishermen's house, now restored, and a iron bridge from where you can enjoy a heavenly view of the garden as a whole.

### *The icehouse*

The icehouse was used for the conservation of the food and was typical in big cascinas. The icehouse of Farisengo has a good size and architecturally, it includes a central room and a "snail ride", as a thermal separation corridor between the outside and the inside.

### *The Swiss cottage or hunter's house*

In a central position of the park, half hidden by age-old yew trees and surrounded by hazel and bushes, there is a pretty little house called "Swiss cottage" or "the hunterman's house".

The house has a decorative purpose and follow the romantic taste of the time. It was a different version of the classical temple typical in the Renaissance garden. It also referred to the "Genius loci" (a natural and supernatural entity linked to a place and object of worship in Roman religion). Inside the house there are simple paintings, related to peasants culture. Behind the door there is a curious almanac that has a chronological date (1831) with a Cremonese sentence saying: "Almanach de l'an MCXXXI sénsa sold se paga nisun" (= with no money you cannot pay).





## THE PEASANT HOUSE

In the Cremonese cascina, the peasants houses were typically lined up all around the farmyard, some at the sides of the Manor House or under the arcades on either side of the stables.

Entering, on the ground floor, there was the kitchen where the women of the house cooked the meals for the whole family.

Usually, behind the kitchen there was another room, with clay floor, in which you could find working tools, and sometimes cages for rabbits or chickens that during the day they lived out in the farmyard. You could also find the seeds for the vegetable garden and many other objects that could be used in the field.

The second room was almost always used for the breeding of silkworms which, once grown, were placed in large trellises of reeds (*arèle*) arranged one above the other in a staircase and which took up a lot of space. On the second and third floors, there were the bedrooms which were accessed by very steep wooden stairs.



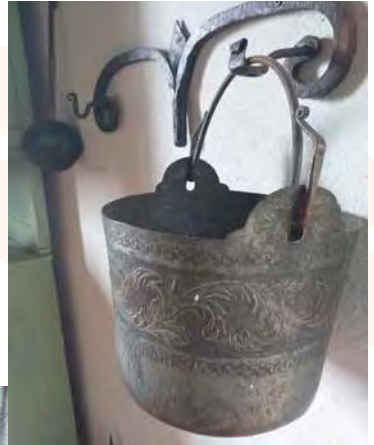


## THE KITCHEN

The kitchen was the centerpiece of the house and had a very simple furnishing. In the middle of the room, the wooden table, usually equipped with a drawer, was used for a thousand of works. Then, there were chairs to seat all the family members.

A piece of furniture that was always present in the kitchen was the sideboard (*màadena*) which contained white and yellow flour. The white flour was used to prepare the pasta, while the yellow flour with water and salt were the ingredients to obtain an excellent polenta. An essential cabinet in addition to the sideboard was the “*moscarola*”, with the sides of the container of wire mesh or veil. This was hung in a dark corner of the kitchen, away from cats and mice, in order to defend and repair food from flies and animals.

The most important part of the kitchen was the fireplace. It was the place for preparing and cooking food and its special assistant was the housewife. Nearby were pallets, brooms and the chain used to move the cauldron typically used for cooking polenta. Bread was prepared and kneaded with the “*gramola*” and then baked in special ovens outside the kitchen. It was a special type of bread called panbiscotto (literally: biscuit bread). When dusk came the light was given by the hearth of the fireplace and the oil lamps placed in different points of the house.



## SERICULTURE AND SILKWORMS

Silkworm breeding was typical in the Cremona countryside. It was an important economic resource for the livelihood of peasant families. The worms were bred at home, in the heat, in special trellis (arele), racks formed with small bundles of reeds.

In the home, the peasant family made room for the multi-storey wooden scaffolding that supported the racks where the worms grew and fed mulberry leaves in a constant temperature condition. Worm breeding was basically done by women who had to ensure their well-being and nourish them adequately. Once the cocoons were obtained, they were sold to the spinning mills which dried them in the oven so that the heat killed the worm to prevent the cocoon from puncturing with consequent breaking of the burr and then they were transformed into yarn of silk.

The practice of breeding silkworm needed some important tools:

- **Arella** - a special trellis formed with small bundles of marsh reeds, where the mulberry leaves and the worms were put
- **Basket** - a light wicker basket, used for the final sorting of the cocoons of the worms and for delivery to the spinning mill
- **Incubator** - a special tool, built from a double wooden container, with a cavity filled with wood sawdust to preserve its internal temperature. The worms' eggs were weighed in ounces (1 ounce corresponds to 28.35 grams) and were placed inside small boxes placed





one above the other inside the incubator. The internal temperature was  $14^{\circ}$  in the first days; then it was gradually increased until  $22^{\circ}$  and then kept constant until the birth of the small silkworms.

- Machine to remove the burr from the cocoons - when it was time for “*de-cocoonization*” this machine was used to remove the burr from the cocoon and the trellis. The bavella (wire of the outer layer of the cocoon) was wrapped around some metal rods and the cocoons were thus cleaned. The waste was however preserved and used to stuff cushions and duvets.
- Topper - a useful tool to cut thin leaves and tender mulberry branches to feed the worms.

## THE FARMSTEAD ORGANIZATION



Normally the men chief (*Fattore*) also lived in the Cascina and was responsible for the entire farm organizing the work of the peasants. The farmer responded only and exclusively to the owner with whom he had a relationship of trust. The *fattore* received a double compensation.

Among the farmers who lived in the farmhouse there were those who carried out the most important tasks such as:

- **Bergamini** who were responsible to milk the cows
- **Casari**, the cheesemakers
- **Farmers** who took care of the work in the fields: plowing, sowing, harrowing, harvesting, cutting hay
- **Cavallanti** or **Bifolchi** who dealt with the same work of the farmers with the use of animals (horses or oxen). They also had to look after the animals.

In early November the employment contract was renewed annually, for some terminated. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, on the occasion of **Saint Martin** (*San Martino*), many charts left the cascina while others arrived in the farmhouse. Still today, "*Fare San Martino*" (= To do Saint Martin) is a saying used in the agricultural area of the Po Valley and means changing jobs and places of work or, in a broader sense, moving.

## AGRICULTURAL MACHINES

### *The locomobile*

The locomobile is a steam engine mounted on a wheeled wagon and therefore, as the name suggests, easily transportable from one place to another.

It was used for many purposes, but its greatest application was in the agricultural sector. Around 1940 it was used to transfer the movement to other agricultural machines by operating the transmission belts of threshers, dough sheeters or peeling machines for threshing, ginning and peeling of cereals (wheat or corn).

The arrival of the steam - of the locomobile - was celebrated in the farmhouses (cascine) as a great event: men, women and children were all in the farmyard admiring this black monster pulled by a powerful tractor that placed it at a safe distance from the threshing machine.

Two or three workers took care of its operation by throwing coal shovels into the stove, checking the water pressure in the boiler and, finally, kicking off the large pulley that transmitted the movement to the threshing machine.

In agriculture, the so-called "*locomobile*" model had a great success. The main manufacturing firms were English. In Italy the most famous company was the "**Ernesto Breda**" of Milan.

#### CURIOSITY:

**Richard Trevithick**, inventor of the steam locomotive, designed in 1812 a semi-transportable engine for agricultural use known as the "*barn-engine*" and used as a thresher for corn.

### *The ginner*

The ginner was an agricultural machine similar to the harvester that mechanically performed the separation of the the leaves from the corn cob and of seeds.

Originally, the seed came out of the machine mixed with dust and impurities, from which it had to be separated manually. With the advent of the locomobile, the movement of these machines was simplified by requiring less manpower; later, the task of transmitting movement and moving from one place to another was for agricultural tractors.





## THE COLLECTION OF OLD CARRIAGES



Today, Farisengo is home to a superb collection of around 25 carriages dating back to the nineteenth century, made by the leading Italian manufacturers of the time such as Sala, Pavesi and Fontana.

Among the most interesting models on display in this beautiful setting, there is a completely restored *Brougham* dating from the end of 1800's, a fine example of an 1800 *Omnibus* which was created for public transport and carries up to 12 people. Among other models there is a *Sulky* from the early nineteenth century, a *Wagonette*, two *Tonneau* used to bring children to school and pulled by a goat or a pony, a *Spider Pheaton* (so named for its slender body and large wheels, to make it look like a spider) and a *Fiacre*, the vehicle used for service within the central courtyard of the house containing a small toiletry bag with mirror. There is also a *Landau*, a restored elegant *Dame-de-Duc*, used by the ladies, as a walking carriage.

### *Berline*

The *Berline* was a covered four-wheeled travelling carriage pulled by four horses and mainly used for long journeys or as a coach of representation (also for cardinals) or gala.

The name comes from the German city of Berlin where the carriage was seen for the first time. The vehicle had two side doors with lowered glass and two front lights.

Inside, two front facing sofas generally housed four people, although there are examples of more capable carriages. In the travel models the Berline presented various accessories, such as bottle racks, clothes holders, table, mirror etc.

The decorations are more colorful in the gala models, more sober in the travel ones.

### *Break*

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A *Brake* (or *break*) was a horse-drawn carriage used in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the training of horses for draft work. In its variants, the Break belongs to one of the most widespread European sports cars. Probably born in France, this carriage arrived in England as a gift from Louis Philippe to Queen Victoria.

It owes its name to the English expression “*to break a horse*” or to tame a horse. He later established himself as a coach for informal promenades in the countryside.

### *Brougham*

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The “*Brougham*” (pronounced “*broom*”) was a light four-wheeled carriage drawn by one or two horses. Designed in London in 1834, it was named after the Scottish jurist Lord Brougham. This carriage was used in the Victorian age, both by the nobles and the middle class people, as a street coach (it is the ancestor of our taxi) or for private use. The model was also used to build the first cars, as its design lent itself to the installation of an engine instead of animal force. The car consisted of a closed body with two doors, generally with two seats. Unlike the other carriages of the time, this vehicle was equipped with a glazed front window, so that the occupants could see forward, and often contained various accessories, such as clothes racks, toilets, etc.

### *Duc de Dame*

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Born in the middle of the last century and symbol of the Belle Epoque, the “*Duc-de-Dame*” was an open carriage, two-seater and four-wheeled, with a back seat for the servants. It was used by refined ladies as a walking carriage, drawn by purebred horses.

Characteristic of the Duc is the “*garde-crotte*”, a large orfan put in the front, and also the large side fenders. The need for this space was required for the wide skirts that the ladies used to wear.

### *Fiacre*

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The “*Fiacre*” was a hackney coach, a horse-drawn four-wheeled carriage for hire. In Vienna such cabs were called Fiaker.

The origin of the name is curious: in Paris, around 1640, the first carriages of this type were used to transport passengers to the sanctuary of Saint-Fiacre de Brie, about 50 km from the French capital. The throw-away had the figure of this saint as a sign.



### *Landau*

The *Landau* (or *landô*) was an elegant four-wheeled and convertible carriage. It was a city carriage of luxury type. The low shell of the landau made for maximum visibility of the occupants and their clothing, a feature that made it a popular choice on ceremonial occasions. It was named after the German city of Landau, where this carriage was designed and built for the first time. A landau is one of several kinds of vis-à-vis, a social carriage with facing seats over a dropped footwell which was perfected by the mid-19th. The soft folding top is divided into two sections, front and rear, latched at the center.

### *Omnibus*

The coach "*Omnibus*" (from the Latin "*for all*") made its first appearance in Paris, in 1819. It was a large, enclosed and sprung horse-drawn vehicle used for passenger transport before the introduction of motor vehicles. Born from an idea of the famous philosopher Pascal in 1662,

it is considered the ancestor of today's bus. It was defined by the people as a "five-dollar carriage" because that was the cost of transportation for each person. In a typical arrangement, two wooden benches along the sides of the passenger cabin held several sitting passengers facing each other. On the upper deck, which was uncovered, the longitudinal benches were arranged back to back.

### *Spider Phaeton*

A Phaeton was a form of sporty open carriage popular in the late eighteenth and early

nineteenth century. Drawn by one or two horses, a phaeton typically featured a minimal very lightly sprung body atop four extravagantly large wheels. With open seating, it was both fast and dangerous, giving rise to its name, drawn from the mythical Phaëton, son of Helios, who nearly set the earth on fire while attempting to drive the chariot of the sun. The Spider Phaeton, of American origin, was a high and ultralightly carriage.

It owes its name to the resemblance of the spider structure (“*spider*”), as it has a slim body and high and light wheels. This carriage was used by gentlemen for city walks.

The more comfortable front seat was occupied by the owner who personally drove, while the backseat was for domestic servants.

### *Sulky*

The Sulky is a typical racing vehicle in which lightness was a factor of prime importance. That’s why they were built almost entirely in wood. Used for transport in the countryside and, more frequently, in racetracks for trotting races, it is a model of a very special two-wheeled cart and driven by a single horse.

### *Tonneau*

The Tonneau is a small two-wheeled horse-drawn cart. Its name derives from the barrel shape (in French “*tonneau*”) rounded with a closed box. This carriage is also called





Governess cart as it was used to bring children to school.  
Its distinguishing feature is a small tub body, with two opposed inward-facing seats.

### *Wagonette*

A wagonette (*little wagon*) was a small horsecar with springs, which has two benches along the right and left side of the platform, people facing each other. The driver sits on a separate, front-facing bench. A wagonette may be open or have a tilt. Used for public transport for up to six people, it was large horse-drawn enclosed vehicle with spring-suspension, a similar arrangement of the seats and obligatory ceiling is called an omnibus.

Due to its robustness, this model was also used in various armies until the Second World War for the transport of soldiers.

### *Victoria*

The Victoria (or Mylord) was an elegant open carriage, with four wheels and two seats: one for passengers and a taller front for the coachman.

The model was created in England around 1835 taking its name from the Queen Victoria. This noble summer carriage was very fashionable throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.



## *Cascina Farisengo*

Via Farisengo, 2 - 26040 Bonemerse (Cremona)

Ph. +39 366 7310161

[info@farisengo.it](mailto:info@farisengo.it)

[cascinafarisengo.it](http://cascinafarisengo.it)

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