

# KC magazine

Aprile 2015

## The Drive — of your — *Life*

*ANWER BATT* explores Italy's Motor Valley,  
basing himself in Bologna and nearby Modena,  
in order to sample the region's claims to fame



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he northern Italian region of Emilia-Romagna is called The Land of Motors, for the excellent reason that it is not only home to many legendary performance car makers, but also a range of automobile attractions to bring out the inner Jeremy Clarkson in anyone. Since the area also boasts the best food in Italy, it's a dream destination for car lovers who want to combine wheels with meals. It's best to base yourself in the bustling university city of Bologna, with its splendid arcaded buildings and convenient transport links. Of several good hotels, easily the finest is the Grand Hotel Majestic, housed in an 18th-century palazzo in the heart of the city; recent guests include Paul McCartney and Jennifer Lopez. Four privately owned boutique hotels, ranging from the stylish Corona d'Oro to the more modest Orologio, are all conveniently central too.

The area's greatest motor attraction is undoubtedly the Ferrari museum in Maranello. If ever there was a company town, this would be it, with Ferrari uniforms, logo and colours in every corner. More than 150,000 people visit the dynamic venue annually to experience all aspects of the dream supercar, from F1 models raced by its champions to special displays and exhibitions of road cars. You can even try your hand at recreating a pit-stop or using an F1 simulator; and there is also a bus tour of the firm's factory and test track nearby. A little south of Bologna is the Imola race circuit, formerly home of the San Marino Grand Prix. After Ayrton Senna suffered fatal injuries in 1994, it was no longer used for F1, though it has been redeveloped and now hosts several other races and events; a statue of Senna, erected in 1997, means that it is still a place of pilgrimage for F1 fans. For lovers of two wheels, Imola is also home to the Battilani Collection of early bikes, including Harley Davidsons. Other motorbike attractions include the Ducati factory and museum (book in advance) and the Bruno Nigelli collection – both just outside Bologna.

The centre of Motor Valley is Modena, where the highlight is the Museo Enzo Ferrari. The museum, which opened three years ago, next to the house where Ferrari's founder was born, is a shrine to motor sport and luxury cars; costing €18 million, it was designed by London-based Future Systems, most famous for the Media Centre at Lord's Cricket Ground. The aluminium roof is painted in the iconic yellow, a symbol of Modena, used as a background for Ferrari's prancing horse trademark. Its dramatic curved spaces feature awesome Italian cars displayed like works of art in themed exhibitions, and it's one of the key stops of a classic car parade commemorating the legendary Mille Miglia race in May. There is a festival of cars and motor cycles in the

town in the same month, and other automobile events year round. You can get a shuttle bus from the Museo Enzo Ferrari to the museum at Maranello.

Modena is also home to the Stanguellini collection of cars, mainly those made by the firm, once a major name in motor sport until it stopped production in 1981. The collection features engines as well as motor racing artefacts and memorabilia. On the outskirts of town is the Autodromo di Modena – a circuit frequently used for new model launches, test drives and special events. There you can book high-powered cars to drive at speed (usually accompanied by a professional driver) or be driven around in race vehicles. There are also courses to sharpen your skills.

Pagani is the newest marque to be built near Modena, founded by Horacio Pagani, an Argentinian designer, who formerly worked for Lamborghini. He launched the extraordinary carbon fibre Zonda in 1997, followed by the Huayra in 2011. Book in advance to visit the showroom and factory, where you can see the custom-made supercars – with top speeds of more than 200mph – being built for clients willing to pay up to €2 million per car.

Maseratis are also made in Modena – although the famous trident logo is actually a symbol of Bologna where the cars were first produced – and at the Panini Museum, just outside town, you will find one of the world's best collections. Models on display include a car

## Apart from cars, Modena's most iconic product is Balsamic vinegar

raced by Stirling Moss, as well as motorbikes, cars from several other manufacturers and even tractors made by Lamborghini before the firm started making automobiles. The collection, a passion of the late Umberto Panini, who made his fortune by selling collectable football stickers, is based at his Hombre farm, which produces Parmesan cheese, one of the culinary stars of the region. See it being made early in the morning and buy some, vacuum packed, to bring back; the older, the more expensive.

Apart from cars, Modena's most iconic product is Balsamic vinegar. Two of the best producers, who welcome visitors for tastings, are Acetaia di Giorgio and Villa San Donnino, where the grand house on the estate was used as a location for Bertolucci's film *1900*. Smooth and syrupy, real Aceto Balsamico – rarely found outside Italy – is very different from the supermarket product. Marked D.O.P. (of protected origin) it comes only in bulbous 100 ml bottles created – true to the region – by motor designer Giorgetto Giugiaro, and is aged for either 12 or 25 years. It can sell locally for more than €150 so it's a precious ►

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► product used very sparingly as a seasoning; never for cooking or salad dressings.

Modena also takes pride in being home to the best restaurant in Italy; Massimo Bottura's three Michelin-starred Osteria Francescana. Tradition is honoured by his playful signature dishes based on local favourites, including Parmesan served in five different ways; tagliatelle with Bolognese sauce; and his take on a mortadella sandwich. The svelte Bottura recently published a cookbook *Never Trust a Skinny Italian Chef* and co-owns Franceschetta 58 where, if you're in a hurry, you can try the delicious, good value buffet at lunch in a relaxed atmosphere (it's a more conventional bistro in the evening). The other top choice in Modena is L'Erba del Re (one Michelin star) serving fine ingredients in neatly presented, deeply flavoured dishes. Once again, tradition is important, but rising chef Luca Marchini is expert at modern techniques.

In Bologna, though, things don't come much more homely than at Anna Maria. Freshly made pasta, including local speciality tortellini, dominates the unchanging menu, enjoyed by everyone from opera stars from the nearby Teatro Comunale to students. At Cantina Bentivoglio the cavernous space, once the cellars of a palace, attracts dinner guests for the reliable food and for some of the best live jazz in town. Tamburini, another local institution, is not only the finest food shop in Bologna but also an immensely popular self-service restaurant and wine bar. Bologna's most luxurious gastronomic experience, however, is at I Carracci, helmed by new chef Giuliano Tassinari, at the Grand Hotel Majestic, where the menu features delicious regional dishes alongside more exotic offerings, impeccably served under a 15th century frescoed ceiling.

Spare yourself the trouble of organising an itinerary by going through British tour operator Motor Passion or locally through Modenatur. Both can arrange meals, stays, visits and transport so that you can concentrate on what really matters: the cars and cuisine. ■



Art Deco Terrace Suite



Pagani Huayra



## MORE INFORMATION

**Where to stay:** [lhw.com/ghmajesticbaglioni](http://lhw.com/ghmajesticbaglioni);  
[bolognarhotels.it](http://bolognarhotels.it)

**What to do:** [museiferrari.com](http://museiferrari.com);  
[autodromoimola.it](http://autodromoimola.it); [ducati.com](http://ducati.com); [nifo.it](http://nifo.it);  
[stanguellini.it](http://stanguellini.it); [autodromodimodena.it](http://autodromodimodena.it);  
[pagani.com](http://pagani.com); [paninimotormuseum.it](http://paninimotormuseum.it);  
[acetaiadigiorgio.it](http://acetaiadigiorgio.it); [villasandonnino.com](http://villasandonnino.com)

**Where to eat:** [osteriafrancescana.it](http://osteriafrancescana.it);  
[lerbadelre.it](http://lerbadelre.it); [trattoriannamaria.com](http://trattoriannamaria.com);  
[cantinabentivoglio.it](http://cantinabentivoglio.it); [tamburini.com](http://tamburini.com)

**Who to book with:** [motor-passion.co.uk](http://motor-passion.co.uk);  
[modenatur.it](http://modenatur.it)

EasyJet flies daily from Gatwick to Bologna  
([easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com))