



Certosa Island

Venice and its Lagoon, Italy – 18 -31 August 2009

♦ Cultural site

The site: Founded in the 5th century and spread over 118 small islands, Venice became a major maritime power in the 10th century. The whole city is an extraordinary architectural masterpiece in which even the smallest building contains works by some of the world's greatest artists such as Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and others. Certosa Island is located in the splendid landscape of the Park of the Lagoon, in an important and strategic position between the old city centre and the open sea. The area has been hosting a Convent between 1200 and 1500 and has later been used for military purposes until 1950. The military use caused the destruction of the biggest part of the Convent, in order to create defensive walls and build bunkers. After the demilitarisation process the island has been abandoned for decades. During this time the vegetation slowly started to cover and ruin the ancient historical site, and numerous archaeological rests have been stolen.



The project and its objectives: In 2002 the Municipality of Venice started the restoration of the island, running since 2004 a nautical pole managed by young Venetian people. The main objective of the project is to contribute to the prestige of the lagoon and its islands by preserving and restoring the archaeological, natural and cultural heritage of Certosa. The work to encourage authorities, citizens and public opinion to take care of their World Heritage and to ensure the protection of their natural and cultural heritage is also an important aspect of the project. Finally, the project aims at raising awareness about environmental values to improve the ecological and cultural education in the region. This is the fifth year Legambiente is running a camp in Certosa Island, involving more than 200 national and international young volunteers since the beginning of the activities on the island.

The activities: Volunteers will be involved in the development of the ancient part of the island, in order to support the planning of the next archaeological works. They will contribute to the maintenance of Certosa's structures and naturalistic paths, in order to make the access to the natural park and its archaeological sites easier. Furthermore, volunteers will organise public activities and events in order to involve the community, collaborating with site managers and local authorities. In the course of the camp, volunteers will discover and bring the visitors to discover the more ancient and not (yet) touristy places of the lagoon.

Expected results: The work of the volunteers will facilitate the task of the team of archaeologists working in the ancient part of Certosa Island, and allow the local authorities to open the Certosa park for public fruition of both citizens and tourists. They will also contribute to an improved understanding of the local community about their historical, naturalistic and cultural heritage, revitalize a non-touristy part of Venice and increasing the citizens' knowledge about their island and the lagoon. The work of the volunteers will finally be a key factor in building solid relationships and long-term partnerships for the preservation and renovation of the site between Legambiente, the other environmental associations active in the lagoon, the site management and the local authorities.

Partners: Among the most important project partners and promoters are the Municipality of Venice, the Park of the Lagoon Authority, the nautical pole Vento di Venezia and the local environmental association Certosa Committee.

Organisation responsible for the project:

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World Heritage Volunteers - "Patrimonito Voluntary Action 2009"

Sources: for the description of the World Heritage site: UNESCO World Heritage List, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>
For the description of the activities: Legambiente Italy and CCIVS, www.unesco.org/ccivs