

**Bellagio Study & Conference Center**

**Villa Serbelloni**

**INFORMATION FOR  
CONFERENCE GUESTS**

**1997**

## Welcome

We hope that you will make yourself at home at the Bellagio Center. During your stay, the house belongs to you. And, as Pliny recommended, you are free to devote yourself to intellectual pursuits.

We also hope the information in this handout will be useful. Let us know if we can make your stay better.

### ADMINISTRATION

Pasquale Pesce                      Tel. 213 (office)  
Director                                      204 (private)

Gianna Bellei Celli                      Tel. 215 (office)  
Assistant Director                      248 (private)

### RECEPTION

Hours: 8:30-13:00 and 14:00-17:00 weekdays and Saturdays,  
or until 22:30 when a conference is in session.

Residents' Assistant/  
Receptionist                      Tel. 9

### SERVICES

Waiter Station                      Tel. 226

A wait-staff person is always available for emergencies outside of Reception hours by dialing 9.

We operate the Center with a small staff. While we want to provide the Foundation's guests with essential comforts, staff time is limited. We ask you to observe scheduled hours. Please remember that few office staff members are on duty over the weekend, therefore if you have any special requests, be sure to see Reception by Friday before closing.

Please also respect the "Staff Only" signs both inside and outside the house.

## GATES

Two gates can be used to enter the Bellagio Center grounds: one opens to the pedestrian stairway and the other to the driveway. A third entrance is located at the end of the lake shore road, at the confines of the small harbor of Pescallo. From these entrances there are signs indicating the paths to various buildings. Most paths connecting buildings are lighted at night.

The electrically operated, wrought-iron gates to the Villa Serbelloni compound are kept locked and are unguarded. Please exercise care in opening and closing them and report malfunctions immediately. To enter the property, insert your key in the lock below the intercom screen. To exit the property, at the stairs, press the push button on the wall in front of you as you descend through the first gate; at the driveway, press the red push button on the post ten meters inside the gate on the left-hand side.

## KEYS

The key found on your desk operates the locks on the door to your room and on all gates to the Center grounds. The key is linked to a small flashlight that can be useful outside at night or during short blackouts that sometimes occur during summer thunderstorms.

Please remember to leave the key on your desk or with any staff member before you depart. We will be obliged to charge you for lost keys, tags and flashlights; their replacement totals \$50.00.

## TRANSPORTATION

Except in emergencies, we cannot provide transportation off the grounds to residents.

Taxi service is available in town. Particularly during the summer tourist season, it is best to make reservations in advance. The Receptionist will be happy to make them for you. The waiters will do the same when Reception is closed.

## TRIPS

Once at the Center, we expect residents to remain in continuous residence. Please arrange other travel for either before or after your residency.

## GROUNDS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

**Visitors:** There are several miles of trails and roads in the park and extensive formal gardens that you are free to enjoy. Except for two tours a day during the tourist season for groups accompanied by a guide, the public is excluded from the grounds. However, if friends or relatives pass through Bellagio, you may show them the gardens, woods and your quarters at the Center. Mr. Pesce or Ms. Celli will make arrangements to have them admitted at the gate.

**Cars/Parking:** We ask residents to limit driving personal vehicles to the stretch of road between the main gate and the Villa. Please keep your car in the lot at the entrance and drive it on the grounds only when entering or leaving the compound.

**Recreational Facilities:** A tennis court, croquet and bocce are at your disposal. Please see Reception for details. Swimming, cabins, deck chairs, shower and a private lake front area are at the Sfondrata and freely available to all guests of the Center. The lake is checked regularly for pollution and warnings are issued when it is unsafe to swim.

**Bird Watching:** In Reception, there is a list of birds sighted on the promontory in past years. For your convenience, binoculars are also available.

**Boating:** See Reception if you wish to use the row boat.

## MEALS AND REFRESHMENTS

We expect you to attend all meals served at the Center. If you will be absent from lunch or dinner, kindly inform Ms. Celli, the Resident Assistant or the waiter on duty in writing before 10:00 for lunch and 15:00 for dinner. We will be most grateful for the courtesy.

**Breakfast:** Breakfast is served to residents and teams in the small Dining Room adjoining it, at any time between **7:30 and 9:00**. Special arrangements are made for those with early departures.

**Coffee/Tea:** Coffee and tea are served from 10:00 to 11:00 and from 16:00 to 17:00 in the Tea Room at the Villa. We ask all guests to help keep coffee and tea spots off the rugs, carpeting and upholstery of the house. Please report accidents immediately.

All residents who have a study in the park may place a standing order for a hot thermos of coffee or tea. Make arrangements with the waiter on duty.

**Lunch:** Lunch is ready promptly at **13:00**, following aperitives which are served from 12:30 on in the Column Room or outside, weather permitting. Dress at the midday meal is informal.

If you prefer not to break your work routine or if you will be away for lunch, you may want to take a sandwich, something to drink and some fruit. If so, ask for a picnic lunch from the waiter on duty at breakfast time or the night before. Please note that it is necessary to request one the night before if you need a bag lunch before 7:30am the following day.

**Dinner:** Dinner is served promptly at 19:30 in the Villa dining room, following cocktails which are served at 19:00 in the ground floor Column Room. Jacket and tie are required for men and women should dress accordingly. Appropriate national costume is also suitable. In order to foster an exchange of ideas across disciplines, dinner is taken with the participants of international conferences scheduled at the Center. After-dinner liqueurs will be served in the Music Room.

Special diets for strict medical or religious needs can be arranged. Please speak to Ms. Celli who will instruct the Chef to meet your needs. Ad hoc dishes or diets are not available.

## MAIL

Normally, mail arrives by 12:00 and is distributed in individual mailboxes at Reception. Outgoing mail leaves the Villa at 11:00. You may leave stamped mail in the leather box on the marble table opposite the main entrance of the Villa or hand it in at Reception.

We do not sell stamps. They are available in the Village at the tobacconists' or at the post office (see map at the end).

## COURIER SERVICES

The Foundation uses Federal Express, DHL and Skypack to send materials. Please see Reception for details.

## TELEFAX

The telefax incoming connection is open 24 hrs. Outgoing communications have to be handed in during office hours at Reception (8:30 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 17:00 or 22:30 when there is a conference in-house).

Charges will be made to the individual's account.

## TELEGRAMS

Telegrams should be written in block letters or typewritten on forms provided by Reception. They will be dispatched from the office.

## **TELEPHONE**

You may use the telephone in your room to call the outside world by dialing 0 followed by the area code and number. A word of caution: the telephone is still considered one of the most expensive services in Italy. Other guests within the Center's compound and the staff can be dialed directly. If necessary, dial 9 for the VS switchboard operator who can assist you in making calls from 8:30 to 17:30 or to 22:30 during conference.

Telephone card holders can dial directly from their room - AT&T #0-1721011, MCI #0-1721022 and SPRINT #0-1721877, at no charge.

The switchboard operator forwards incoming calls to your room, or to the nearest telephone when your whereabouts are known. **Except for emergencies, please ask callers not to call after office hours** as the staff person answering the phone after hours and on Sundays is there for emergencies only.

Charges for all calls are automatically assessed, and you will be billed at the end of your stay.

## **LIBRARY**

While it is not designed for research, the library contains many books of quality in various fields. A high proportion of these, identified by a red tab on the spine, were worked on at the Villa by scholars, or are the product of conference deliberations.

The main collection, including a general reference section in English and foreign language dictionaries, encyclopedias, yearbooks and atlases as well as specialized reference books, is located on the second floor of the Villa. We welcome your suggestions for additions to the reference collection.

Books are organized by the Library of Congress Catalogue System. There is no check out process. **Please return the books you borrowed to the library table**, or leave them in your room when you depart. **Do not remove reference works from the library.**

## **SERVICES IN HOUSE**

**Adapters/Converters.** The voltage is 220. Adapter plugs are available in each guest bathroom; additional plugs and small converters are available at Reception.

**Games:** Backgammon, chess, Scrabble, Trivial Pursuit, card games, puzzles, and other games are for use in the public rooms and are stored in the Villa Game Room.

**Hair dryers:** Blow-dryers are available at Reception. Please return them on the same day.

**Laundry and pressing:** This service is not available at the Center. There are no facilities in the Village equipped for 24-hours laundry service or dry cleaning. You can use the washing and ironing rooms located in the Tower. Conferees staying in the Villetta and Gate House have their own washing and ironing rooms located in their buildings. Washer, dryer and iron are available, as well as detergent. **Please observe the signs posted and the difference between the two machines.**

**Maintenance problems:** In case of malfunctioning equipment, broken furniture, lamps, or other problems, please call Reception at ext. 9, or tell someone on the administrative staff.

**Newspapers and periodicals:** **The International Herald Tribune, Le Monde, Neue Zurichr Zeitung, Il Giornale Nuovo, and Repubblica**, are the dailies to which we subscribe, though delivery is often spotty. Together with weeklies and monthlies, they can be found in the Salottino at the Villa. A copy of the Herald Tribune can also be found in the Maranese Salottino. **AS A COURTESY TO OTHER GUESTS, PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE CURRENT ISSUES FROM THE ROOM.**

**Phonograph/Radio:** A stereo phonograph, cassette player and radio set, a special collection of American music records and a varied collection of records, are available in the Game Room. In the Salottino there is a compact disc and a tape player and an incipient collection of discs and tapes. Also, there is a phonograph in the Sfondrata Common Room. You are invited to use the equipment with care and to contribute to the collection music that you feel is missing.

**Reading Material:** In the Villa Salottino there are shelves bearing paperbacks. Donations or exchanges are welcome. Current Italian travel books, regional maps and guides are available at Reception.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

**Secretarial service**, as well as technical and audio-visual assistance, **is not available at the Center.**

Residents have use of the following equipment and facilities:

- an IBM electric typewriter
- a collating photocopier (Mon.-Sat. from 8:30 to 17:30 daily)
- three MacIntosh computers
  - two connected to a laser printer and one to a laserwriter with C.D. (on a sign up basis)
- Toshiba and Compaq lap-top computers (machines are available on a first-come first-served basis)
- Compaq lap-top computers (2 machines are available on a first-come first-served basis)
- \* - a Compaq Deskpro XE with audio and CD Rom reader (available on a sign up basis for printing purposes)
- an HP Laserjet IV L Printer, European A4 paper format
- tape recording equipment (standard cassettes)
- \* - a 16 mm sound film projector
- \* - 3 Kodak carousel slide projectors
- \* - slide sorter
- \* - an overhead projector
- a VCR videotape machine connected to a TV.

(\* Equipment can be used when there is no conference in session.)

**We do not have a computer expert on staff** so we expect users to have had previous experience with computers and his/her word processing program. Bellagio is absolutely not the place to learn how to use word processing equipment. We ask you to please not attempt to regulate any permanent computer commands on any of the machines.

Please take care in using these machines. Do not attempt maintenance or repairs. Report malfunctions to Reception.

Some paper and office supplies are found in the studies. Additional supplies are available at Reception. Rems of paper for printing are available in the photocopying room.

## CHARGES FOR PERSONAL SERVICES

Telephone, cables, fax, transparencies, medical services and other personal expenses which a guest may incur at the Center will be summarized by the Receptionist. **Please stop at Reception the day before departure and settle your account.** Personal checks, dollars, pounds and other major currencies are accepted at the official exchange rate.

## SERVICES IN TOWN

**Banks:** The Center is not authorized to carry out foreign exchange transactions. This may be done at either of the two banks located on the lakeshore street in the Village. The **Banco Lariano** and the **Banca Popolare di Lecco** are open Monday through Friday from 8:20 to 13:20 and from 14:35 to 15:35. Travellers checks and foreign currency are readily exchanged upon presentation of a valid passport. Personal checks are cashed by the local banks for a limited amount (up to \$500) and with the Director's endorsement. A staff person routinely goes into town each day on errands. If you want to

have an exchange operation carried out on your behalf, bring your passport and the currency or check you wish to change into lire to Reception by 9:30.

**Barber:** There are three barbershops in town (see map at the end). Both are open through Sunday mornings, but are closed on Mondays. No appointments are necessary.

**Church Services:** A Protestant Church is open for Sunday services in Cadenabbia during the tourist season. Catholic church services are held within walking distance from the Villa. Schedules are posted on the bulletin board at Reception.

**Hairdresser:** Hair stylists are marked on the map of the village of Bellagio (see map at the end). The Receptionist will assist you in making appointments. Please do so in advance.

### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Physicians/Dentists:** If you need a physician or a dentist, please consult Mr. Pesce, Ms. Celli or Reception.

**First aid supplies, household drugs and some emergency drugs and medical equipment are kept at Reception.**

### VALUABLES

The integrity of the staff is proven by an unblemished record dating back about 35 years. To our knowledge, no guest at the Center has ever been a victim of a theft. However, you are invited to exercise care by locking your room when leaving and by entrusting anything of special value to Reception for storage in the Villa safe.

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Direction of the Bellagio Center will not assume responsibility for valuables belonging to guests.

### FIRE EMERGENCY

**In the event of a fire, call extension 9 immediately.** Fire extinguishers are within reach in the corridors of each house. Do not hesitate to sound the fire alarms (red buttons located at eye level near the entrance inside each house and on each floor level). Each bedroom is equipped with a smoke detector device.

In case of smoke or fire, the detector will give out a piercing peal. It will give an intermittent sound to signal an almost dead battery. It gives a flashing signal at regular intervals to signify that the battery is operative.

**Note the location of all nearby exit signs from your room, from the conference room and from the living rooms to the exits of the building in which you are in.**

Fire drills may be conducted from time to time, but will be announced in advance.

### SMOKING

Many of the Center's furnishings are valuable and guest quarters are in 17th century buildings where floors, ceilings and roofs are wood beamed. We ask guests to exercise care when smoking and to limit it to their bedroom.

**WE WILL NOT ALLOW SMOKING IN THE DINING ROOM, IN THE LIBRARY, IN THE CORRIDORS AND STAIRWAYS OR IN THE VILLA CARS.** Please report immediately any cigarette burns in the rugs or furnishings.

Smoking is allowed on the grounds. Please do not throw lighted cigarettes in the undergrowth of the park.

## GRATUITIES

The Center is not a commercial operation. Tips are not required, nor expected. Guests are under no obligation whatsoever to leave a gratuity.

If you wish to leave one nonetheless, please place it in a sealed envelope addressed to the entire staff and hand it in at Reception. (The Director will not endorse, exchange or cash personal or travellers' checks left as gratuities.)

## COMPLAINTS

Please register complaints in person or in writing, to the Director or to the Assistant Director, **not to individual members of the staff.**

## DEPARTURE

The Residents' Assistant will assist resident guests with departure travel arrangements. She has major airline schedules and railway timetables, as well as local boat and bus schedules. Airline ticket confirmations, cancellations and reservations can be made by telephone from Bellagio, but ticket changes are possible only at ticket offices in Milan and the airport.

**We ask residents to exercise restraint in taking up staff time to arrange personal travel and excursions. Please remember that the responsibility for travel plans and reservations made is yours.**



**TELEFAX CHARGES**

As of mid-May '95, our new telefax # is: +39. 31. 955-259

**EUROPE**

(Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland,  
The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The United Kingdom)

**CHARGES PER MINUTE: Lit. 1,245. (Rate includes tax + 4 units when destination responds)**

**UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

**CHARGES PER MINUTE: Lit. 2,127. (Rate includes tax + 4 units when destination responds)**

**FOR THE COST OF FAXING TO OTHER COUNTRIES PLEASE CONTACT THE VS SWITCHBOARD.**

**TELEPHONE CHARGES**

For any call: dial 0 for the external line

**ITALY, DIRECT CALLS**

**FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

8.00-8.30 8.30-13.00 13.00-18.30 18.30-22.00 22.00-8.00  
ordinary busin. hrs ordinary reduced 28% reduced 50%

**SATURDAYS**

8.00-13.00 13.00-22.00 22.00-8.00  
ordinary reduced 28% reduced 50%

**SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS**

8.00-22.00 22.00-8.00  
reduced 28% reduced 50%

**EUROPE**

(Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland,  
The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The United Kingdom)

**CHARGES PER MINUTE: (Rate includes tax + 4 units when destination responds) Lit. 1,245.**  
**For every additional minute: Lit. 0,762.**

**Lower rates from 10:00pm to 8:00am and on Sundays (-14%)**

For first minute:

Lit. 1,068.

For every additional minute:

Lit. 0,580.

### UNITED STATES AND CANADA

**DIRECT CALLS: DIAL COUNTRY-CODE + AREA-CODE + PHONE NUMBER**

**CHARGES PER MINUTE: (Rates include tax + 4 units when destination responds)**

For first minute:

Lit. 2,127.

For every additional minute:

Lit. 1,675.

**Lower rate from 11.00pm to 8.00am**

**Reduced weekend rates from 2.00pm to 11.00pm (-18%); first minute**

Lit. 1,736-

**Super-reduced weekend rates from 11:00pm to 2.00pm (-23%)**

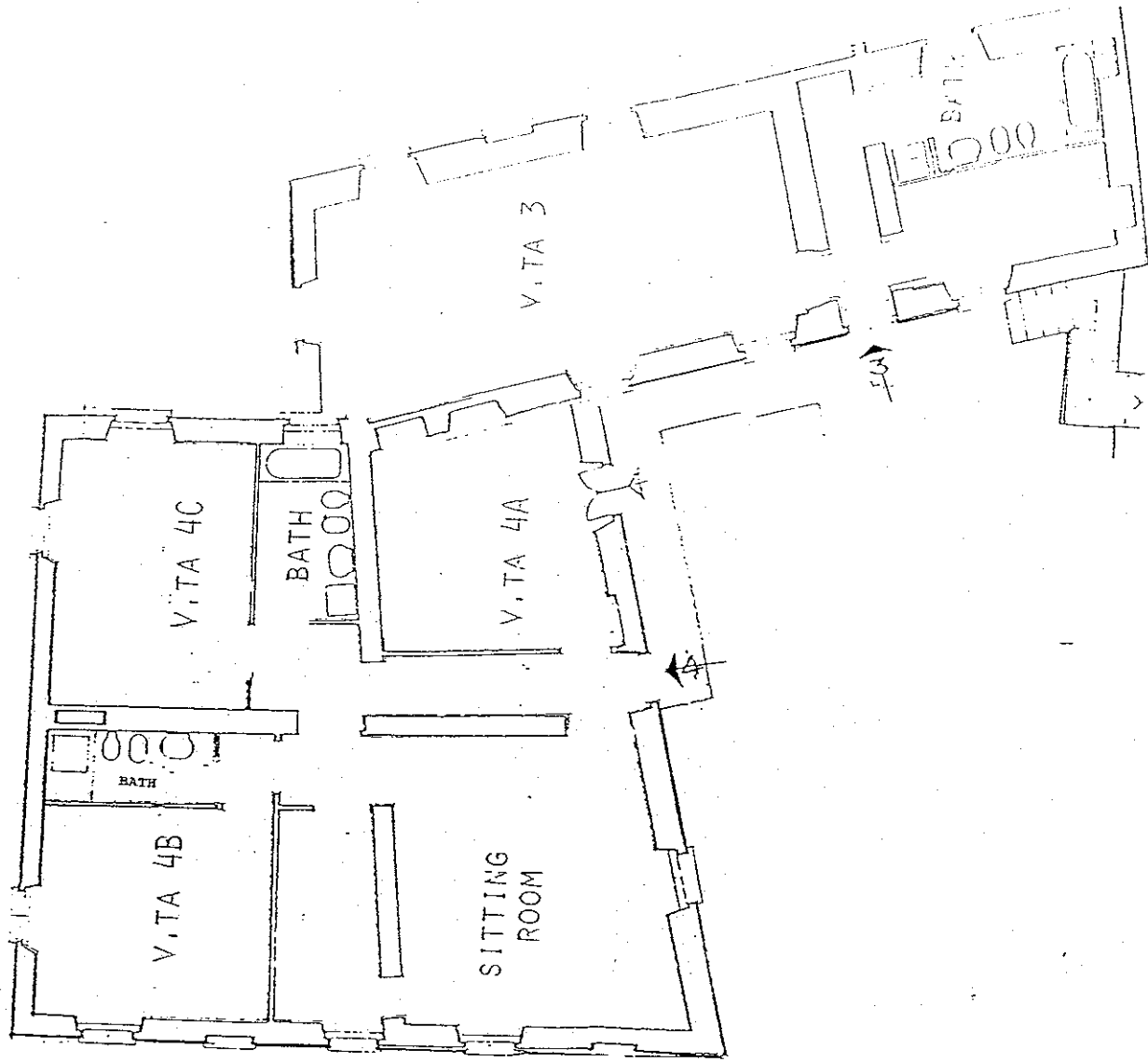
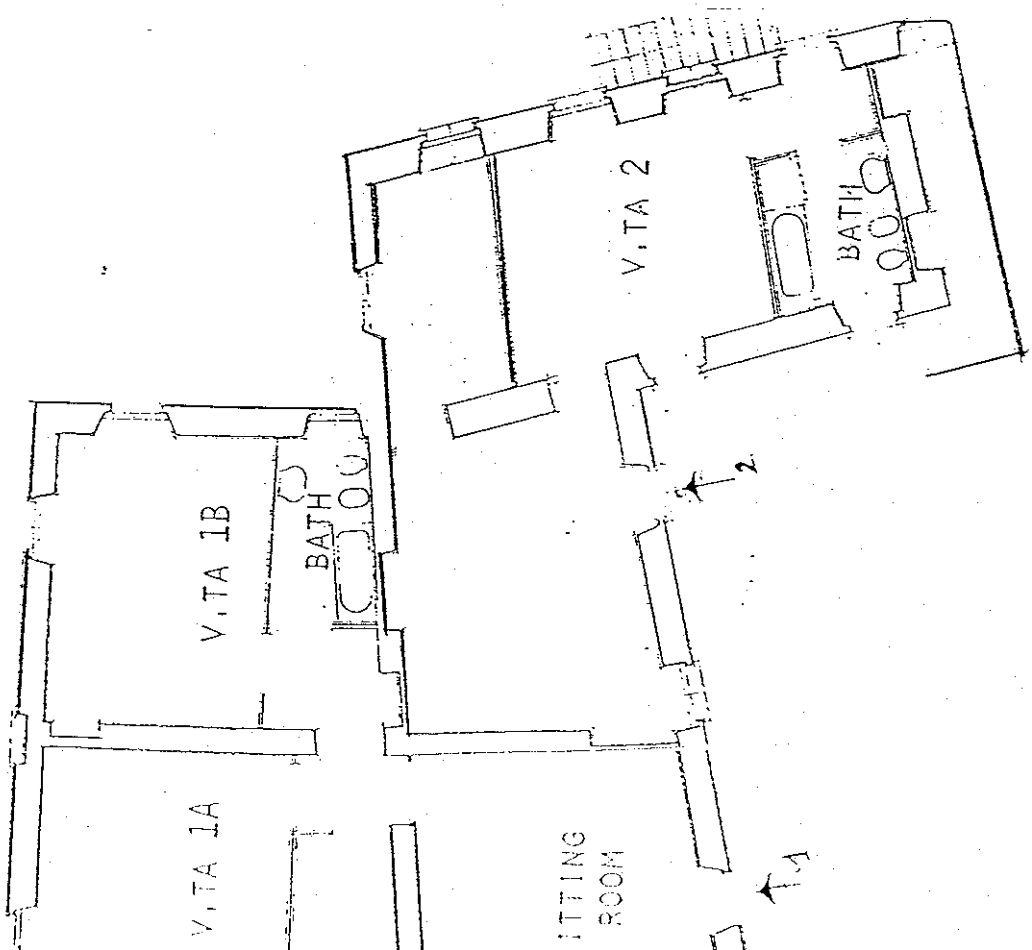
Lit. 1,624

**Collect calls:** Both direct and collect calls can be made from your room or any public telephone booth in Italy by dialing 170 (international operator). The cost of 1 unit is Lit. 200.

For phone calls to European countries beyond the EEC please contact the VS switchboard.

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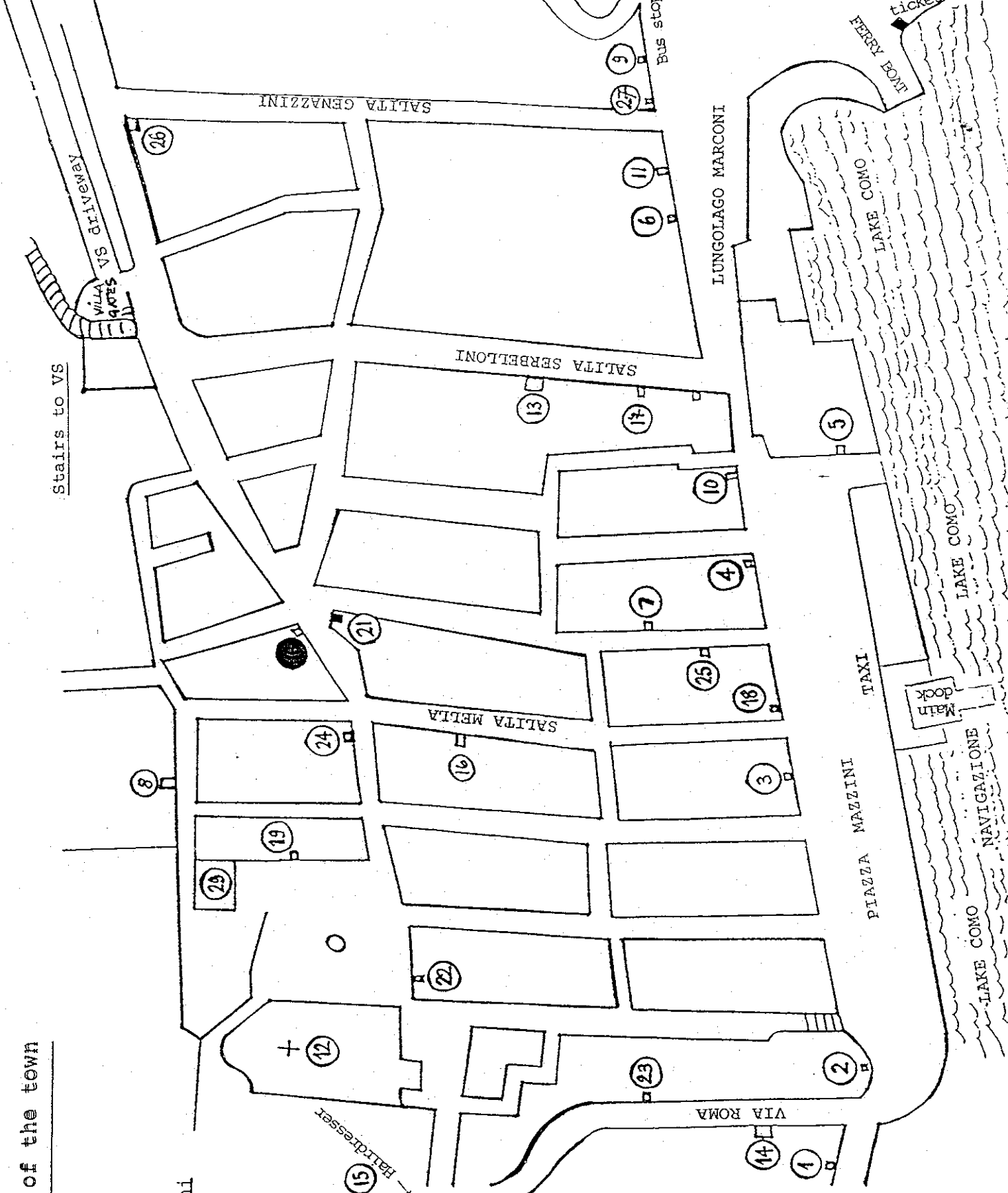


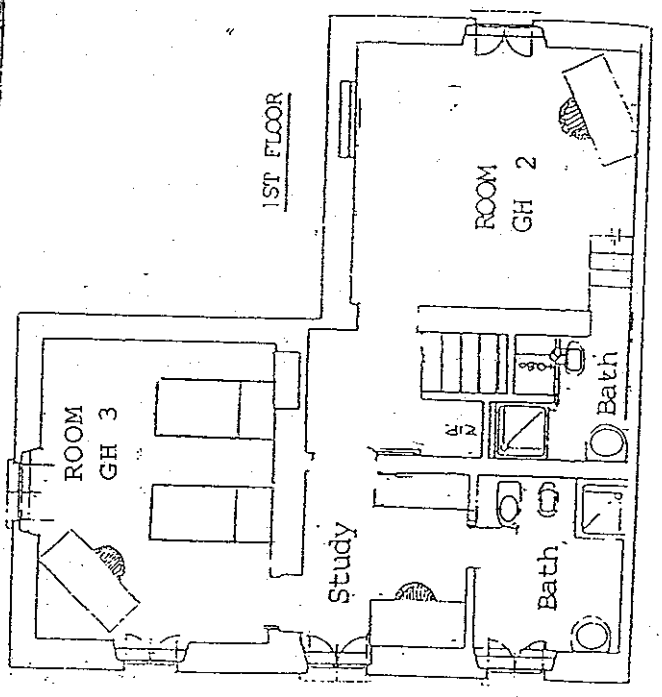
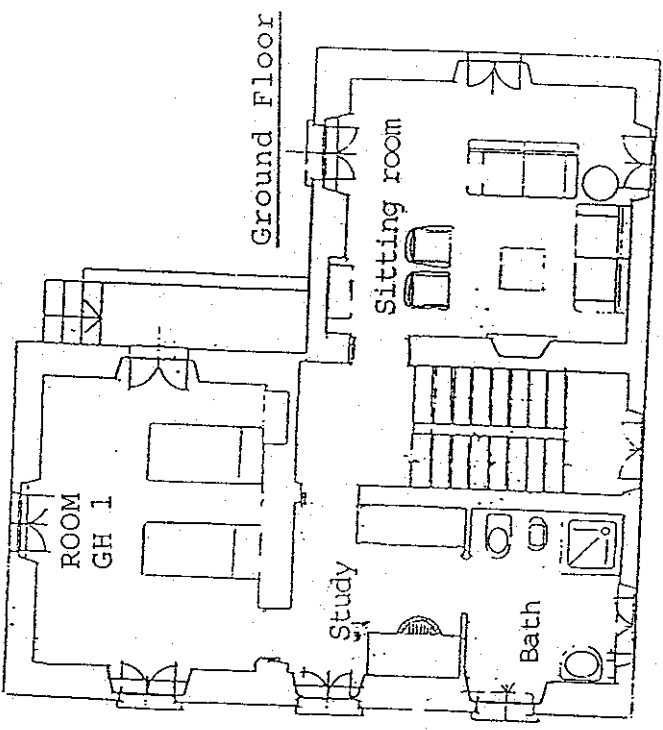
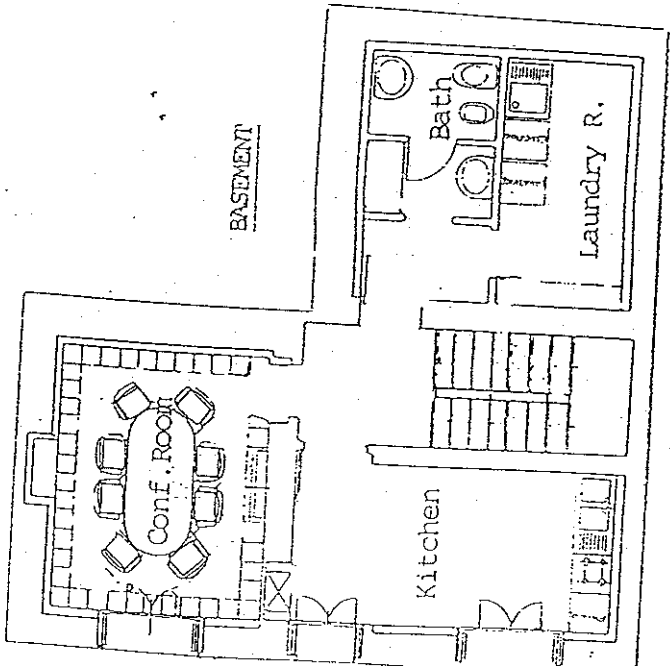
VILLETTA 1, 2, 3, 4

BELLAGIO - Map of the town

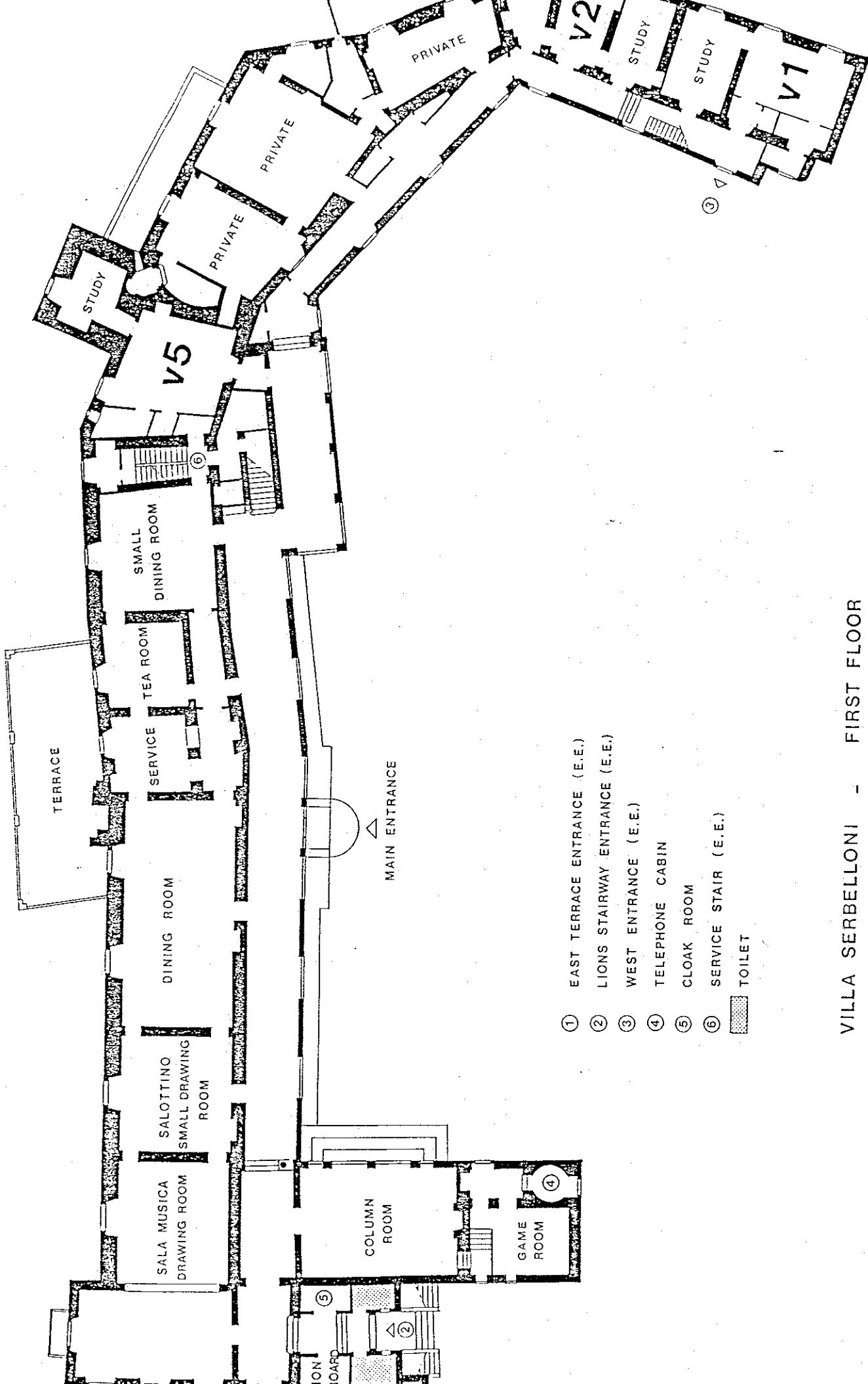
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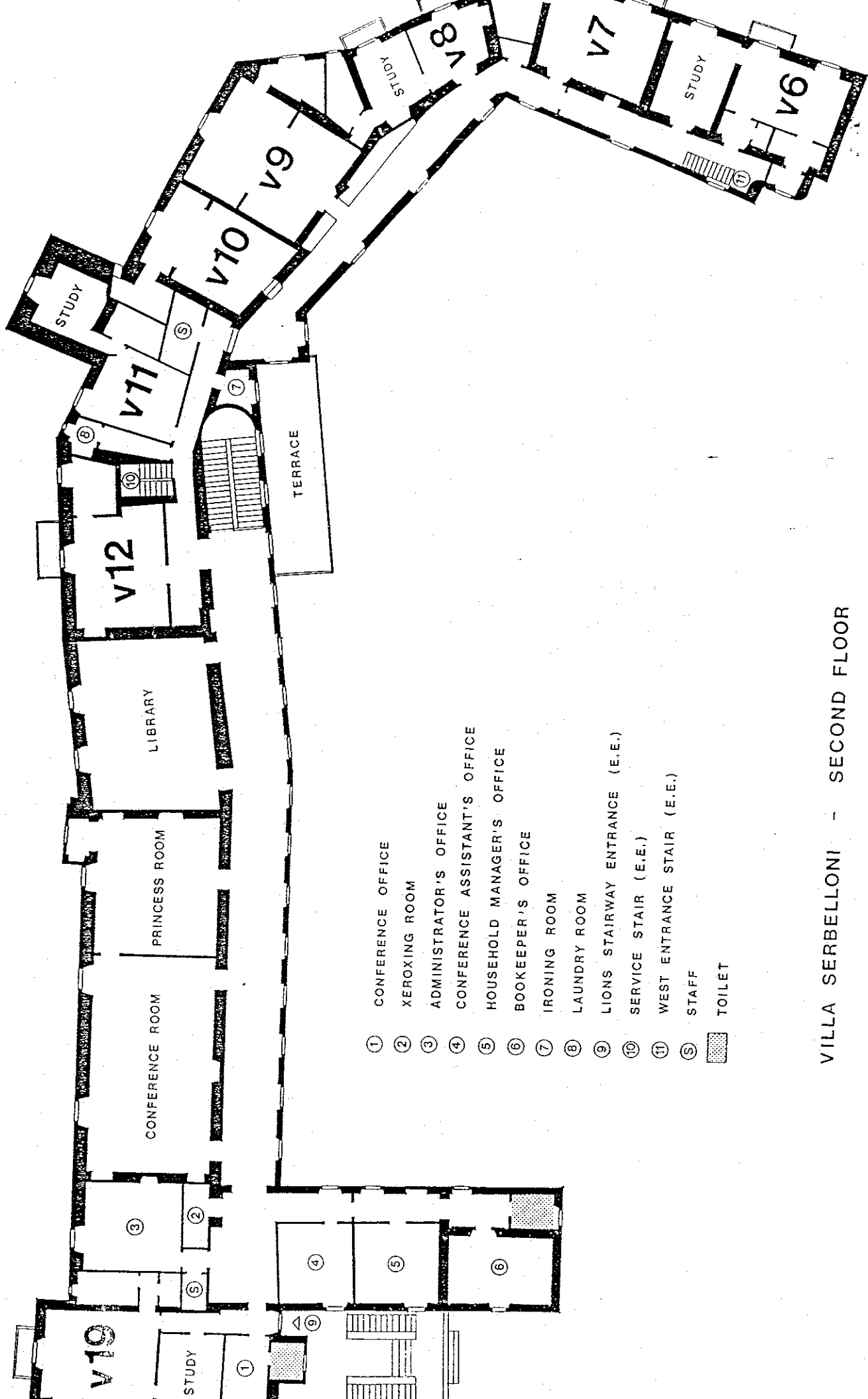


GATE HOUSE



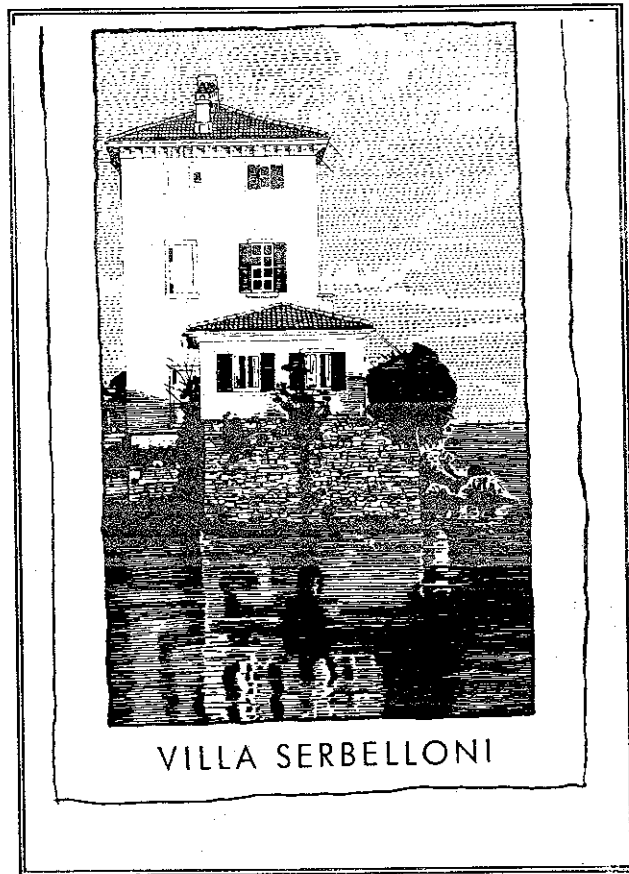
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BELLAGIO

Study and Conference  
Center

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VILLA SERBELLONI

By the first century A.D., the Romans were firmly established in the Lake Como region, and their villas dotted the edges of the lake. Describing his own two local villas, Pliny the Younger wrote:

"One is set high on a cliff..and overlooks the lake..Supported by rock, as if by the stilt-like shoes of the actors in tragedy, I call it Tragedia. It enjoys a broad view of the lake which the ridge on which it stands divides in two...From its spacious terrace, the descent to the lake is gentle..."

Scholars agree that this description fits the Bellagio promontory. In fact, fragments of Roman roof tile have been found in large quantity under the grass of the terraces east of the present house.

The Bellagio promontory reappears in historical records dating from 1080, when a church was built midway on its southern slope; the lower part of its bell-tower is embedded in the south facade of the Villa today. The masonry is of finely laid stone from the nearby lake town of Moltrasio, evidence of the skill of the Maestri Comacini, an early guild of masons that built 34 other churches around the lake between 1000 and 1200 A.D.

During the Middle Ages, Bellagio was involved in the conflicts between the communes of Milan and Como, and between the Guelph and the Gibelline factions; the fortress on the promontory, controlling the strategic waterways, changed hands three times by conquest. The Viscontis, one of Milan's ruling families, fearing the castle to be more of a nuisance than a benefit (it had become the lair of German mercenaries), had the building razed in 1369.

Later, the property passed through the hands of minor castellans, until it came into the possession of the Sforzas, Duke of Milan, who sold it to Marchesino Stanga in 1489. By 1493, Stanga had built a "villa regale", of which the only remaining trace is a foundation section of finely worked stone at the southeast corner of the present house. Leonardo da Vinci may well have visited the promontory; in the Codex Atlanticus, he describes a curious intermittent stream, the Fiume Latte, seen "opposite" Castel Bellagio. Following the death of Stanga, the castle was looted and reduced to ruins once again.

In 1537, a contemporary account noted that although Stanga's palace was in ruin, "burnt to the ground by the wicked and unbridled Cavargnoni" (the lake pirates), there remained the promontory of Bellagio itself, and there is nothing more beautiful, more salubrious.". The property was at that time in the possession of Count Francesco Sfondrati of Milan, who became a cardinal after his wife's death, and was a trusted diplomat for both Emperor Charles V and Pope Paul III. Once again, a great house was built, essentially the Villa as we know it today, and Francesco Sfondrati planted gardens and trees to embellish the bare, rocky upper slopes.

Francesco's grandson, Ercole Sfondrati, inherited the Bellagio demesne. While serving his uncle (Francesco's son, Nicolo', who had become Pope Gregory XIV) as Captain General of the papal armies, Ercole had little time for his new possessions. But by 1597 he had retired and come to rest in Bellagio. After wiping out the Cavagnoni, he turned to more congenial matters: like the first Sfondrati, he became a builder.

His first project was a small chapel dedicated to the Madonna of Monserrat and perched on a rock separated from the eastern cliffs. Its ruins are visible from the present chapel which was erected in the 1800's. In 1609 he invited a small group of Capucin Brothers from Milan to settle on the property and constructed for them a monastery in memory of his wife who had died a few years earlier. The monastery was consecrated in 1612 and inhabited by the monks until the second half of the 1800's. Now, somewhat dilapidated, it remains by good fortune little changed from its original structure.

Ercole Sfondrati also constructed by the shore of the Lecco branch of the lake retaining walls and a harbor as a setting for the three-story square tower and adjacent house which he built for his brother, Cardinal Paolo Sfondrati. For his Capucin son, Ercole built the now ruined chapel of San Nicola di Bari, also on the cliffs, and a small loggia for meditation attached to the ruined fortress at the summit of the promontory.

In 1788, by request of the last Sfondrati Duke, Carlo, the promontory (and the family name and title) passed into the hands of Alessandro Serbelloni, member of another great Milanese family. Sfondrati may have become acquainted with Serbelloni when he was a young man - both families spent time on Lake Como; Serbelloni had also served as courier between Sfondrati and Prince Belgiojoso his nephew by marriage and at one time his commanding officer in the Imperial and Royal German Bodyguard.

Alessandro Serbelloni's main contributions to the property were the development of the grounds and the design of the present gardens. During the famine of 1815-1817, he kept a "small army" of workmen busy constructing the present roads, paths, and tunnels on the hilltop. The Polenta, a small two-story building still in use today as a studio, where the traditional cornmeal dish was ladled out to the workmen. Alessandro himself became poorer: it has been estimated that he spent over \$1.5 million on his project.

His successor, Duke Ferdinando Serbelloni, settled on the property after his retirement as cavalry general in the Austrian army. He is responsible for the carriage road from the town to the villa, built in 1842.

The Serbellonis sold the property in 1885 to a Swiss hotelier. For almost half a century, the Villa was used as a hotel. Ella Walker, heiress to the Hiram Walker fortune, bought it for her private residence in 1928.

After a two-year renovation of the main building, based on a thorough study of the origins of the building and done under the supervision of Milanese architect Magistretti, Ella Walker moved in and established herself with a large staff of servants and gardeners. She had married the head of the Italian branch of the princely Thurn und Taxis family, Dukes of Luino, and became known as Her Serene Highness, Ella, Principessa della Torre e Tasso.

The Villa Serbelloni was her principal residence for the rest of her life. She was a childless, 84-year-old widow, much loved by her husband's family, when she died in June 1959 at the Villa, in the room that is now the library.

Dean Rusk, the Foundation's president at the time, was instrumental, shortly before he became John Kennedy's secretary of state, in persuading the Foundation's Trustee to accept the gift the property and its furnishings, as well as an accompanying two million dollar endowment, in the spirit of the Princess' last will: for the promotion of international understanding.

Possession of the Villa represented an unusual challenge to the Foundation, which mounted an immediate exploration as to its best use. In October 1959, a group of distinguished scholars calling themselves "Friend of the Foundation" met at the Villa to discuss and advise on that question. They were unanimous in their view that it should be a refuge for contemplation, writing, and purposeful discussion - a place where scholars and other thoughtful people would be free from everyday demands. In addition they recommended that the Villa be used for small, non-routine conferences that might be expected to arrive at important conclusions on the state of knowledge in a given field and point out a path for future development. The Villa, they concluded, could support the Foundation's program and its mandate, "the well-being of mankind throughout the world".

The Foundation has continued to follow the general outline of these recommendations - combining extended residencies for a small number of scholars with week-long conferences covering a wide spectrum of disciplines and topics. Foundation officers in New York choose about 135 residents and 25 conferences annually, on a competitive basis, to work at the Villa and to enjoy Plini's "broad view of the lake".