



VILLA MELI LUPI DI SORAGNA TARASCONI

Villa Meli Lupi di Soragna Tarasconi is the current residence of **Marchesi Alessandro and Raimondo Meli Lupi di Soragna Tarasconi**, sons of **Marchese Lupo (1928–2006)**, the second-born branch of **Principe Diofebo V Meli Lupi di Soragna (1808–1897)**, undoubtedly one of the most beautiful summer residences that can be admired in the Parma region. The estate consists of the merger of two villas, once separate but now part of a single property: that of the **Conti Toccoli** and that of the **Conti Magawly-Cerati di Calry**. **Marchese Luigi Lupo Meli Lupi di Soragna (1845–1923)**, together with his wife **Contessa Luisa Melzi di Cusano (1854–1925)**, commissioned the unification of the two estates and the restoration of the existing residences, entrusting the project to the Milanese architect **Marchese Antonio Citterio (1854–1936)**.

Historical Notes

The **Meli Lupi di Soragna** constitute one of the oldest and most noble Parmese families, with numerous monographs and publications detailing their centuries-long dynasty. For those interested in further study, we refer to these works. As a brief historical note, the ancient **Lupi** family, noble since 300 A.D., merged with the noble **Meli** family in 1092, which continued the lineage under the name **Meli Lupi**, holding titles such as Marquises, Venetian Patricians, Palatine Counts, Grandees of Spain, the title of Don, and Princes of the Holy Roman Empire.

The second-born branch later added the title and surname **Tarasconi**, with the obligation to combine the heraldic coats of arms of the two families, by decree of **Duchessa Luisa Maria di Borbone** on February 12, 1858, regent of the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza on behalf of her minor son, **Duca Roberto I**. In fact, **Conte Luigi Tarasconi**, Court Chamberlain, Grand Cross of the **Order of Saint Louis**, and last representative of his house, appointed **Marchese Luigi Lupo Meli Lupi di Soragna** as his universal heir on June 12, 1857.

Main Manor House (formerly Villa Toccoli)

With the title, the **Vigatto** estate and villa were inherited, which **Conte Tarasconi** came into possession of around 1850 following the extinction of the ancient Parmese family of the **Conti Toccoli**, owners of the estate since 1589, when **Conte Giovanni Toccoli** obtained from the **Arciprete di Vigatto** "...a house and 22 biolche of land at level." The **Conti Toccoli** remained in Vigatto for nearly three centuries, until the family's extinction around 1850.

The current building, renovated by **Citterio**, features simple lines, a single main floor, in **neo-Barocchetto style** (a Rococo revival typical of late 19th-century Lombard eclecticism, expressed in architecture, furnishings, and gardens by architects such as **Alemagna** and **Citterio**, who became formal interpreters of the representational needs of high Lombard society). The three-arch portico on columns, called **La Veranda**, is perhaps the only remnant of the previous construction, Villa Toccoli. The pre-existing building was completely rebuilt and doubled, and today consists of two distinct structures: the so-called "**Villa**" and the "**Annexe**."



In the Villa, the architect created an atrium (the **bocchirale**), a large reception hall, small salons, a dining room, a library, a study, and bedrooms on the first floor for the owners and guests. All rooms feature high, identical coffered wooden ceilings and walls decorated with Baroque-style stuccoes. The Annexe includes kitchens, wardrobe rooms, laundry, and several rooms originally intended for the service staff.

Casa Magawly-Cerati (known as “Il Palazzo”)

This building, now used as a **dépendance**, was in the 18th century the villa of the noble **Cerati**, Counts of Viarolo. **Conte Valerio** appears in Vigatto in 1723. Later it passed to the better-known **Conte Antonio Cerati (1738–1816)**, a cultured man devoted to literature. Upon his death, the Vigatto property passed to his niece **Fulvia**, the last of the line, who married **Conte Giuseppe Mazzucchini-Guidoboni di Viadana**. Their only daughter, **Contessa Chiara**, married **Conte Filippo Magawly di Calry (1787–1835)**, and thus the villa came into possession of this family. The **Conti Magawly** are originally from Dublin and represent one of Ireland’s most illustrious families, noble since 379 A.D.

Conte Filippo, already a member of the Provisional Government in 1814, was Prime Minister to **Maria Luigia**, Grand Chancellor of the **Constantinian Order**, and a wise administrator. In 1823, he resigned as Minister of State and returned to Ireland. In 1895, **Marchese Luigi Lupo** purchased the property from **Conte Giuseppe Magawly (1845–1922)**, thereby incorporating it into the Soragna villa. **Marchesa Luisa** asked **Marchese Citterio** to transform the Magawly Villa into a rustic courtyard, overlooking the main road and opposite the village church, redecorating it in **cottage style**.

Citterio created accommodations for staff, sheds, garages, a greenhouse, woodshed, stables for horses and donkeys, and even rooms that housed the village kindergarten until the mid-1970s.

Romantic English-Style Park

Together with the architect, **Marchesa Luisa** designed the large garden, preserving some pre-existing centuries-old trees and planting new specimens, either individually or in groups of three, to frame the views from the villa’s windows (notably **Cedrus Libani** and **Fagus Purpurea**, now among the largest in the region after more than a century). The park, imposing yet delightful, spans about 10 hectares and today appears much as it was designed over a century ago: English-style green lawns interspersed with groups of centuries-old trees arranged to create scenic, picturesque backdrops.