



The Museo storico e il parco del Castello di Miramare (Historical Museum and Park of the Miramare Castle) is a MiBAC (Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities) autonomous State Museum.

Located in the surroundings of Trieste, the castle is a residence originally commissioned by Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Hapsburg, where he intended to live with his wife, Princess Charlotte of Belgium. Built between 1856 and 1860, it is a unique testimony of a luxurious stately home which still retains its original interior decoration.

The castle was conceived to have a lush park all around. Rich in precious plant species, the garden is both a natural and artificial complex. Multicolour flower-beds, statues, monumental trees, fountains and ponds can be found along its paths.

The complex enjoys a breathtaking panoramic location over a sheer drop to the sea, at the tip of the Grignano promontory. The Mediterranean perfumes and colours and the dazzling austere architecture blend in a surprising combination of art and nature.

Open all year except for Christmas Day and New Year's Day, **the Museo storico e il parco del Castello di Miramare is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Italy.** In particular, the Park—which can be accessed free of charge—recorded over 830,000 visitors in 2018 and ranks third in the list of the most frequented cultural sites in Italy.



The Castle



the castle began. On Christmas Eve 1860, Maximilian and his wife Charlotte of Belgium moved into the ground floor of the building. By that date, the exterior had already been completed, while the interior was only partially available. **Designed by Austrian engineer Carl Junker, the residence features an eclectic style in accordance with the fashion of the time:** Gothic, Medieval and Renaissance models combine into a remarkable blend, which recalls other examples of the great houses of the time built by noblemen in Alpine

The Miramare castle and park were commissioned by Archduke Maximilian of Hapsburg who decided—around 1855—to build a residence worthy of his name and rank outside of Trieste, looking out to the sea and surrounded by a wide garden. Enchanted by the harsh beauty of the Grignano promontory, a rocky outcrop almost devoid of any vegetation at the foot of the Karst with a sheer drop down to the sea, Maximilian first purchased several plots of land towards the end of 1855. On 1st March 1856 the construction of

landscapes on the banks of rivers and lakes. **In the Miramare castle, Maximilian devised a perfect combination of nature and art, Mediterranean scents and austere European shapes, thus creating a unique atmosphere thanks to the presence of the sea, which gives the light blue colours to the tapestry on the ground floor of the castle,** and inspires the names and furnishings of many of the rooms. The planning of the interior decoration was entrusted to craftsmen Franz and Julius Hofmann: the ground floor was to host Maximilian and Charlotte's private apartments and has an intimate and familiar character, while the upper floor was set aside for their guests who couldn't help being dazzled by the sumptuous furnishings decorated with coats of arms and by the red tapestry adorned with imperial symbols.

The Park



The park of Miramare, with a **surface of 22 hectares**, is the result of Maximilian's long and demanding project on the rocky promontory of Grignano, which originally resembled a Karst area almost devoid of vegetation. The site was planned and arranged by Carl Junker, though as far as the botanical features were concerned a gardener, Josef Laube, was called in. He was later replaced by Anton Jelinek, a Bohemian who had taken part in the frigate Novara's expedition around the world. **Large quantities of soil were imported from Styria and Carinthia, and nurserymen mainly from the Lombardy-Veneto region supplied a rich variety of tree and shrub species, many from outside Europe.**

Maximilian constantly kept up with the work, which started in spring 1856, and never stopped being interested in his garden even after moving to Mexico, whence he sent back numerous species of trees. **The dominant aspect of the eastern area is "woodland," in harmony with the orological features of the place: trees alternating with grassy spaces, winding paths, gazebos and ponds recall the romantic principles of the English landscape garden.** The south-west zone, protected from the wind, accommodates geometrically imposed areas, as in the case of the Italian-style garden in front of the "Kaffeehaus," or the well-arranged flower-beds around the harbour.

The park of Miramare, which in its purchaser's intentions was to be an experimental centre for reforestation and the acclimatisation of rare botanic species, is a complex at once natural and artificial: even today, when strolling around it you can feel the meaningful atmosphere intimately linked to the life of Maximilian, and at the same time capture the relationship with nature which was characteristic of that age. The notable features of the park include, in particular: the statues produced by the Berlin firm Moritz Geiss; the greenhouses, with glass partitions opening within the original iron framework; the "Swiss Cottage" which is on the edge of the swan pond; the small square with the cannons donated by Leopold I of Belgium; the Chapel of San Canciano with a wooden crucifix carved from the wood of the warship Novara, dedicated in 1900 to Maximilian by his brother Ludwig-Viktor.