

CLASSIC DRIVER

The only way to arrive at Lake Como - by vintage seaplane...

Lead

Forget a Lamborghini Miura, a classic Moto Guzzi, or a gleaming Riva Aquarama — the only way to arrive at the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, and truly embrace the majesty and allure of Lake Como, is by seaplane...

Critical clientele



Orson Welles, Winston Churchill, Gianni Versace, and George Clooney. Lake Como and its fabulous surrounding mountainous landscape, studded with quaint villages, opulent villas, and grand hotels, has been a destination for the glitterati for hundreds of years. From Hollywood stars, musical legends, and supermodels to influential politicians, novelists, and even royalty, the warm climes, cosmopolitan population, and dignified ambience of Como are irresistible — it epitomises *La Dolce Vita*.

To the skies!





But while lounging aboard a gently bobbing Riva, sipping an Aperol Spritz on a generous hotel terrace, or doing your utmost to get a peek of George and Amal Clooney while astride a classic motorcycle are all great ways to soak up your surroundings, hovering gracefully high above the beguiling blue water, looking out over the spots at Cernobbio, Bellagio, and Tremezzo, is by far the most enjoyable way of experiencing Lake Como. And once you're done gazing, you can simply swoop down to moor at the restaurant or hotel of your choosing or make for Lugano, Corsica, Venice, or Sardinia for supper.

For the greater good



If you're reading this and you're sold, the experience is actually much more accessible than you'd think. Nestled in the quaint town of Como, on the southwest tip of the lake, resides the Aero Club Como, the longest continually operating seaplane base in Europe. The history-steeped club, which is run by a group of dedicated volunteers, offers a variety of services, from teaching to fly its fleet of modern and historic aircraft to hiring planes for licensed pilots to simply giving pleasure flights. Ultimately, the aim is to sustain this dying pastime and keep these glorious aircraft afloat and flying.

Drowning in history





Amphibious planes, hydroplanes, and sea-boats have long been seen above (and on) the shores of Lake Como. In 1913, the lake played host to the *Gran Premio dei Laghi*, one of the first competitive seaplane events, in which star pilots such as Roland Garros and Hellmuth Hirth fought tooth and nail to be quickest. Seventeen years later, in 1930, the Aero Club Como was founded and has provided keen local and international pilots and enthusiasts with a place in which to revel in their hobby ever since. It's something of an institution on the lake and a much-loved attraction in itself for the thousands of visitors who flock there every year.

Down to earth



So, if you're heading to Como this weekend for the esteemed Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, why not take to the skies in a glorious Piper 'Super Cub' or a Cessna 'Bird Dog' (as our photographer Rémi Dargegen recently sampled in order to capture these sensational aerial photographs) and ogle all those sensational classic cars and beautiful people from a different perspective? We promise when you do descend towards the Grande Dame Hotel, you'll be the envy of everybody on the lake...even Mr Clooney.

Photos: Rémi Dargegen for Classic Driver © 2017

Gallery

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