

# Itinerary

The museum itinerary includes the whole first floor (piano nobile, or “noble floor,” in Italian). The original arrangement of art and decorative arts in each room has been recreated thanks to a collection of early twentieth century photographs. The visit starts with Fausto’s suite of rooms overlooking via Gesù, and shows his fondness for art and architecture in Urbino and Mantua during the Early Renaissance period, when Bagatti family members were important at the Sforza court in Milan, though they were not yet noble (Pietro Bagatti Valsecchi, the father of Fausto and Giuseppe, received a baronetcy in 1842 for his excellence as an artist).

In Giuseppe’s suite, Bagatti Valsecchi family heraldic motifs are intertwined with the interlaced rings of the crest belonging to Giuseppe’s wife, Carolina, “queen of the house” since 1882, according to the courtyard inscription. Here, the decoration underscores the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, instead, a period when Carolina’s two famous relatives, S. Carlo Borromeo and Card. Federico Borromeo, were important in Milan and Italy. Separating Fausto’s suite from that of Giuseppe is the long Cupola Gallery, which also shows their architectural talents, and which gives access to the Grand Salon, the heart of the

mansion, and the rest of the rooms dedicated to formal, or business, purposes, which the brothers shared. At the top of this stairway on the via Gesù side, of note is the large Flemish tapestry (n. 1102) made around 1550-1560 in Oudenaarde. It portrays, perhaps for the first time, Mercury and his children, who are scientists. The dark colors were difficult to obtain without ruining the fabric. Two kinds of cards are available in each room: those with a selection of the room’s objects and decorations, and those listing all the room’s contents. Please put the cards back in each room where found, so that they may be enjoyed by subsequent visitors, thank you.

