

VareseNews

The racecourse is dressed up to be a “rally stadium”: “An ideal space for fans and families”

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Ten years after the magnificent Cycling World Championships in Varese, the **“Le Bettolle” racecourse** is opening its doors once again to a different sport from its “usual”, horseracing, for an event that promises to be both fascinating and spectacular.

The **27th International “Rally dei Laghi”** has taken another step up, choosing to use the inside of the Varese racecourse as the **starting and finishing point**, but also for a spectacular **opening evening trial** (Friday, 16 March, from 7 p.m.), which will be the main change this year. Thus, it is no coincidence that the Le Bettolle racecourse (which is being renamed the **“Magugliani Arena”** for the occasion) has been chosen by the organisation – the patron **Andrea Sabella** but also **Maurizio Gandini**, who manages the non-horseracing activities of the racecourse – for the **official presentation** of the race which, after Friday’s appetiser will be blazing on Saturday, during the seven special trials planned in Upper Varese Province (three “Cuvignone”, two “Valganna” and two “Sette Termini”). Today, **Lara Marchi**, the 17-year-old from Malnate, **made her debut**, after she won the competition to **become the Maiden of Ceremonies**.

At the start, **over 120 cars** alone for the main competition (in addition to which there will be a **historic rally** and the first stage of the Italian Championships, which **consistently has an average** of 30 participants), with **almost all the local big names** (the only one missing is the young and promising De Tommaso), but also **several important, Italian names**, who have chosen Varese to try out their high-

profile cars, in preparation for the upcoming Italian races. This is the case of **Andrea Crugnola** (who was born in Varese, and is the reigning champion, and the favourite), who has just announced that he has been signed up as an official Ford driver for the Italian Championship, together with his co-driver Danilo Fappani.

“The show trial at **Colacem** was **spectacular** and famous, but the huge inflow of fans **was starting to create problems for us**, in terms of security,” explained **Andrea Sabella**, the chairman of ASD Rally dei Laghi. “So, while we were thinking about how to fix that stretch of road, **the opportunity arose** to have the **Le Bettole** racecourse at our disposal, thanks to a lucky meeting with Maurizio Gandini. When assessing the area, we noticed that the **roads inside the racecourse** were already suitable to design a special trial, which, incidentally, is on a ‘genuine’ course, without creating an unnatural ‘gymkhana’. In Varese, the racing will be completely safe, with many other advantages for the spectators: it’ll almost be **a preview for Italy** and we’re entirely satisfied with this agreement.”

PHOTO – Beppe Freguglia, four times winner of the ‘Laghi’, with Miss Lara Marchi

The choice of the racecourse (today represented by **Max Frattini**, in the absence of Guido Borghi) has two other important consequences: the revival of a **wonderful facility that is in difficulty**, given the decline of horseracing in Italy, and the possibility of bringing **families and the curious** closer to the motorsport. “Veteran fans climb up to special mountain trials without any problems, even early in the morning. In the show trial, however, cars and drivers will be **available for everyone**, and it’s a nice way to allow ordinary people to get close to the rallying world. The fact of also having **several WRC cars**, those used in the World Cup, at the start, is a further gift we can make to those who come to see the race,” Sabella said.

The ‘Laghi’ is also supported by the **Varese Sports Commission**, as this is an event that also brings an interesting number of tourists, overnight stays and visitors to the area. “Don’t be fooled by the names of the special trials,” Sabella explained, in anticipation of possible objections. “It’s true that we always use the same roads for the special trials, but **the designs of the courses change** or are reversed. And then, **in these areas, there’s great harmony with the local councils** and there’s the possibility of reducing the inconvenience to residents to a minimum. Not surprisingly, the territory crossed by the ‘Laghi’ is very active during the race: for example, **Vivi Vararo**, an association that this year has prepared a special award, and is going to provide the fans with breakfasts and refreshments.”

The **show trial at Le Bettole will have free entrance** to most of the area involved, including the commercial spaces. The **tickets that are sold will only be for the stand**, from which you can enjoy an excellent view of the whole racetrack. In the various spaces of the racecourse, there will also be **screens and maxi screens**, on which to follow the race (we are still talking about the trial on Friday, not the trials on Saturday) and the Italian Post Office (today represented by Dr Passalacqua) have created a special **postmark** for the Rally dei Laghi.

di Translated by Gloria Crespi (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)