

CITYFOCUS TURIN

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City Focus editor Robin McKelvie hops over to Turin for an aperitivo or two

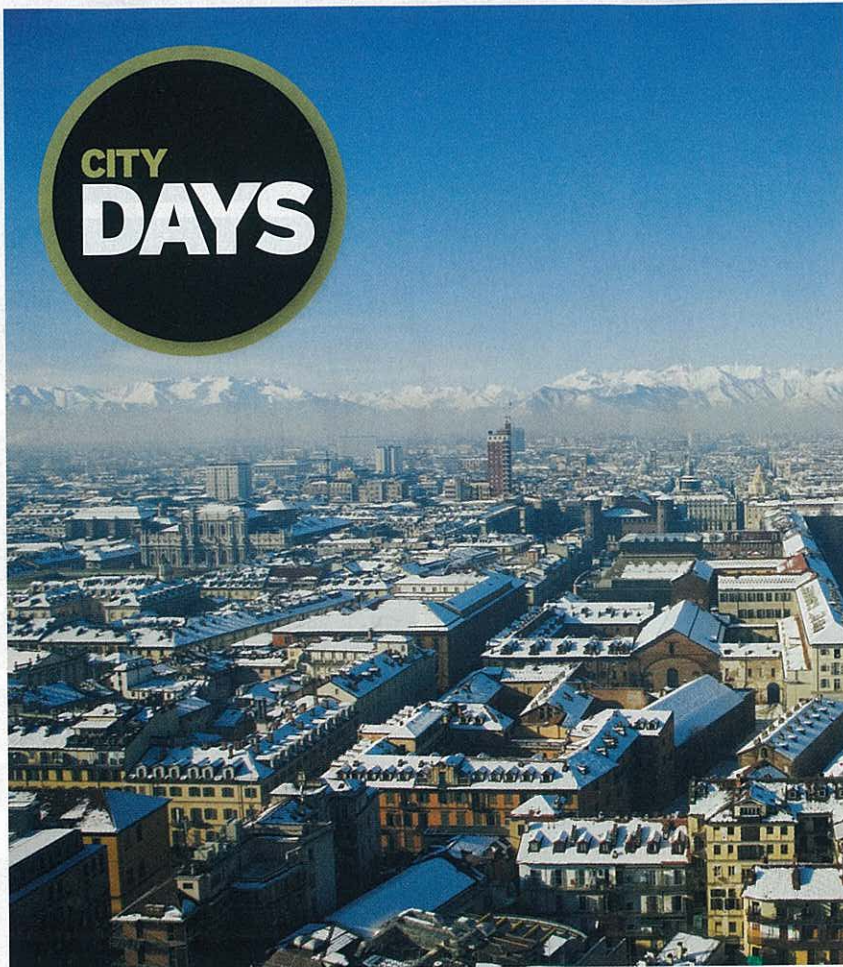


CITY LENS

Though known as "Italy's Detroit", home of car giant FIAT, there's much more to Italy's fourth-largest city than industry. The 2006 Winter Olympics demonstrated the top-notch snow sports action that tumbles all around the surrounding Alps, and also gave Turin the euros it needed to spruce up its elegant city centre. Walking under the porticoes and easing across its grand squares is an absolute pleasure. Throw in some first-class restaurants, hedonistic nightlife and fantastic museums like The National Mountain Museum "Duca degli Abruzzi", perched on the hill of Turin next to the church and the convent of the Monte dei Cappuccini, from where the view pictured is taken, and you'll find Turin offers a heady mix every bit as tempting as its famous chocolate.

i **VIEW OF TURIN AND THE ALPS**
Photo © Tim White



**THERE IS ONLY ONE PLACE TO START**

a visit to Turin and that is at the top of the gorgeous folly that is the Mole Antonelliana. A lift whisks you 85m above the city, where you can appreciate its neat, grid-like layout and the folds of the Alpine mountains that tempt you on the city's fringes.

The Mole is also home to the National Cinema Museum. Even if you "don't do" museums you can enjoy this thoroughly interactive experience as you pass through rooms themed around "love" and "horror", reclining on everything from heart-shaped sofas to toilet seats. You could easily spend half a day wrapped in its surreal charms.

Chocolate is another Turinese passion, so much so that they invented a delicious drink that can only be found here. The Bicerin is made to a secret recipe in the same tiny oasis, Caffè al Bicerin, where it was created in 1763. Follow in the footsteps of such luminaries as Dumas, Puccini and Nietzsche with this orgy of coffee, chocolate and whipped cream. If you really love chocolate, then pick up a ChocoPass from the tourist office – it costs €15 and gives you three days of tastings in shops and cafés all over town.

Photography: Tim White



For souvenirs, Guido Gobino, the "World Champion Chocolatier", is the place to visit. And don't miss the annual Chocolate Festival (6–15 March, www.cioccola-to.com).

If you want something less sweet for lunch try one of the city's legendary old-world cafés. Caffè San Carlo slips back through the centuries with its graceful décor, smart waiters and sumptuous lunch buffet. And wine buffs can sample excellent Piedmontese cooking along with quality regional wines at Taberna Libreria.

On Saturday mornings, the tourist office offers walking tours for a mere €6. Lazier souls can catch one of the City Sightseeing buses, which weave their way around the city from Piazza Castello, out across the mighty River Po and back again – offering the option to hop off and on along the way.


Turin overflows with museums, including the finest Egyptian collection outside Egypt. The Egyptian Museum includes finds from as far back as 1400BC, with remarkably recreated tombs the highlight. The Fondazione Sandretto re Rebaudengo demonstrates that Turin is as interested in the avant-garde as the ancient,

**New horizons**

-  See for miles from the top of Mole Antonelliana
-  The Bicerin is a chocolate lover's dream – try it!

as does the Civic Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Arts.

Another world altogether awaits at Lingotto – the once-mighty FIAT factory. After the closure of the car plant, this space has been rejuvenated as a leisure oasis. The highlight is Eatly, a food emporium where you can sample the finest of foods from all over the country. Make sure to nip upstairs to the Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, a bijou art gallery housing the collection of the FIAT legend and his wife that includes works by Manet, Picasso and Canaletto. Outside is the testing track where they filmed scenes for *The Italian Job*, a fitting way to end a day in what some call "Italy's Detroit".

 Fly to **TURIN** from 12 destinations, including **Barcelona (Girona)**, **Bournemouth**, **Bristol** and **Brussels (Charleroi)**.

Visit www.ryanair.com for more information.

Follow in the footsteps of luminaries Dumas, Puccini and Nietzsche

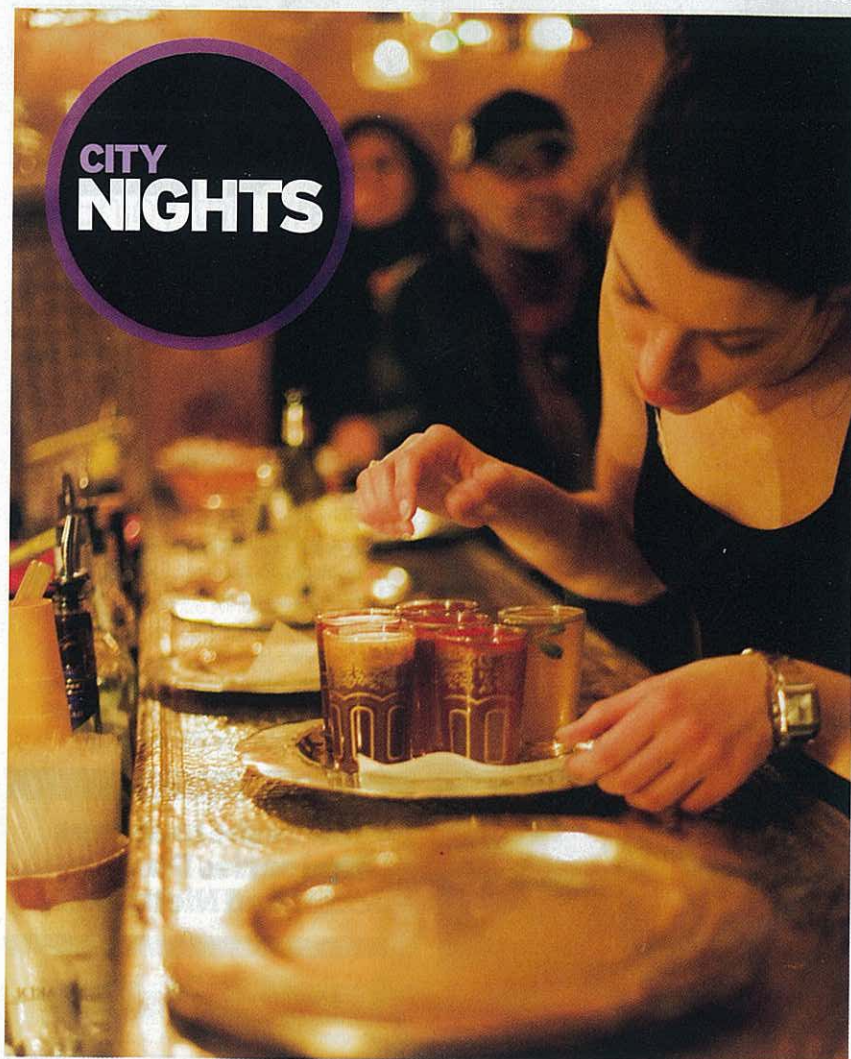
 **FOR MAP AND FULL CONTACT DETAILS, TURN TO OUR CITY LOCATOR MAP ON PAGE 48**



CITYFOCUS **TURIN**

The best restaurants, bars, clubs and more

CITY NIGHTS



TO BE A TRUE TORINESE, HEAD OUT AT about 7pm for *aperitivo*, and order a “punt e mes”, a vermouth that’s the traditional tippie of choice. The cost of your aperitivo usually covers all the tasty treats dotted around the bar, so tuck in – but don’t overindulge as you could miss out on dinner in one of Italy’s culinary capitals. A great aperitivo is on offer at Km5, a hipster haunt in the centre, while Cantine Barbaroux combines tasty nibbles with top-notch local wines.

Michelin stars abound in Turin and one eatery to try is Casa Vicina at Eataly. The funky, family run restaurant serves up reimagined Piedmont classics, and offers sublime tasting menus. Knocking on the Michelin-star door is the über-trendy Art Hotel Boston’s La Linea Continua, headed by innovative local chef Ugo Gastaldi.

Time now to hit the bars, and the best place for these is the Quadrilatero Romano, whose

cluster of streets and raffish atmosphere are a world away from the order of Turin’s grand boulevards. Good starting points are Il Bacaro, a buzzing little place with a cosy interior and tables outside when the temperature allows, and the Moroccan-influenced Hafa Café, reflecting the changing demographics of modern Turin.

If you want to move on to clubs there are two main choices. In spring and summer the action moves down to the banks of the River Po and the Murazzi. But when the mercury dips, the place for hot clubbing action is Docks Dora. This rundown, post-industrial wasteland now echoes to the sounds of cutting-edge electronica and techno. Docks Home is the place for electronica and house, while Café Blue is more guitar-oriented, with punk and rock in the mix. Officine Belforte is a chilled space with sofas and an anything-goes music policy, from hip-hop to reggae.



Orientexpress

Sip on mint tea and coffee with spices at Turin’s Moroccan-infused Hafa Café



The Turin Gig

The big day for classical music lovers is 4 March, as the renowned Hungarian trio Geringas Baryton breeze into the Conservatorio Statale di Musica “Giuseppe Verdi” (above). Their performance is part of a wider musical festival running through to June, organised by Unione Musicale, an association founded in 1946 that is staging 50 concerts with performers coming from across the globe.

i 11 VIA MAZZINI, TEL: +39 011 888 470,

WWW.CONSERVATORIOTORINO.EU

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TURIN ON THE CHEAP

Pick up a Torino&Piemonte Card from the tourist office, at €19 for two days and available for up to seven. It offers free public transport and free entry to 160 cultural sites. For budget eats, head to one of Europe’s largest markets, Porta Palazzo (Piazza della Repubblica), or look out for the cheap lunch set menus that abound in the city. For dinner, a good aperitivo can also be more filling than many a meal in a restaurant – for the price of just one drink.

Photography: Tim White

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Whether you're in town for business or a break, you can find great deals in Turin – particularly at weekends

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Cream of the Crop

Golden Palace

A black-marble, art deco entrance sets the tone for this stylish five-star, formerly a functional building for FIAT before its transformation in time for the Winter Olympics in 2006. The 195 spacious rooms have LCD TVs, high-speed internet and a subtle colour scheme of gold, silver and bronze. The restaurant is not half bad either, and its breakfasts are legendary. If you want to ease muscles bashed about on the Alpine slopes there's also a wellness centre with a hammam, pool and a range of spa treatments.

i DOUBLES FROM €205, INCLUDING BREAKFAST.
TEL: +39 011 551 2111, WWW.GOLDENPALACE.TH.IT



Photography: Tim White

On a Budget

Hotel San Carlo

If it's location on a budget you're after, this is the place. Situated right on the central Piazza San Carlo, the hotel even has some rooms that look out over the bustling square, a great public space now that cars have been banished underground (parking free for guests). The lobby hints at a sense of luxury that is absent in the rooms, although the free wi-fi is a nice touch. Many of the rooms have their own bathroom, but do check before you book unless you want a nasty surprise at 4am!

i DOUBLES WITH BATHROOM €85, TEL: +39 011 562 7846, WWW.ALBERGOSANCARLO.IT

Not Breaking the Bank

Grand Hotel Sita

This old, four-star dame opened in 1825, and has long been a favourite of visiting celebrities from Lou Reed to Muhammad Ali. Understated luxury is the key here, from the moment you step in off the busy street into a world of calm. There are 120 rooms and suites, an excellent restaurant with Piedmontese specialities, a relaxed American Bar and a modest fitness room. Breakfasts are a heaving feast of goodies, with cheese, cured meats and pastries to set you up for the day.

i DOUBLES FROM €190, INCLUDING BREAKFAST, TEL: +39 011 517 0171, WWW.TH.IT

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CITYFOCUS **TURIN**

Ugo Gastaldi, head chef at La Linea Continua, shares his passion for the city

**CITY
LIVES**



"FOR ME TURIN IS THE HOME OF ITALIAN

cooking, the nation's real kitchen – so if you agree with me that Italian cooking is the world's best then you can see why I have spent my whole life in the Piedmont region.

"I was born just outside the city in the village of Cuorgne, in the foothills of the Alps, and have always been interested in cooking and restaurants. My family have two restaurants there, and I also have a farm, so go back as often as I can to source fresh ingredients and get back to nature.

"I studied to be a chef in Turin and have really watched the city develop in recent years. A few decades ago we were not taken seriously, even by our rivals in Milan, but now the Winter Olympics have shown the world what we have in Turin and what a

"Everyone who comes to Turin must try the Piedmontese specialities"

great city it is to visit – whether you are here on business or just coming for a holiday.

"We live for food. At lunch we talk about what we want to eat for dinner, then even before dinner we feast during the *aperitivo* on little snacks and tasty treats before the main event. My restaurant is based at the Art Hotel Boston and we do aperitivo every night, with a special service on Thursdays where there is no way you will need dinner afterwards. Value as well as quality is high in Turin, and even our five-course tasting menu is only €38, including wine.

"Everyone who comes to Turin must try the Piedmontese specialities. My favourite is *agnolotti*, our local version of ravioli, then there are the truffles from Alba. These for me are the finest white truffles in the world. Don't forget our wines, too. We produce some excellent reds that go well with the pork and beef we rear in the Alpine foothills, and also some champagne that I think is up there with France.

"Another passion in Turin is design, and last year we were recognised as the first World Design Capital. At our hotel we take design seriously, with each of the 91 rooms designed individually. My favourite is the Ayrton Senna suite, a split-level oasis where you can feel the great man's beauty and presence. He was a man who insisted on quality in all areas of his life, and in Turin we appreciate that."

i 70 VIA MASSENA. TEL: +39 011 500 359. WWW.HOTELBOSTONTORINO.IT

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**Liverpool, London (Stansted),
Shannon and Trapani (Sicily).**

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