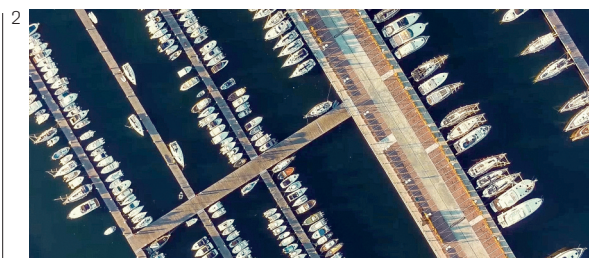


PORTO MIRABELLO

Italy's newest & largest yacht harbour

By NICOLE RUSKELL

A marvel of ingenuity and architectural prowess, Porto Mirabello was created from nothing. A decade ago, the area was only a protected inlet of sea, but within two years, an artificial peninsula was constructed and a massive complex of 40,000 square metres now connects La Spezia to its very own superyacht harbour. Riviera Insider sits down with its founder and CEO, Alessandro Menozzi, to learn more about this impressive project.



► Photo 1
VIEW OF THE HARBOUR WITH
THE MOUNTAINS OF THE
CINQUE TERRE
© Porto Mirabello

► Photo 2
AERIAL VIEW OF THE NEW
YACHT PORT
© Porto Mirabello

► Photo 3
PORTO MIRABELLO'S FULL-
SERVICE SHIP YARD
© Porto Mirabello

► Photo 4
CEO, ALESSANDRO MENOZZI
© Porto Mirabello





The €143 million *Porto Mirabello* project was completed in a record-breaking two years mainly due to the fact it was privately funded. Alessandro Menozzi, a businessman from Modena with zero prior knowledge of boating, took on the enormous project ‘after a joke’ about the challenges of creating a five-star harbour out of nothing.

He happened upon the project – it had been passed around for nearly four decades, always deemed impossible and left in a thick folder – by chance, but the idea of this immense challenge piqued his interest and he didn’t stop until it was his.

Humble beginnings

A self-made man, Menozzi proudly states, “I didn’t come from a wealthy family. I’ve worked for everything I have.” He wears a bright blue designer suit for our meeting, which takes place in his large office, offering a panoramic view of the 40,000m² port below his window. He insists he isn’t a rich man. Instead, he takes tremendous pride in his behemoth accomplishment and chuckles when he thinks back on how it all began. “They must have thought I was an idiot; someone without any knowledge of boats and from a completely different business sector,” he quips, recalling the absurd set of circumstances that led to the building we are sitting in. He chocks it up to destiny that he was not only granted the project, but also a generous line of support from his bank. The rest he credits to his hometown of Modena, where he delights in recounting some of Italy’s top products and brands. “Modena has nothing but fields and fog, and yet we have such a strong work ethic that we have produced many of Italy’s top products, from food to fashion, to cars to chefs.” Obviously, being the home of *Ferrari*, *Lamborghini*, *Maserati* and *Ducati* should be enough for the record books, but foodies will surely note Modena for the world’s source of *Parmigiano Reggiano* cheese and balsamic vinegar. Menozzi’s mention of the finest

FACTS & FIGURES

- >Total area: 40,000m²
- >1,107 berths
- >100 superyacht berths
- >2 high-flow filling stations
- >1 heliport
- >1,300 parking spaces
- >287 garages
- >1 captain & crew gym
- >30+ shops, restaurants & caf  s
- >24h security
- >Round-the-clock on-site service staff
- >On-site concierge

FROM LA SPEZIA TO...

- Monaco:**
106 nautical miles
- Portovenere:**
3.5 nautical miles
- Viareggio:**
20 nautical miles
- Portofino:**
33.5 nautical miles
- Elba Island:**
78 nautical miles

gastronomy is no exaggeration either. *Osteria Francescana*, located on a small and quiet street in Modena, was recently voted 2018’s Best Restaurant in the World.

Un-phased by the naysayers and warnings of financial ruin, Menozzi pushed forward with marine reclamation work in 2007 and the construction of jetties in 2008. By 2009, the first berths were available. Financing as the project progressed, he sold berths to some top yacht owners and their vessels, including the well-known dark-blue Armani yacht, now a long-term fixture at *Porto Mirabello*.

A floating city

Connecting La Spezia to *Porto Mirabello* is a new modern footbridge that allows residents and tourists alike to enjoy the many amenities of the new port. Over 30 shops are housed in the modern structure and among their number are several restaurants, caf  s, wine bars and even a proper English pub. *La Pia*, a La Spezia institution for over 100 years, also opened a shop at the port and serves *farinata*, a local Ligurian speciality (Italy’s version of the Ni  ois *socca*). The high-end restaurant of *Akua* features a 25-metre swimming pool and an outdoor bar. Summer nights turn the spot into a chic after-hours club.

Giving the C  te d’Azur a run for its money, Porto Mirabello offers 1,107 berths in total, with 100 berths for superyachts from 40 to 130 metres. In fact, Porto Mirabello ranks as number three in Europe for size. Its exclusive mega yacht quay has 16 births for 50 to 130-metre yachts, with key-card entry, a private lounge deck, BBQ area, its own high-capacity diesel (SIF) high-flow filling station, and a helipad.

Overall, Porto Mirabello offers round-the-clock security with CCTV, 24/7 service staff and on-site concierge service. It is also one of very few ports that offer a full-service and on-site shipyard complete with dry dock. Another speciality is the long-term berths. Working with La Spezia’s port authority, there are 407 berths that will licence for 60-year terms; something that is certainly not easy to find anywhere in the Mediterranean.

All-year appeal

La Spezia’s expansive gulf is highly protected from rough seas by both natural elements and a 620-metre breakwater. This ensures ease of navigation throughout the winter and utmost safety for sheltering its yachts while moored. But the best part, according to Menozzi, is the strategic location of La Spezia. All yacht harbours offer summer recreation, but he points out the endless activities available during the winter.

“What do you like about Italy?” he asks with the signature Italian gesturing: hands and palms up. “The cars? Food? Fashion? History? Skiing? We have it all around us here.”

In fact, most of Italy’s top spots for any of the above are within a two-hour drive or 50-minute helicopter ride from La Spezia and are best enjoyed in the cooler months. ▀