



Autogrill Fiorenzuola d'Arda: **where tradition and innovation meet**

Since their construction the Fiorenzuola d'Arda service area has stood out from being innovative and modern, a trait it has retained over the years to ideally symbolise the growth of the entire Country in the past 5 decades and cater to generations of Italians travelling along the Autostrada del Sole motorway.

In 1959 Autogrill Pavesi at Fiorenzuola d'Arda was indeed the first **bridge motorway service area ever built in Europe** and it still one of the most iconic symbols of Italy moving on the path of modernisation during the economic boom. The area is located on the A1 motorway, a key thoroughfare connecting Milan and Naples, right on a very strategic spot in the centre of the Padana plain. It is not by chance that this area was selected in the Sixties to connect the Autostrada del Sole with another important road crossing the north of the country: the A21 from Turin to Piacenza and Brescia.

Since the opening of this futuristic bridge on 31 December 1959 in the presence of the then Undersecretary of the Interior Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, the Autogrill at Fiorenzuola d'Arda was constantly among the most successful and beloved motorway service area among Italian travellers.

Today the first Bistrot opens here, once again putting the Fiorenzuola d'Arda area at the centre of a restaurant-on-the-move revolution, embodying the new culinary culture that Autogrill devotes to new needs and dietary habits and offering travellers a quality break and the discovery of local gastronomy treasures.

The mind behind this outstanding feat, which appeared in all its majesty to the entire nation, was architect **Angelo Bianchetti**, born in 1911 and graduated in architecture at Milan's Polytechnic University in 1934. In 1949 Bianchetti started collaborating with **Mario Pavesi**, the Novara entrepreneur who opened the first restaurant meant for travellers on the Milan-Turin motorway, thus "inventing" the model that all other Autogrill outlets opening in the ensuing decades followed. The collaboration between Bianchetti and Pavesi lasted until 1977: almost thirty years in which 11 bridge service area were built, together with seventy roadside areas, four motels and the Milan building that later would house the Group's offices.

The concrete and steel framework of Fiorenzuola d'Arda, with entrances from both directions through two staircases and lifts, and the restaurant located along the glass-panelled gallery, were designed to provide travellers with ease of access and the highest function. The project was **the prototype for all the bridge service area that followed** and, thanks to the rationalised production process, the whole structure was completed in only four months, a feat that won Bianchetti the gold medal at the Ninth national advertising award. The idea came after a trip to the United States, where bridge service area had already been in existence for a few years. After all, Mario Pavesi had taken inspiration for the name of his restaurant from the trip to the US a decade before: more precisely, the name was derived from grill rooms, small restaurants scattered everywhere along American intestates.



The American experience also dictated Pavesi's choices in terms of the selection of food, with a real "Motorway traveller's menu" designed on purpose by the Milan University Physiology Department and including hearty and light recipes, light enough to ensure drivers kept their focus while at the steering wheel.

Over the years Fiorenzuola D'Arda has stood out as one of the favourite service and rest areas among travellers, soon becoming one of the highest-traffic area in the entire Autogrill network. The structure and the offering have been modified and adjusted several times, to keep the appeal fresh and modern, in line with consumers' taste and the changes occurring in the Country. In 2012 Autogrill at Fiorenzuola d'Arda was one of six outlets of the Group involved in the "Territorio – Piacenza" project, developed in partnership with Ente Provincia and consortium Piacenza Alimentare to promote local produce and strengthen the bond with the local community. Today this bond is renewed with Bistrot and its innovative, successful concept.

All the material in the press kit is available on www.autogrill.com at the following link:

<http://www.autogrill.com/it/our-way/progetti-speciali-bistrot-fiorenzuola-arda>