Beat: Music

Inside the Pelagalli Museum: the Memory of Communication Bologna Italy

Bologna Tells the Story of Where Communi

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USPA NEWS - A Journey Through the History of Communication: Inside the Pelagalli Museum in Bologna
by Roberto Magni and Daniela Comi – Foto ReD Photographic Agency
In the heart of Bologna lies a place where past and present, technology and memory, science and wonder come together. It is the Museum of Communication – A Thousand Voices… A Thousand Sounds, better known as the Pelagalli Museum, one of the richest and most surprising private Italian collections dedicated to the history of radio and communication media. A unique heritage that preserves more than 2,000 original and functioning artifacts, including instruments that belonged to Guglielmo Marconi, the Bolognese genius who revolutionized the world with wireless telegraphy.

A museum born from passion
The museum was founded in 1992 thanks to the intuition and determination of Giovanni Pelagalli, a radio technician and passionate collector. Its location in Via Col di Lana is a true treasure chest of history: a journey through more than a century of innovation, from the birth of radio to modern digital technologies.
Pelagalli did more than gather objects. He built a narrative—a journey through time that allows visitors to understand how communication has transformed society and the way we live.

Twelve sections to tell a century of inventions
The Pelagalli Museum is divided into 12 thematic sections, each dedicated to a key figure or era in the history of communication:
• Marconi's Radio – Original devices documenting the earliest wireless transmission experiments.
• Edison's Phonography – Phonographs, gramophones, and the first technologies for recording and reproducing sound.
• The Lumière Cinema – Projectors and machines that gave birth to visual communication.
• Baird's Television – The first television sets, marking the dawn of the TV era.
• Meucci's Telephony – Instruments illustrating the evolution of voice communication.
• The Computers of Jobs and Gates – The roots of the digital age, from microprocessors to early personal computers.
Alongside these core sections, the museum also houses mechanical musical instruments from the 18th and 19th centuries, a remarkable collection of jukeboxes with over 11,000 titles, historic audiovisual equipment, and a specialized library.

An immersive journey through radio, cinema, and music
Visitors move through sections dedicated to the history of radio, phonography, cinema, television, and Italian popular music, following a narrative thread that intertwines science, culture, and social history.
One of the museum's most captivating aspects is the chance to see many artifacts still in perfect working order. During guided tours, Pelagalli himself performs hands-on demonstrations and experiments with vintage equipment, showing how a radio signal is born and how communication has evolved over the decades.

A reference point for schools and students
The Pelagalli Museum is a popular destination for school groups and students. Its strength lies in its ability to transform scientific education into an engaging experience:
• educational workshops on how radio works;
• guided tours by reservation;
• a library and film archive for further study;
• a path that blends history, technology, and popular culture.
For many young visitors, this is their first direct encounter with the instruments that shaped the history of modern communication.

A heritage recognized internationally
The cultural value of the Pelagalli Museum has been acknowledged beyond Italy's borders. The collection has been included among UNESCO sites of interest and has received numerous awards for its historical and educational significance.
With more than 600 square meters of exhibition space and over 2,000 artifacts, the museum offers a fascinating journey from the inventions of Marconi and the Ducati brothers to the birth of computers and the digital age.

A treasure of Bologna
The Museum of Communication – A Thousand Voices… A Thousand Sounds is an essential stop for anyone wishing to discover how Bologna contributed to the global history of telecommunications. A place where memory becomes experience, where the technology of the past continues to speak to the present.
A museum that does more than display objects: it tells stories—those of the inventors who changed the world and those of people like Giovanni Pelagalli, who dedicate their lives to preserving and sharing this extraordinary heritage with future generations.

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