The Courtyard of Arms, once military headquarter, is dominated by the Filarete Tower. The tower’s name comes from Antonio Averulino called Filarete, who designed the tower built in 1452, fallen in 1521 and reconstructed by Luca Beltrami in 1905. The circular fortified towers were built in 1452 by design of the architect Gadio and renovated, as well as the courtyard, by Luca Beltrami. Going towards the Ducal Courtyard you can see the moat of the medieval ring of walls, the dead moat, and Bona Tower, built on instructions of Bona of Savoy, who moved here after the killing in a conspiracy of her husband Galeazzo Maria Sforza.

The Ducal Courtyard
The part dedicated to the ducal residence is preceded by a colonnade ‘of the elephant’, so called for the fresco, designed by the architect Bonifazio Ferrini in 1473. The ducal apartments, housing Galeazzo Maria Sforza since 1468, covered the ground floor and the first floor, connected by low step stairs that made it possible for the Sforza to go up and down by horse. The stairs end at the first floor in the lodge of Galazzo Maria Sforza. In the north-western corner is the Falconiera Tower (seen only from Sempione Park) that contains, at the ground floor, the Sala delle Asse decorated by Leonardo da Vinci.

The Rocchetta Courtyard
Rocchetta is a fortress inside a fortress, its tough external appearance, with high windless defensive walls, is softened inside by a colonnade. The capitals are adorned by the emblem of Visconti and Sforza families, commissioned by Galeazzo Maria Sforza. Recent restorations discovered under the vaults the decorations commissioned by Luca Beltrami at the beginning of 1900. The north-eastern corner hosts the Castellano Tower (seen only from Sempione Park). The ground floor of the tower contains the Chamber of the Treasure, a room decorated under Ludovico il Moro with a fresco depicting the mythical guardian Argo, made by Bramantino.

Practical Information

Castle (Monumental area)
7.00 am - 7.30 pm Monday - Sunday

Castle Museums
9.00 am - 5.30 pm Tuesday - Sunday
Last admission 5:00 pm (only for ticket holders)
The ticket office closes at 4:30 pm

The ticket is valid for one day and includes the entrance to all of the Castle Museums
Free admission on every first and third Tuesday of the month from 2.00 pm
Closed on Monday, December 25th, January 1st, May 1st

www.milanocastello.it
For information about educational department service: c.educastello@comune.milano.it
11. “Falcone”, XV century, Lombard masters, marble, stone, steel
The “falcone” stood by the Darsena harbour, by Laghetto street near Duomo. Barges full of materials for the building site of Duomo arrived there through the canals. The hook was used to pick up the marbles and unload the barges.

12. Round shots, Lombard masters, stone
These groups of rounds shots, with calibers varying from 15 to 45 cm, are made of cannonballs launched against the walls of the fortress during the various sieges that the Sforza Castle has suffered.

The keystone with a Visconti-Sforza emblem is located at the culmination of the arch of the so called Gate of Giovia. This was the name of one of the gates of Milan’s medieval ring of walls, around which the castle developed. F/S are the initials of Francesco I Sforza.

14. Sculpture group, XV century, Lombard sculptor, Candoglia marble
The three sculptures, Announcing angel, Heavenly Father and Head of a bearded man, were originally part of a group of exceptional dimensions, while the provenance of the said group is still debated.

15. Ausonio’s tombstone, XVI century, Lombard stone-cutter, Apuan Alps marble
The praising inscription is testimony of the town’s pride, and reproduces a notorious poem written by the Latin poet Decimo Magnus Ausonio (310-293 A.D.), who describes Milan as a city “second only to Rome”.

16. Emblem held by two angels, XV century, Lombard stone-cutter, Candoglia marble
It’s very likely that the emblem, reminding similar representations with angels holding the emblem of a family, was wanted by Galeazzo Maria Sforza and was collocated on one of the Castle’s facades until 1607, when it was moved here.

17. Don Diego Pimentel’s gates, 1607, Lombard masters , stone and marble
The gate, testimony of the period of Spanish domination, was made for don Diego Pimentel, who has been the last castellan at the beginning of ’600. The entrance lead directly to his apartments and is topped by his emblem, and was walled in 1904.

18. Pine cone, XII century, Lombard sculptor, marble
This particularly interesting handworks were normally placed at the highest point of a building, and for this function was called an acrots in architecture. Similar elements were already well documented in the classical period. This one was found in 1893 in Cappuccio street.

19. Saint John the Evangelist, XIV century, Master of the Loggia degli Osii, sandstone
The statue adored the facade of San Giovanni in Conca, Barnabo Visconti’s Palatin church (Palatin = “of the palace”). His and his wife’s funerary monuments, coming from that building, are now in the Museo d’Arte Antica. La church was demolished in 1949.

20. Gian Giacomo Mora’s tombstone, 1630, Lombard stone-cutter, white marble
The tombstone was situated by the column built near Mora’s home. He was accused of propagating the plague of 1630: the charge was followed by torture and death sentence, described on the tombstone and rewritten by Manzoni in “History of the Column of Infamy”.

21. Views with exotic animals, 1476, painter from Ferrara, mural
The reason behind this representation is probably the gift of an elephant made by Borso d’Este, Lord of Ferrara. The presence of exotic animals, especially big cats, in castles is well documented by similar works.

22. Wall fountain, XV-XVII century, Lombard sculptors, Candoglia marble, granite
The back of the fountain is richly decorated with, in the center, the cantaro or “vessel of life”, while the sink, maybe coming from an interior, is embellished by a sequence of Sforza endeavors. The various parts were assembled together in 1904 by Luca Beltrami.

23. Saint John of Nepomuk, 1729, Giovanni Dugnani, marble and bronze
The statue, wanted by the last castellan, represents a Czech saint protector of soldiers, killed by drowning and particularly worshipped by Austrian soldiers. Similar statues are also present on bridges along of the Navigli canals.

24. Francesco I Sforza’s emblem, 1450, Lombard sculptor, marble
The emblem represents the viper and the crowned eagle. In the first paragraph, the inscription attests that, 4 March 1450 Francesco I Sforza came to power. The second paragraph declares the date of reconstruction of Castrum Portae Jovis.

25. Keystone with a shield, XV century, Lombard sculptor, Angera limestone
The enigmatic shield shows letters that were only partially adopted by the Greek alphabet and the interpretation of the word still isn’t clear, while it roughly translates as “ANIMO” (soul/intention/courage).

The keystone features the emblem of the Savoy family, topped by a crested lion and surrounded by a garland made of branches, while the ribbon motive dates back to an intervention made by Ernesto Rusca in 1904.

27. Monument to Saint Ambrose, 1904, Luigi Secchi, marble
In the middle of ’50s the central tower of the Castle was adorned with a statue of Saint Ambrose. Most of the tower was destroyed by an explosion of a deposit of gunpowder in 1521. It was later rebuilt by Luca Beltrami, who commissioned to Luigi Secchi the statue. you see now.

28. Monumento a Umberto I di Savoia, 1903, Luigi Secchi, marmo
In the immediate aftermath of the killing of Umberto I, 29 July 1900, upon Luca Beltrami’s proposal, central tower of the castle was rebuilt, destroyed in 1521, dedicated now to the second king of Italy.

29. Emblem of the Saint Spirit tower, 1455/1904, Lombard masters , marble
On the spearheaded serizzo vestiments stands out the giant marble depiction of the viper, but the part you can see today is a reconstruction made by referencing similar emblems in 1904.

30. Emblem of the Carmineto tower, 1455/1898, Lombard sculptor, marble
Just like the previous emblem, the original was partially destroyed, like many other heraldic depictions, during the French domination starting in 1796. It was reconstructed in 1898 together with the peak of the tower.