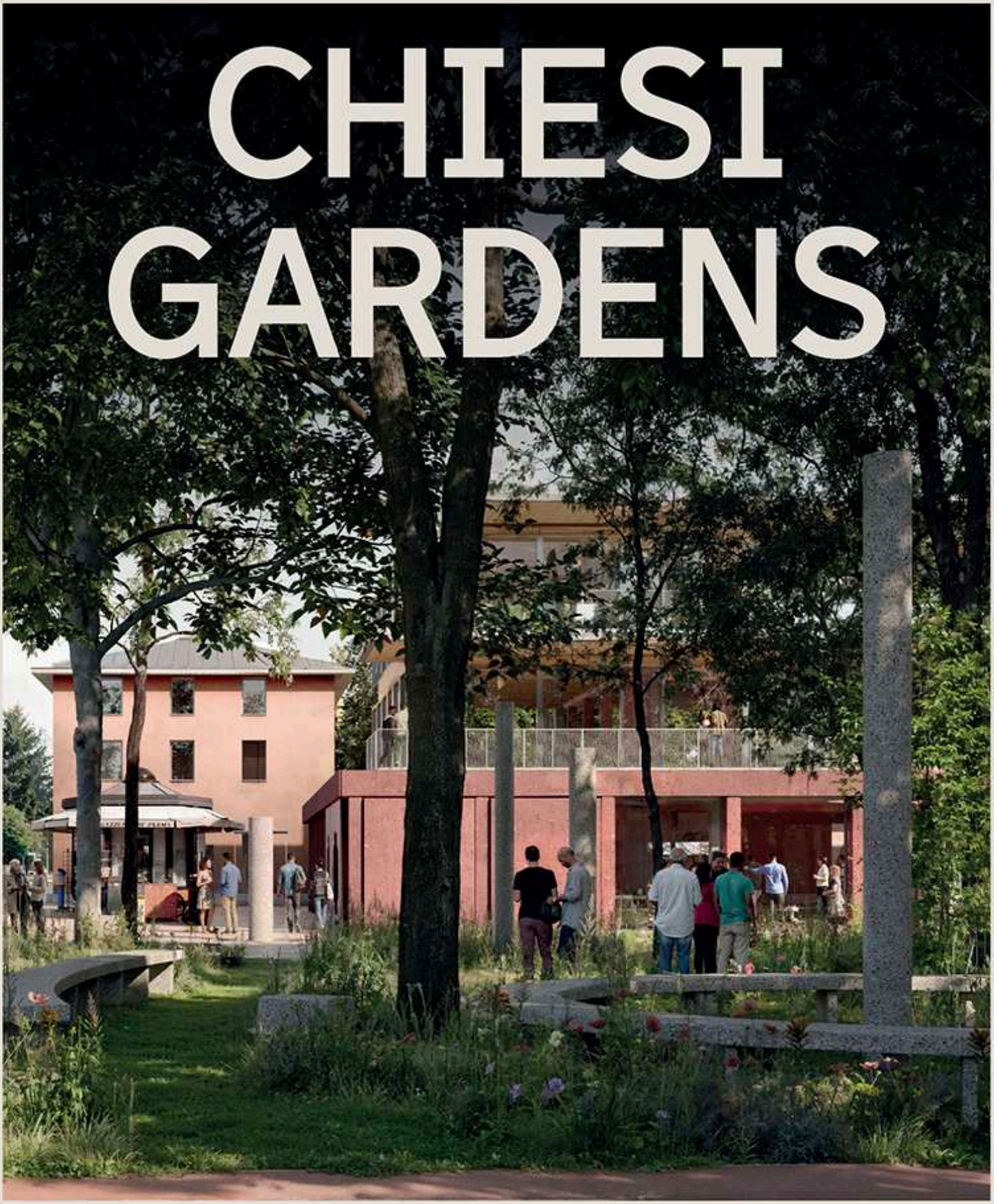
CHIESI GARDENS



FROM OUR ROOTS, A NEW BEGINNING GROWS.
DALLE NOSTRE RADICI PRENDE FORMA UN NUOVO FUTURO.

CHIESI
GARDENS

BREAKING NEW GROUND
NUOVI ORIZZONTI

A day devoted to exploring innovation, corporate culture, urban regeneration, and community engagement, featuring voices from across the Chiesi world and leading professionals in their respective fields.

Press Release
Parma, September 17th, 2026

What should be done with an industrial site once its original purpose has come to an end? How can it be transformed into a hybrid place where business activities coexist with those of the wider community? What form should spaces take in order to stimulate innovation, enhance attractiveness and encourage the involvement of external expertise? And how can the relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces be enhanced to promote a better quality of life and stronger relationships?

These are just some of the questions at the heart of the urban regeneration project transforming the historic Chiesi industrial site on Via Palermo in Parma. They are also the themes around which the event ***Breaking New Ground / New Horizons*** took shape, held on 16 September in the space where the future **Chiesi Gardens** will be created.

Structured around two round tables focusing respectively on **"A Culture of Innovation"** and **"Urban Regeneration and Social Impact"**, the event was opened by **Maria Paola Chiesi**, Chair of the Chiesi Group, who commented: "*With this event, we are celebrating much more than an urban regeneration project: we are celebrating a way of imagining the future while remaining true to our roots. Chiesi Gardens is being created in a place that has been part of our history for more than seventy years and is being transformed into a space designed to foster encounters, knowledge and new opportunities, both within and beyond Chiesi. We believe that innovation is first and foremost about scientific research, which lies at the heart of what we do. But it is also about the ability to build relationships and create shared value with the communities of which we are part. It is in this spirit that we have chosen to continue investing in San Leonardo: because the future is built in the places where we have the courage to stay, listen and grow together.*"

CHIESI
GARDENS

As Master of Ceremonies, **Michele Nebuloni**, Head of Chiesi Gardens, outlined the rationale behind the project and the ambitions that have shaped its strategic direction and design choices, with the aim of enhancing the dynamic interplay between space, people and place.

Bringing together voices from across Chiesi and professionals from across the sector, *Breaking New Ground / New Horizons* provided an opportunity to explore issues currently at the centre of international debate: from reflections on the Italian and European innovation ecosystem and the role of leadership in encouraging the adoption of Open Innovation programmes, to the design of spaces that foster relationships and the exchange of knowledge, and how to bring to life environments conceived to evolve over time.

“A Culture of Innovation”

Specifically, the panel dedicated to **“A Culture of Innovation”** featured **Andrea Chiesi**, Head of Special Projects at the Chiesi Group; **Carlo Bagnoli**, Professor of Strategic Innovation at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice and Founder and Scientific Director of VeniSIA; **Francesca Bria**, President of ART-ER and Board Member of the European Innovation Council; and **Massimiano Bucchi**, Professor of Science and Technology in Society at the University of Trento.
Moderated by **Eleonora Chioda**, curator of MeravigliosaMente for Corriere della Sera, the round table opened with a contribution from **Dr Andrea Chiesi** focusing on the three concepts that underpin the vision for Chiesi Gardens: openness, care and transformation. At the heart of his contribution was the idea that innovation does not emerge solely within a single company, but through interactions among people, expertise and different perspectives. Chiesi Gardens has been conceived precisely to foster these connections, transforming a historic company site into a place open to the wider scientific and innovation communities, as well as to the San Leonardo neighbourhood and the city of Parma. The same vision inspires The Impulse, Chiesi’s global initiative promoting patient-oriented innovation by supporting ideas and innovators capable of turning insights into high-impact solutions. Chiesi Gardens aims to provide a physical expression of this approach: a space where dialogue between business, research, place and community can spark innovation and generate shared value.

But what exactly is innovation, and how does it come about? Sociologist **Professor Massimiano Bucchi** addressed this question by emphasising that innovation is always a kind of short circuit between a new way of doing things, a new idea, a need that society did not know it had, or a missing technological element needed to complete a process of social change that is nearing fruition.
Drawing on his experience with VeniSIA — the Venice Sustainability Innovation Accelerator, where he is Founder and Scientific Director — **Professor Carlo Bagnoli** focused the discussion on the ability to turn innovation into tangible value: how an insight or discovery can move from the realm of research and ideas into application, travelling from academia to the market and ultimately becoming an industrial solution capable of generating a positive impact on people, the environment and places.
Francesca Bria, an economist specialising in innovation and President of ART-ER, then explored the role of places as infrastructures for innovation. Today, innovation can no longer be conceived as a closed process confined to laboratories or organisations, but rather as the outcome of open ecosystems in which businesses, research institutions, public authorities, start-ups, creatives and citizens share knowledge, data, expertise and perspectives to generate public value and social impact.

From this perspective, Chiesi Gardens represents a tangible example of open innovation: a space that brings different disciplines and communities together, creating the conditions for ideas, talent and collaborations to generate new solutions for health, sustainability and the local area.

“Urban Regeneration and Social Impact”

The second panel — dedicated to **“Urban Regeneration and Social Impact”** — featured contributions from **Cecilia Plicco**, Senior Director, Shared Value and Sustainability at the Chiesi Group; **Nina Bassoli**, architecture curator; and **Roberto Zancan**, Professor of History and Theory of Architecture at HEAD–Genève (HES-SO). Moderated by urban transformation expert **Paolo Bovio**, Editorial News Lead at Chora & Will and Editorial Director of Future4Cities, the panel opened with reflections from **Professor Roberto Zancan** on the era of urban regeneration shaping our time. Preserving, transforming and giving new functions to existing buildings and places is no longer simply one possible alternative, but increasingly represents the only viable way to respond to today’s environmental and social needs.

Nina Bassoli, an architecture curator with extensive experience in public cultural institutions, structured her contribution around the meaning of inhabiting spaces undergoing transformation — spaces capable of adapting to social change and accommodating people's evolving needs. Architecture, therefore, as exemplified by Chiesi Gardens, is increasingly taking on the challenge of creating more flexible, hybrid and layered places where different functions can coexist. From this perspective, transforming what already exists also becomes a way of re-establishing a deeper relationship between people and the spaces being designed.
Cecilia Plicco, Senior Director, Shared Value and Sustainability at the Chiesi Group, concluded the panel by bringing the discussion on urban regeneration and social impact specifically to Chiesi Gardens: "At Chiesi, we believe that the success of a company should not be measured solely by its economic results or its ability to innovate, but also by the positive impact it can generate for people, the environment and the communities with which it grows. Chiesi Gardens is a tangible expression of this vision. It reflects the kind of relationship the company wants to build with the territory, while also conveying how Chiesi imagines the future of business: as a driver of scientific innovation, but also of social and urban innovation."

The Architects' Perspective

The cultural journey through innovation, urban regeneration and social impact ultimately led to architecture, with contributions from the architects behind Chiesi Gardens — **Harold Vermeiren**, partner at 51N4E, Brussels, and **Nemanja Zimonjić**, director at TEN, Zurich/Belgrade. They highlighted the importance of making use of what already exists and maximising its potential, starting at the scale of the site itself, a single building or even a window. It is with this idea of an architecture of care — one that places the relationship between business, the local community, research and international culture at its centre — that Chiesi Gardens is preparing to look towards new horizons.

Andrea Chiesi, Head of Special Projects, Chiesi Group
"Chiesi Gardens: A Process of Social Weaving Beyond Urban Regeneration"

The concluding reflection was entrusted to Andrea Chiesi: "*The urban regeneration of the Via Palermo site goes beyond a simple building intervention; rather, it is a process of social weaving that involves people, the community of the San Leonardo neighbourhood that has welcomed us for more than seventy years, and the scientific, professional and creative*

communities that we hope to welcome in the future. With Chiesi Gardens, we want to create an open place capable of bringing together people, expertise and different perspectives, because we are convinced that innovation does not emerge solely within a company, but above all from the ability to open up to the outside world and create new connections. This is the logic of open innovation: creating the conditions for ideas, knowledge and cross-pollination to come together and be transformed into impactful solutions. Space itself can contribute to this process: innovating also means designing environments that encourage exchange, collaboration and the free flow of ideas. With Chiesi Gardens, we want to create not simply a new workplace, but an open ecosystem where new ideas, relationships and forms of innovation can emerge. Because innovation is not a project. It is a daily cultural choice."

Contacts for the press

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