

The Spada collection

The Spada collection, which boasts several thousand objects, is the fruit of a life of passionate research by an exceptional collector. The major pieces of this admirable collection have been on display at the Museum of the Legion of Honor since 2008.



Château Avogadro Spada © DR

The story of a collector

Throughout his career, Antonio Benedetto Spada held leading positions in the fields of finance, industry, culture and charity.

This outstanding collector's taste carried him towards silverware, stamps and porcelain, as much as toward contemporary art, books and bindings, until the time when orders and decorations became his main pursuit.

From an enthusiastic amateur, Antonio Spada gradually turned into one of the world's greatest experts on the subject, consulted by collectors and researchers as well as by royal and princely families.

He is the author of seven reputed books on Italian and European chivalric orders, which are acclaimed by the directors of major museums and authorities the world over.

In 1984, his entire collection was stolen from his residence at the gates of Brescia. Year after year, Antonio Spada tenaciously recreated a new, even more remarkable collection.

The spirit of the collection

The Spada collection is not only the world's largest private collection of official decorations, it is also a unique concentration of insignia selected for their rarity, their beauty, their interest and above all for the prestige of their recipients: sovereigns, marshals, ministers, statesmen and heroes-whether famed or lesser known-of major armed conflicts.

The collection magnificently illustrates the diversity and wealth of insignia of a wide variety of orders from the entire world, from the 16th century to the present day.

The partnership with the Museum of the Legion of Honor

Intent on preserving his life's work, Antonio Benedetto Spada, who was already a trustee and then first vice-president of the board of the Society of Friends of the Museum of the Legion of Honor, decided in 2008 to entrust the museum with the temporary loan of his collection for a period of 20 years. The foreign orders room was then renamed after his son who died at a young age, Mario Spada.

Thanks to this exceptional loan of some 2500 objects, the Museum of the Legion of Honor is now the world's leading museum in its field of specialization.