



The coin

The obverse shows images of the three Bellinzona castles, in vertical arrangement. Here the individual images mesh together, giving the impression of a harmonious whole. The name «TRE CASTELLI DI BELLINZONA» appears above them, as a circumscription.

The reverse, a typographical design, shows in the lower half a large figure «20» for the value, and beneath it in smaller writing the letters «FR» for francs. The designation of the country and the year of issue «CONFOEDERATIO HELVETICA 2004» are shown parallel to the edge, in two staggered lines. Above the centre there is a small Swiss cross.



Characteristics

Subject of the coin

«Tre Castelli di Bellinzona»

Artist

Marco Prati, Brè/Lugano

Technical data

Alloy: Silver 0.835

Weight: 20 g

Diameter: 33 mm

Legal value

20 Swiss francs

Date of issue

May 2004

Mintage

Standard coinage, uncirculated:

max. 70 000 coins

Proof coin in presentation case:

max. 8 000 coins

Coined and issued by

swissmint

Official Mint of the

Swiss Confederation

CH-3003 Bern

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2004

OFFICIAL COMMEMORATIVE COIN OF SWITZERLAND



**The Castles
of Bellinzona**
SERIES WORLD
HERITAGE

A splendid piece of Switzerland

The commemorative coins of Switzerland are designed by important native artists. Elegant, valuable and timeless, they epitomise the country's solid cultural heritage. As tasteful collectors' pieces available at attractive prices, they are also extremely popular. The commemorative coins have a legal face value and are minted in limited series. The net profit from their sales is used by the Confederation to promote cultural projects in Switzerland.

The Castles of Bellinzona

Bellinzona is widely known as «Turrita», the city of towers, walls and castles. The three castles in Bellinzona are the sole remaining example of medieval military architecture in the whole alpine region and number among the most important witnesses to the art of constructing fortifications in Switzerland. In 2000 UNESCO therefore added the three castles to its World Heritage list. In the narrow valley at Bellinzona, more pass routes converge than in almost any other

southern exit from the Alps. The topography of the site, with a ridge of rock projecting far into the valley from the eastern flank of the mountains, was an obvious invitation to build a system of fortifications there. Anyone who controlled this strategic position in the valley could share in the goods trade and exert influence on the course of history. The Castel Grande defensive system arose there as far back as the 4th century, remaining of importance during the following centuries in the campaigns conducted

by the rulers of Milan as they marched northward. At the end of the 13th century the Dukes of Milan built the Castello di Montebello, and around 200 years later the Castello di Sasso Corbaro.

The artist

Marco Prati was born in Viganello in 1955. After leaving school, he completed training as a graphic designer. He then enrolled at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, where he completed his studies in 1984. Marco Prati's artistic career is characterised by a constant search for innovation. From figurative expressionism with woodcuts and oil paintings, under Nordic influence, he moved on to a personal, futuristic vision of sculpture in the 1990s, a vision influenced by

Boccioni. From 1997 on, with lessening severity of expression, a new, contemporary-existential consciousness entered Marco Prati's figures. In his most recent works, the result of his inner transformation is clearly expressed. In them the human and non-human aspects are artistically united, fused and brought into harmony in clean, clearly defined lines and shapes. Marco Prati lives and works in Brè near Lugano, and since 1994 has been a member of «visarte», the professional association for the visual arts. His work has been shown in various one-man and group exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad.

