



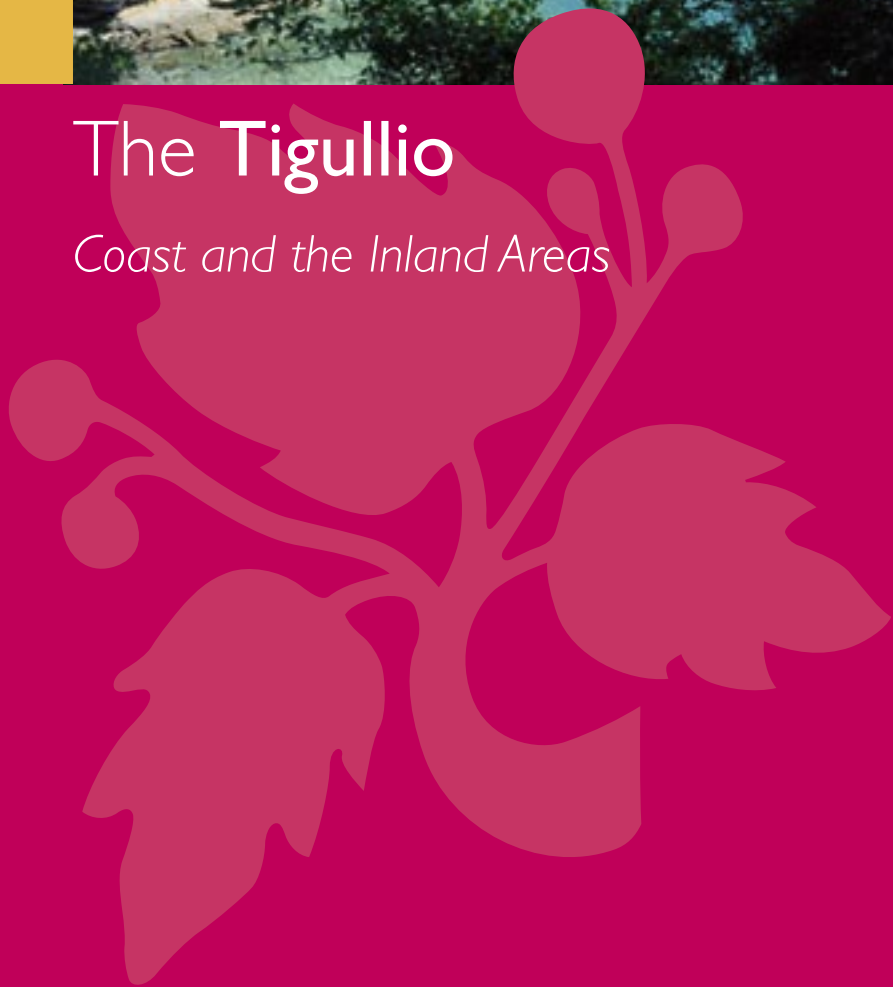
Provincia di Genova
Assessorato al Turismo

LIGURIA
ITALIA
terradamare



The Tigullio

Coast and the Inland Areas





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1. Mount Portofino

Portofino headland is the only example of such vast proportions in the whole of the Ligurian Arc. It divides the Paradise Gulf from the Tigullio Gulf stretching out towards the sea and creating a very unusual natural environment. Its highest peak, Mount Portofino, goes up to 600 meters above sea level only a kilometre from the coast.

The geological conformation of the headland offers spectacular scenery with precipitous rock faces that drop straight into the sea, and terraced slopes with vegetable gardens and olive trees. Rocks known as "puddinga" - made up of rounded pebbles cemented by minerals of various types, which are particularly resistant to marine erosion, are a characteristic of the natural environment of the mountain particularly on the steep southern side.

Mount Portofino was recog-

nised as a Regional natural park in 1977. It is covered by a network of splendid itineraries and excursions of extraordinary natural beauty. From here, one can get to Punta Chiappa, San Rocco, San Fruttuoso, Portofino Vetta, Portofino Mare and Paraggi.

Portofino

The village of Portofino is situated at the south-eastern extremity of the headland. It is enclosed in an inlet that is shielded between the small peninsula that closes off the Gulf of Tigullio to the west, and Punta Carega which is to the south of the inlet of Paraggi.

The little Port, known as *Portus Delphini* referred to by Plinio, was cited, for the first time in the year 986, in a document in which Adelaide of



Portofino: the colourful row of houses on the Marconi Quay

1. Mount Portofino

Borgogna, wife of Ottone I, donated the Benedictine Abbey of San Fruttuoso di Capodimonte.

One can get to this exclusive tourist village using the narrow scenic road that runs along the coast, on the eastern side of the mountain, from Santa Margherita.

Driving to Portofino by road, one immediately comes across the **CHURCH OF SAN MARTINO**, which was built in the XII century in Romanesque Lombard style and then completely renovated in the eighteen hundreds. In the XIV Century the **ORATORIO DELL'ASSUNTA**, was built. It has Gothic and Renaissance elements, which include the beautiful door frame in slate with a bas-relief lunette from 1555 above it, which represents a Madonna and child surrounded by monks in traditional robes.

From Via Roma, one can get to the famous "**PIAZZETTA**" which is surrounded by colourful houses. The tourist port has some of the most prestigious boats in the world moored there. All around, under the archways and along the Marconi quay and the wharf, there are expensive boutiques, exclusive shops and restaurants, which feature in national and international events and de-



A view of the splendid villas by the sea, along the road that leads to Portofino

monstrations. On the top of a steep rock face is the **CHURCH OF SAN GIORGIO**, a church that was rebuilt in the middle of the last century. The original church was built in 1154 and had undergone several changes. Inside the church the relics of St. George are to be found. They were brought by Sailors who participated in the crusades.

From the San Giorgio path, one can go on to **CASTELLO BROWN**. The defence stronghold was built during the Mediaeval period and had always been used for military functions. It was strengthened by Napoleone and then it became a home for wealthy private owners, including the English Consul, Yeats Brown. Since 1961 the fortress is the property of the Municipality that uses it for exhibitions. It is surrounded by a Mediterranean garden, full of flowers, rose gardens and pergolas.



The doorway of the Church of the Assumption

1. Mount Portofino



Portofino - Castello Brown seen from the port

The enchanting panorama of Portofino and of the sea that can be seen from the various openings and from the terrace makes it possible to understand the important strategic value of this fortress. The walls of the building are enriched by numerous basreliefs and architectural embellishments in marble and slate, similar to the first architrave at the entrance.

From the castle, by following the path surrounded by olive trees and lush green villa gardens, one gets to the **LIGHTHOUSE OF PORTOFINO** at Punta del Capo. From here there is a view from Punta Manara in Sestri Levante to Capo Noli, beyond Genoa.

Paraggi and Nozarego

Leaving Portofino on state road 227 that leads to Santa Margherita one comes across **PARAGGI**. Until the XII Century because of its abundant sources of

Tourism, events and traditions

Thanks to the typical Mediterranean climate and the beauty of its landscape, Portofino has been a prime tourist destination for decades. Hotels of different categories and shops of every type are on offer to the most discerning tourist. Even the most discerning tourist will have his choice of different categories of hotels and shops of every type. Traditionally most of the available land in the area is turned over to olive groves although some vegetable gardens can be observed, whilst the local fisherman will take the catch of the day to the best restaurants in the area ensuring only the freshest of fish can be found. The local crafts are also very pretty, embroidery and hand made lace articles can be found in most of the shops. On the feast of the patron saint - **San Gior-gio** - on 23rd April, a big bonfire is lit in the square and this, when red hot, together with the illumination from a trail of little lights around the buildings make the village look really charming.

water it had numerous mills, some of which are still in existence today

1. Mount Portofino

in the Acqua Viva area. Paraggi is a natural jewel: A tiny inlet that has crystalline green water, and a Genoese fortress - **CASTELLO BONOMI** - that was renovated in the eighteen hundreds. It also has an exclusive beach, restaurants, and an elegant night club.



The inlet at Paraggi

Continuing towards Santa Margherita there is a deviation near the town that leads to **NOZAREGO**. Here one sees the **CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA ASSUNTA** built in 1725. It has a beautiful baroque façade and inside there are important paintings by Luca Cambiaso and a splendid sixteenth century organ. There is a large church square dating back to the middle of the eighteen hundreds decorated with thousands of coloured pebbles which offers a breath taking view of the whole of the gulf.

San Fruttuoso Bay

There aren't many alternatives to get to the tiny bay of San Fruttuoso, in a deep inlet that opens towards the South of the Portofino headland. One can either follow one of the three long footpaths amongst the rocks and vegetation on the headland, or use one of the boats that connect Camogli, (besides Genoa and Santa Margherita)

with this charming place, that is isolated from the rest of the world.

San Fruttuoso has a small beach, an abbey, a church, the Doria tower and a few buildings. The dark green background of pine trees is reflected in the emerald blue waters of the sea.

The legend regarding the building of the structure destined to become an Abbey, revealed that in 259 AD. Giustino and Procopio, disciples of the San Fruttuoso, martyred bishop were thrown by a tempest into the most hidden inlet of Mount Portofino. After the shipwreck they found themselves surrounded by three lions which, according to what was predicted, instead of tearing them to pieces traced outlines on the sand of the church that they had to erect in honour of the saint. What really happened is that the monastery was founded in this inlet in 711 A.D. when Prospero, Bishop of Tarragona, while escaping from Spain to get away from the invasion of the Moors, anchored there with the

1. Mount Portofino

remains of the saint. The Saracens destroyed the monastery and it was rebuilt in the tenth century by Benedictine monks and in the 13th Century it was expanded by the Doria family.

The **SAN FRUTTUOSO ABBEY** is presented as one of the most significant Ligurian buildings of Mediaeval times. The cupola and bell tower, with a distinctive spherical shape, denote a Byzantine influence. A large part of the complex that we admire today goes back to the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh, when reconstruction was carried out according to the wishes of Adelaide, widow of Ottone I. In the new church, the octagonal tower included the Byzantine cupola within it. The complex also included a single order cloister and a chapter house on its western side. At the end of the thirteenth Centu-

ry the story of San Fruttuoso was intertwined with that of the Doria family. They contributed to the building of a new part facing the sea. In recognition of this, the monks agreed for them to build a family sepulchre in front of the cloister. In the fifteenth century the family changed the appearance of the cloister, by elevating the floor and demolishing the crypt.

Recent restoration has brought back the architectural characteristics of the Romanesque-Gothic building. The irregularities of the spans of the arches in the portico are due to the position of the rocks on which the plinths of the foundation are placed. These irregularities are also repeated in the position of the windows, which evidently followed the internal placement. In the restored façade, the old wooden shutters were eliminated and new sliding glass, which is



The Abbey of San Fruttuoso di Capodimonte

1. Mount Portofino



A view of the bay from one of the halls of San Fruttuoso Abbey

almost invisible, has been used so that the purity of the architectural lines can stand out. It's also possible to have a beautiful view of the sea and the coast from the inside of the halls. The roof, as in the rest of the Abbey, has been rebuilt with traditional materials and structures. In the area near the sea tiebeams of steel have been used to hook it to the wall of the structure at the back which is stronger.

The Abbey was donated by the Doria-Pamphilis to Fai (Fondo Italiano per l'ambiente) in 1983. The inside of the Abbey - the part used as a museum - is open to the public so that they can see the various changes that the building has undergone over time.

The **ANDREA DORIA TOWER** is situated behind the Abbey, and was built in the sixteenth Century by the Admiral to defend the village from attacks by Turkish pirates.

The small beach in San Fruttuoso was created in 1915 during a violent downpour that caused

flooded streams to bring much debris to the waterline.

The little restaurants in this village are small but the food based on fish dishes is excellent. It is also possible to spend a night in the village, but it is difficult to find one of the seven rooms because there is only one inn.

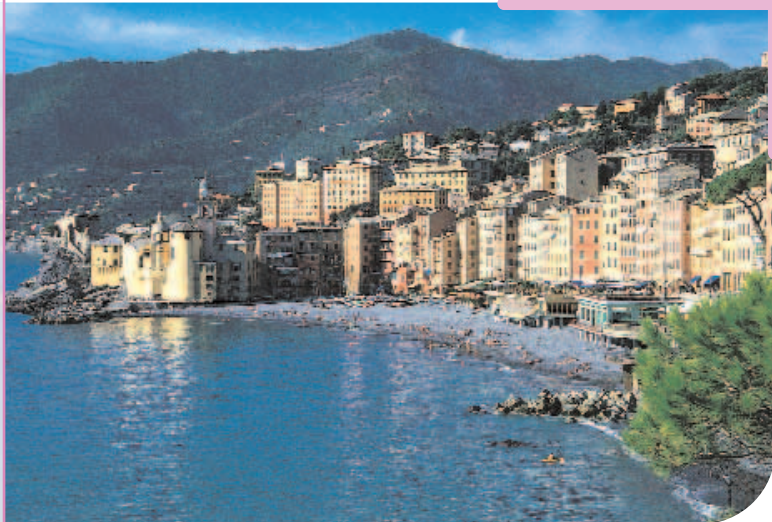
Finally, if one does any underwater diving in the bay, it is possible to admire the renowned **CRISTO DEGLI**

ABISSI, a statue of Christ by the sculptor Guido Galletti, lowered into the sea in 1954 as a protection for sailors.

A view of the bay of San Fruttuoso from the footpath that leads to Portofino



1. Mount Portofino



Camogli - A row of colourful houses and on the left the Church of Saint Mary Assumption

Camogli

Situated on the steeper and more rugged western side of Portofino headland, Camogli stands out first of all because of its line-up of colourfully decorated, multiple storied houses, which face the ancient pier and the promenade along the sea.

The word "Camogli" is old, but its exact origins have been lost in time. There are different ideas about the meaning of the word. Many scholars think that the word Camogli comes from "*Camulo*" or "*Camulio*", name attributed to Marte da Sabini and the Etruscans. Or "*Camolio*" a Gallic-Celtic divinity. Others say that the word has Greek-Ligurian origins and that it meant "low lying land" from "*cam*" (low) and "*gi*" (land). These words would certainly describe the characteristic topography of the village, a valley when compared to Ruta. The Ge-

noese meaning is very interesting - they say that the word Camogli, (*Camuggi*, in Genovese) comes from "*Cà de Mugge*" i.e wives houses. The wives who used to stay alone at home awaiting their sailor husbands return. Others believe that it might have come from "*Cà a Muggi*" or houses in a group, given their position closely packed together and separated only by steep alleyways that lead to the beach, amongst steps and porticoes. The aspect of the little town has remained almost unchanged for centuries with the typical houses and the landing pier at the little port. The only evident change is the promenade built in place of a row of houses, two steps from the beach. In the historical centre, Via Garibaldi, obviously the businesses have changed with the arrival of shops and elegant cafes, but the heart is still the port with its colourful houses that face the piers, the boats and the ferry boats.

1. Mount Portofino

The most significant artistic works are in the **BASILICA DI SANTA MARIA ASSUNTA** which is situated on the promontory known as the "isola" (island). In the past one could reach it using a wooden bridge. The church was built in 1200. Today it is high up on a pebbled square, which



Camogli - Castel Dragone

one gets to by climbing a marble stairway. It has a neo-classical façade that leads to a Baroque interior. Amongst the works that are most important is the flooring inlaid with marble of various colours, the wooden statue of the Assumption, a most beautiful canvas of the Annunciation and two big windows depicting the patron saints, San Fortunato Martire and San Prospero. A few years ago the San Prospero Window was rebuilt after a giant wave destroyed it.

The visit continues on to **CASTEL DRAGONE** that rises from a cliff face. Built in the fourteen hundreds as a defence against Pirates, it was destroyed and rebuilt several times. It was used as a prison, and then as a meeting place, and recently it was an aquarium. Today it is the "**GIO-BONO FERRARI**" MARITIME MUSEUM. It contains important items regarding Camogli's link with the sea, such as drawings of boats, compasses, and various other items.

Tourism, events and traditions

The event that puts Camogli in the news, is the traditional **Sagra del pesce** (fish festival), which is held on the second Sunday in May. The first edition was held in 1952 when it was added to the Feast of San Fortunato. A platform is erected near the port and freshly caught fish is cooked there all day. A gigantic frying pan was introduced for the second festival - and it has been used ever since. The present one has a diameter of 4 meters.

On the first Sunday in August there is a procession of boats in honour of Stella Maris (the Star of the Sea). Both these events are a good opportunity to taste the typical "camogliesi" pastries, choux pastry balls filled with rum custard cream.

1. Mount Portofino



Camogli - A view of the little port

Ruta, San Rocco and San Lorenzo

Ruta is on the western side of Portofino headland amongst pine and chestnut woods. It is about 30 meters above sea level. One can get there from Camogli, or by turning off the Rapallo-Genoa road. This is the departure point for excursions on foot on the Portofino headland in the direction of Portofino



Ruta - The "Chiesa Millenaria"

Vetta or San Rocco. It is possible to admire the **CHURCH OF SAN MICHELE** built in the seventeenth century, but above all, turning towards San Martino di Noceto, it is possible to see the **CHIESA MILLENARIA** which dates to the year 1000.

This church, which is in excellent condition, is one of the best examples of Roman architecture in Eastern Liguria. From very ancient times, it functioned as a parish church on a territory that included Rapallo and the whole area of Recco. Its decline began in the fourteen hundreds and in the sixteen hundreds it was abandoned. It was used as a barn in the eighteen hundreds. The church was renovated in the early twentieth century. It is in bare stone, with a beautiful wooden ceiling with rafters. Unfortunately nowadays it is not possible to see the inside.

From Ruta, a road leads to **SAN ROCCO**, the last point up to which one can take a car. One can also get to the place by following footpaths from

1. Mount Portofino

Camogli and from other places on the headland. From San Rocco, which is 300 meters above sea level, one can get a splendid view of the Gulf. The church, which is dedicated to the **MA-**

DONNA DELLA SALUTE (Madonna of Health) is situated in a little square on a cliff above the sea, and was built in 1863 by sailors from the village.

On the way down on foot from San Rocco to Punta Chiappa, along the path that runs along the western side of the promontory of Portofino, is the **CHURCH OF SAN NICOLÒ DI CAPODIMONTE**. A small church that is a precious example of Romanesque art. Attached to it is a monastery and a small nucleus of houses. Despite numerous misfortunes the church still has its original structure in stone, built according to tradition in the twelfth century. On the inside, amongst the frescoes that emerged during the restoration in 1925-26, there is a significant one - the oldest representation of the "*Stella Maris*": showing a boat in stormy sea saved by the Virgin with child in arms. The church is in a small square with a pebbled mosaic that was restored in 1971. It has only one nave, a square bell-tower and a perfectly intact apse.



Detail of the Apse of the church of San Nicolò di Capodimonte

On the other side of the mountain, along the coast at Santa Margherita, is the road that leads to **SAN LORENZO DELLA COSTA**, which is in a dominant, panoramic position. Its Parochial church, of Romanesque origins, goes back to the twelfth century. Of the mediaeval building only a few pieces remain - the foundations and the column bases that are preserved at the bottom of the church. The building has three naves. It is famous for its **FLEMING TRIPTYCH**, representing the *Martyrdom of Saint Andrew*, commissioned in 1499 in Bruges by a merchant called Andrea Della Costa.

2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli

Santa Margherita

A few kilometres from Portofino, between Santa Margherita and Paraggi, along the slopes of the park wrapped in dense vegetation is the **ABBEY OF SAN GEROLAMO DELLA CERVARA**. Originally built in the thirteen hundreds it was extended in the eighteen hundreds. The landscape around it was transformed too.

In 1361 when it was decided to build a new Monastery dedicated to Saint Gerolamo (St. Jerome), Cervara was built. The Benedictine Monks planned and built the structure in which they then lived for some time. However, during Humanism and Renaissance period, the monastery acquired great splendour in its architectural structure and square cloisters. The tower was built for defence from the much feared Saracens in the fifteen hundreds, and in the same Century the tower was used as a prison for Francis I, King of France.

The structure that we see today

is the result of renovation undertaken under the supervision of the " Soprintendenza ai Beni Ambientali e Architettonici" (Italian National Heritage Trust). It was then restored by the present owner. Its large vaulted halls are now used for congresses and other functions. There are also guided tours for the public.

Entering Santa Margherita one is immediately aware of the exclusive style and beauty of this town on the Riviera, with its hotels in Liberty style and it's elegant villas.

VILLA DURAZZO with its large park - today the property of the Municipality - is the heart of the town. The sumptuous fifteenth century building, built for the Marquis Gio Luca Durazzo, is situated in a panoramic position on the hills of San Giacomo di Corte, surrounded by a splendid terrace with a balustrade, and decorated by statues from the XVII and XVIII Centuries. The inside of the building is the prestigious representative seat



A pretty view of Santa Margherita

2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli



Villa Durazzo and its pebbled square

of the city. Spread out on four floors. It is possible to visit the rooms on the ground floor, amongst which are the beautiful green room, the dinning room of the Marquis Durazzo, and the apartments on the main floor. These are furnished with period furniture, and paintings by Genoese painters of the seventeenth century. The beautiful hall with stucco-work, and the Belvedere hall with its private chapel shouldn't be missed. The park has been subdivided into an Italian garden, English woods and a small citrus orchard. These are all enriched by mosaic lanes, statues and fountains.

Outside the villa in a scenic position that dominates the bay is the **CHURCH OF SAN GIACOMO DI CORTE**, with its imposing Baroque façade. The building is divided into three naves and contains eleven altars. On

Tourism, events and traditions

With more than one and a half million visitors annually, tourism is always the most important economic activity. Fishing is still practised, while the local artisans repair pleasure boats, and make bobbin lace. The tourist port has about 450 moorings spaces, 200 meters long protected in the south east by a pier. The wharf in the north is reserved for docking ferries that are used to take people on excursions to Portofino, San Fruttuoso, Camogli, Portovenere and the Cinque Terre.

The local gastronomy proposes fish dishes, which are always fresh having been caught by local fishermen, while local products of excellence are the olive oil and white wine.

Amongst the events held here are the Spring Feast - **Festa della Primavera** - at the end of March, **the National Competition for Figurative Painting** in August, and the **feast of the patron of Santa Margherita** on 20th July. Other feasts are: the feast of Our Lady of the Roses held on the fifth Sunday after Easter and the feast of San Giacomo - St. James - held on the last Sunday in July. Concerts, literary competitions and numerous other cultural events take place from time to time particularly in the summer.

the main altar, inside a priceless niche, is a wooden statue of the Madonna of

2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli

letters, about which a legend exists. It is said that in 1783, when a terrible earthquake devastated Messina, the statue of the Madonna, which was in the Port of that city, above a stele, fell into the sea. It began floating northwards, against the currents that were flowing south. In twenty days it got to the Gulf of Tigullio and then up to the port of Santa Margherita.

The **BASILICA OF SANTA MARGHERITA DI ANTIOCHIA** can be found at the historical centre of the town. The width is very noticeable, and on each side there is a bell tower. The church has the shape of a Latin cross, with three naves and a cupola. It dates back to the sixteen hundreds. Another significant example of a religious building is the **CHURCH OF CAPPUCINI**. It was built in the sixteen hundreds, and has a beautiful crucifix from the fifteen hundreds preserved within it. From a square that faces the sea the view of the whole of the Tigullio Gulf can be seen.

The **CASTLE** also faces the sea. This fortress was

built in 1550 after a decree of the Doge of Genoa to safeguard the city from the numerous incursions by pirates. It is a small

construction. The plan is rectangular with rounded corners and a tower positioned to the south west. The entrance is situated on the Northern side from where one can get di-

rectly to the hall in the main part of the building.

This room has a big central pillar and a vaulted ceiling. The building was recently renovated and is now used for cultural and artistic exhibitions.



Santa Margherita - The Sixteenth Century Castle



Santa Margherita - The Church of San Giacomo

2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli

Rapallo

From Santa Margherita, along the main road for Rapallo, passing Grand hotels dating back to the "good old days", one comes across the seaside village of **SAN MICHELE DI PAGANA**. In the **CHURCH OF SAN MICHELE** (St. Michael) there is a painting by Anton van Dyck, entitled *the Crucifix (Crocifisso)* with *St. Francis and St. Bernard and the gift bearers*.

On the cliffs behind the church, at Punta Pagana, there is a four sided **TOWER**, from the XVI Century. This is another construction that was built as a defence against Turkish Pirates, on this part of the coastline. The three bays - Travello, Prelo and Pomaro - used to be safe landing places in the western part of the gulf.

In order to stop the slow degradation of the fortress, the Fondo per l'Ambiente Italiano (National Environmental Trust), carried out restoration work in the nineteen eighties to save this important relic. The reason why this fortress was built by the inhabitants of San Michele, was the same as the one for which a fortress was built on the seafront in **RAPALLO** in 1550. From this point it is possible to begin a tour of the city, one of the main tourist centres in the Tigullio Gulf.

The **CASTELLO** (castle) is to be found on rocks that protrude into the sea near the elegant seafront called Vittorio Veneto. The fortress, which in the sixteen hundreds was used as the home of the Captain of the city, changed over time when it was extended and used for different purposes. It was a prison and then the office of the Financial Police. It was bought by the Municipality in 1959 and transformed into an exhibition centre. It was renovated again in 1997. In the heart of the city is the **CHURCH OF SANTO STEFANO** (Saint



A view of the coastline at San Michele di Pagana

Steven), the most important monument of the nucleus. According to tradition this was the first Christian temple of the district. It was renovated for the first time in the XVII century. The church is also called **ORATORIO DEI NERI**. On the side of the church is the **TORRE CIVICA** (Civic Tower), built in the middle of the fourteen hundreds as a symbol of the will for peace of the different political factions). In front of the tower is the **L'ORATORIO DELLA SS. TRINITÀ** (Oratory

2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli

Tourism, events and traditions

Rapallo is obviously a tourist location. It has many hotels, shops and services that can be offered to tourists. These include sports facilities and an important port. As in Portofino and Santa Margherita Ligure, a well known local craft based on bobbin lace making is a tradition that is practised by the local Ligurian School of lace making.

Typical gastronomic specialities of the Riviera are found here. These consist of fish dishes, excellent pasta and pesto, and various types of focaccia made with Olive Oil.

The **feast of the Patron - Our Lady of Montallegro**, is held on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of July. In January the fair of San Sebastiano is held, and in mid July and mid August a show called "**Palco sul Mare**" is held. This includes concerts, variety shows, musical events etc. and draws crowds to the sea front.

of the Holy Trinity) also called "dei Bianchi". The Civic Museum is to be found here and in it one can see a

collection of bobbin lace, Confraternity documents, Laws and Manuscripts of the Municipality, and many other historical and artistic materials. Amongst these are two wooden sculptures of the XV and XVI Centuries, some paintings and Maragliano's statue of Saint Sebastian.

Rapallo Cathedral is dedicated to the **SANTI GERVA-SIO E PROTASIO**. Its origins go back to the end of the IV Century but the present church with its neo-classic aspect was built in the XVII-XVIII Centuries. It was renovated and expanded and a cupola was added on in the Nineteen hundreds. The bell tower is slightly leaning. Apparently, when the builders of the bell tower got to the fifth floor during its erection, that took place in the mid seven-teen hundreds, the tower

Rapallo - The Castle on the sea front

2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli



Rapallo - A shop selling locally made lace and needlework

leaned by "4 palms and 7 inches".

Therefore, instead of taking it to 85 meters, they stopped at 67 meters. The **CHURCH DI SAN FRANCESCO** (St. Francis). Built in 1575, the church has four naves. There is a painting by Cambiaso on the Standard. There is also a canvas by Borzone that dates back to the sixteen hundreds, as well as some sculptures by Maragliano. To enter Rapallo in the past one had to go through one of five gates. Now, only one is left - the **PORTA DELLE SALINE** - built in the sixteen hundreds, with a Baroque niche towards the inside. In the south of the town is the **PONTE DI ANNIBALE** built in mediaeval times. Right from the XVII Century, the Noble Genoese families had chosen eastern Liguria for their holidays. They had placed buildings along the whole arch of the coast, that even today embellish the towns of the Riviera. In Rapallo, emblematic examples are **VILLA PORTICCILO** and **VILLA TIGULLIO**, which are part of the legacy of the Municipality. These

two villas are characterised by the elegance of their architecture and by the lavishness of their gardens and parks. Both occupy a panoramic position in front of the gulf of Rapallo in the direction of Zoagli, near the Casale Park just outside the historical centre of the town.

Villages and Monastery of Valle Christi

A few kilometres from the city of Rapallo, built on the sides of two valleys, which merge to form the Rio Bogo, are Santa Maria del Campo and San Massimo. Leaving Rapallo on the old Aurelia route that leads to Ruta, after passing Sant'Anna, there is a deviation to the right that takes one to the ruins of the **CHURCH OF SAN TOMMASO DEL POGGIO**. There are only a few walls in squared stone and a robust column with a base and capitals on which arches are supported. They were built to support the roof, and some windows. The little that remains

2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli



The Monastery ruins of Valle Christi at Rapallo

of the ancient building is, however, precious proof of the architectural style present in Mediaeval times, above all in Lunigiana, that can still be seen, even though rarely, in Liguria. According to the deeds of the church of San Tommaso, the church already existed in the first half of the 1100.

Going back to the main road, near Ponte Nuovo (new bridge) one will find the **PONTE MEDIEVALE** (medieval bridge) in an arch over the Santa Maria stream, and nearby is the deviation for San Massimo. In a flat area, immersed in a lush green of trees that are centuries old and lawns that are maintained by the Golf Club (that is right there), one can admire the ruins of the ancient **MONASTERY OF VALLE CHRISTI**. The female Cistercian monastery of Valle Christi was erected in 1204 in French Romanesque-Gothic style. It depended on San Salvatore di Cogorno - fief of the Fieschis. It then passed on to the Claisse nuns and was

under the jurisdiction of the parish of Ruta. Pope Paul III abolished it in 1535 after a decision of the Council of Trento that prohibited female monasteries outside inhabited centres.

The general style of the complex is Gothic Lombard strongly tied to the Romanesque traditions of construction. What remains of the church is the bell tower, the presbytery area and the ruins of the perimeter. The bell tower as it appears today is divided into three orders of suspended arches. In the first two, there are windows with embrasures, and in the third there is an elegant three-mullioned window with light coloured columns.

The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Montallegro

Situated in the hinterland of Rapallo, amongst the chestnut, oak, and beech woods, the sanctuary domi-

2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli

nates the whole Gulf Tigullio. It is 612 meters above sea level, and is on the watershed between the coastal side and the Fontanabuona valley. One can get there by road – a journey of 11 kilometres. This road continues to Coreglia. Alternatively, one can get to the Sanctuary on foot, following an old mule track for an hour and a half. It takes seven minutes using the cable car which leaves from the centre of Rapallo. The sanctuary was inaugurated in 1933, and has recently been renovated. According to the legend, the Sanctuary was erected on a place where on the 2nd of July 1557, the Virgin appeared to Giovanni Chichizola, a farmer from San Giacomo di Canevale, who was coming back to his house after a day's work in Genova.

The icon left behind at the scene of the apparition is perennial proof of the event. It depicts the transit of the Virgin in the presence of the Holy Trinity. The icon was brought to the

Parish church at Rapallo, but mysteriously it always found its way back to the mountain. Therefore, according to the wishes of the Bishop in 1558, the construction of the building began, and it was opened for worship the following year. In the eighteen hundreds the Sanctuary underwent some transformation. The apse was frescoed by Nicolò Barabino and the façade was designed by Luigi Rovelli, in neo Gothic style. In 1957, the bronze doors were fitted.

The sanctuary attracts numerous devotees and visitors and is the destination for excursionists. While walking along the avenue lined with holm-oaks, one is struck by the neo Gothic façade in black and white stripes. On the inside there is only one nave, and a chapel on each side, in which works of art are kept. Amongst these, on the inside of the choir, there is a fresco by Nicolò Barabino that represents the



The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Montallegro

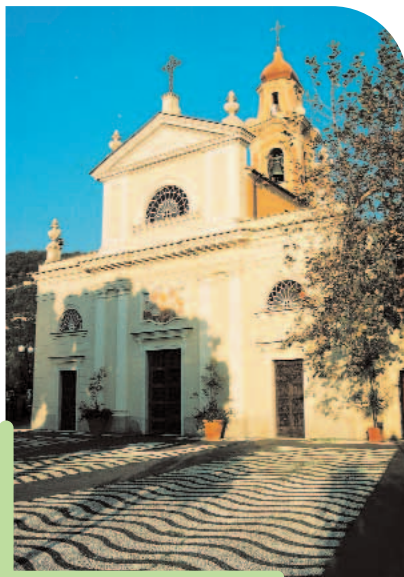
2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli

Apparition of the Virgin to the farmer, Giovanni Chichizola. The inside walls are covered in votive offerings, mainly of maritime inspiration, some of them valuable pieces of high quality. The oldest dates back to 1574 and commemorates a sailing ship escaping from a shipwreck in stormy sea, just outside Monterosso.

This was contested by some sailors from Ragusa (the present Dubrovnik, in Croatia) who claimed the icon as their property and took it back to their country. The picture however, continued to be found at the Sanctuary of Montallegro, where after a certain point it was no longer contested and has remained there until today.

Along the Aurelia road towards Zoagli

After passing Rapallo in the direction of Chiavari, one comes across various deviations along the Aurelia road, (Roman Road), leading to dif-



Sant'Ambrogio, on the hills above Zoagli

ferent hamlets, which offer enchanting panoramic routes.

The first leads to a village in the hills called **SANT'AMBROGIO** (St. Ambrose). It is the biggest hamlet in Zoagli, a large residential zone with a beautiful **PARISH CHURCH**.

Sant'Ambrogio - Panoramic square in front of the church



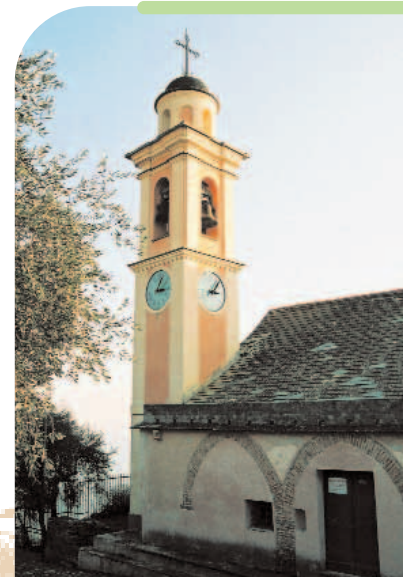
2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli

From the church square it is possible to see one of the best views of the whole area. A little further towards the old Roman road to the edge of the ford one comes across the beautiful **CHURCH OF SAN PANTALEO**, the oldest in the area that goes back to the XII Century and is in clear Romanesque style.

SEMORILE is in the centre of a small valley in the shape of an amphitheatre that surrounds Zoagli. It is a typical rural Ligurian village, that one can get to using the ancient mule track that skirts the western side.

SAN PIETRO DI ROVERETO, a hamlet that is more to the east, is on a cliff that drops straight to the sea. It was crossed by the Roman road and had been the seat of a military garrison at that time. There is a crematorial urn that today holds holy water in the **Parish Church**.

The main centre of **ZOAGLI** is enclosed in a small basin at the mouth of the Semorile stream. It



The Church of San Pantaleo

has a walkway carved out of the rocks by the sea that offers splendid views of the whole gulf from Portofino to Sestri Levante.

It was an important centre for the Romans at one time, but has more remote origins. On higher ground there is a fortress, built by the ancient inhabitants of the place. Zoagli was a feud of the Fieschi, counts of Lavagna, and together with Chiavari and Rapallo (XII Century), it then passed under the control of Genoa. During the first half of the fifteen hundreds, it suffered from the effects of the plague and the incursions of pirates. Therefore, as happened in other coastal villages in Liguria, Zoagli built two more lookout towers, at the two extreme ends of the village - one to the east and one to the west.

The **EASTERN SARACEN TOWER**, a little jewel set in rock, was modified over the centuries, until 1800 when



Zoagli - The eastern Saracen Tower

2. The Coast from S. Margherita to Zoagli

it assumed its present aspect. It has recently been renovated and is used for exhibitions and artistic-cultural meetings. The **WESTERN SARACEN TOWER** had a building constructed next to it that was used to host the garrison dedicated to controlling the plague. Today, it has been turned into a luxury residence, and is one of a group of historical Patrician villas, of Genoese Nobles, that are of high artistic value, and noted for their beauty.

The **PARISH CHURCH of SAN MARTINO** (St. Martin) that was built in 1725 and renovated after the second world war, houses two wooden groups of sculptures, attributed to the Maragliano school, in addition to frescos from the XIX Century.

The **PROMENADE ALONG THE SEA KNOWN AS CANEVARO**, offers an enchanting walk amongst the rocks and the narrow paths that lead to the sea. It extends on the two sides of the central beach, and is safe to walk along even in the winter, when the beaches often cannot be used. The sea bed around Zoagli is particularly adept to underwater exploration. Besides the beauty of the inlet, with its various types of fauna and marine flora, the Statue of Our Lady of the Sea is to be admired. It was sculpted by Marian Hastianatte and placed in the sea in August 1996 in the bay next to the central beach.

Zoagli is also well known for its handmade silk velvet fashioned on antique handlooms, particularly because it is embossed silk. Traditional palm designs are often used to decorate materials, just as artisans in the past used to do. The making of these textiles originated in the XIII century and was developed particularly between 1400-1600.

Continuing the journey along the sea towards Chiavari, one comes across the **CASTLE-VILLA** of the writer and playwright **SEM BENELLI** and then the **SANCTUARY OF THE MADONNA DELLE GRAZIE**, a little church that is to be found on the hills.



Zoagli - Part of the walkway along the sea

3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland

Chiavari

Chiavari is a coastal city that has spread out on the flat land between the Entella River, and an ample valley leading inland. It is an attractive tourist town and commercial centre, its principal activities being residential and tertiary. It also has rich antique traditions. It has a favourable position at the meeting point of the Lavagna, Sturla and Graveglia rivers, which guarantees easy communication with the Padano area. Right from Medieval times during Genoese dominion, it had a strategic and commercial role of primary importance.

The history of Chiavari goes back to at least eight centuries before Christ, and is intertwined with the history of the Etruscans. This is proved by the remains of the necropolis that have been found immediately inside the plain of the Entella river by professor Nino Lamboglia, a great scholar of Ligurian history. Various objects in cast iron and bronze and pieces of amber, found in rich tombs in enclosed burial sites, as well as other pre Roman remains, are to be found in the **MUSEO ARCHAEOLOGICAL DI PALAZZO ROCCA**. The Museum merits a visit.

The exploration of Chiavari can without doubt begin in its historical centre. The famous **"CARRUGGIO DRITTO"** Via Martiri della Liberazione, is the street with arches and arcades with clear medieval style. Sandstone and slate and the decor in Genoese stile, give the road - a favourite walking place - its distinctive aspect. Elegant and exclusive specialist shops



Chiavari - The "Carruggio Dritto"

and boutiques add to its particular character.

From the "carruggio" (narrow lane) one can reach the **VIA RIVAROLA AND VIA RAVASCHIERI** which are parallel to the central street and boast some of buildings of the city. The most significant building is Palazzo Rocca, built in 1629. At the start it was known for its pureness in line and style and later was extended and transformed with various decorations. The park that surrounds it is also interesting to visit.

In via Ravaschieri the building which belongs to the Ravaschieri family is also of importance as the seat of the **ECONOMIC SOCIETY**. On this street is also: The Cultural Association - a place in which many debates and exhibitions are held, which has a very good library; The renaissance museum with its picture gallery. In the adjacent **PIAZZA FENICE**, is perhaps the

3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland



The Building of the Black Porticoes

most beautiful building in the historical centre - the **PALAZZO DEI PORTICI NERI** - the building with the black arches - built in the fifteenth Century, and today completely restructured.

In the other central square in Chiavari, **PIAZZA MAZZINI** - also known

Piazza Mazzini and its market



Tourism, events and traditions

Chiavari has always been a commercial centre, and over the years, it has become more and more important. It has also grown as a tourist port and because of its bathing establishments. Given that it has facilities to cover both port services and tourist requirements, Chiavari has become one of the most frequented tourist localities on the Ligurian Riviera. In Chiavari artisans craftwork still exists. A particular type of chair, and macramé lace can be admired together with numerous other pieces of furniture and antique objects in the characteristic **market** that is held every second weeked on the streets in the centre. The **Feast of the patron - Nostra Signora dell'Orto**, is held on the first three days of July. The **Sant'Antonio fair** in January is also an important event. Local gastronomy is typical of other localities in eastern Liguria - with specialties based on fish and also a great variety of seasonal fruit and vegetables. Farinata is a must. It is prepared every day in several typical eateries in the historic centre. Vegetables dominate the other dishes with "capon magro", the various savoury pies, the ravioli fillings, the ever present cima, and naturally, pesto. Chiavari is also famous for two types of handmade chocolate, which should be mentioned because of a long existing tradition - they are "Caruggetti" and "Sorrisi". The former are solid chocolate and hazelnuts, while the latter have rum in the centre.

3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland



A corner of Via Rivorola

as market square, because of the fruit and vegetable stalls that are to be found there every morning - is the beautiful **PALAZZO TORRIGLIA**. Behind the law courts (**PALAZZO DI GIUSTIZIA**) a building that goes back to 1404, but was renovated at the end of the eighteen hundreds - with mullioned windows and battlements - is the **TORRE DELLA CITTADELLA**. It is a tower of great architectural prestige, built in 1505. The Municipality building, that has recently been restored, faces the **N.S. DELL'ORTO SQUARE**, where the **CATHEDRAL** stands. It was built in 1623-1624 and was transformed in the eighteen hundreds. It had a neo-classical portico added to the façade in 1907. On the inside of the cathedral you will find the main alter built in 1624 and various canvases from the sixteen hundreds.

The oldest church in the city is the **SAN**

GIACOMO DI RUPINARO, which was first built in the seventh century and was rebuilt in 1300.

Also in the historic centre, is the **CHURCH OF SAN GIOVANNI BATTISTA** that goes back to 1182.

The Baroque features that were added on between 1624-1628 can be noted. Inside, there is a wooden Crucifix carved by Maragliano. The **CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO** has been deconsecrated and is now used as an exhibition centre. The cupola and the bell tower are from the seventeen hundreds. The church together with Piazza Matteotti which it faces, are amongst the most interesting buildings in the city.



The Church of San Francesco

3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland

Chiavari is also the city of large villas. All of Corso Millo up to Piazza del Popolo shows a concentration of styles which include Liberty, and Classic Ligurian. In Piazza del Popolo is **VILLA OTTONE**.



One of the villas on Corso Millo

Leivi and the Foot Path to the Five Towers

Between Chiavari and Val Fontana Buona is the Rupinaro valley. It is a hilly area used for olive and grape cultivation. Leivi is in this area. It is made up of several small hamlets that are famous for their production of olive oil. This is backwater countryside and the sea often dominates the landscape.

One as can be seen in the panoramic areas of rare beauty found here, particularly when going from San Pier di Canne, to Leivi. The road, which runs in a circle, touches San Terenziano, arrives at the Bocco, goes past the hamlets of San Rufino, San Bartolomeo and Curlo and then back

to the ring road at Chiavari.

Along the road, besides the view of the Gulf, one can also admire the natural beauty of the area, and the wonderful landscape. One can see parts of the Graveglia, and the Fontanabuona valleys, and the main mountains in the area. (Mounts: Porcile, Zatta, Penna, Aiona and Ramaceto).

It is also possible to take this route on foot thanks to the "**PATH OF THE FIVE TOWERS**" so named, because while walking one comes across one mediaeval tower and four bell towers.

The itinerary which takes three and a half hours, follows an old abandoned path, cleaned and cleared in 1998. For this walk you set off from the centre of Chiavari, going from the "Carruggio" to the road that leads to the Castle and



Leivi - The Church of San Bartolomeo

3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland



Panoramic view of the hills of Leivi

from there following an old mule track going uphill. The first bell tower (which isn't one of the five), belongs to the Ri Alto church which is in the municipality of Chiavari. Following the Ri lookout tower we come across the first of the five bell-towers within the municipality of Leivi which belongs to the **CHURCH OF SAN TOMMASO DEL CURLO**. The oldest deeds of this building, which was substantially renovated in 1600, go back to the XII century.

There are now two ways to proceed: continue on the northern side, crossing some beautiful chestnut woods with a view of the Graveglia valley and Sestri Levante, or continue on the southern side with an open view of the Gulf of Tigullio. Both paths arrive at the second bell tower of the **CHURCH OF SAN BARTOLOMEO**, formerly known as San Michele, with its characteristic church square decorated with

colourful pebbles. The old name, linked to the Longobard cult, indicates that this church is very old.

Continuing in a westerly direction we find the third tower in Leivi: It is an old military lookout tower, which is the symbol of the town. At the side is the fourth bell tower of the **PARISH CHURCH OF SAN RUFINO**. This tower is in a dominant position on the ridge of the hill, one of the principal centres of the economic and social life of Leivi. Despite its repainting and restoration between the 600's and 700's, the imposing structure of the church has never changed.

After a short stretch on a tarred road, one gets to the Bocco, which then proceeds to San Colombano Certenoli, and Fontanabuona. The path crosses the old village of Leivi, which is a centre of well renovated buildings, and arrives at the last bell tower - that of the **CHURCH OF SAN LORENZO**

3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland

- the oldest church of Leivi, that belonged to the Dioceses of Milan, at one time.

From here the return journey begins crossing woods until Maxena. After going down a few steps, one gets to San Pier di Canne, and then after a half-hour walk the journey ends in the centre of Chiavari.

Lavagna

Situated on the delta to the left of the river Entella, Lavagna forms a single town with Chiavari, which extends on the right of the river. The river forms the boundary that separates the municipalities of Chiavari and Lavagna.

The coastal and inland area with interesting itineraries leading from the sea to the hills, is the most important attraction for tourists who visit

Lavagna. Together with Cavi, Lavagna has the biggest sandy beaches in western Liguria. It is well known that Lavagna has an old tradition of cutting and working slate that was most probably carried out from Roman times or even before that.

The city was in open conflict with Genoa until 1198, the year in which the Fieschi family gave up the territory to the municipality, becoming citizens and participating in the same political ups and downs of the city. Two Popes, Pope Innocent IV, and Pope Adrian V, 72 cardinals, and several admirals, army leaders, and scholars came from the Fieschi family. The fortunes of the powerful family came to an end in 1547, when Gian Luigi Fieschi was killed in Genoa during a conspiracy against Andrea Doria.

Lavagna has many examples of mediaeval buildings in the beautiful historical centre such as arcades supported by solid columns with carved capitals. It is not difficult to find archi-



Lavagna -
The Basilica
of Santo Stefano

3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland

Tourism, events and traditions

Lavagna offers very good Tourist accommodation, and other facilities. There are numerous hotels, residences, shops, bars, and restaurants, which make up the main economic resource of the city. The tourist port is one of the biggest in the Mediterranean, and is protected by a pier running parallel to the coast, and extending for more than one kilometre protects it. This has moorings for over 1600 boats, and also offers different types of modern services land side. To commemorate its illustrious past, the famous feast known as the **Torta dei Fieschi** is held on 14th August each year. People dress up in costumes, and a grand historical procession is held. There is also a tournament between knights. In Piazza Vittorio Veneto slices of a gigantic cake are handed out. This weighs about 1 ton and is made by master confectioners in Lavagna. The cake is distributed during a game; everybody can buy one or more tickets - pink for women and blue for men. All the participants have to find their soul mate who is carrying exactly the same ticket as his or hers, and together they can go and collect a piece of cake. The celebration recalls the magnificent wedding of Count Opizzo Fieschi and the Sieneese Countess Bianca dei Bianchi, that took place in 1230, and was followed by many people with the distribution of slices of an enormous cake.

Other events are the feast of the patron saint Santo Stefano, which is held on the first Sunday in August, the feast dedicated to Our Lady of Carmine on 16th July, also a walnut festival in September and the San Simone fair in October.

traves from the seventeen hundreds and doorways from the fourteen hundreds emboldened by antique inscriptions. In the middle of the town centre, between Via XX Settembre and Via Cavour, there is a **SARACEN TOWER** - a lookout tower built in the fifteen fifteenth hundreds. This was often linked to the Fieschi family. Over the centuries it has been used for many different purposes - even a home - and nowadays after its restoration, it is used as a museum. Concerts and exhibitions are also organised in its small Genoese Garden.

The **BASILICA OF SANTO STEFANO** is worth a mention. It was built in 1653 on the site of the former parish church built in 994, which

Lavagna - The Saracen tower



3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland

covered a large area. The Basilica has an elegant façade, with a bell-tower on each side, and wide steps leading up to it. On the inside it is possible to see rich Baroque decoration, a canvas of the Crucifixion painted by Francesco Piola, and finally the Black Crucifix – a reproduction of the sacred image of St. Luke.

The **CHURCH OF NOSTRA SIGNORA DEL CARMINE** (Our Lady of Carmine) built in 1631 and since renovated, is without doubt the most loved in the town, mainly by fishermen and sailors, who have left their votive. This church is also in the historical centre, and its cloisters are used as the local library.

The **CHURCH OF SANTA GIULIA CENTAURA** dates back to 1654. It is reached from Lavagna by following directions for a little village, also called Lavagna, situated on one of the most beautiful hills in the whole Levante area. On the inside of the church, there is a Byzantine

wooden crucifix and in the nearby oratory, there is a polyptych of the XVI century. The church square decorated in pebble mosaic is particularly beautiful.

Cogorno, feud of the Fieschi

Near one of the bridges that connects Lavagna and Chiavari, on the road that leads to San Salvatore dei Fieschi, is the **CHURCH OF MADONNA DEL PONTE**. It was built in the fourteen hundreds but later renovated. It has a contemporary fresco on the façade and a valuable baptismal font on the inside. It was named **PONTE DELLA MADDALENA** because of the XIII century bridge built by the Fieschis between the two villages.

COGORNO has its origins in pre Roman times. It is made up of the village on the panoramic hills and the centre of San Salvatore dei Fieschi, where the Municipality can be found.



Lavagna - A partial view of the historical centre from the Basilica square

3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland



The hills of Cogorno, with a view of the Gulf of Tigullio

The Lavagna motorway junction point is not far away.

Cogorno is surrounded by beautiful countryside that rises to the top of Mount San Giacomo. This has been terraced in typical Ligurian style, held up by walls that have been patiently built with chipped stones. For centuries olive trees have been cultivated here. Apart from San Salvatore, the municipality includes the hamlets of Breccanecca, San Colombano della Costa, and Monticelli. The paths and the hill roads that lead to these areas offer the most

beautiful views. The **PARISH CHURCH OF SAN LORENZO** at Cogorno, that has a beautiful polyptych and the **CHURCH OF SAN COLOMBANO DELLA COSTA** should be seen. The latter, was first constructed by the Monks from the Monastery of San Colombano di Bobbio, in the high mediaeval period. Finally, the **CHURCH OF BRECCANECCA** deserves a mention.

It goes back to the XIII Century, and is situated at the top of a hill in a panoramic position.

The most important buildings in the area however, are in the village of San



Olive groves on the terraces at Breccanecca

3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland



The San Salvatore dei Fieschi buildings

Salvatore, and make up the mediaeval complex of the Basilica of the Fieschi, which has been declared a national monument. It is the most important architectural structure from mediaeval times left in the area. From a narrow road through the village one reaches a pretty yet irregular shaped square. The area that surrounds the monument, is framed by olive trees, gardens, and small houses hidden in the green which follows a clear Mediaeval plan. The surface of the square has been covered with a mosaic of stones from the river. On one side of the square is the **BASILICA DEI FIESCHI** (see the article on page 36). This is typical of Ligurian Romanesque-Gothic architecture - severe and functional. Almost in front of the church, on an area raised by a few steps, is another church, tall and narrow, clearly dating to the seventeen. This is the **CHURCH OF SAN SALVA-**

TORRE IL VECCHIO, so named because it was built on a previous building site, which existed before the famous basilica.

The Church of San Salvatore "il vecchio"



3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland

To the side, is the **PALAZZO DEI FIESCHI**. This belonged to the family who had the monumental church constructed. Probably contemporary to the church, the residence is built on two floors. It has a façade in black and white - stripes of white marble and black slate, and a loggia with two arches, which rest on a central column. On the façade of the upper floor, elegant "quadrifore" (four arched) windows in marble, with slender columns and capitals, complete the courtly residence.

This piece of the medieval world, which has remained unchanged over time, becomes animated in the month of August by the so called "Fliscane Feasts". On the 13th, day before the feast of the Fieschi Cake in Lavagna, a large number of people in costume, dancers, soldiers, flag wavers, and men on horseback,



The Fieschi building

celebrate the stag night, *L'addiu du fantin*, of Count Opizzo Fieschi, destined to wed Bianca de' Bianchi of Lavagna. At the end of the month on the hills of Cogorno, there is a new remembrance - the newly weds return to their courtly residence, and during the feast (strictly in period costume) artists and artisans of the era exhibit works of art in the court of trades.

Itineraries and areas



3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland

Guide to the Basilica of San Salvatore dei Fieschi



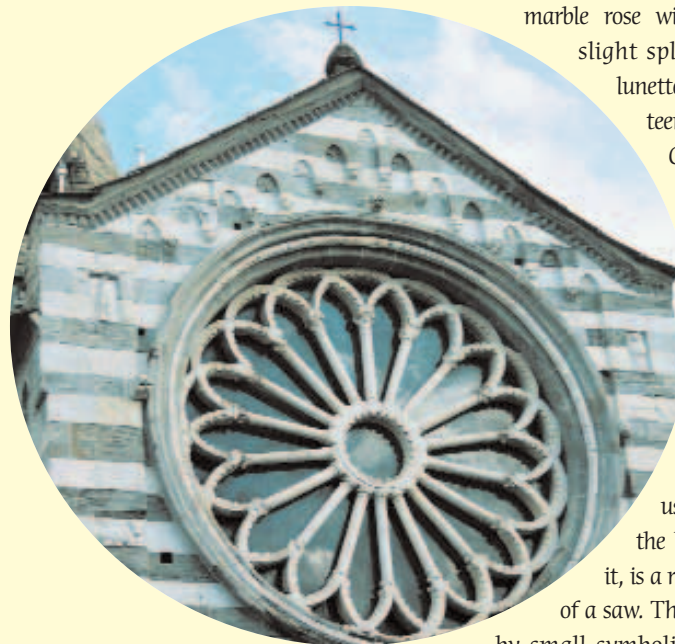
master masons who had been working in Genoa for more than a century on stone buildings. An inscription on the doorway records this event. The Basilica was given important privileges, and above all many estates were annexed to it. In this way, not only was it a warning for the emperor, but also for Genoa, which, with the extension of its law in this area of Levante, threatened the estates of the Fieschi, counts of Lavagna.

The layout of the church of San Salvatore, is that of a Basilica, with three naves. The apse with a structure of three quadrangular chapels forms one of the most original and interesting elements of the building. The entire rear part reveals a vertical emphasis, with walls that rise above the apse, but it is weighed down by the powerful bulk of the tower, which rises from the centre of the Basilica, at the point where the naves cross. The internal division of the bays is characteristic of Romanesque architecture, with rectangular naves. Six rounded columns sustain the central one. The façade is made up of alternate white and black stripes. Under the sloping roof is the traditional cornice of suspended arches, which continue all around the perimeter. The central part has a beautiful

The History of the Basilica of San Salvatore is tied to the struggle between Emperor Federico II of Svevia and Pope Innocenzo IV around the mid twelve hundreds. In 1245 Federico II, in order to take revenge for being excommunicated by the Pope, had the estates of the Fieschi at San Salvatore plundered, the Maddalena Bridge over the Entella River destroyed, and Lavagna set on fire. On the ruins of San Salvatore, Pope Innocent IV and his nephew Ottobono Fieschi, future Pope Adriano V, ordered the laying of the foundations of the Basilica. Work began in the same year and terminated in 1252. It was built by "ma-gistri antelami",

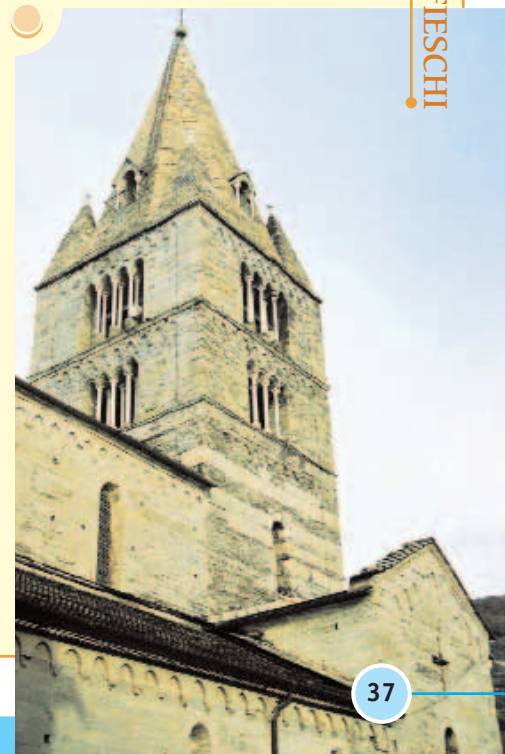


3. Chiavari, Lavagna and their hinterland



marble rose window. The doorway has a slight splay of six small columns with a lunette. This was decorated in the fourteenth hundreds by a fresco figuring Christ on the cross, the Madonna, Saint John and Sinibaldo and Ottobono Fieschi. On the façade, instead of the usual two side doors, two pilasters and two polygonal windows announce the presence of the three naves in the church. The cornice decoration of arches, even though more simplified, is used under the roof and again on the bell tower. On the façade above it, is a row of stones placed like the teeth of a saw. The cornice is richly decorated by small symbolic marble statues representing

human heads and figures, that appear on the inside of the arches, as well as on the corbels. The feature, which confirms the grand Romanesque influence of the Basilica of San Salvatore is without doubt the mighty bell tower. It has a square floor plan, and is built on two floors, lit up by elegant "quadrifore" (four arched) windows with paired columns, culminating in a high cusp with an octagonal base. On the corners of these are four big pinnacles. On the inside, the naves are subdivided by three columns on which the "sferocubico" capitals rest. This is a feature that is particular to, and frequently used in the Genoese area. Some have smooth surfaces and others have an ornamental groove. These hold up the arches upon which the walls that extend to the roof rest. The covering, partly renovated - using a Genoese architectural technique of the XII Century - is done partly in wood and partly in stone. The central nave is covered with a wooden trussed ceiling with moulded beams and varnished boards of wood, that extend over the lateral naves. The presbytery and the apse are covered by a cross vault. The minor apses have simple barrel vaults.



4. The Fontanabuona Valley



The beginning of Fontanabuona Valley with the Lavagna river and Carasco

The Fontanabuona valley runs along the Lavagna River, leaving from the centre of Carasco. It winds its way for more than twenty-five kilometres through a succession of small and big villages. The State road n. 225 is the main artery and follows this water course, running parallel to it. From this road, other provincial or less important roads radiate to places higher up the mountains. In the following three paragraphs, that describe the main places of historical and artistic interest, and also places of interest with regard to their landscape or naturalistic features, the places at the base of the valley will be examined first. Following this the roads that lead off from here, to the right towards mountain passes that lead to the Padana Valley, as well as those on the left that go to Genoa or the mount of Portofino will be looked at.

The Valley bed from Carasco to Gattorna

CARASCO, which is further inland from Chiavari, is the natural access to the Graveglia, Sturla and Fontanabuona valleys.

Carasco in old Ligurian meant "head of the water course". The village is at the meeting point of the Lavagna and Sturla rivers. The old bridge that connected Chiavari to the valleys, which were fundamental for commerce with Lombardy, was the centre of attraction in the original nucleus of the village and was already populated in Roman times. The bridge was destroyed many times by frequent flooding, but was totally rebuilt in stone at the end of the XVII Century.

Amongst the interesting sites, are the ruins of the castle on the hills of Paggi, dating back to the fifth Century. It

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used to be part of the defence system of the territory of Garibaldi. Another testimony to the strategic position of Carasco is the fortification at Rivarola erected by the Genoese in the XII century. It was in the heart of the Fieschi estates, built in order to contrast to the excessive lifestyle of the Lords of Lavagna. The castle, in the centre of a big bend formed by the river, ceased to be garrisoned and fell into ruins. Today there are only the ruins of the surrounding wall left.

The **PRIORY OF SANT'EUFEMIANO DI GRAVEGLIA** built before the year 1000 by monks from the powerful Monastery of San Colombano di Bobbio is an important building. The present building, in which the ashes of the Saint are kept, was rebuilt in 1866.

The Monks of San Colombano also built the **CHURCH AND THE CONVENT OF SAN MARZIANO MARTIRE**. There is some trace of this old church which was destroyed several times by the floods caused by the Lavagna river in the XVII century, in a farmhouse that is on

the banks of the river, not far away. The church was then rebuilt in 1705, and today it is in the middle of Carasco.

Apart from the settlement from which it takes its name, the Municipality also includes the hamlets of **SANTA MARIA** and **SAN PIETRO DI STURLA** which have two very pretty churches situated respectively on the right and left banks of the river.

Following on, one comes across the territory of **SAN COLOMBANO CERTENOLI** divided into many hamlets and localities, some of which are in the Fontanabuona valley, while others are in the adjacent Cicana Valley. It also got its name because of the Monastery of San Colombano, founded by the Benedictine monks who came from Bobbio. Many hamlets were built and developed because of these monks. As proof of how old the settlement is, in places such as Romaggi, Camposasco, Certenoli and Cichero, the churches are all mediaeval. However, all of them have been altered during the centuries that followed. A church that merits being



The Rivarola hill in Carasco

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seen, is the **SANCTUARY OF NOSTRA SIGNORA DELLA GUARDIA** at **SAN MARTINO DEL MONTE**, in a panoramic position over the whole valley, which can be reached by deviating from the main road and driving for three kilometres.

At **CALVARI** a fair called "Expo Fontanabuona" has been held every year since 1982. Artisans, Agriculturists and tourism related businesses from eastern Liguria, exhibit at this fair. People from the valleys and places along the coast, take part. Staying on the state road from Calvari and carrying on for a few kilometres, one gets to the basin between Pianezza and **MONLEONE**, a focal centre of the valley economy. As a consequence of the town growth and development in the lower part of the valley, Monleone has now become an overspill of Cicagna. There is an uninterrupted line of houses built along both sides of the road until the main town of the province.

CICAGNA is the most populated town in the valley. It has always been the reference point for the social life

and commercial exchanges of the whole district. The centre of the town is very old. It increased its administrative importance in 1815 after the annexation of Liguria to the State of Savoy. In 1848, Giuseppe Garibaldi was elected to the Subalpine Parliament in this very constituency. In the historical centre the silent "caruggi" (lanes) merit a visit. In particular the one of the "posta vecchia" and the lane that runs from the bridge towards the church. Both start from Piazza Garibaldi, which has been the heart of Cicagna from the end of the eighteen hundreds. Several old buildings with frescos on them are proof of this.

The **BELL-TOWER** in **SAN GIOVANNI**, which is isolated in the square, is the most significant monument, to survive after the old church was demolished. In 1993 it was renovated and this brought to light its primitive Romanesque structure, attributed to the same Lombard school responsible for other buildings in Eastern Liguria and the Genoese area. There is a great contrast between the elegance of the

Cicagna - A view of the centre and of Ponte Vecchio



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old tower and the imposing mass of the **SANCTUARY OF THE MADONNA DEI MIRACOLI**. The Sanctuary is a well-known centre of devotion and a destination for pilgrimages made by the descendants of emigrants.

Cicagna is well known for the extraction and working of slate. The antique works in the Chiapparino locality are one of the most interesting stops in the **ECOMUSEO DELL'ARDESIA** trails. It is an industrial structure built at the end of the eighteen hundreds. It is now used as an exhibition site where one can see all the present uses of the "pria negra" (black stone). Blackboards for schools, billiard tables, windowsills, clocks and kitchenware are made from it. In the Town Council hall, one can admire the bass reliefs in slate by the Ital-Peruvian sculptor, Vittorio Tollo Mazzola. These illustrate the history of the Municipality. **PALAZZO CAVAGNARI**, a beautiful eighteenth century building, is the seat of the Fontanabuona Mountain Community. Leaving Cicagna, the road still follows the tortuous course of the Lavagna River, that brings one to **FERRANDA**, a town at the foot of the Moconesi mountainside. The **CHURCH OF SANT'ANNA**, the oldest Baroque church at the base of the valley, has a narrow bell tower at its side, with an unusual layered surface.

GATTORNA is to be found at the confluence of the river Lavagna and the river Neirone. The locality is a centre of great tradition in the field of handcrafted toys. From here, during the last century, the inhabitants used to emigrate to France, Germany and Holland, where they used to go to sell toys at fairs and on the roadsides of the towns. Amongst these was Luigi Bas-



Cicagna - The San Giovanni bell-tower

so, who after the second world war began to manufacture toys created by him with salvaged materials, and then sell them all over Europe. His firm exists even today, side by side with many others that have come up since.

Itineraries in the direction of the sea: Lumarzo, Uscio and Tribogna

From Gattorna, the itinerary along the valley floor (besides going towards the north to Neirone), splits into two directions: The first arrives at the coast at Recco, passing the territory of the Municipality of Uscio. The second

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continues to run alongside the Lavagna river for a few kilometres and arrives at Lumarzo, and then goes across the hills of Bargalla and into the Bisagno valley and to Genoa. Following the second alternative, one gets to the Municipality of **LUMARZO** which is made up of different hamlets spread around in prevalently wooded areas, where chestnut and olive trees dominate the landscape. On the watershed between Val Fontanabuona and the Recco Valley, near the hamlet of Pannesi, is the **SANCTUARY OF NOSTRA SIGNORA DEL BOSCO**. It was erected in the XVI century, probably on a pre-existing construction, at a spot where according to tradition, the Madonna appeared to a deaf and dumb person, who after the event, was miraculously able to speak. The sanctuary - one of the most visited in the province of Genoa - has been provided with facilities which were developed on the occasion of its jubilee in 2000.

Using the first of the two deviations indicated at Gattorna, and driving about 10 kilometres, one gets to the little village of **Uscio**, after ten kilometres. It is an ancient settlement. The centre of the village is dominated by the Romanesque **PARISH CHURCH OF SANT'AMBROGIO**, proof that the church depended for centuries on the diocese of Milan. The building, dating back to the XI century, has three naves and a beautiful wooden ceiling. Above the altar is a beautiful



Uscio - The Parish Church of Sant'Ambrogio

polychromatic cross that dates to the fourteen hundreds.

Continuing along the road one gets to **AVEGNO**, a Municipality that became independent from Uscio only in 1797. It is made up of several hamlets spread out on the banks of the river for its foundry which makes church bells. The **CHURCH OF SANTA MARGHERITA** in the Testana locality has a wooden altarpiece that depicts the story of the Passion, and is attributed to the Flemish School of the XVI century.

TRIBOGNA is another centre of the upper Fontanabuona valley at the foot of Mount Borgo. Beyond Tribogna, after crossing the higher parts of the Recco valley, those who come from

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Tribogna - The bas-relief in slate of the Municipal Building

the inland areas can reach the sea.

Tribogna is one of the slate capitals which, for yearhas been an irreplaceable resource. For this reason, on the sides of the balcony of the **PALAZZO MUNICIPALE**, there is a 26 panel relief in slate which illustrates the history of the village, transfigured in a sort of nowadays mythology. Seasons, religious feasts, and local history fuse together in a gracious and suggestive representation. In the Avegno locality is the quarry theatre of Mount Tuggio, one of the most spectacular stops of the Slate Eco museum trails. Centuries of work to extract slate has carved a type of amphitheatre on the rocky surface with the large steps formed by square blocks cut by machinery in the last century.

COREGLIA, on the southern ridge of the valley, is a village that has very few inhabitants. It is on the slopes of Mount Pegge. The road to the Crocetta (little cross), climbs upwards, past terraces, vegetable gardens and orchards but it never crosses a real village because Coreglia does not

have a historical centre but many small nuclei, or individual houses spread out on the slopes, like the typical structure of a "transit station". On the first Sunday in August, in the hamlet of Canevale, a statue of the patron - San Giacomo (Saint James) - depicted on horseback while fighting the Moors - is the object of a very festive procession, which is most impressive.

Towards the Padana Plains: Neirone, Lorsica and Orero

In the upper Fontanabuona valley between Lumarzo and Gattorna, the first of the secondary valleys leading towards the North opens up. This route leads towards the Trebbia valley, the Pavia area, and the Padana plains. Neirone, Corsiglia and Roccatagliata indicate the direction of an important road, as well as a scenic route.

At **NEIRONE**, a village on the hills, there is a Parish church called San Maurizio, which has a beautiful square

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in front of it which faces the valley.

ROCCATAGLIATA is to be found almost on the summit of the Appenines spine and is built on the summit of a steep rocky spur. The nucleus of the village, which is of medieval origin and a Fieschi stronghold was developed all around the castle. The castle was built before the tenth Century, and was the base of feudal administration and later passed on to the Fieschi family who used it as an outpost for defence against the government of the Republic. From the plans, parts of the tower and the walls are still legible.

SAN MARCO D'URRI is a parish formed by the hamlets of Lazeruola and Bozzola, and it can be reached from Roccatagliata and from Neirone along the path on Mount Carena, or

in mountain vegetation and conifer woods. There is also the **CHURCH OF SAN MARTINO DEL VENTO**. It is situated in the Tasso locality. The building has Romanesque characteristics and existed in 1240 but some say that its foundations were laid before the end of the first century. Its shape is basic, its lines are simple, and its low roof like one of a simple dwelling, with a stumpy bell tower on top, expresses the austerity of the primitive Christian religion.

Other itineraries go upwards from the state road towards the north across the secondary valleys: the first begins at Monleone and running along the basin of the Malvaro, gets to towns like Lorsica and Favale, and across the Scoglina pass, to the Trebbia valley. The second goes up the various

ridges of Mount Ramaceto and crossing the ridge of the Ventarola pass descends into the d'Aveto Valley. On the first journey, the road runs along an ancient route, that used to connect numerous mills that were fed by the water from the nearby river. One comes across

VERZI, agglomerates spread

out on different terraces, and **FIGAROLO**, famous at the time for its castle. It has a curious church, **SAN TEREZIANO**, fruit of numerous additions, that testify the Romanesque phase. **LORSICA**, a

4. The Fontanabuona Valley

settlement on the slopes of the mountains is famous for the production of precious fabrics in silk which in the past adorned the homes of Genoese nobles.

Nowadays only one firm produces the damasks and fabric for Macramè, which still owns more than three hundred designs from the XVI Century to be used when making the fabrics.

The centre of **FAVALE DI MALVARO**, a typically agricultural settlement in which stock raising has always flourished, is very well kept. Here it is possible to see how materials such as slate and rocks from the local mountains, which have been cut into square blocks, are used as the corner stones of most of the buildings. The **PARISH CHURCH OF SAN VINCENZO**, from the XVII Century, dominates the town.

The first of the itineraries leading to Mount Ramaceto from the bottom of the valley, climbs upwards from Pianezza and arrives at a locality called **ORERO**. This little centre has been important since ancient times, because it was a place of transit between Piacenza and the Riviera. The route used to pass the "Via del Pane e del Sale" (the bread and salt road). Even today on this road it is possible to see some paved stretches left over from Roman times, that were used by mule-drivers who loaded their mules with oil and salt in Rapallo, and off-load these at Piacenza, where they loaded up with cheese and wheat for their return journey.



A view of the little village of Lorsica

A second deviation near Pian dei Ratti rises towards Soglio and Casareggio. In this case too the route is very old and as proof of its age, there is the **CHAPEL OF SAINTS NAZARIO AND CELSO**, which is immersed in undergrowth in the hamlet of **CANAUS-SA** and half hidden by the vegetation. It is one of the few examples that still exist in Liguria, work of the two saints who arrived in the region in the year 78 AD. The chapel was used until 1800. It was then transformed into a barn after the construction of the larger church of Casareggio.

The third and last itinerary originates at Calvari and going up past the little village of Frigale, it gets to the village of **ROMAGGI**. The mediaeval nucleus leans against the **CASTELLO**. The houses, which nowadays are almost all uninhabited, still have the square stones, which were characteristic of the first settlements that sprung up. Of the Castle, only the base of the surrounding wall still exists, while the only part that is still inhabited of the village has a small triangular area with the **BAROQUE CHURCH OF SAN MICHELE** in it.



The little church of San Martino del Vento in upper Fontanabuona

by road, by climbing from Ognio. At San Marco there is a church known by the same name, that was erected in 1603, but is very much prettier, probably due to the fact that it is immersed

5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys

The Graveglia Valley route from Ne to Reppia

The vast territory of the Graveglia valley coincides with the Municipality of Ne, that consists of numerous localities, centres and hamlets. In all they add up to about fifty.

NE stands for "Nae" or "nave" (ship) and refers to the characteristic shape of the highest summit of the area - Mount Zatta (1404 meters). This is linked by an itinerary of great environmental and panoramic interest, with Mount Chiappozzo, Mount Porcile and the Biscia pass (892 meters) This pass connects the Graveglia valley to the Vara Valley.

The district opens up a little beyond Lavagna. One gets to it from the road that leads from San Salvatore di Cogorno and deviates at Carasco. The Municipal centre is at **CONSCENTI**, a zone that is at the meeting point of two main water courses that cross the valleys: the Reppia and the

Garibaldo, apparently named after a Lombard Sovereign who was de-throned and found refuge in the area.

At Campo di Ne, in the lower valley, is the church of Santa Maria Assunta, built in the sixteen hundreds on antique foundations. A little beyond in the centre of Conscenti, a deviation takes one to the small **VALLEY OF CHIESANUOVA**. Here, in the little village of **OSTI**, are the remains of the oldest church in the area, **SAN MICHELE**. On an isolated hillock, there are traces of a Romanesque apse that was built in squared stone. Even in the hamlet of **SAMBUCETO** there is one of the oldest and most interesting churches of the valley, dedicated to **SAINTS CIPRIANO AND GIUSTINA** who were already cited in the XIII century. This was renovated in recent times; it has a precious apse in squared stone, in Romanesque style.

ZERLI, in a panoramic site, dominates the mouth of the upper valley and is one of the centres of major interest. The most significant elements,



The ruined apse at San Michele di Osti

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The bridge at Nascio

are represented by what remains of its historical monuments: the (ruins of) **RESTI DI CASTELLO** and (the house-tower of) **LA CASA-TORRE DEI GARIBALDI**. From the castle, built to protect the village, on a rocky spur, there are some ruins of the tower and a paved mule-track that can be reached, by starting off from the parish church. Not far away the so-called house-tower of Garibaldi is visible. Even though the building is in ruins, elements from the thirteen hundreds are still visible. There are many small villages in this area: Salino, Adreveno, Costa, San Rocco and

Gosita. From the square of the **CHAPEL OF SAN ROCCO**, a beautiful oratory dedicated to the saint of the same name, one can enjoy a magnificent panorama in this part of the valley. Near the hamlet called **GOSITA**, while walking along a path it is possible to admire a fantastic example of an Oak that is centuries old. The circumference of the trunk at the widest part, is almost 5 meters. At **FRISOLINO** there is a mediaeval bridge called **PONTE DELLE ROCHE**. The villages of Nascio and Cassagna are pretty and characteristic. They are in the upper valley and can be arrived at by deviating from the main road.

NASCIO, which is situated in an elevated position on the slopes of Monte Bianco is an antique nucleus of some unusual buildings. In the mediaeval period it was supposed that the place had a castle that was perched on the rock near the present **PARISH CHURCH SANTA MARIA AND SAN MICHELE** which was built in 1565, and then underwent renovation at



Nascio village

5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys



A pretty corner in the village of Cassagna

the beginning of the nineteen hundreds, financed by inhabitants of the village who had emigrated to Buenos Aires. The previous Parish church of the place, which was also called San Michele and used to serve the inhabitants of Nascio, Cassagna and Statale, was above the hills amongst chestnut trees in a place called Crocetta. The ruins of that very old church which was abandoned when the new religious buildings were built in Nascio and Statale, can be seen, by making a brief deviation on a dirt road, from the main road.

CASSAGNA is one of the most interesting and better preserved villages of the valley and of the entire eastern part of Liguria. The structure of the settlement is compact, with arches and internal passages in stone and beautiful slate roofs. At the start of the village, on the side that can be reached by road, near the chapel of San Rocco, the structure of a tower can still be identified. It was short-

ened and turned into a house in 1930. One can get a more beautiful view, by following a path on the opposite side of the village until a little after Nascio across the imposing and elegant **PONTE SETTECENTESCO** (seventeenth Century bridge) on the river Novelli.

At **REPPIA**, almost at the summit of the valley, is the church of **SANT'APOLLINARE**. It contains a triptych of the XVI Century. From here, it is possible to get to the **MINIERA DI GAMBATESA**, a manganese quarry where a sort of park/museum has been built depicting the mining activities. It is possible to visit the tunnels on little wagons that once served to transport the mineral, accompanied by miners who worked in these mines. Not far away, above the village of Casesoprane, across a historical path, one gets to the top of Monte Chiappozzo and of Monte Zatta from where one can see the chain of the Cozie Alps.

5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys

The valley terminates with the vast **PRATO DEL BISCIA**, a place for Sunday picnics, and Spring feasts. From this ample green area there is the most unusual panorama in the whole Ligurian Apennine area. The Graveglia valley, from a gastronomic point of view has restaurants and agricultural establishments that offer products which are typical of the area and are amongst the most renowned in the whole of the Tigullio inland area. In a characteristic (agricultural market) **MERCATO AGRICOLO**, at **CONSCENTI**, respecting an old farming tradition, genuine farm products are sold. People are invited - after they have tasted the various products in a renowned local restaurant, to buy directly from the producers.

At Iscoli artisans produce testi those particular clay plates used to cook the typical "testaieu" on an open fire. These are like "focacce" of flour, water and salt, that are then eaten with olive oil, pesto or cheese.

Lavagna to the Republic of Genoa, which put it under the jurisdiction of Chiavari.

Prati di Mezzanago is the seat of the Municipality. The **PARISH CHURCH DELL'ASSUNTA**, goes back to 1272, and is the oldest church, while **NOSTRA SIGNORA DEL CARMINE**, is of the XVI century. Proceeding along the road one comes to **BORGONOVO**, one of the most important centres. In the nearby village called **CORERALLO** there is a very nice sixteenth century church situated on a panoramic hill. From Borgonovo the road divides - one road goes towards Borzonasca, and the other goes to the villages of Ponte Giacomo and San Siro Foce, until it arrives at Passo del Bocco, which connects Liguria with Emilia. From **SAN SIRO FOCE** - a small rural centre which has maintained its original structure - one can take part in an excursion to Mount Zatta.

BORZONASCA, whose territory coincides with a big part of the Sturla valley,

Borzonasca

Along the Sturla river, from Carasco to Forcella Pass

Running along the easy state road that goes from Chiavari to Carasco and onwards, one enters the green Sturla valley, which has a great variety of environmental and naturalistic aspects.

MEZZANAGO is the first of the two municipalities of the valley which extends to the east until the Bocco pass. In the centre of Mezzanago, there used to be one of the four fortresses that formed the defence system of the Sturla valley. This existed at the end of the XII Century when the territory passed from the sphere of influence of the Fieschi of



5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys



Borzonasca - A characteristic doorway in stone

was built on the river with the same name, in the centre of a valley of great historical and environmental interest. The mass of Mount Aiona, that rises to 1700 meters is one of the highest summits of the Ligurian Apennines, and can be reached following numerous excursion itineraries that gives one the chance to appreciate the uncontaminated nature of these places.

The village of Borzonasca still has notable traces of its past. The lanes in the centre have shops with stone structures, curved and gothic arches, and superb doorways with flat arches. The **ORATORIO DEI SANTI GIACOMO E FILIPPO**, at the entrance to the village, already existed in the XIII Century, and in it there

is a XVII Century canvas of the Madonna and a precious wooden statue of San Giacomo. The **PAROCHIAL CHURCH OF SAN BARTOLOMEO** dates to 1628. At the end of the village, is the **ORATORIO DELLA NATIVITÀ**. On its doorway there is an inscription that takes it back to 1460. About four kilometres from the village, going up the valley of the river

Borzone, is the most significant monument of the area, built in a really beautiful place. It is the **ABBZIA DI SANT'ANDREA DI BORZONE** (Abbey of St. Andrea of Borzone). Originally this monastery was dependent on the one that was founded by Saint Colombano at Bobbio (see the notes on page 52).

Other hamlets have retained traces of the late mediaeval period. Amongst these are **TEMOSI, BERTI-**



The Oratory of the Nativity - bas-relief in slate

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Sopralacroce - The ruins of the old church of San Martino di Licciorno

GARO and above all **SOPRALACROCE**, nowadays a nucleus of five small agglomerates, which, around the year one thousand were the property of the aforementioned Monastery of Bobbio. From the church of Vallepiana, one of the five localities of Sopralacroce, while walking down to the bottom of the valley using a path in the middle of woods, one comes across the ruins of **SAN MARTINO DI LICCIORNO** hidden in vegetation. It used to be the Parish church of the area at one time.

Also at Sopralacroce, in the hamlet called **PRATO** one can turn on to a dirt road that arrives at the refuge of **PRATO MOLLO**. It is at 1498 meters, immersed in an almost alpine landscape scenery. The refuge has about 50 beds and of-

fers typical mountain cooking. From here it is possible to go on excursions on the whole of the coastal side of the Apennines - routes that permit one to admire the abundance of the fauna and the environment in the valleys. It is also possible to closely observe the life of farmers and shepherds who live and work in the rural houses and in the typical mountain pastures, where one can also buy typical products from the area: honey, chestnut flour, salami, mushrooms and cheese.

One of these itineraries leads to **MALGA DI PERLEZZI** at the foot of Mount Aiona, and the **LAGO DI GIACOPIANE** (Giacopiane Lake) - one of the best known and appreciated destinations for excursionists. It is also possible to get to this place by road from a deviation at **CAMPORI**.



Giacopiane Lake

5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys

Guide to the Abbey of Sant'Andrea di Borzone



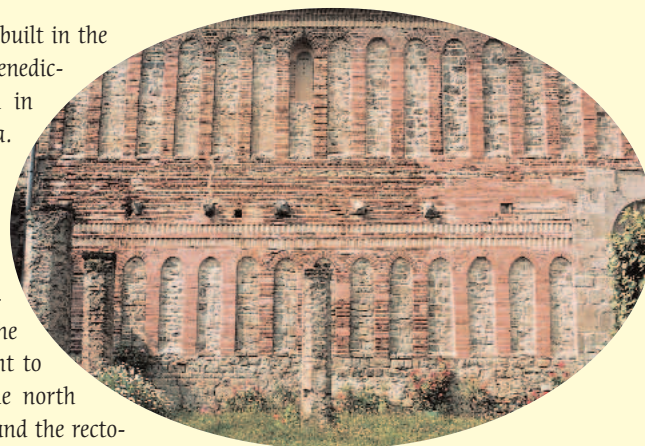
The abbey of Sant'Andrea di Borzone is set in an isolated, evocative location, flanked by a magnificent, century old cypress tree. Following the directions for Borzone from Borzonasca, you will reach the church after crossing terraced land and oak woods. This historical monastery, which originally came under San Colombano di Bobbio, was elevated to abbey status from 1184 by Ugone della Volta, archbishop of Genoa, who donated it to the Benedictines of Marseilles for its repair and to farm the surrounding valley. The church was rebuilt on a pre-existing Benedictine cell according to the wishes of Abbot Gherardo, native of Cogorno, as written on the headstone set in the tower wall.

However, there are varying opinions regarding the date the abbey was built. Some believe that it was built well before the year 1000, between the seventh and eighth centuries, on a pre-existing Byzantine "castrum" – the "fort" is represented by the lower part of the ashlar-worked tower. This thesis would mean that the first building dated back to the era of Liutprando, a Longobard king, who had entrusted the management and administration of the church to the monks of San Colombano di Bobbio. In any case, the abbey that can be seen today is the result of more than a millennium of transformations. The most part of the complex repre-



5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys

sented by the church built in the mid 1200s, but the Benedictine cell was located in the presbytery area. The church features a single nave and lies between the bell tower, which rises to the south and the building once known as the "new vestry", adjacent to the presbytery on the north side. The farmhouse and the rectory complete the complex which face a cloister-garden that still features some octagonal columns. The building technique employed in the abbey, is one of the most important points of interest. The materials used are stone and brick, an uncommon combination for the Ligurian building tradition. The brickwork not only defines the foundation for the layers placed on top but also creates a pretty planned decorative effect. The pattern is also



repeated inside. Identifying the ornamental effect with the structure, and is repeated in the ample trifore of the bell tower. The bell tower base is in large sandstones in ashlar-work. This last part, together with the perimeter walls of the church, in stone and brick (up to the height of the evident elevation), can be considered the oldest parts of the building. The tower was completed in 1310 with a bell housing that matches the decorative style of the nave with its small arches. In 1704 the church was subjected to a notable transformation for functional reasons and worship. Both decorative and structural modifications were made. On this occasion, 6 chapels were created; doors and windows as well as baroque altars were added and the interior plastered. Further transformation took place in the first half of the 1800s. These included, the covering of the central nave and the rebuilding of the apse. The last transformation took place with restoration in the 50s and 60s with a partial restoration of the ancient medieval look. In the presbytery there is a niche, in slate, carved in 1513, while the polyptych with Sant'Andrea, Santi e Calvario of 1484 painted by an anonymous artist of the Genoese school has been moved to the Museo Diocesano di Chiavari.



5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys

The Aveto Valley Riviera mountain

The d'Aveto valley can be reached by a number of routes: from the Fontanabuona valley through the Malvaro valley and the Scolgina pass. It can also be reached from a number of points in the Trebbia valley, or along the Sturla valley and the road, which, after Borzonasca, leaves the base of the valley to climb towards the villages of Brizzolara and Bertigaro. From here, Mediterranean woods give way to oak woods followed by pastures and bare rock, towards the Forcella pass area. From the ancient itinerary, that leads from the Fontanabuona valley through the Ventarola pass, there is a route that goes from Ventarola itself, crosses Parazzuolo and arrives at the Cabanne highland.



Aveto Valley - Panorama of Mt. Maggiorasca and of Mt. Bue

VENTAROLA is noted for its bare stone wall work, amongst which are a grand doorway dated 1631 and an imposing medieval lodge with two rounded arches.

CABANNE, the first important hamlet in the municipality of Rezzoaglio, is an ancient village of which the most important artistic testimonial is the **CHURCH OF SAN BERNADO**. It was rebuilt in the 1600s on an original structure from the fourteenth century and has a stone bell tower and an elaborately decorated marble interior.

Further ahead, a brief deviation leads to the rural village of **VILLACELLA**, whose name comes from "*Cella Sancti Michaelis*", a religious settlement dating back to 1103. From documents of the period, it can be noted that Prior Alberto and some monks from San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro in Pavia, founded the church of San Michele and donated it to Alselmo,

5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys



Villacella - The San Michele church tower and old mill structure

their Abbot. The monastery was built on the ancient route that led from Borzonasca up to the Rocche pass and to Val d'Aveto, with the purpose of providing assistance to travellers and pilgrims. The friars' residence at Villacella did not last after the fifteenth century, perhaps because the construction of another network of roads at the bottom of the valley shifted the importance of the monastery to local commerce. Today there are only some remains of have been built into a mill near the tall bell tower of the village church.

REZZOAGLIO is located in a vast alluvial plain, on a stretch of flat land crossed by two rivers and surrounded by small highlands. Two separate settlements can be seen. The "high" settlement, around the church, which is quite different today, from its original appearance, and, the "low" settlement which is the older

of the two. The **CHURCH OF SAN MICHELE** today features the radical transformation that took place in 1929 but it has a long history. In 1523, when the village became a parish, the nave of the first building was built. In 1575 it was subjected to repair work because it risked collapsing, and in 1720, an arch was added. Following the increase in population, in the mid 1800s the church became too small and it was decided to rebuild it using a Greek cross plan. Its orientation was altered. In the restructuring carried out a century ago, the nave was raised and the flooring lowered, the facade completely changed to baroque style to match the interior and the bell tower. Next to the church, a narrow road leads to the ancient single arched **MEDIEVAL BRIDGE** that crosses the Aveto river.

A few of Rezzoaglio's hamlets are worth seeing. These are **MA-**

5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys



Santo Stefano d'Aveto

GNASCO, CERISOLA and **VILLANOCE**, villages located in sequence along the most recent route that leads from Rezzoaglio to the centre of Santo Stefano d'Aveto. Soon after Magnasco, a secondary road climbs for a couple of kilometres towards the **LAGO DELLE LAME** (Lake Blade). In fantastic natural setting there is an alpine style hotel, a horse riding centre and fishing spots. Starting from the lake, there is a trail, which leads to the **RISERVA ORIENTATA DELLE AGORAIE**, an area of absolute importance from a flora and fauna point of view. One cannot miss a visit to the **LAKE DEGLI ABETI**, whose name comes from the fossil remains of 2000-year-old white fir trees which can be found resting at the bottom. To visit the Parco delle Agoraie area, it is necessary to obtain permission from the State Forest Corps.

Other small villages near Rezzoaglio, located away from the traditionally beaten track are **SECORTE, ALPEPIANA, VICOMEZZANO** and **VICOSOPRANO**. These villages, which are popular during the summer months, are surrounded by a humanised territory from centuries ago, made up of mule tracks, country chapels and dry stonework walls.

SANTO STEFANO D'AVETO, at the extreme limit of the region, is the biggest town of the d'Aveto valley. Situated at the centre of an immense amphitheatre made up by high hills and the main mountains of the territory, it was of notable importance in pre-Roman times, when the Liguri used its strategic position to build a fortification against the Romans. In the middle ages, three dynasties: the Malaspinas, the Fieschis and the Dorias governed the

5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys

territories of Santo Stefano. Its castle, built by the Malaspinas during the thirteenth century, and then passed on to the Fieschis and later to the Dorias of Genoa, suffered the consequential contrasting effects. The Dorias held it for around 50 years despite strong local rebellions. The fortification features a perimeter of strong walls forming an irregular pentagon with 5 bastions at its vertices. Thanks to documentation from the 1500s, filed in the State Archives in Genoa, in which the original drawings are preserved, it is possible to reconstruct what the fortress looked like when it was designed. The spaces were well divided between walls for defence (walls, bastions, moats), feudal homes, the tribunal, the armouries, the prisons and even a bakery and a small chapel. The old town of Santo Stefano, a little way from the castle of the Malaspina, winds along the main street, with a long row of houses, that still provide a good idea of the urban structure of the ancient village, although they have been

transformed by modern restoration. The porticoes, the old lamp-posts, the portals in stone and the cobbled roads each contribute to recreating an image of the old village. The parish church dedicated to the **SAINTS STEFANO AND MARIA**, is also isolated with respect to the town. The present building is a neo-gothic reconstruction of the old church, of which

only the lone bell tower remains; In the interior, other than the choir and the precious organ, it is worth mentioning the painting of the **MADONNA OF GUADALUPE** kept on the main altar. In the area surrounding Santo Stefano, there are a few places that are worth a visit.

One of them is **AMBORZASCO**, where a few farmhouses which have not been restored feature ancient rounded portals, marked with Christian symbols. Another is **ALPICELLA**, a small village in a beautiful location, at the centre of a highland, which features interesting examples of rural architecture and an old mule track that leads up to the village from the bottom of the valley. **ALLEGREZZE** is a village located near the fork in the road that leads from Santo Stefano to Rezzoaglio and Gramizza, with an ancient parish church in Romanesque style. This building is of notable importance since it's the only one in the valley, which has maintained its original features: the facade, the black stone columns and the cross vault. From



The Penna Forest

5. The Graveglia, Sturla and Aveto Valleys

Religious traditions: Santo Stefano and the Madonna of Guadalupe

The cult of the Madonna of Guadalupe, to whom the inhabitants of Santo Stefano have erected a statue on the nearby Mount Maggiorasca, has had a great historical and religious relevance for centuries. In 1531 the Virgin appeared at Guadalupe, a small town near the City of Mexico to a religious native, and successive appearances gave the story credibility. The devotion to the Madonna quickly spread, not only in Mexico and South America, but also in Spain and subsequently in Italy. In 1802, an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was exhibited in the church of S. Pietro, Piacenza by some Jesuit priests. An inhabitant of Santo Stefano, Antonio Rossi, who was in Piacenza at the time, brought a sacred image of the Virgin back to Val d'Aveto. The cult spread to the d'Aveto population and became celebrated among the faithful. In 1811, Cardinal Giuseppe Doria donated the beautiful picture (that is still worshipped today) to his church and parish of Santo Stefano. The painting depicts the Virgin with dark hair with her face leaning towards her right shoulder, standing with her hands joined in prayer. The King of Spain had donated the icon to Andrea Doria. Before becoming property of the Doria Palace in Genoa, it was said to have been carried aboard a galley during the battle of Lepanto.



Casoni really a group of houses divided into two fractions and hidden in oak woods, the road climbs up to the square of the **CASERMETTA DEL MONTE PENNA**, managed by the Forest Corps and surrounded by the ancient State owned forest.

Santo Stefano also means strolls, fields for picnics and trails for long walks. From the town one can climb to Mount Maggiorasca (1796

m), the highest peak of the Ligurian Apennine, or to Mount Bue. Another inviting and not tiring, excursion is the one which leads to the **LAGO NERO** (Black lake).

In the winter the Val d'Aveto is covered in snow. Both Santo Stefano and the ring which connects the Tomario pass to Mount Penna, offer many possibilities to lovers of cross-country skiing.

6. Sestri Levante and its Valleys



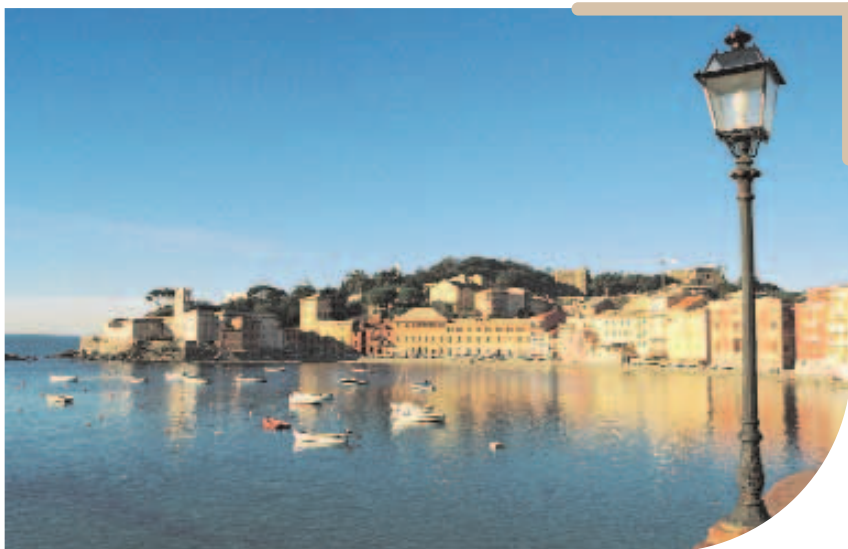
A view of the Sestri Levante peninsula

Sestri Levante

Sestri Levante is located at the south west extremity of the Golfo del Tigullio. It is in the alluvial plain of the river Gromolo and along the isthmus that connects the mainland to the Island (it used to be an island until the eleventh century). To the west of the strip of land is the **BAY OF FABLES**, to the east the **BAY OF SILENCE**. The bird's eye view of the landscape and its lush green vegetation, the blue sea, the golden sandy beaches and the harmony of the seaside houses, from the heights of the Rocche di Sant'Anna, is of incomparable beauty. During the medieval era (beginning of the tenth century) the first inhabited settlement was built on the Island, in a naturally fortified position. The origins of Sestri Levante however, date further back. The first inhabitants were the Ligurian *Tigullii*, who named it *Segestum* (*Segesta Tigulliorum*).

Today the headland is dominated by the Grand Hotel dei Castelli, surrounded by a magnificent park. This hotel was built around 1925, on the location in which the Genoese built one of their forts in the XII century. The **TORRETTA** (tower) from which Guglielmo Marconi carried out his experiments in radiotelegraphy with very short waves, is located here. Also on the peninsula is the first parochial church, **SAN NICOLÒ**. It is a Romanesque construction, built in 1151. It was transformed in part in the fifteenth century and modified in the baroque period. Recent restoration has highlighted the original structure. The fifteenth century facade, features a pseudo-protiro portal surmounted by a three-mullioned window. Tombstones and medieval inscriptions appear within the walls on the eastern and western sides. The bell tower has a pyramidal peak, and the bell area has a mullioned window. The inside is di-

6. Sestri Levante and its Valleys



A marvellous view of the Bay of Silence

vided into three naves by columns with cubic capitals. Another religious building of noteworthy importance is the **BASILICA DI SANTA MARIA DI NAZARETH** (eighteenth century) It has a neo-classical portico which was added in the 1800s. It is richly decorated and contains a canvas by Fiasella. From the church square, wondering through the streets of the town is a must, starting from the main street, **VIA XXV APRILE**, the pedestrian promenade is full of shops, boutiques and night spots which are amongst the busiest of the Riviera on summer nights.

Going back to religious buildings, the **CHURCH OF SAN PIETRO IN VINCOLI** is worth a visit. It hosts numerous works of art, amongst which is a wooden group dedicated to Santa Caterina di Alessandria. The recently restored **EX CONVENTO DELL'ANNUNZIATA**, which faces the eastern gulf, now hosts a cultural centre thanks to European community funding. The complex hosted Dominican priests from 1467 to 1797,

and was under the older convent of Santa Maria di Castello in Genoa. The **GALLERIA RIZZI**, in Sestri Levante hosts a prestigious collection of paintings, drawings, prints, furniture and ceramics. It was opened in 1967 when the private collection of solicitor Marcello Rizzi was donated to the State.

There are numerous historical villas and buildings of exceptional value in the town and immediate surroundings: **VILLA BALBI**, located at the western extremity of the old town, thanks to its magnificence, hosted Elizabeth Farnese in 1714, who was promised in marriage to Phillip the Fifth of Spain. Two lateral extensions were added to the original construction, which dates back to the 17th century. **VILLA CATTANEO** (formerly Durazzo) which is on the old Aurelia route, has a main building dating back to the mid-fourteenth hundreds. **VILLA DURAZZO PALLAVICINO**, in the centrally located Piazza Matteotti is now the municipal building. **VILLA CHIARELLA** (formally Gentile Pallavicini)

6. Sestri Levante and its Valleys

Tourism, events, traditions

The name "Bay of Fables" was given by the great author of children's books, Hans Christian Andersen, who visited the area, and was fascinated by it. In his honour, for over 30 years, Sestri Levante has hosted a literary prize for children. Thousands of fables, of great variety, are entered and the best, unpublished one is awarded the prize. Another wonderful event, is the "**Barcarolata**" a real fancy dress boat parade that takes place by night in the Bay of Silence in July every year. Sestri Levante was also the birthplace of poet Giovanni Descalzo and of critic and essayist Carlo Bo. The heart of Sestrese cooking, is fish and in particular, the anchovy. The village of Riva Trigoso, to the east of Sestri, for the past 40 years, has held the festival of the Bagnum, a dish of anchovies, onion, garlic, parsley, tomato and white wine in accordance with the best tradition of the local fishermen.

can be reached by the road which leads to the Santa Vittoria locality and lastly, **VILLA FIESCHI** along the road to the Bracco, is the result of the integration of multiple buildings and can be appreciated today in its seventeen hundreds' appearance.

Coming away from the town centre, there are a few nature walks worth a mention. Setting out from Via XXV Aprile and climbing eastwards, **PUNTA**

MANARA, which marks the limit of the Gulf of Tigullio, can be reached within two hours. **MONTE CASTELLO** and **PUNTA BAFE**, which allows one to get to Monégia on foot, are also worth an excursion. On the other hand, heading up through the Gromolo valley by car, one crosses the hamlets of **SANTO STEFANO DEL PONTE**, with a church that was once a parish church and **SANTA VITTORIA**, famous for its iron ore mines.



Villa Durazzo-Pallavicino, seat of the Municipality

6. Sestri Levante and its Valleys

Along the Petronio Valley: from Casarza to the Velva Pass

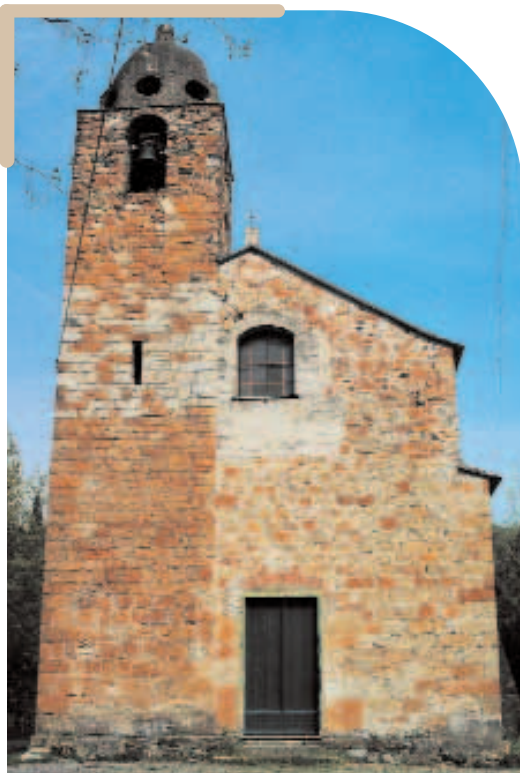
The town of Casarza has grown thanks to its agricultural economy. It is situated at the base of the Petronio valley, along the road that leads from Sestri Levante through the valley, towards Velva and the Cento Croci pass.

The **CHURCH OF SAN MICHELE**, in the centre of the town, built in the seventeenth century, is worth a visit to see a triptych by Barbagelata dated 1498. The triptych was previously located in the oldest church in Casarza, **SAN GIOVANNI BATTISTA**, which is on Candiasco hill. The building, which is commonly dated around 1200 but could be older, can be reached by a brief diversion from the town. From the town's unpaved square there is a beautiful view of the whole of the lower Petronio valley. The church of San Giovanni is in entirely exposed stonework and is in a very good state of repair. At a glance, it can be recognised as an ancient monument. The bell tower is considered to be the nucleus of the complex. It is said to have existed on Candiasco hill from before the year 1000. It was a lookout and defence tower, before the church was built. The church was built on its south side at a later date.

Other religious build-

ings which are located within the municipality are the **CHURCHES OF SAN MARTINO** (1500) and **DELL'IMMACOLATA** (1670) as well as the **CAPPELLA DI SAN ROCCO**, near which are the visible remains of an ancient hermitage.

On the hill facing the town is a group of buildings that forms the ancient settlement of **MASSASCO**. Further ahead is **SAN PIETRO IN FRASCATI**, with its parochial church. The hamlets of **BARGONE**, **BARGONASCO**, **CARDINI** and **VERICI** were built higher up on communal territory. They are surrounded by woods and streams and are included in many excursion itineraries. The medieval **CHURCH OF SAN LORENZO** is interesting. **BARGONE**, on Mount



The Church of San Giovanni Battista

6. Sestri Levante and its Valleys

Zenone is an ancient village that lives off agriculture and chestnut farming.

Proceeding along the main road, one gets to the municipality of **CASTIGLIONE CHIAVARESE**. It is in a panoramic location, and has a view of olive groves and vineyards. The parish church, in the town centre, is dedicated to **SANT'ANTONINO MARTIRE**. Its foundations are of ancient origin although it features a 1600s look and was renovated in the mid-eighteen hundreds. The whole Petronio valley area is very interesting from a geological point of view. The Roccagrande waterhole was a lake of glacial origin - there were chalcopryite and manganese mines here. Besides this, Casarza is host to the "Parma Gemma" museum, one of the region's most important points of reference for students and mineralogy enthusiasts.

Among the gastronomic products worthy of mention are asado, savoury pies, "latte dolce" (a type of set custard coated in batter and fried) and strawberry tarts, the production of which is renowned throughout the Petrone Valley. An annual festival is held in August at Bargone. The wine production in the Verici area is of historical importance. An important event is the Feast of San Giovanni Battista, which is held on the 24th of June at Casarza.



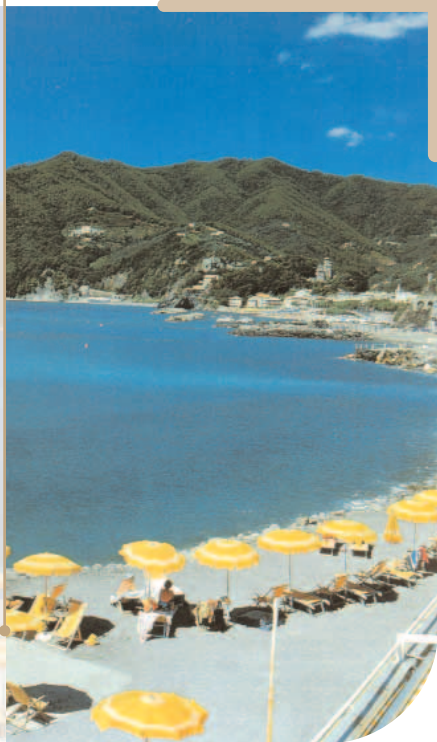
An rocky inlet between the tunnels that connect Moneglia to Riva Trigoso

The coast up to Moneglia and the Bracco route

To reach Moneglia using the coastal road, one passes **RIVA TRIGOSO**, once a fishing village and today host of important shipyards. One proceeds through the long narrow tunnels, once used for the railway, which now permit traffic to travel in alternating directions in turns.

The last coastal municipality that comes under the province of Genoa is **MONEGLIA**, situated in a green inlet. The land is lush with pine trees, olive

6. Sestri Levante and its Valleys



Moneglia and its sandy beach

groves and vineyards, between the two headlands of Punta Moneglia and Punta Rospo. It is a typical seaside village, that goes back to Roman times. Nowadays, it can compete with larger seaside destinations. It has a short waterfront and a fine sandy beach. The name comes from the Latin "*monilia*" - jewel (most certainly a reference to the beauty of the landscape), as it is referred to in the fourth century. As a point of transit, it was subject to pirate attacks in the middle ages. At the end of the twelfth century it was included in the Republic of Genoa, which built fortresses on the two headlands. In 1173, the **FORTE DI MONLEONE** was built, and in the sixteenth Century the **CASTELLO DI VILAFRANCA**, (recent-

ly restored and now open to the public) was built. In 1284 ships from Moneglia took part in the battle of Meloria in which the Genoese defeated the Pisans. In recognition of this achievement, some of the links of the great chain which protected the port of Pisa and which Genoa donated to the faithful Moneglia, are embedded in the wall of the **CHURCH OF SANTA CROCE** (tenth/eleventh Century). This church, which is the oldest in the town, hosts a cross of the Byzantine era and a wooden statue by Maragliano. Its churchyard features one of the best examples of pebble mosaic. Alongside Santa Croce is the **ORATORIO DEI DISCIPLINATI**, of the tenth Century, which plays host today to music events of international importance.

Another religious venue which is important to Moneglia and worth a visit is the **CHURCH OF SAN GIORGIO** (end of the fourteenth century), together with a Franciscan cloister of the fourteen-hundreds, in which there is a Rubens painting and the *Adorazione dei Magi* by Luca Cambiaso. Born in Moneglia in 1527, Cambiaso owes his fame to his great paintings of mythological and sacred inspiration and was called upon by Phillip II of Spain to fresco a vault in the royal palace.

From the town, the excursionist may venture into the Mediterranean woods towards Punta Baffe and Punta Manara, towards Sestri Levante or towards the Bracco, touching on the ancient villages of **LEMEGLIO**, **MORTEO** and **SAN SATURNINO**, all in panoramic locations and renowned for their prestigious vineyards.

Museums in the Genoa area

Note: Only museums in the Genoa area are mentioned in this booklet.
For museums in Genoa City please see the web site www.museigenova.it
For opening hours and other information please contact each single museum directly.



Tourist Information
and Tourist Reception (I.A.T.)



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