

HISTORICAL OUTLINE

REZZO

The foundation of Rezzo dates back to before the 11th century. Since 1529 it was a feud of the Republic of Genoa and it was entrusted to the Marquis of Clavesana although during the 14th century two other marquisates, the Marquisate of Ceva and the Marquisate of Del Carretto tried to take possession of it. During the 16th century, Rezzo became the stronghold of the Republic of Genoa against Cenova, a little village not far from Rezzo and a possession of Savoia which was entrusted to the Marquis of Maro and which Genoa wanted to annex to its territories. Cenova, in fact, became a possession of Savoia after having been under the rule of the Marquisate of Clavesana, of the Marquisate of Ceriale, of the Republic of Genoa and of the French Empire. In 1672, during one of the most bloody struggles between the two villages, the Savoia managed to destroy the Castle of Rezzo, built during the 12th century.

ARTISTICAL OUTLINE

In the Parish Church of San Martino Vescovo of the 16th century, it is possible to admire a black-stoned christening font and a wonderful anonymous polyptych from the 16th century. Not far from the village, on a hill that dominates the entire valley, stands the Sanctuary of Madonna del Santo Sepolcro, in Romanesque style, which is one of the most important monuments of Valle Arroscia. Its beautiful rose-window is sculptured in a unique block of stone and the interior, adorned by ogival arches, preserves a serie of frescos by Pietro Guido da Ranzo representing some episodes of Christ's life, a polyptych by the same artist and a wonderful sculpture of Madonna col Bambino by Filippo Parodi from the 17th century.

LAVINA

The first historical information of Lavina dates back to 1320 when it is mentioned in some statutes concerning the Church of S. Antonio Abate. An imagine of the village at the end of the modern Age appears on a canvas, dated 1764, preserved in the Sanctuary of Nostra Signora della Neve from the 18th century. The Parish Church of S. Antonio Abate was rebuilt in 1765, according to a project by a local architect, Giò Antonio Ricca, in late baroque style and it has got the central plant typical of that time. Near the Church stands the Oratory of S. Giovanni Battista from the 16th century; its linear portal is made of local stone. Other important monuments are the Chapel of S. Bernardo and the ruins of the Church of S. Maddalena both from the Middle Age situated in the woods and the Chapel of S. Pantaleo and three other rural chapels hidden among the olive groves.

CENOVA

The first historical information of Cenova dates back to 1380 when the village is mentioned in some documents concerning the blessing of the christening fonts and of the churchyard of the Church of S. Maria. This building underwent several renovations up to the present front in neoclassic style. Of great importance is the Oratory of Santi Giovanni Battista ed Evangelista, from the 17th century, situated in the high part of the village which preserves a great series of paintings. Cenova is also famous for many craft-made activities, first of all the stone dressing. During the 15th and the 16th centuries those typical works spread all over western Liguria, probably due to the existence of a local school of stone-cutters.

EXCURSIONS

From Rezzo to Calcinaro Bridge

This excursion takes 20 minutes, going along a level muletrack. The most important attractions are the Ponte Napoleonico, the ruins of a chapel and some old furnaces which in the past used to produce lime.

From Passo della Teglia to Monte Grande(1418 metres)

This excursion takes an hour. In 15 minutes you reach Monte Fenaira (1459 metres) and then, walking along a muletrack near Monte Carpasina (1415 metres), up to Monte Grande. From its top you can reach Passo Boschetto (1240 metres).

From Passo della Teglia to Sotto di S. Lorenzo (1386 metres)

This excursion takes an hour. Going along the provincial road in the direction of Molini di Triora you reach Passo della Teglia (1387 metres). For those who like walking in the woods it is possible to go on foot to Passo della Mezzaluna (1454 metres). During this walk you can see some testimonies from the 3rd millennium BC, such as the "menhir", a big stone driven into the ground, and a stone for sacrifices. Before arriving at this mountain pass, you go past the ruins of the Chapel of S. Lorenzo (1386 metres) and some of the shepherds' traces, such as stone fences and shelters.

From Rezzo to Monte Monega

Going along the provincial road for about 4 kilometres, you reach Ponte dei Passi (744 metres). After the bridge, on the right appears a muletrack. Walking along it, you arrive at some slopes, named Piani delle Selle and then at the Chapel of S. Giacomo and the House of Colle Bregna (1344 metres), up to Passo della Mezzaluna (1454 metres). On the eastern side of those spurs there is a muletrack. Going along it you pass beneath Cima della Donzella up to Monte Bussana (1636 metres) and Poggio Buoi di Raxin (1701 metres). From this point, the path is steeper and takes you up to Passo di Monega, to Monte Monega and finally to Passo Pian del Latte (1764 metres). To reach the top of the mountain you can follow an ex-military path where were situated some military huts.

THE SANCTUARY IN THE HEART OF THE VALLEY

The Sanctuary of Nostra Signora del Sepolcro or della Natività di Maria Santissima stands on the road which links Rezzo up with some passages towards Piemonte and it is surrounded by a chestnut wood. It was built during the second half of the 15th century and it replaced a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It was consecrated in 1492, after some troubles with the Monastery of Piemonte which tried to make the sanctuary a subordinate monastery. Probably the attempt was indirectly stopped by the Republic of Genoa, which feared the expansion of Savoia's power beyond Colle di Tenda. The sanctuary is more than forty metres long and about fourteen metres wide and it is a building with a nave and two side aisles marked by stone-columns. Its pointed bell tower is embellished by a painted portrait of S. Cristoforo. The building also has a portico resting on stone-columns used as a shelter, a house for the caretaker and an inner crypt which represents Christ's Holy Sepulchre. The right aisle of the sanctuary is enriched with a pictorial sequence by an artist from the late 15th century and the illustration of the entire Easter Mystery painted by Pietro Guido da Ranzo (1499-1542). In the sacristy of the Parish Church a polyptych is also preserved which the author painted for the altar at the end of the right aisle. In the presbytery, it is possible to see some frescos by Giovanni Cambiaso (1495-1579) and his apprentices, although they have partly disappeared. During the 17th and the 18th centuries, some artists, such as Giò Paolo Marvaldi di

Borgomaro, made the stucco decoration, modifying the presbytery to house a marble statue of the Madonna col Bambino, an important work by the young Filippo Parodi.

HOW TO ARRIVE AT THE VALLE DELLA GIARA

From Pieve di Teco you go along the state road (SS 28) in the direction of Imperia for one kilometre, then you turn to the left in the direction of Albenga and you go along the road for five hundred metres and afterwards you turn to the right going along the provincial road which climbs the side of the valley enclosed between two wooded sides, in part terraced and used for olive growing. Before reaching Rezzo you come across two small villages, Lavina and Cenova.