

## Brief history of Savigliano

Savigliano is one of the main towns on the Cuneo plain. It has a population of about 20,000 inhabitants. The main artistic traces of its historical centre and the surrounding territory are the consequence of a past rich in history: it was initially inhabited by Celtic-Ligurian people, and then conquered by the Romans. Thanks to its geographic position it was particularly exposed to conflicts with the Marquisate of Saluzzo. Between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century there was an important flourishing of culture and art documented by the paintings of the so called “Savigliano School”. The local nobility, having achieved authoritative positions at Court, rebuilt palaces in town and mansions in the countryside in late mannerist or baroque style.

With the demolition of the fortified walls around the town – at the beginning of the eighteenth century – Savigliano lost its role as military stronghold and also the position of prestige that it had occupied among the towns of Piedmont. A hundred years later, the town became a remarkable centre of important textile and mechanical productions and the arrival of the railway (1853) offered new possibilities of traffic and connections.

The first plants for the rolling stock production were transformed in 1880 into the Società Nazionale delle Officine di Savigliano (SNOS).

Among the illustrious personalities born in the town, we find Santorre di Santa Rosa, hero of the revolutionary uprisings movements in 1821, and Giovanni Schiaparelli, one of the most important astronomy experts in Italy.

### **Piazza Santorre di Santa Rosa (Santorre di Santa Rosa Square)**

The square was probably formed during the period of the Lombardy League and after the Peace of Constance (1183).

In 1472 new rows of arcades were built in front of the previous buildings’ facades in order to embellish the old square. Other transformations took place in the seventeenth century in particular with the construction of several loggias.

The square still houses the old Town Hall – Palazzo del Comune (the first mentions of its existence date back to 1228). Until 1810 the building still comprised the dungeons and the torture chamber.

Other elements that remain are the Triumph Arch – Arco di Trionfo (1585), the Civic Tower (thirteenth – seventeenth centuries) and the Monument dedicated to Santorre di Santarosa (1869).

### **The Civic Tower**

The tower was built during the fourteenth century, but the tradition tells it was constructed on the remains of a pagan temple devoted to Goddess Ceres.

During the same period the first bank (Monte dei Pegni) of the town was based here.

In 1447, the Municipal Council reclaimed the tower.

## **The Triumphal Arch**

The Triumphal Arch was built in 1585 for the wedding parade of the Duke Charles Emmanuel of Savoy and Catherine of Spain. The plan for the Arch was created by the architect Giovanni Battista Ripa who took its inspiration from the ancient arches such as the Arch of Titus in Rome.

## **Saint Andrew Church**

The first information of the existence of the Church date back 1098, but nowadays the most ancient frescoed part is the Chapel of Saint Nicola and the image with “The Virgin Mary with Sainte Anne and child” (fifteenth century). The current structure of the church, with the presence of five naves, was built in 1728 by the architect Andrea Benedetto Vay

## **The Taffini Palace**

The residence of the Taffini d’Acceglio Family is the most important residential building in Savigliano. The Taffinis were a military family at the service of the Savoy Court.

The palace was built in 1620 in perfect baroque style by the architect Ercole Negri di Sanfront. Inside you can find the Salon of the Battles entirely dedicated to Victor Amadeus I of Savoy. Today the owner of the Palace is the Bank “Cassa di Risparmio di Savigliano”.

## **The Muratori Cravetta Palace**

The Palace originates from the union of three aristocratic buildings belonged to the Corvo, Tapparelli and Muratori families. The courtyard of honour is an exceptional example of Mannerist architecture. A small Italian garden completes the Palace. Inside there is the room where the Duke Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy died in 1630. This place is particularly surprising for the superb coffered ceiling.

## **Milanollo Theatre**

The Milanollo Theatre was built in 1836 in neoclassic style by the architect Maurizio Eula. It is dedicated to Maria and Teresa Milanollo, two violinists from Savigliano.

The Theatre is composed of a dress circle and parterre, two ranges of loges, a mezzanine and an upper circle.

Inside we can find the representation of “The Parnassus” paint on the curtain and on the ceiling visitors can admire a fresco with “Apollon and Psyche” decorated by Pietro Ayres.

## **Convent of Saint Monica**

In 1642 the nuns bought some houses in the city centre and began to build their Convent which was dedicated to Saint Monica. The nuns were involved in the education of girls of noble families. The nuns left the Convent in 1802. In 1857 the convent became a military property. From 1862 to 1974 the building was used as a hospital for soldiers.

Today the convent is owned by the municipality of Savigliano. It has been entirely restored and in a part of the building we find some faculties affiliated with the University of Turin.

## **Confraternity of Misericordia**

The Confraternity was founded in the late seventeenth century. A group of people gathered to help poor families, prisoners and everyone sentenced to death. The Confraternity chose St. John as patron. The Church is known as “Crosà Neira” (Black Cross”). The name recalls the colour of the clothes the confraternity members used to wear during particular ceremonies. The beginning of the twentieth century represents a period of decline for the building when in 2004 the Municipal Council began the works of restoration. The project was completed in 2010. A modern architectural element has been added in order to create a new conference room.

## **Saint Peter Church and Monastery**

The discovery (1822) of a tombstone under the altar leads to the belief that the church was built on the ruins of a Roman temple dedicated to the goddess Diana. According to tradition, the monastery was founded by San Fausto in 585. The re-foundation of the complex dates back 1028. The church was built in Romanesque style with the presence of three naves and a cloister.

In 1599 the architect Giovenale Boetto carried out a slight renovation, giving the church its current architectural aspect. The church houses the “gens Gavia” tombstone, an important Roman artefact.

## **Confraternity of the Assumption**

The Confraternity of the Assumption was built in 1445, but the current building was designed by the architect Giovanni Giacomo Plantery in 1708 who conceived the body of the church with the presence of curved lines. Between 1714 and 1717, the interiors were painted by Giovanni Battista Pozzo. The statue group of the Assumption was created by Giovanni Battista Bernero in 1760. The facade dates back 1780.

## **Confraternity of Piety**

The architect Giovanni Giacomo Plantery designed the church in 1708. The external facade is characterized by a design of accentuated verticality.

Inside, the union between architecture and decoration creates admirable illusionary effects.

Jean Claret painted the Deposition of Christ (1650) positioned above the main altar. The Statue of Christ Resurrected, created in 1725 by Carlo Giuseppe Plura, is of considerable importance.