



Piacenza present itself through its churches, offering a fascinating and rich itinerary full of artistic, historical and cultural experiences.



82 | Cathedral

■ 85 | Chiesa di Sant'Anna

■ 86 | Chiesa delle Benedettine

■ 87 | Oratorio di San Cristoforo

■ 88 | Chiesa di San Savino



90 | Chiesa di San Francesco

■ 91 | Chiesa di San Donnino

■ 91 | Chiesa di Sant'Ilario



92 | Chiesa di San Sisto

■ 94 | Chiesa di Santa Brigida

■ 94 | Chiesa dei Santi Nazario e Celso

■ 95 | Chiesa di San Sepolcro



96 | Chiesa di Santa Maria di Campagna

■ 99 | Chiesa di Sant'Eufemia

■ 100 | Chiesa di San Giovanni in candele

■ 101 | Chiesa di Sant'Agostino



102 | Chiesa di Sant'Antonino

City
CHURCHES

CATHEDRAL (DUOMO)



■ **Cathedral**
Façade and
bells tower



■ **Presbytery vault**
Camillo Procaccini
and Lodovico
Caracci
(1605-1609)

According to a votive inscription, the building of the Cathedral started in 1122 upon the ruins of the pre-existing Church of S. Giustina. The double-gabled façade, completed in the 16th century, is divided into three parts by two semi-columns, which refine and lengthen the structure. The three, 12th century entrance doors of the Cathedral are characterized by elegant vestibules and decorated with sculptures ascribable to Wiligelmo and Niccolò Schools. A row of hanging arches runs along the façade and the side aisles, while the central nave is illuminated by large lancet windows. The bell tower was built a century later, and in 1341, Pietro Vago *magister lignaminis et petre* created the spire with a bronze angel on top of it. This *Angil dal Dom* (Angel of the Cathedral), as it is affectionately called, is considered the symbol of Piacenza. By the will of Ludovico II Moro, a cage (still visible in its original position) was placed under the belfry facing the square; it was supposed to enclose prisoners guilty of heinous acts. In the apse facing via Vescovado, there is an arresting window decorated with 12th-century sculptures, depicting the Annunciation in the upper part, and two prophets in the lower. The majestic interior is divided into three naves (82.40 meters long), intersected by a wide transept, also divided in three parts. The Latin cross structure is supported by enormous lobed pillars. On the first pillar on the right is painted a fresco depicting an *Our Lady of Grace* (circa 1400 AD), an image deeply loved and worshipped by the local population. The other pillars are sculpted with panels depicting the various 12th-century Piacentine Corporations, called *Paratici*, to prove the citizens' commitment



■ **Cathedral**
Central nave

to the building of the Cathedral. At the intersection between the central nave and the transept, there is an inverted octagonal cupola. Two segments of it were painted by Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli (called *Morazzone*) with images of prophets' life in 1626, and, after his death, the other six elements were painted by Giovan Francesco Barbieri (known as *Il Guercino*) with images depicting *Le Sibille* (The Sibyls). He also realized the Nativity scenes below the cupola (1627), thanks to Cardinal Odoardo Farnese's patronage. In the left part of the transept, the visitor can see a baptismal font belonging to



■ Left: **Paratici | Panels** • The citizens' commitment to the building of the Cathedral
Right: **Wooden polyptych**, golden and depicted (1476)





■ **Cathedral**
Lion support a column

the pre-existing early Christian structure, along with a painting representing S. Girolamo by the Bolognese painter, Guido Reni. There is also an interesting polyptych depicted with Biblical scenes by Serafino dei Serafini. On the left side of the transept a gigantic painting of San Cristoforo between the Holy Knights Giorgio and Antonino, dating back to the 13th century, is frescoed. Behind the central altar, the visitor can find a noteworthy wooden polyptych by Antonio Burlengo and Bartolomeo da Groppallo (1476). Interesting are also the frescoes of the presbytery area realized by Camillo Procaccini between 1605 and 1609, who was also the author of the altarpiece representing *The Virgin Mary's Transit* (currently visible in the counter-façade), and by Ludovico Carracci: a complete series dedicated to the Holy Virgin Mary (including the scenes in the apse, Mary's Assumption and, on the central rib vault above the presbytery, *Mary's Coronation*). The crypt, in which are kept the relics of S. Giustina from Antioch (virgin, martyr and co-patron saint of the Cathedral), contains splendid columns with capitals that supports small, quadripartite vaults. Most of them were created during the restoration works done during the 19th and 20th centuries. The crypt also contains many traces of 15th century frescoes.

■ **ADDRESS:** Piazza Duomo, Piacenza

Tel: +39.0523335154

Web: www.duomopiacenza.it

■ **Cathedral**
Entrance view



CHIESA DI SANT'ANNA

| Saint Anna's Church |

The convent of the Servites Order was built in 1334 and was endowed with a hospital in which S. Rocco from Montpellier was hosted in 1371. After the religious suppression, the church became a parish and was then turned into a military base.

The Church has a three naves structure and was directly influenced by the Church of S. Giovanni in Canale, as appears evidently from the ribbed columns and ribbed cross vaults. The gable façade is characterized by an *ad quadratum* project, that is, where the height is equal to the length, a typical feature of Italian medieval churches. The current façade is due to restoration works carried out from 1925 to 1938 by the architects Camillo Guidotti (1853-1925) and Paolo Costermanelli (1895-1954). They refurbished the lancet windows and the rose window; they also shaped the pinnacles after those in S. Lorenzo's Church. The portal is instead inspired by the one on the southern side of S. Francesco's Church. Inside, the visitors can admire a polychrome, wooden statue of S. Rocco dating back to the early 16th century.



■ **Saint Anna's Church**
(from 1334)
Façade



■ **Saint Anna's Church**
(from 1334)
Interior

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Scalabrini 83, Piacenza

Tel: +39,0523385243

CHIESA DELLE BENEDETTINE

| Benedettine's Church |



■ **Benedettine's
Church
(1677-1681)**
External views

The church, which was consecrated on 31st August 1681, was commissioned by Duke Ranuccio 2nd to the court architect Domenico Valmagnini (1649-1730) in 1677. The Benedictine cloistered convent, built at the beginning of the 19th century, was organized in a series of buildings that also contained a public church and a private church for the nuns. The complex ran along the area called Cantone dei Buffalari and was structured around three courtyards. The major cloister was accessible from Via Benedettine, also called *del Filatoio* (Spinning wheel). The name was due to a near spinning laboratory that bordered with the religious complex by means of a retaining wall that surrounded a vegetable garden, which was almost as big as the building itself. The church has a Greek cross shape topped by a large, octagonal structure below a bronze cupola. The façade, typical of Classical style, is characterized by a Tuscan layout: a high base with paired pilasters that seem to be concluded by a broken segmental tympanum that becomes more linear at the lateral ends of the cross and in the cymatium of the cupola windows. The small entranceway is crowned by an arched cymatium. Nowadays there is no trace of the convent or of the cloisters because of Napoleonic interventions and of its subsequent closure in 1810. After the Napoleonic period, the ownership of the church was given to the Military State Authority, which still possesses it. The church has recently seen a series of renovations done to save its original layout, although its final destination is still unknown.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Benedettine, Piacenza
Tel: +39.0523329324

ORATORIO DI SAN CRISTOFORO

| Oratory of Saint Cristoforo |

The building of the Oratory of S. Cristoforo, also called the Oratory of new Death, because of the namesake Confraternity that had its headquarters there, was began on May 28th, 1687 and it was inaugurated on October 30th, 1690. During the French dominion of the city it was closed, and reopened only in the *Restaurazione* period. It is currently used as a school of holy music. The designer was the court architect Domenico Valmagnini (1649-1730), who planned it with a central structure and a Classical façade surmounted by a cupola. This choice was affected by the influence of the set designer Ferdinando Galli, alias Bibiena (1657-1743), who was the author of the internal frescoes, which closely reminds those typical of theatre stage sets.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Gregorio X, Piacenza
Tel: +39.3289166160



■ **Oratory of Saint
Cristoforo**
External view



■ **Oratory of Saint
Cristoforo • Cupola
of Ferdinando Galli,
called Bibiena**

CHIESA DI SAN SAVINO

| Saint Savino's Church |

This basilica is dedicated to S. Savino, the bishop who firstly organized the diocese of Piacenza, and who is buried in the church. A primitive place of worship was built in this location by Savino towards the end of the 4th century as a *basilica apostolorum*, but was then completely destroyed by the Hungarians in 899 AD. Its reconstruction started in 903 AD and was finished in 1107 AD, at the time of Bishop Aldo. An elegant, 18th century, paired-column portico with a railing, windows and a pediment open the way to the interior of this Romanesque basilica. The inside is divided into three naves by pilasters, in an alternate sequence of three spans covered by ribbed vaults. Due to restoration work, the side naves run from the bell tower (on the south side) to a semi-circular apse (on the north side). Very interesting is the wooden crucifix that revives the iconography of *Christ Triumphant* (with his head held high and his eyes open) which dates back to the middle age. Besides the sculptures of the capitals with their phytomorphic and vegetable decorations (11th and 12th centuries), other original artifacts include mosaic tiles on the presbytery floor,

■ **Saint Savino's Church (903-1107)**
Crypt



near the presbytery area, in the Northern apse and in the crypt. The mosaic in the presbytery has a rectangular shape and it is included in a modern frame. In the central square, inscribed into a circle, the visitors can recognize a bearded figure who holds in his hands the symbols of the Sun and of the Moon; many scholars connects this image with another mosaic, conserved in the Cathedral of Aosta, in which a similar figure represented the Year. Around it, in another circle, there are four pairs of fantastic animals, while four figures are shown in the act of turning around the outside circle. The other sectors represent allegoric scenes alluding to the eternal conflict between Fortune and Virtue. The mosaics in the crypt are decorated with figures depicting Zodiac Signs, each one connected with its month and its related activity. Near Libra, the figure of a siren is holding a theatre mask in her hand while, next to Sagittarius, there is a two-tailed siren. Particularly interesting in the crypt are the ornate capitals and the columns made of antique stone (preceding Byzantine-era) from the building that was previously on this site.

The structure underwent various modifies, above all during the 17th and 18th centuries. In the early part of the 20th century, it was scrupulously restored by Engineer Martini, who brought it back to its original medieval splendor.

■ **Saint Savino's Church (903-1107)**
Interior and façade

■ **Saint Savino's Church**
Wooden Crucifix (12th century)



■ **ADDRESS:** Via Alberoni 35, Piacenza

■ **Tel:** +39.0523318165

CHIESA DI SAN FRANCESCO

| Saint Francesco's Church |



■ Saint Francesco's Church (1278)
Façade

The Franciscan convent was built on a land donated by the nobleman Ubertino Landi, and the construction lasted from 1278 to 1356, when it was consecrated. After the religious suppression, it was transformed into a parish church for a brief period, devoted to St. Napoleon. The interior is divided into three naves and the presbytery has an ambulatory (covered by an umbrella vault) as well as radial chapels. This was the typical structures of the churches along the way to Santiago de Compostela. The gabled façade is characteristic of the *ad quadratum* plans (that is, when the height and the length are the same): a plan quite common in Italian, medieval churches. On the inside there are some noteworthy works of art: some late-Gothic frescoes by the Piacentine artists Bartolomeo and Jacopino da Reggio and *The Last Judgment* (mid-14th century), together with the first chapel on the right (late-17th century) that was decorated by Giovan Battista Trotti, called Malosso (1555-1619). A plaque on the façade of the church recalls the 1848 plebiscite, when 98% of the population asked for Piacenza annexation to the Sardinia Reign, thereby giving the city the title of *Primogenita* (the Firstborn of Italy).



■ Saint Francesco's Church (1278)
Interior

■ **ADDRESS:** Piazzetta San Francesco, adiacente a Piazza Cavalli, Piacenza

■ **Tel:** +39.0523321988

CHIESA DI SAN DONNINO

| Saint Donnino's Church |

The S. Donnino's church was consecrated in 1236 by the Piacentine Cardinal Jacopo Pecorara, teacher of Tedaldo Visconti (Pope Gregorio 10th). The event was commemorated by a plaque, still conserved inside the church, and transcribed by the historian Pier Maria Campi. The inside is divided into three naves, while the façade bear the signs of different interventions. In 1818, the perspective professor Giuseppe Pietro Giorgi (1792-1865) had hidden some 16th century frescoes behind a wall on which he had painted a Greek-Roman temple. On December 1889, in nine months, the today façade - in a Lombard style by Camillo Guidotti (1853-1925) - was uncovered.



■ Saint Donnino's Church (9th-13th century) • Façade

■ **ADDRESS:** Largo Battisti, Piacenza

CHIESA DI SANT'ILARIO

| Saint Ilario's Church |

This early 12th century church, once the headquarters of the Civic Historical Archives, is currently used as a conference hall for Municipal events. There are some majolica tiles and an architrave portraying a scene of *L'incredulità di San Tommaso* (*the Disbelief of St. Thomas*) (1170-80) walled-in the façade, an artistic expression of early explorations into a naturalistic style on the part of Piacentine School.



■ Saint Ilario's Church (12th century) • Façade

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Garibaldi 12, Piacenza

CHIESA DI SAN SISTO

| Saint Sisto's Church |

Empress Angilberga, wife of Ludovico 2nd, had a Benedictine monastery built in 852 AD, originally dedicated to the Resurrection. The building included a hostel for pilgrims and had a fortification wall all around, built reemploying materials from Roman fortifications.

The monastery owned navigation and fishing rights in the richest areas of the territory, especially in Gossolengo and Cotrebbia, and played an important role in medieval times, controlling the nearby fair starting from 896 AD, also because of its local port on the Po River. After the religious suppression, the monastery became a parish church and was given as barrack to the *Genio Pontieri* (Army Corps of Bridge Engineers).

In 1424 AD, Benedictine monks from the Cassinese order of S. Giustina took over the complex and, in 1499, they started the renovation works. In 1505, Alessio Tramello (1470-1529) was appointed project manager to solve some structural problems and to build the small temples at the entrance. The interior is divided into three naves and the transept is completed with a tripartite porch. The construction

■ Saint Sisto's Church (1499-1511)

Left: big sacristy
Right: Façade
and cloister
external view



of the façade was commissioned on November 15, 1589 and was carried out in 1591 by Bartolomeo Bosi, Bernardino Storni and Marco Antonio Magnani. It was then frescoed, in the same year, by the painter Pietro Dordelli and completed with plastered terracotta statues.

Inside, the visitors can admire a cycle of frescoes by Bernardo Zacchetti, who worked with Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, and a copy of the *Sistine Madonna* that Raphael painted for the Piacentine monks, then sold to Augustus 3rd of Saxony in 1754 (the original is now shown in the Gemäldegalerie Art Gallery in Dresden). Noteworthy are also the frescoes by the brothers Antonio and Vincenzo Campi and the 1514, inlaid, wooden choir by Bartolomeo Spinelli from Busseto and Giampiero Pambianchi from Colorno. Thanks to restoration works, many elements of the original church were recovered: the organ (1544-5) by Giovan Battista Facchetti, the wooden choir, the frame (1697-8) containing the *Sistine Madonna* by Giovanni Sceti, the mid-17th-century wrought iron gate of the tripartite porch and the wood furniture in the bigger sacristy. The transept contains the urn of S. Barbara and a monument to Margaret of Austria, who commissioned the construction of Palazzo Farnese. Margaret, wife of Ottavio, died in Ortona degli Abruzzi in 1586 and wanted to be buried in S. Sisto. *The Passerini Landi Municipal Library* is the keeper of the invaluable manuscript, *Salterio di Angilberga*, which, according to the tradition, was donated by Margaret to the monastery of S. Sisto. It was written on crimson parchment in gold and silver letters, in the year 827 AD. The Codex remained in the monastery until 1803, when it was given to Moreau de Saint Méry, the French administrator of the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza, who brought it back to France with him at the end of his assignment. It was then recovered by Carlo Poggi, who bought it in France and, in 1820, donated it to the City of Piacenza.



■ Saint Sisto's
Church
(1499-1511)
Interior



■ Saint Sisto's
Church (1499-1511)
Part of wooden
choir of the big
sacristy

ADDRESS: Via San Sisto 9, Piacenza

Tel: +39.0523320321



CHIESA DI SANTA BRIGIDA

| Saint Brigida's Church |



■ Saint Brigida's Church (9th-13th century) • Interior

The Church, founded in 868 AD, also had a hospice for the Irish pilgrims visiting the city. It was rebuilt in the middle of the 12th century, after a fire, and was used as the official headquarters for the confirmation of Constance Treaty (January 21st 1185). The present image of the church is due to the complex campaign of reconstruction and liberation carried out by Giannantonio Perreau in 1898, which ended in 1950 when the bell tower was rebuilt, following the arch. Pietro Berzolla's (1898-1984) project.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Garibaldi 66, Piacenza



CHIESA DEI SANTI NAZZARO E CELSO

| Church of Saints Nazario and Celso |



■ Church of Saints Nazario and Celso (14th-18th century)

The Church, founded in 1025 AD, included a hostel for pilgrims and originally faced towards outside the city. At the beginning of the 17th century, the structure of the church was changed to make the entrance face the city, but still conserving the cone-shaped cusp of the bell tower. For this reason a remodeling of the façade was required; Giulio Alberoni (Superior of the Parish) commissioned this project to the architect Giacomo degli Agostini (1642-1720), who carried it out in 1691. The church now houses the Rosso Tiziano Art Gallery.

■ **ADDRESS:** Cantone San Nazario, Piacenza



CHIESA DI SAN SEPOLCRO

| Saint Sepolcro's Church |

The building of this Olivetan religious complex started in 1498 from the construction of the monastery and then of the church in 1513. After the religious suppression, the monastery became property of the Civil Hospital and the church was given to the Military Land Administration. In 1903, thanks to the Blessed Giovan Battista Scalabrini, at the time Bishop in Piacenza, the church was reopened as a parish. The Benedictine monastery is now part of the Civic Hospital. There are two large cloisters and a 'secret walkway' - a sort of internal corridor that the monks could use to get from place to place without using the porches. Documents certify that, in 1501, building works were entrusted to the Piacentine architect Alessio Tramello, (1470-1529), who decided not to follow the classical contrast between a longitudinal and a central plan, like in the original Sepulchral Church. He proposed instead a succession of central spaces connected by cupolas, quite similar to the structure of the Cassinese Order's Church of S. Giustina in Padua (which was also given the management of the monastery of S. Sisto).

■ **ADDRESS:** Piazza San Sepolcro, Piacenza

■ **Tel:** +39.0523499822



■ Saint Sepolcro's Church (early 16th century)
Façade

CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DI CAMPAGNA

| Church of Saint Maria di Campagna |



■ Church of Santa Maria di Campagna (from 1522)
External views

The area where the church of Santa Maria di Campagna is located is historically connected to a pivotal moment in the rebirth of Western Christianity: the 1095 Council that gave birth to the Crusades. At that time in this area, which was outside the city walls, there was a sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin known as *Campagnola* Sanctuary. Pilgrims travelling towards the Holy Land or Rome passed this way, often visiting the sanctuary, which obviously had a clear symbolic meaning for those people, such as the Council organizer, Pope Urban 2nd, who wanted to reunite the Christian world by regaining Holy sites. The construction of the present church began in 1522 according to Alessio Tramello's project (1470-1529), who was one of the most important Piacentine architects and who showed his ability in using Bramante's style in his plans; indeed, he also used such a style in his projects for San Sisto and San Sepolcro churches. In Santa Maria di Campagna, he faced a fundamental theme of Renaissance architecture - building a church with a central floor plan. He found a creative solution and a harmonic balance between the external volumes and the internal spaces. In 1791, Lotario Tomba modified the presbytery, while the choir had already been enlarged in the 16th century. Tramello had foreseen a slight asymmetry in the western side of the Greek cross plan because of the presence of a chapel, where the wooden statue of the Madonna was placed after construction was finished. The wooden polychrome statue representing the *Madonna di Campagna* (*Countryside Madonna*), deeply venerated in the past, and the ones of *Santa Caterina*

(St. Catherine) and *San Giovanni Battista* (St. John the Baptist) date back to the 14th century. It was possible to determine the dating of the statues thanks to the style used in the creation of the sculptures, for example, the Gothic structure of the Virgin's left side. Starting from 1530, Giovanni Antonio de Sacchis, known as Pordenone, created the frescoes of the central cupola, of S. Caterina's and of the Magi's chapels (likely with the help of other artists), as well as a fresco on the left side of the entrance, representing Sant'Agostino. The skills of the artist in achieving foreshortened figures are shown in the frescoes of the dome, in particular, inside the lantern, where God descends towards the altar twirling, supported by joyful cupids. The church has been used as a civic temple and as the Farnese Family's ducal chapel. For this reason a clear reference to the city of Piacenza appears in many of its frescoes, as for example in the lunette representing *la Decollazione di Santa Caterina* (*the Beheading of Saint Catherine*), where the cathedral's bell tower is recognizable in the urban landscape of the background. Further references to the city can be noticed also in the background of the main scene of *San Giorgio e il Drago* (*Saint George and the Dragon*) by Bernardino Gatti, on the right of the entrance. The statue of *Ranuccio Farnese* by Francesco Mochi demonstrates that, even during



■ Pordenone and Bernardino Gatti
Cupola
(16th century)

■ Church of Santa Maria di Campagna (from 1522)
Interior





■ **Church of Santa Maria di Campagna (from 1522)**

Interior: Saint Caterina's cappella on the background with **Pordenone** frescoes; Ranuccio Farnese's statue (**Francesco Mochi**) in front, on the left side



■ **Francesco Mochi**
Ranuccio Farnese, particular

the following century, the church was still a palatine chapel. *L'Annunciazione* (the *Annunciation*) by Camillo Boccaccino, dating back to 1530, and now situated in the presbytery, was originally a decoration for the internal part of one of the two organs (the Prophets, David and Isaiah were represented on the outside and today they are kept in the Art Gallery of the Civic Museum in Palazzo Farnese). Noteworthy is also the wooden choir (1560-1565), realized by Giulio Rossi, while the Piacentine Giulio Mazzoni, was the author of the stucco and fresco decoration of the Santa Vittoria's chapel, a very rare example of late-Mannerist Roman decoration.

The paintings of S. Sebastiano and S. Rocco, in the left transept, were realized by Camillo Procaccini and date back to the beginning of the 17th century. In the late 17th century was then realized the altarpiece, *La Madonna e Santi* (the *Madonna and the Saints*) by Piero Antonio Avanzini for S. Antonio's chapel, (where now is also located the painting *Il perdono di Assisi* (*Assisi Forgiveness*), dated 1610 and originally meant for the left transept), whose decoration by Ferdinando Galli Bibiena dates back to the middle of the following century. *L'Annunciazione* (the *Annunciation*) by Ignazio Stern dates back to 1724, while the group of statues in the right transept portraying the Crucifix, the Virgin, St. John and Mary Magdalene, by Jan Jacob Geernaert, are dated 1757. Interesting are also the rectangular paintings in the frieze, realized between the beginning of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century by various artists, such as Alessando Tiarini, Daniele Crespi, Camillo Gavasetti and many others. Among the 19th-century works of art preserved in the church, six oval paintings with *Santi* (*Saints*), by the young Gaspare Landi, deserve a special mentioning.

■ **ADDRESS:** Piazzale delle Crociate, Piacenza
■ **Tel:** +39.0523490728



CHIESA DI SANT'EUFEMIA

| Saint Eufemia's Church |

This church was founded before the year 1000 AD, but Bishop Aldo commissioned the current structure after the body of the Saint was found (in 1091), and the church was finally consecrated in 1107. An architectural analysis showed traces of two previous building phases towards the end of the 11th century and early 12th century, while the remakes to which the church undergone in 17th and 18th centuries were partly removed during later restoration works. The architect Camillo Guidotti (1853-1925) reconstructed the façade in the early Romanesque style in 1904. Fortunately, the gorgeous 12th-century capitals in the portico are still well conserved; evoking the typical iconographic theme of the time, the capitals represent the triumph of Good, on the left, over Evil, on the right, which is portrayed as a mermaid, symbol of the Nature's duplicity. Inside, a precious painting by Cesare Cesariano (1512), representing the *Madonna and Christ Child between St. Eufemia, St. Agnes and two warrior Saints*, is still conserved.



■ **Saint Eufemia's Church (11th-12th century)**
Façade



■ **Saint Eufemia's Church (11th-12th century)**
Interior

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Sant'Eufemia 27, Piacenza
■ **Tel:** +39.0523320304

CHIESA DI SAN GIOVANNI IN CANALE

| Church of Saint Giovanni in Canale |



■ Church of Saint Giovanni in Canale (1121-1270)
Façade



■ Church of Saint Giovanni in Canale (1121-1270)
Interior

The Foundation of this Dominican convent and church dedicated to St. John the Baptist dates back to 1227, as evidenced by recent studies. After its closure in 1810, the church reopened as a parish in 1862, while the adjacent convent was partly destroyed because of the construction of the Carmelite convent in via Nova in 1881. The gabled façade presents characteristics of the *ad quadratum* (square) floor plans, in which the length and the height are the same, and which was a typical feature of Italian, medieval churches. The church longitudinal structure is a hall, or *Hallenkirche*, in which the three naves are of the same height, separated by tall pilasters, like those in German churches. However, the features that mainly attracted modern scholars is the use of two different types of ceilings, each defining a specific space – one for the area reserved to the Monks and the other for the devotees. The Scotti family was the protector of the church, but many other aristocratic families, as for example the Barattieri, decided to build their funeral chapel here. The presbytery, which was lengthened at the beginning of the 16th century, contains frescoes by Francesco Natali (1669-1735), Sebastiano Galeotti (1676-1741) and Bartolomeo Rusca (1680-1750). Famous paintings by the Piacentine artist Gaspare Landi (1756-1830) and Vincenzo Camuccini (1771-1844) are conserved in the impressive, neo-classic chapel of the *Holy Virgin of the Rosary*, while traces of detached frescoes and the sarcophagus of Alberto Scotti (14th century) are in the right nave.

■ ADDRESS: Via Croce, Piacenza

CHIESA DI SANT'AGOSTINO

| Saint Agostino's Church |

The construction of the religious complex began on September 14th, 1550, when the first stone of the monastery was set. The building of the church started in 1570 on the 1555 foundations, as shown by the construction contract signed by Bernardino Panizzari, called *Caramosino* (1536-1612). After its deconsecrating in 1798, the property was given to the Military Land Administration and it was used as barracks until the 1990s. The impressive Latin cross plan of the church, with five naves in the main wing and three in the transept, a presbytery and an ambulatory, is the largest in the city. The naves are supported by Doric order, binary columns whose friezes are decorated with metopes and triglyphs, to which correspond pilasters with niches in the lateral naves. A majestic, barrel-vaulted cupola covers the central nave, the side naves are covered by small cupolas, while those at the far end are covered by cross vaults. The inside is illuminated by large Palladian windows in the counter-façade, in the presbytery and in the arms of the transept. Camillo Morigia (1743-1795), who obtained the tender, finished the neoclassic façade in 1792. The well-known refectory, currently used as a gym, contains only a part of the fresco *The Last Supper* by Gian Paolo Lomazzo (1538-1600), which was destroyed during the last war.

■ ADDRESS: Stradone Farnese 35, Piacenza



■ Saint Agostino's Church (1570)
Façade



■ Saint Agostino's Church (1570)
Cupola

CHIESA DI SANT'ANTONINO

| Saint Antonino's Church |



■ **Saint Antonino's Church (5th-14th century)**
External and internal view

The Basilica of S. Antonino is one of the most interesting sacred buildings in Piacenza and is certainly one of the earliest places of Christian worship (4th century). The body of Saint Antonino, a Roman soldier beheaded under Diocleziano's persecutions in 303 AD, was moved to the original Basilica at the end of the 4th century. Saint Antonino is currently the Patron Saint of Piacenza and his remains, which were found in the crypt of the small, nearby church of S. Maria in Cortina, are preserved in an urn under the main Altar, together with those of San Vittore, the first Bishop of Piacenza. Being located *extra moenia* (outside the city walls) and used as a *martyrum* basilica on a Roman necropolis territory, the church was subjected to various acts of ransacking and plundering, until its total destruction in the 10th century. Due to its peculiar structure, scholars believe that the current building is the result of various construction stages, but the planimetry is still identifiable with that of the church built in 1014, during the time of Bishop Sigisfredo. The reversed Latin-cross floor plan and the transept that intersects the length of the church at the entrance, as well as the octagonal belfry (lightened by three series of two-mullioned windows), date back to this period. The portico, called of *Paradise* was created by the architect Pietro Vago in 1350, who dignified in this way the prestige of the entrance that looks to the *via francigena* and the city itself. On the top of the portico, during the restoration works of 1912 were added some pinnacles. In the walls are then recognizable some gravestones and two inscriptions: one in memory of the election of the Piacentine Tedaldo Visconti as Pope

Gregory 10th (who is also the subject of a bronze statue by Giorgio Groppi) and the other commemorating the debates held here for Constance Peace in 1183. Artists of the Piacentine School realized the late 12th-century stone figures of Adam and Eve in the portal. Inside, the church is divided into three naves by massive pillars and, westward, the structure seems to retreat, because of the polygonal tower that rises here.

The floor was raised, preserving the base of the pre-Romanesque pillars. The importance of this structure is confirmed by the presence of some mid-11th century frescoes that probably decorated the whole building, and whose traces nowadays remain only in the attic and at the bottom of the bell tower. These frescoes are remarkable for both their intense connection between architecture and decorations and for the quality of the paintings, which can be attributed to the Lombard school. In the western entrance, there was once a fresco of the *Last Judgement*, while the frescoes in the presbytery, depicting the *Jesus Glory*, were carried out by Camillo Gavasetti, a painter sponsored by Odoardo Farnese, and date back to 1624. In the same year, an altarpiece representing *The Last Supper* was added to the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, by a Genoan artist, Bernardo Castello. Bernardo Morando, a court poet for the Farnese family who also came from Liguria, had commissioned it. In the presbytery, there are also five large paintings of the *Stories of Saint Antonino* by Robert de Longe (1693-1695), undoubtedly his most important work in Piacenza. It should be pointed out that the conservative intervention done in the 19th century defined the current interior features, and the restoration works done in the 20th century by the architect G. U. Arata are remarkable for the rigorous attention shown in re-establishing the church's original style.

■ **ADDRESS:** Piazza Sant'Antonino, Piacenza
Tel: +39.0523320653



■ **Saint Antonino's Church**
Bells tower
(11th century)



■ **Robert de Longe**
Stories of Saint Antonino
(1693-1695)



Piacenza tells its history through past and recent monuments and sculptures. Its urban furniture is an important statement.



106 | Equestrian Statues

Francesco Mochi



107 | The Dolmen

William Xerra



107 | Garibaldi Monument

Enrico Astorri



108 | Romagnosi Monument

Cristoforo Marzaroli



108 | Scultura 2000

Giorgio Groppi



109 | Pontieri Monument

Mario Salazzari



109 | La Lupa



110 | S. Antonino Monument

Sergio Brizzolesi



110 | Caduti del Mare Monument

Franco Pizzi



111 | La Grande Avventura

Bruno Cassinari

City
MONUMENTS



CITY MONUMENTS

EQUESTRIAN STATUES

Ranuccio & Alessandro Farnese



The two equestrian statues depicting the Captain Alessandro Farnese and his son Ranuccio, were realized by Francesco da Montevarchi (1580–1654), called *il Mochi*, to be placed in the square in front of the Gothic Palace, called Piazza Cavalli (Square of the Horses), where they are located since the 18th century. The statue of Ranuccio on the west side was the first to be completed (1620), and has a classicist halo, befitting the personality of a leader. It is therefore no coincidence that, on the base of the statue, there are bronze plates depicting allegories of the Good Government. The statue of Alessandro (1625) is instead a Baroque masterpiece that fully expresses the dynamic character of this ruler. The base depicts two scenes of the Battle of Zutphen (Flanders) where Alessandro Farnese became renowned throughout Europe. At the bottom of the two monuments, four cupids carry the coat of arms of the city.

■ **ADDRESS:** Piazza Cavalli, Piacenza

■ **Francesco Mochi**

Above: Alessandro Farnese
Below and on the opening page:
Ranuccio Farnese

This monument was commissioned by the Provincial Federation of the Resistance to the Piacentine artist William Xerra (born 1937) in 1976, to celebrate the thirty-first anniversary of Italian Liberation. The structure incorporates the essential elements of the ancient Neolithic dolmens: enormous funerary stones used as collective graves and considered as locations full of symbolism. The monument is therefore a natural and essential way to remember those who died for the country's liberation. The three granitic stones weight 40 tonnes.

■ **ADDRESS:** crossroad between Stradone Farnese and Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, Piacenza

This monument was commissioned to Enrico Astorri, a famous Piacentine artist (1859-1921) in 1889 by the *Società Garibaldi Reduci Patrie Battaglie* (The Garibaldi Society of the Veterans of Homeland Battles). He studied at the Gazzola Art Institute and later worked in various Italian cities, in Russia, Argentina and Uruguay as a follower of Realism. Giuseppe Garibaldi is portrayed here as a victorious general with a worried and thoughtful air. At the base of the monument, one of his soldiers is represented while inciting his comrades. The sculptor, who was a skilled marble worker, also sculpted a bust of Mazzini, the Ceresa chapel and the statue of Christopher Columbus in Bettola.

■ **ADDRESS:** Giardini Margherita next to the station, Piacenza

■ **Enrico Astorri**
Garibaldi Monument (1889)

THE DOLMEN



■ **William Xerra**
The Dolmen (1976)

GARIBALDI MONUMENT





■ **Cristoforo Marzaroli**
Romagnosi Monument (1866-1867)



■ **Giorgio Groppi**
Sculpture 2000 (2009)

ROMAGNOSI MONUMENT

This statue, dedicated to Gian Domenico Romagnosi (1761-1835), was crafted between 1866 and 1867 by Cristoforo Marzaroli (1836-1871). Native of Salsomaggiore, Romagnosi was a jurist and magistrate who studied in Piacenza at the Alberoni School, taught at university and became one of the most important legal experts of the time. He was persecuted by the Austrian regime both before and after Napoleon's reign. Many of his tomes are conserved in the Braidense Library while a huge bronze statue of him is located in the porch of the Ambrosiana Library. The Piacentine sculpture represents him standing, covered in jurist robes, with a pensive air about him. He is portrayed bowed and with one arm on his chest while his left hand is holding a document as statement of his great jurist production.

■ **ADDRESS:** Piazzetta San Francesco, near Piazza Cavalli, Piacenza

SCULTURA 2000

Sculpture 2000

This piece was located outside of Palazzo Farnese in 2009, and was donated to the city by the sculptor Giorgio Groppi and by the Association of Piacentine Industrialists. It is the author's personal interpretation of an equestrian statue, which has an antique tradition in our city.

■ **ADDRESS:** Viale Risorgimento (near Palazzo Farnese), Piacenza

Built in 1928 after the request of Piacenza's mayor, Giuseppe Barbellini Amidei, this sculpture was inspired by a draft presented by a young sculptor, Mario Salazzari, who was a bridge builder in Verona.

The vertical structure is about 16 meters high; on the southern side towards the city are depicted the Bridge Builders pushing a boat while rescuing the needy and the Goddess Minerva with coats of arms at her sides. On the opposite side, a woman is raising a child towards the Po River. The eastern and western sides show allegories of the Isonzo and Piave Rivers, realized following a Classical style, inspired by Gian Lorenzo Bernini's *Monument to the Four Rivers* in Piazza Navona, in Rome. Halfway up the stele the visitors can recognize the coats of arms of the cities of Rome, Venice, Piacenza and Verona. The Army Corps of Bridge Builders has always been a proud and joy for the Italian Army.

■ **ADDRESS:** Piazzale Milano, Piacenza

PONTIERI MONUMENT

(to the bridge builders)



■ **Mario Salazzari**
Bridge Builders Monument (1928)

This sculpture was ordered in 1938, to celebrate Vittorio Emanuele's proclamation as Emperor of Ethiopia. The Mayor of Piacenza, De Francesco, had a copy of the Roman She-Wolf brought to Piacenza, and commissioned the architect Pietro Berzolla (1898-1984) to create a base for it. He therefore created a 3.5-meter-long cube and of two 7.30-meter-high granite pillars (originally located in Palazzo Farnese) connected by an architrave and bearing the inscription S.P.Q.R, together with a commemoration of the founding of the city: *Vigile scolta tra I barbari vinti (Watchful is the guard among the defeated barbarians).*

■ **ADDRESS:** Piazzale Roma, Piacenza

LA LUPA



■ **La Lupa**
(1938)

SAINT ANTONINO MONUMENT



■ Sergio Brizzolesi
S. Antonino
Monument (2002)

This bronze statue realized by Sergio Brizzolesi (1933) represents the Patron Saint of Piacenza, a valiant soldier who faced martyrdom after converting to Christianity.

Installed in 2002, its right hand holds a banner while the other is resting on the Cross that the Saint is carrying around his neck. In the base is located a mechanism that makes the statue turn around clockwise, thanks to a satellite signal transmitted from the Galileo Ferraris Institute in Turin. Eight panels cover it: five are dedicated to Piacenza and three to artistic areas of the surrounding province.

■ **ADDRESS:** between the Public Stroll and Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, Piacenza

CADUTI DEL MARE MONUMENT

(to the fallen sailors)



■ Franco Pizzi
Fallen Sailors
Monument (1986)

This work of art, created in 1986 by the Piacentine artist Franco Pizzi, was commissioned to remember those sailors who lost their lives at sea. The statue, made up of an anchor and a wave, is located in front of the Pedagogical High School, in Via Beverora.

The artist tried to highlight the connection between Man and Sea by depicting a wave, whose top seems to have a human shape. It is a unique piece, melted in the Arsenal, and is made up of a special alloy that protects it from oxidation.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Beverora, Piacenza

A Piacentine artist named Bruno Cassinari (1912-1992) built this monument in 1983, to celebrate the Bi-millennium of the foundation of the city. Verses by the poet Salvatore Quasimodo are inscribed on the granite base: *ognuno sta solo sul cuore della terra trafitto da un raggio di sole ed è subito sera (Each one of us stands alone at the centre of the earth / pierced by a ray of sun / and it is suddenly evening)*. The statue is located in Piazzetta Tempio, between Palazzo Marliani and Palazzo Scotti da Vigoleno, which was built in the middle of the 18th century as the headquarters of the prefecture. Bruno Cassinari is considered one of the most important mid-20th century Italian artists: he was a member of the famous Milanese group called *Corrente*, became friend of Picasso in Antibes and held an important anthological exposition in Palazzo Farnese in 2003.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via San Giovanni (Piazzetta Tempio), Piacenza

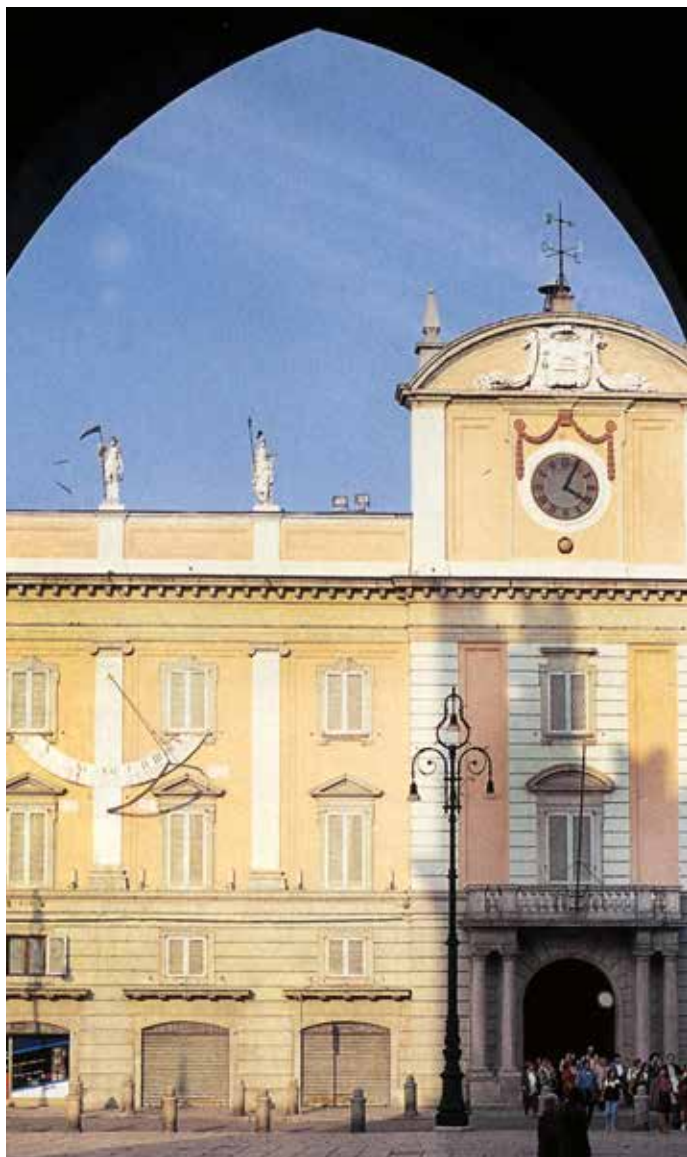
LA GRANDE AVVENTURA

The Great Adventure



■ Bruno Cassinari
The Great Adventure (1983)





City PALACES



114 | Palazzo Gotico

- 115 | Palazzo dei Mercanti
- 115 | Palazzo del Governatore



116 | Palazzo Galli

- 117 | Palazzo della Provincia
- 117 | Palazzo Mischi



118 | Palazzo Rota Pisaroni

- 119 | Palazzo Falconi
- 119 | Palazzo Baldini Radini Tedeschi
- 120 | Palazzo Scotti di Sarmato
- 120 | Palazzo Anguissola Cimafava Rocca
- 121 | Palazzo Landi delle Caselle
- 121 | Palazzo Malvicini Fontana



122 | Palazzo Anguissola di Grazzano

- 122 | Palazzo Ferrari Sacchini
- 123 | Palazzo Giacometti
- 123 | Palazzo Bertamini Lucca



124 | Palazzo Landi (del Tribunale)

- 125 | Palazzo Madama
- 125 | Palazzo Mandelli



126 | Palazzo Costa

- 127 | Palazzo Scotti da Vigoleno
- 127 | Palazzo Somaglia



PALAZZO GOTICO



■ Palazzo Gotico
(1281)
External view



■ Palazzo Gotico
(1281)
Hall

Commissioned by Alberto Scoto, a powerful lord of the city, in 1281, the Town Hall was built on the area where the convent of *San Bartolomeo* and the *Church of Santa Maria de Bigulis* stood; its construction was entrusted to the architects Pietro da Borghetto, Gherardo Campanario, Pietro da Cagnano and Negro de' Negri. The building is called *Gothic* because of its pointed stone arches, and is considered one of the finest examples of Italian Town Halls. In the 17th century, the spacious, 700 sq.-meter hall on the first floor, formerly used for meetings of the Elders, was transformed into a wooden theatre, and a bronze bell, which is still rung on special occasions, was placed on the turret. The Palace underwent several modifications between the 16th and the 17th centuries, including the removal of a balcony facing the square. From the middle of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century, many changes were made to free the building of superfluous elements that had altered its original state. Nowadays, the façade is divided into two parts: the lower part is distinguishable by five dominating pointed arches that limit a portico with two naves covered by cross vaults. The upper one, in brick, has six semi-circular arches with various terracotta ornaments. A niche can be seen between the fourth and fifth arch, where stands a copy of a statue of the Madonna and Christ Child (the original 13th century statue is in the Civic Museum) from the Church of S. Francesco. The sides of the building are similar to the front and are held up by arches with pinnacles. The first-floor hall is used as a venue for shows and exhibitions, as well as for important meetings.

■ ADDRESS: Piazza Cavalli, Piacenza



PALAZZO DEI MERCANTI

This two-floors building, with a vast double-columned portico was the old headquarters for Piacentine merchants. It was rebuilt according to Camillo Cacciakupi's project between 1679 and 1697. Duchess Marie Louise donated it to the city of Piacenza in 1840. The main staircase has a wonderful frescoed vault and it includes a delightful balustrade with a fine-quality wooden statue of *Justice*. Nowadays the City Council meets here, in the spacious Council Hall on the first floor.



■ Palazzo dei
Mercanti (1676-
1697) • Façade

■ ADDRESS: Piazza Cavalli, Piacenza



PALAZZO DEL GOVERNATORE

The name of the building derives from the fact that it was used as the headquarters of the City Governors until its renovation in 1860. Built by L. Tomba, its elongated front blends in well with the square context. The façade has two square towers at the corners and elegant classical statues next to the central cymatium, which contains a clock. The calendar and the sundial were installed in 1793 by the physicist G.F. Barattieri. Currently, the Governor's Palace is the headquarter of the Chamber of Commerce.

■ ADDRESS: Piazza Cavalli, Piacenza



PALAZZO GALLI



■ **Palazzo Galli**
(17th-18th century)
Façade and Via
Mazzini



■ **Palazzo Galli**
(17th-18th century)
Depositanti hall

This is one of the most renowned buildings of the city, to the point that, during the period of French Administration (1802-1814), it was used to lodge the Governor of Piacenza. In the 17th century, it belonged to the Raggia family, although it takes its name from the Counts Galli, who owned the building from 1767 to 1872. Then it was bought by the *Banca Popolare Piacentina*, who commissioned many works of art, between 1904 and 1905, on the grand staircase: it was indeed decorated with frescoes depicting *The Allegory of the Earth* by Alfredo Tansini and *The Apotheosis of Italy* by Francesco Ghittoni. The Raggias committed the frescoes on the first-floor hall depicting *The Episodes of Julius Caesar* by the painter Giovanni Ghisolfi (1623-1683), while, in the same Hall, the ceiling fresco *Julius Caesar being received on Olympus by Mercury* was painted by Giuseppe Milani (1716-1796) and commissioned by the Galli Family. Milani also frescoed *The Allegory of the Sea* on the grand staircase. The building was sold in 1919 to the Agricultural Consortium (here had been found The Italian Federation of Agricultural Consortia, in 1892.), but the palace was again linked to a bank when the *Bank of Piacenza* opened here its first branch. The bank also bought some surrounding buildings, such as the one belonging to the Counts Barattieri di San Pietro. When the Agricultural Consortium moved to its new building in Via Colombo, in 1997, the local bank reclaimed this historic property, and, after some swift renovation works, the Palace is now an enjoyable venue for artistic and cultural events of the city

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Mazzini 14, Piacenza



PALAZZO DELLA PROVINCIA

The headquarters of the Province is considered the best example of the Umbertin style in Piacenza, thanks to the spatial and volumetric sense of equilibrium of the building, which is also enlivened by Art Nouveau elements. Projected by the Provincial Technical Office in 1912, it was later renewed to its current shape by the architect Manfredo Manfredi, who had already worked on public projects in Rome. (He realized the monument to Vittorio Emanuele 2nd in Piazza Venezia and the Viminal Palace).

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Garibaldi 50, Piacenza



■ **Palazzo della
Provincia (from
1912)** • Façade



PALAZZO MISCHI

Built during the first half of the 18th century, the building has a sober façade, with traces of frescoes, and is enhanced by a pleasant wrought iron balcony in the centre. The porticoed inner courtyard is paved with typical flower-patterned cobblestones that lead to the stairway. Because of its clearly Bibienesque corner views, the staircase is the most remarkable feature of the whole building. The vault fresco was realized by B. Rusca and his workshop.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Garibaldi 24, Piacenza

■ **Palazzo Mischi (first half of 1700)** • Façade



PALAZZO ROTA PISARONI



■ **Palazzo Rota Pisoni**
(18th century)
Façade on via Sant'Eufemia



■ **Palazzo Rota Pisoni**
(18th century)
Portico

This building, planned by Domenico Cernini (1689-1756), was commissioned by the Rota family (who earned the title of Count in 1769) between 1750 and 1762. The singer Rosmunda Benedetta Pisoni owned it in 1830, before it was bought by the *Cassa di Risparmio* in 1906. The bank committed restoration works to the architect Franco Albini. The Palace was then bought by the *Fondazione di Piacenza and Vigevano* in 2007, who continued the restoration works thanks to the architect Angelo Benzi. The breathtaking, richly decorated, late-Baroque façade towards the street is characterized by an entranceway with mixed-line motifs and by a wrought iron balcony. The grand staircase follows the *scala libera* (open stairs) scheme, that is, it opens towards the courtyard with its opposing, curved ramps. In the double-height, grand hall there is a medallion showing the *Fall of Phaethon*, painted by Luigi Mussi (1694-1771) inside *quadratures* by Natali. On the walls, there are the paintings - *Flowers* by Margherita Caffi (1670-1780), *The Seasons* by Ludovico Trasi and *The Heroines of the Old Testament* by Giovanni and Antonio Rubini (1730 c.) - all inserted in stucco frames.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Sant'Eufemia 13, Piacenza

PALAZZO FALCONI



This small building has a lovely, parallel-ramped staircase, with a ribbed vault and a hanging lantern in the middle, which leads to the first floor portico and on to the main hall, decorated by G. B. Ercole, an artist who was particularly appreciated for his *quadratures* and figures. He created monochrome representations of Mercury, Apollo, Hercules and Antaeus in between exedras and columns that tend to widen the space around them.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Sant'Antonino 3, Piacenza



■ **Palazzo Falconi**
(18th century)
Stairway vault

PALAZZO BALDINI RADINI TEDESCHI



This building, organized around three courtyards, is 80 meters long overlooking via San Siro. You can reach the extraordinary double-body room walking through the Bibiena staircase. Remarkable decorative frescoes were realized by important painters such as D. Piola, R. De Longe, F. Rusca and F. Natali.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via San Siro 72-74-76, Piacenza

■ **Palazzo Baldini Radini Tedeschi**
(18th century)





PALAZZO SCOTTI DI SARMATO



■ Palazzo Scotti di Sarmato (18th century) • Stairway

The construction of this majestic building started in 1772, according to a project by C. Morelli. The grand staircase is noteworthy for the preciousness of the materials used and for the typically Bibienesque stucco decorations. Particularly interesting is the overall vision of the splendid Italian garden that is accessible from the gate on Stradone Farnese, in front of the Basilica of Sant'Agostino.

■ ADDRESS: Via San Siro 17, Piacenza



PALAZZO LANDI DELLE CASELLE

This edifice was built at the end of the 18th century, and its long façade is adorned by wrought iron balconies. An internal apartment was planned by the Piacentine architect L. Tomba. After crossing the large, columned portico, the grand staircase opens to the gallery and the entrance. The frescoes visible in various parts of the building were realized by the artists Schiepati, Cornelianani and Legnani from Milan.

■ ADDRESS: Stradone Farnese 32, Piacenza



PALAZZO ANGUISSOLA DI CIMAFAVA ROCCA



■ Palazzo Anguissola di Cimafova Rocca • Hall

This immense, stately building has a vast, pillared foyer that leads into the central courtyard, which, in turn, leads to a garden separated by picturesque arches holding up a hanging passageway that connects the internal wings. The noble staircase opens onto the spacious hall of honor, which is the most important part of the building: it contains light, but elegant stuccoes and a remarkable pictorial cycle dedicated to Alexander the Great - which suggests an influence of Venetian painting, especially from Tiepolo to Fontebasso.

■ ADDRESS: Via Giordani 2, Piacenza



PALAZZO MALVICINI FONTANA

This is a large building whose façade is richly decorated with Bibienesque elements. The wide courtyard has porticoes on two sides: one of them leads to the impressive, three-ramped grand staircase decorated with paintings, now deteriorated, and with three-dimension decorations, which are better conserved.

■ ADDRESS: Via Verdi 13-15, Piacenza



■ Palazzo Malvicini Fontana (17th century) • Courtyard



PALAZZO ANGISSOLA DI GRAZZANO




Planned by the outstanding architect Cosimo Morelli, who also worked for Pope Braschi in Rome, this building contains late-Baroque architectural elements melted with Louis 16th motifs. The grand staircase is similar to the one realized by Bernini in Palazzo Barberini, in Rome. A. Della Nave and A. Villa decorated the vault of the staircase and frescoed the ballroom, where the visitors can admire architectural structures and bas-reliefs realized by Giovan Battista Ercole.

▮ **ADDRESS:** Via Roma 99, Piacenza

▮ Palazzo Anguissola di Grazzano (1777) • Stairway



PALAZZO GIACOMETTI




This late 18th-century building, with its imposing terracotta façade decorated with three rows of windows, was built in the usual U-shaped design. It is dominated by one of the highest turrets in the city and its main staircase is noteworthy for the Bibienesque inspiration. 19th-century decorations enhance the rooms, while the apse of the Basilica of Sant'Antonino can be seen from the courtyard.

▮ **ADDRESS:** Via Scalabrini 7, Piacenza

▮ Palazzo Giacometti (second half 18th century)



PALAZZO FERRARI SACCHINI




This building has a vividly decorated façade with two rows of windows animated by complex tympanums, above which are located bulging shelves, connected by large Bibienesque garlands. The double loggia of the inner courtyard opens onto a three-ramped staircase covered by a roof-terrace that is lavishly adorned with stuccoes. Pleasing frescoed decorations by R. De Longe and M. Rizzi can be admired on the inside.

▮ **ADDRESS:** Via Carducci 11, Piacenza

▮ Palazzo Ferrari Sacchini • Stairway vault



PALAZZO BERTAMINI LUCCA



The edifice was built by the Bertamini family, rich Ligurian merchants who already owned a large building in Fiorenzuola. The brick façade has a beautiful iron gate graced with Farnese lilies.

The portico on the ground floor faces the garden while the stairway, with its double parallel, Bibiena-style ramps, leads to the main hall, which is embellished with refined stuccoes and frescoed vaults realized by E. Prati (1870 c.).

▮ **ADDRESS:** Via Sopramuro 60, Piacenza

▮ Palazzo Bertamini Lucca (18th century)



PALAZZO LANDI (THE TRIBUNAL)



■ Palazzo Landi
(end of 18th–early
19th century)
Marble portal



■ Palazzo Landi
(end of 18th–early
19th century)
Marble portal,
particular

This is the most fascinating example of a Renaissance noble residence in Piacenza. It was built at the end of the 18th century by Manfredo Landi, a councilor of the Dukes of Milan. In 1578, the complex was requisitioned by Duke Ottavio Farnese after a conspiracy against his father Pierluigi, in which Agostino Landi took part. It then became the headquarters of the *Supreme Council of Justice and Pardon* and, subsequently, the *Courthouse of the Revenue Services*. It currently houses the Tribunal and the Court of Assizes.

Manfredo Landi commissioned the façade to Giovanni Battagio from Lodi, author of the *Temple of the Coronation* in Lodi, and to his son-in-law, Agostino de Fonduli, a promoter of Bramante's style, which he learnt while working on the Church of St. Mary's in San Satiro, Milan. His skills are well visible in the elegant terracotta ornaments along the two façades of the building that lighten up the simple structure, otherwise animated only by the lunettes framing some of the windows. The splendid marble entryway was made by a sculptor from Rho in Lombardy, Giovan Pietro, author of the entrance of Palazzo Stanga in Cremona, which is now in the Louvre. The shape of the entrance harks back to ancient triumphal Roman arches and it is decorated with two classical medallions with virile profiles. The 18th century main hall leads to the majestic, four-sided, porticoed courtyard with semi-circle arches held up by columns. The walls are decorated with brick medallions similar to those on the façade.

■ ADDRESS: Vicolo del Consiglio 12, Piacenza



PALAZZO MADAMA

This palace was commissioned in 1658 by Madame Margherita de' Medici, mother of Ranuccio 2nd. Its terraced gardens in the back that sloped down towards the Po River were quite famous in the 18th century. The palace was later used as Customs Offices in 1779, and, around 1866, as a jail. After a long period of restoration work, it is now the headquarters of the District Attorney of the Republic.

■ ADDRESS: Vicolo del Consiglio 15, Piacenza



PALAZZO MANDELLI

This vast building, headquarters of the Bank of Italy, occupies the entire block of via Mandelli and is organized around two courtyards. The 75-meter-long main façade, has three rows of windows. The lobby is the largest of all Piacentine noble buildings. It leads to the immense courtyard and, on the right, to the grand staircase with its two parallel flights. The stairwell is one of the better-conserved parts of the building.

■ ADDRESS: Via Mandelli 14, Piacenza

■ Palazzo Mandelli
(18th century)
Entrance





PALAZZO COSTA



■ Palazzo Costa
(end 17th century)
Façade



■ Palazzo Costa
(end 17th century)
Stucchi Hall

The building was planned by Ferdinando Bibiena and is one of the most remarkable structures of late 18th-century, noble architecture in Piacenza. Noteworthy is the elegant, smooth, ashlars façade embellished with refined stuccoes and Rococo wrought iron. The building has porticoes on three sides surrounding a large garden with a balustrade and statues dedicated to the Seasons. A very original solution was adopted for the striking, luminous main staircase. The first flight of stairs is integrated into the three arcades of the porch and the resulting space is charmingly decorated with stuccoes and frescoes along with statues of Juno, Venus, Flora and Pomona. On the opposite side, an elliptical stairway with cantilevered steps and superb, Rococo wrought iron elements create a whimsical effect. The hall on the main floor (1699) is a masterpiece of perspective with five orders of arches designed by Ferdinando Galli Bibiena, and fake sculptures by G. Evangelista Draghi.

The other halls have been converted into the *Museo Ambientale del Settecento* (The 18th-century Environmental Museum), and are open to the public. Fascinating 18th century paintings and furniture are on display.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Roma 80, Piacenza

Tel: +39.0523306137
+39.3387451756

■ **Visits:** all year round, free guided tours by appointment



PALAZZO SCOTTI DA VIGOLENO



■ Palazzo Scotti da
Vigoleno (from 1718)

The building, which is currently the headquarters of the Prefecture, is simple and linear, but immense in size, as visible by the lobby. The great stairway is unusual and strongly monumental. The splendid hall of honor is entirely frescoed. The authors of the important decorations in the hall were B. Rusca for the illustrations, and G. and F. Natali for the architectural motifs.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via San Giovanni 17, Piacenza



PALAZZO SOMAGLIA

The construction of the building was commissioned at the end of the 1600s. The façade, with its simple lines, is punctuated by three rows of windows, and lightened by three bowed, wrought iron balconies. Of great architectural interest is the marvelous staircase, with four oblique, opposing ramps that are pleasantly lit by windows. The frescoes that adorn the vaults of the staircase were done by the trompe l'oeil artist F. Natali in collaboration with R. de Longe and his workshop for the figurative art (first half of the 18th century).

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Taverna 66, Piacenza

■ Palazzo Somaglia (1688) • Interior





Theatres of Piacenza: fascinating spaces, which tell stories and emotions of different ages.



130 | Municipal Theatre



132 | Comunale Filodrammatici Theatre



134 | Saint Vincenzo's Church
"Sala dei Teatini"

■ 136 | S. Matteo Theatre

■ 137 | Gioia Theatre

City
THEATRES





MUNICIPAL THEATRE

On Christmas night, 1798, the *Cittadella Theatre*, which had been the centre of the theatrical activity for over 150 years, for the Piacentine aristocracy and nobility, burnt down. On August 24th, 1803, the construction of a new theatre, projected by Lotario Tomba and funded by a private association made up of noblemen, began. All the elements of theatrical architecture introduced by Piermarini and Morelli at the end of the 18th century were included in the project: the elliptical shape of the auditorium surrounded by 26 box seats (divided in 4 rows) aligned in a continuous balcony with the gallery above and closed by an oval, arched vault. The Theatre opened on the evening of September 10, 1804 performing *Zamori*, composed and directed by Giovanni Simone Mayr, the foremost musician of the moment. The Theatre was donated to the city of Piacenza in 1816 and, for this reason, its name changed in Municipal Theatre. In 1826, it was renovated by Alessandro Sanquirico, who worked as production designer for La Scala Theatre (Milan) from 1806 to 1832, and painted the *Flemish*

Curtain with a rural dance motif. Three years later, the mayor, Luigi Guarnaschelli, had the façade built according to Tomba's plans, with seven ashlar arcades.

Restoration works were carried out in 1857, giving the theatre the splendid appearance it has today. Several Piacentine artists worked to embellish the Art Director's room, then the foyer and the auditorium. The foyer was divided by glass doors into three connected rooms, giving it a sense of spaciousness, and the vault ceiling was frescoed.

Also the *Café* at the right of the atrium was renovated and reopened on January 27th, 2001, on the 100th anniversary of Giuseppe Verdi's (who lived in the Piacentine countryside) death.

The city had then the whole structure reinforced and refurbished. A stucco cameo with a portrait of Tomba can be seen at the entrance of the Auditorium, while the elliptical vault was divided into eight segments and repainted by Girolamo Magnani. The elegant frames and the proscenium arch were gilded with gold leaf by Piacentine artists, who also made the stage drapes to replace the original ones. The *Crown Stage*, with its imposing, refined, zoomorphic busts, was also incised and gilded. Especially noteworthy are then the theatre's candlestick and balloon lamps, which bring to mind the gas lighting that substituted candles during the 19th century. In 2004, a mammoth treatise written by various experts and edited by Stefano Pronti was published. It explains the history of this monument, its architectural characteristics compared to the other historical Italian theatres - the Municipal Theatre is considered one of the best - and it recollects these 200 years of operas, concerts, ballets and plays.



■ Municipal Theatre (1803-1804)

Interior and vault



■ Municipal Theatre (1803-1804)
Hallways



■ Municipal Theatre (1803-1804)
Stage

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Verdi 41, Piacenza

Tel: +39.0523492254

Ticket Office: +39.0523492251

E-mail: teatro@comune.piacenza.it



■ Municipal Theatre (1803-1804)

Façade

COMUNALE FILODRAMMATICI THEATRE

This 300-seats theatre was inaugurated in October 2000, after restoration works that brought the parterre and the box seats to their antique splendor. It can be defined as a historical presence in Piacenza's cultural scene and a small, but precious, example of noteworthy artistic venue.

The Municipal Amateur Dramatic Theatre of Piacenza was built inside the Church of St. Franca, which was founded in 1549, when the Cistercian nuns, who had left their convent in Pittolo in 1527, wanted to create a resting place for the body of their patron. The church was situated between via S. Siro and via Solferino (now via Santa Franca) and it had a basilica floor plan with a single nave covered by a barrel vault ceiling. Alongside the church was built the nuns' convent that nowadays is used as a music school dedicated to the famous Piacentine musicians Giuseppe Nicolini. At the beginning of the 19th century, during Napoleon's supremacy, the church and monastery became property of the public administration, and then, during Marie Louise of Austria's reign, it was given to the town of Piacenza and destined to different uses. It was then turned into a theatre and inaugurated in 1908, but in the 1980s, the roof started to collapse forcing the administration to shut it down and to start restoration works. In September 2000, thanks to donations from the Town of Piacenza, the *Fondazione di Piacenza e Vigevano* and the Region of Emilia-Romagna, the renewed Amateur Theatre was reopened to the public. Since 2001 it has been the headquarters of *Teatro Gioco Vita*, whose artistic director is Diego Maj. At the moment the theatre hosts different events during the theatrical season: parts of the *Tre per te* prose program of the



■ Comunale
Filodrammatici
Theatre • Façade

Municipal Theatre is put on stage here, as well as the Festival of Contemporary Theatre (*L'altra scena*), the theatre's dance company program, the seasonal children's theatre representation and all connected activities.

The liberty façade, carried out by Giovanni Gazzola, has three art nouveau entryways, a major and two laterals ones. The outside motif is defined as *butterfly wings*: the frames follow curved lines, which fit perfectly with the soft pink and grey colors of the walls. The main doors, with wrought-iron elements, have the same motifs, while the fairy lamps that illuminate the entrance have a peculiar snake tail, making them some of the most important art nouveau objects of the city. This kind of decorations has, as typical feature, an asymmetrical floral design, which resembles natural shapes in their curves and flowing movements, together with a predominant use of glass and wrought iron in its realization.

The main door leads to a foyer with a Venetian marble floor, where the inscription 1908 recalls the year of the theatre's restoration and inauguration. The U-shaped auditorium has two rows of galleries supported by pilasters and arches, and both the cavea and the proscenium are adorned with gold leafed woodwork. The dominant colors are ivory and light green, while the floral stucco decorations are gold with geometric designs that decorate the front of the stage. The umbrella vault is divided into wedges and decorated with frescoes of bunches of flowers (wisteria, roses, dahlias and daisies). The stage is proportional to the small dimensions of the hall, but is well equipped. The original stage curtain has recently been repaired and will be back to its original position as soon as possible. The vault and semi-pilasters of the stage testify to the religious origin of the building, while the latest renovation allowed the creation of large changing rooms and offices.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Santa Franca 33, Piacenza
Tel: +39.0523315578
Ticket Office: Via San Siro 9, Piacenza



■ Comunale
Filodrammatici
Theatre • Stage



■ Comunale
Filodrammatici
Theatre • Gallery
and parterre



SAINT VINCENZO'S CHURCH "SALA DEI TEATINI"

The construction of the church of S. Vincenzo began in 1595 and it was consecrated on June 29th, 1612. In 1810 it was closed, but then reopened in 1822, thanks to the intervention of several private citizens, who, in 1843, ceded the entire complex to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. They then sold it to the City of Piacenza in the 1970s. The building earned then the Gazzola Award, in 2010, for the restoration works done to transform it into a rehearsal studio for orchestras and into an auditorium, called the *Sala dei Teatini* (Hall of the Theatines).

The construction of the new church, likely using the older one as its transept, was commissioned by the Theatine brothers to the Neapolitan Brother Pietro Caracciolo in 1595. It has a cathedral floor plan with a transept divided into three naves with Tuscan Order columns. At the far end, the crossing is covered by a cupola and a high lantern tower on the outside with the lantern above the stringcourse. The

■ **Sala dei Teatini**
Façade and
interior



lateral naves are covered by a series of small cupolas (like in the church of S. Agostino) while the central one is covered by a groin vault in correspondence to the windows.

A series of frescoes (1706-1712) by Robert De Longe (1646-1709) and Giovanni Evangelista Draghi (1654-1712) can be admired on the cupola and on the transept (realized by Andrea and Giambattista Galluzzi) while the vault in the central nave (1760-1761) was frescoed by the Lombard artists Felice Biella and Federico Ferrario. The presbytery contains three scenes of the martyrdom of S. Vincenzo, by Robert De Longe, while the altarpieces of the chapels are now exposed in Palazzo Farnese Art Gallery.

■ **Sala dei Teatini**
Stage

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Scalabrini 9, Piacenza

■ **Tel:** +39.0523492251
+39.0523492259



S. MATTEO THEATRE

Thanks to funding provided by the *Teatro Gioco Vita* company and its director, Diego Maj, restoration works were carried out in 1986 to highlight this theatre's sacred origins, from a Pre-Romanesque temple to the church of the *Ospizio di San Matteo*. People worshipped here until 1895, the year its parish was abolished. The function of the building changed drastically in the early 20th century, when it was transformed into the *Verdi* cinema and hosted curtain raisers and an interesting repertory of prose. It was reduced to a second-rate cinema in the 1930s but re-opened in 1987 with *The Odyssey*, a shadow play by the company *Teatro Gioco Vita*. Since then, its activities included evening shows of contemporary plays, comedies and experimental theatre, afternoon activities for families and mornings shows dedicated to school groups. It also hosts laboratories, conferences and meetings. Its 200-seats capacity always permitted a close contact with the audience, thereby offering a notable contribution to the number of theatregoers from the city and suburbs. Associations and amateur theatre companies have been allowed to utilize this city-owned theatre since the 2003-2004 seasons.

The building is a fine example of a minor church located along what once was the main entrance of the city. A sculpted lintel from the side entrance, supposedly by Nicolò - one of Wiligelmo's pupils - is now exposed in the Civic Museum in Piacenza. A second one, showing a hand in the act of blessing, is cemented into a wall of the façade. The façade itself underwent crucial restoration and consolidation works at the end of the 1990s.



■ S. Matteo
Theatre
Interior

■ **ADDRESS:** Vicolo San Matteo 8, Piacenza



GIOIA THEATRE

Now run by the Theatre group *Teatro Gioco Vita*, this theatre (which, since 2002, belongs to the *Foundation of Piacenza and Vigevano*), was refurbished by Marcello Spigaroli. The building that hosts it is an ex Jesuit Church, founded around 1000 AD and originally dedicated to the Holy Trinity. It was donated to the monastery of S. Savino in 1031, then ceded to the Order of Minims in 1492, who dedicated it to their founder, S. Francesco di Paola. Thanks to a wooden structure built inside the church, it was turned into a theatre dedicated to Gian Domenico Romagnosi, and it hosted stage revues and other types of entertainment. The parterre was then surrounded by two rows of box seats, with a small gallery above, while the stage and backstage, in the presbytery, were on different levels, housing a total of 200-250 spectators. After the building was given over to the Jesuits in 1887, they had the theatre dismantled, the interior repainted and the bell tower restored. The church was re-consecrated in 1896 as *Church of the Sacred Heart*. It has one nave covered by a barrel vault, which is divided into eight arches with pilaster strips - three in the presbytery and five in the nave. The completely decorated interior is quite refined. Restoration works were aimed to create a multi-purpose area that could be used in different ways: as a theatre, for art exhibitions, for itinerant creations as well as for shows, displays, workshops, conferences, films, etc. A smaller hall was created in 2015 in the *Sala delle Colonne* for shows having a modest number of spectators, for conferences and workshops.

■ **ADDRESS:** Via Melchiorre Gioia 20/A,
Piacenza
Tel: +39.0523186019/+39.0523315578



■ Gioia Theatre
Interior space view