

*In Santa Margherita, an exceptional naturalistic heritage was preserved from the most serious deterioration of the building expansion and walking along the itineraries suggested here, you can still enjoy the views of the hill landscapes and seascapes full of charm and beauty. The trails, all of them dating back to a long time ago, tell the whole history of the town and of an industrious community. This latter aspect is revealed not only by the huge terracing work of the steep land for intensive olive-tree cultivation, but also in the cobbled paths climbing up the hills. The age-old agricultural activity can still be glimpsed in dis-used oil-mills and in the surviving ancient farmhouses, which can sometimes be seen among those –much more numerous by now–transformed into modern cottages. A remoter history can be read on the hill ridges where, from towers and castles, local lords used to control the trade between landing places and the towns beyond the Apennines, exacting payment of duties and tolls. The wealth of people who made a profit from the resources of this land, together with the widespread religious devotion of the local population, is apparent in the commissioning of stately churches, in the profusion of precious marbles and remarkable paintings. The same grandeur is displayed in the magnificent 17th-century palaces of the Genoese aristocrats engaged in European financial trade, but nonetheless interested in local economic activities. The wealthy industrial middle class of the first decades of the 20th century is responsible for the construction of elegant Art-Nouveau villas and lush gardens. On completion of the itineraries it will be noted that the location of towers, churches, palaces and the fabric of the town follow a well-defined lay-out originated by the ancient paths crossing the territory, they too being part of a historic heritage handed down by wise preservation politics.*

RED WALK: TOWN CENTRE



SANTA MARGHERITA LIGURE  
TOWN COUNCIL  
Tourism and Culture



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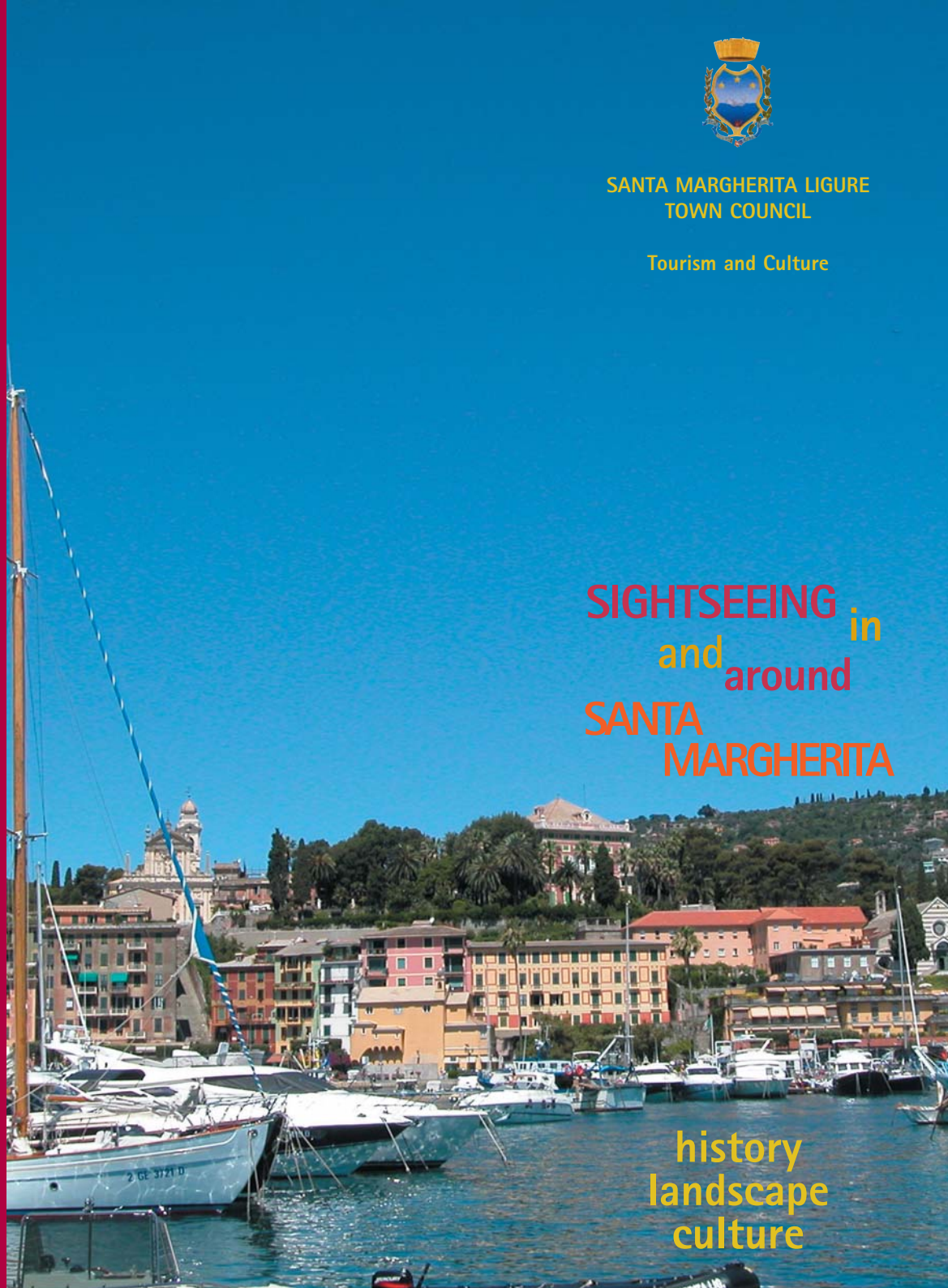


SANTA MARGHERITA LIGURE  
TOWN COUNCIL

Tourism and Culture

SIGHTSEEING in  
and around  
SANTA  
MARGHERITA

history  
landscape  
culture





1. Church of San Siro



Painting by Valerio Castello



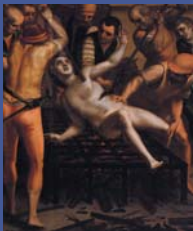
Panoramic view from via Romana



2. Church of San Lorenzo



Bruges Triptych



Martyrdom of San Lorenzo

## 1. Church of San Siro 2. Church of San Lorenzo della Costa

1. Documents dated 1200 and 1210 attest the presence of the Church of San Siro and that of San Lorenzo, respectively. The dedication to the two most venerated saints in Genoa at the time is evidence of the expansion of the Genoese Church jurisdiction in a territory subject to the Abbey of San Fruttuoso. A 19th-century classical-style façade was added to a sumptuous Baroque interior embellished with paintings by renowned 17th-century Genoese masters: Giovanni Battista Paggi (*The Nativity*, about 1600), Giovanni Andrea De Ferrari (*San Biagio and two Bishop Saints*, about 1630) and Valerio Castello (*San Sebastiano, San Lorenzo and San Rocco*, initialled and dated 1648) (Hubner photographs).

2. Transformed over the centuries by substantial restructuring works, the Church of San Lorenzo still shows traces of the medieval building already mentioned in a will dated 1191. The Chapel of Sant'Andrea dates back to the end of the 15th century; it was designed to house the *Bruges Triptych*, a masterpiece probably commissioned by Andrea della Costa to Hans Memling and completed by one of his pupils. Another valuable work is the *Martyrdom of San Lorenzo* attributed to Luca Cambiaso which may be dated to about 1575.



1. Basilica of Santa Margherita



7. Roisecco's tower-house



8. Villa Durazzo



9. Church of San Giacomo



14. Castle



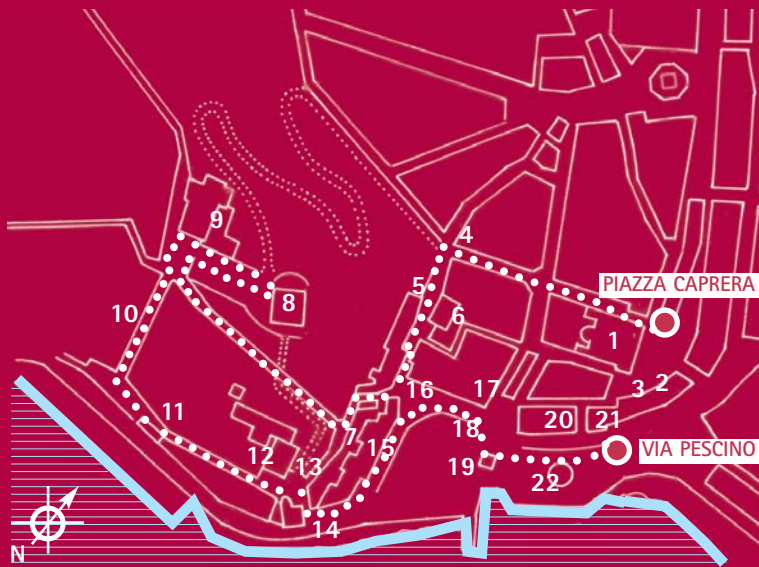
20. Bertollo's tower-house

1. By will of cardinal Stefano Durazzo, the Basilica of Santa Margherita was rebuilt starting from 1657, based upon the design of Giovanni Battista Ghisio, one of the best exponents of Ligurian Baroque. The building has an imposing structure, with a nave and two aisles embellished with a wealth of marbles, paintings and stuccoes.
2. The portico interior at no. 7, piazza Caprera is decorated with a refined *Art-Nouveau* scratchwork made in 1928 by Giovanni Franceschetti, who painted the frescoes in the halls of Villa Durazzo.
3. The building at no. 8, piazza Caprera still preserves (March 2005) the original, delicate paint and the decorations with transparency effects typical of the techniques in use between the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century.
4. The portal of Villa Durazzo park was designed in 1921 by Giovanni Franceschetti for the new owner of the aristocratic mansion: Alfredo Chierichetti.
5. In 1660, a water-wheel operated the oil-mill of Gerolamo Durazzo.
6. Oratory of the Addolorata (18th century).
7. Margaritina Roisecco's tower-house, documented in 1642, dominated the ancient landing place of the town, the path to Nozarego and the Ruta pass.
8. The magnificent house with tower of doge Gio Luca Chiavari was completely restored and enlarged by his grandson Gio Luca Durazzo in 1678.

He wanted a mansion like the ones designed in Genoa –more than one century earlier– by Galeazzo Alessi. The palace was to extol the prestige of the family and host the bankers of the exchange fairs, which took place on the Riviera between the 17th and the 18th centuries. The halls contain the picture gallery of the Centurione princes, who succeeded the Durazzo as owners of the historic building in 1821. A lush park with valuable species of trees enriches the old mansion, now municipal property.

9. The reconstruction and enlargement of the Church of San Giacomo with a new orientation dates back to the year 1600. In the 19th century there was the final placement of Nicolò Barabino's rich decoration with polychrome marbles and frescoes.
10. The spectacular staircase leading to the Church of San Giacomo is flanked with 19th century buildings decorated with particularly valuable architectural and figurative patterns.
11. Inside the 18th-century Oratory of Sant'Erasmo models of old ships can be found, that were given by mariners in gratitude for their salvation (*ex voto*).
12. The Church and Monastery of Cappuccini (Capuchin friars) are due to the patronage of Gio Luca Chiavari, who donated the land in 1608. Donations for charity by the Durazzo and Centurione families followed one another. Inside is the statue of *Maria Regina*, a 12th-century masterpiece.

13. The main portal of the villa Durazzo park is surmounted by a valuable 18th-century statue of the *Madonna della Misericordia* (*Lady of Mercy*).
14. The Castle was built in 1550 by the Republic of Genoa to fight the attacks of Barbary pirates.
15. The ground floor of the Roisecco tower-house shows the typical structure of 17th-century towers.
16. The ancient houses of the hospital, which in the 17th century were used to accommodate travellers, were situated close to the harbour.
17. A medieval column composed of circular drums and of a spherical-cubic capital provides evidence of the ancient origins of the house at no. 1, via Algeria.
18. The furniture in the Farmacia *Internazionale* was made in sap gum wood by carver Domenico Bacigalupo in 1899.
19. The statue of Vittorio Emanuele II was commissioned in 1894 on completion of the filling up with earth of the old landing place, on the occasion of the opening of the coast road for Portofino.
20. The tower-house was built in 1590 by Agostino Bertollo.
21. The complex decorations of the furniture in *bar Colombo*, made in 1904, show the ability of the carver, Domenico Bacigalupo.
22. The statue of Christopher Columbus was made by Odoardo Tabacchi in 1892, on the occasion of the celebrations marking four centuries since the discovery of America.



Piazza Caprera, via della Vittoria, via Giuncheto, salita San Giacomo, via III Novembre, via Manara, piazza Martiri della Libertà, via Pescino.

**Walking Time: 30 minutes**

The itinerary goes through the heart of the town, which developed –presumably in Medieval Times– around the road system

1. Basilica of Santa Margherita or Sanctuary of Nostra Signora della Rosa (Our Lady of the Rose)
2. Portico interior at 7, piazza Caprera
3. Painted façade at 8, piazza Caprera
4. Portal of Villa Durazzo park
5. Oil-mill of the Durazzo family, now *Il frantoio* restaurant
6. Oratory of the Addolorata
7. Roisecco's tower-house (1, salita San Giacomo)
8. Villa Durazzo and Park
9. Church of San Giacomo
10. Painted façades in via Tre Novembre
11. Oratory of Sant'Erasmo
12. Church of the Cappuccini (Capuchin friars)
13. Portal of Villa Durazzo park
14. Santa Margherita Castle
15. Ground floor of the Roisecco tower-house at 36, piazza Martiri della Libertà
16. Ancient houses of the hospital, at 26, 28, piazza Martiri della Libertà
17. Medieval column at 1, via Algeria
18. Furniture at *Farmacia Internazionale* (International Chemist's shop)
19. Monument to Vittorio Emanuele II
20. Bertollo tower-house
21. Furniture at bar *Colombo*
22. Monument to Christopher Columbus

connecting the ancient landing place (now piazza Martiri della Libertà) and the routes for Genoa, Rapallo or the towns beyond the Apennines (salita San Giacomo, via Costasecca, via Romana, salita Banchi). It is no accident that towers, churches and aristocratic palaces stand at the end of these routes, to guard and control social and economic activities.



Quarter of San Siro, via Romana, San Lorenzo village.

**Walking Time: 50 minutes.**

The Via Romana (Roman Road) starts from corso Matteotti not far from the Church of San Siro and ends in the vicinity of San Lorenzo church. Here the vehicular road has replaced the old road which went on towards the Ruta pass together with the ridgeway coming from the medieval bridge of Rapallo, improperly called Hannibal bridge. The name of the road climbing up from Santa Margherita evokes remote times, but it must be mentioned that in the Middle Ages the adjective *Roman* was generally used to indicate the main public ways heading for Rome. The road goes on along the hill slope in a country landscape among dry-stone walls, olive groves and cottages which have lost the features of rural housing. In this environment it is a surprise to find two churches containing numerous valuable works of art and decorated with rich marbles and golden stuccoes.



1. Roisecco tower-house



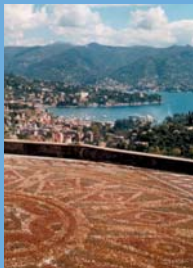
2. Villa Durazzo



3. Cassagna tower-house



4. Church of Nozarego



Panoramic view from Nozarego

1. Roisecco tower-house (1, salita San Giacomo)
2. Villa Durazzo
3. Cassagna tower-house
4. Church of Santa Maria di Nozarego

1. Margaritina Roisecco's tower-house, documented in 1642, dominated the ancient landing place of the town, the path to Nozarego and the Ruta pass.
2. The magnificent house with tower of doge Gio Luca Chiavari was completely restored and enlarged by his grandson Gio Luca Durazzo in 1678. He wanted a mansion like the ones designed in Genoa –more than one century earlier- by Galeazzo Alessi. The palace was to extol the prestige of the family and host the bankers of the exchange fairs, which took place on the Riviera between the 17th and the 18th centuries. The halls contain the picture gallery of the Centurione princes, who succeeded the Durazzo as owners of the historic building in 1821. A lush park with valuable species of trees enriches the old mansion, now municipal property.

3. The denomination Torre di Cassagna (Cassagna Tower) appears in 18th-century documents while in a cadastral register of 1642 the building is registered in Margaritina Roisecco's name, owner of another tower near the town old harbour (see item 1).

4. The Church of Santa Maria di Nozarego, which may be dated between 1727 and 1730, may be attributed to Gio Antonio Ricca junior –one of the most interesting architects of the late Ligurian Baroque- who adopted here an original ellipsoidal octagonal plan. A mosaic in polychrome cobblestones decorates the flooring of the church square, according to an old Ligurian tradition, committed to skilled craftsmen.



Harbour, salita Montebello, Nozarego, Gave, Acquaviva Brook, Paraggi, Cervara, harbour.

**Walking Time:** 2 hours and 30 minutes.

The walk may be shortened by going down through the path near the Gave Chapel.

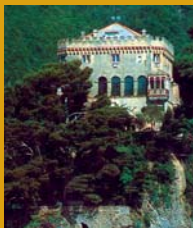
Close to the harbour quay starts salita Montebello which soon becomes one of the most spectacular coast itineraries on Mount Portofino. Past the Chapel of Madonna della Neve, a south turn, parting from the main track a short way uphill, leads to a flat area disclosing, among the Mediterranean scrub, a picturesque view of the gulf and the Cervara Abbey. A holm-oak grove will be met just before the Chapel of San Gerolamo delle Gave and a crossroads. By choosing the uphill path you will reach the Chapel of Sant'Anna and the Gassetta oil-mill. A short way off is the descent to Paraggi through the shadowy Acquaviva valley. Here, in remote times, were a series of mills, some ruins of which still remain. On the coast, the itinerary skirts the enchanting bay along a walkway over the sea, towards Santa Margherita. After a short walk, you can climb to the Abbey of San Gerolamo della Cervara, now private property and open only on set days and times. From the road it is however possible to see the stately 16th-century tower built in a place the monks rightly called *Paradise*.



1. Villa Luxardo



2. Chapel of Madonna della Neve



5. Paraggi Castle



Paraggi Bay



6. Abbey of San Gerolamo



7. Poster of the Covo-1940

1. Villa Luxardo
2. Chapel of Madonna della Neve (Our Lady of the Snow)
3. Chapel of San Gerolamo alle Gave
4. Gassetta Mill
5. Paraggi Castle
6. Abbey of San Gerolamo della Cervara
7. Covo di Nord-Est

1. Villa Luxardo is in the style of neo-Gothic Venetian castles, fashionable in the mid 19th century in England.

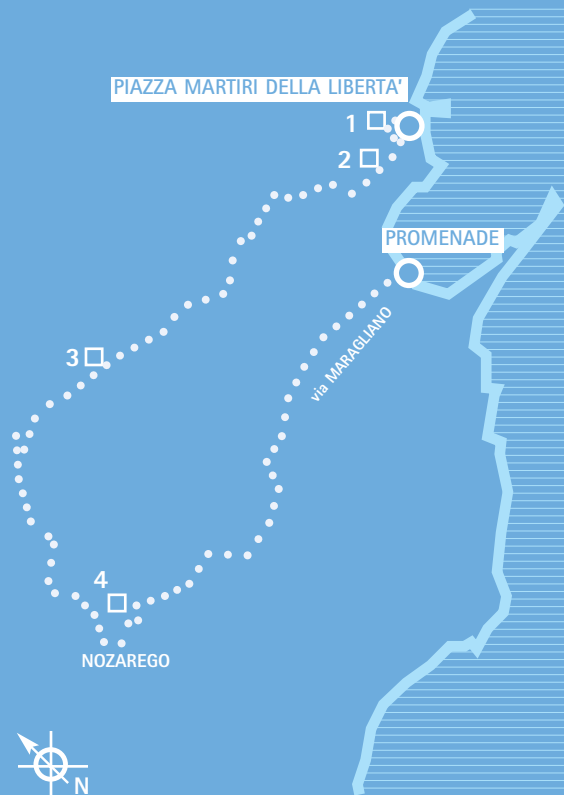
2. 3. Country chapels, such as the ones of Madonna della Neve and San Gerolamo, are typical of the 17th century and generally were built on processional routes. The former was already owned by the Costa family in the 18th century; the latter was property of the Cervara Abbey, dedicated to the same saint.

4. The Gassetta oil-mill still preserves the ancient gears and milling tools.

5. The original square tower on scarped base of the Paraggi Castle, with watch boxes at the corners, dates back to 1625, when the Republic of Genoa reorganized the defence of the coast threatened by the French-Piedmontese navy. In 1890, having become a private property, was overbuilt and restructured.

6. The Benedictine monastery of San Gerolamo della Cervara was founded in 1361 and enlarged in the 16th century with the construction of the cloister and tower. The latter is similar, for type and dimensions, to the Doria tower at San Fruttuoso; as the two towers were built in the same period, it may be assumed that the architect was the same: Giovanni Ponzello. The Sauli family is responsible for the rebuilding of the church choir in the 17th century and for commissioning the polyptych with the *Virgin and Saints* to Gerard David, now partly preserved at the Museum of Palazzo Bianco in Genoa. The monastery was suppressed in 1798 and, after experiencing restoration and neglect, finally became a private property in 1937.

7. In the 18th century the place belonged to the Durazzo family; in the 19th century they were succeeded by the Centurione princes and then by the Costa family, who at the end of the century sold the property to baron Franchetti. He could not complete his villa with theatre, and its ruins were transformed into a night club in the Thirties of the 20th century.



Piazza Martiri della Libertà, salita San Giacomo, via Giovanni Pino, Cassagna tower, Nozarego, via Madonnetta, via Maragliano, Promenade.

Walking Time: 1 hour and 45 minutes.

In the 17th century, at least three towers were in control of the path climbing up from the town landing place -now piazza Martiri della Libertà- to reach the Ruta pass. The importance of this strategic road probably dated back to even remoter times, as near the point where it joins via Bavastro was the medieval church of San Giacomo di Castello, the ruins of which were still present, in the 18th century, in the area near Villa *Il Poggio*, now located at 15, via Bellosguardo. Past Cassagna Tower, recently painted in white and grey stripes, turn south until reaching the Church of Santa Maria di Nozarego. The stairs going down just below the church will lead you to a still intact environment among olive groves and disused oil-mills.



1. Tower-Villa or Casone



2. San Gioacchino tower-house



3. Church of San Lorenzo



4. Church of Nozarego



5. Chapel of Madonna della Neve

1. Tower-Villa or *Casone*
2. San Gioacchino tower-house
3. Church of San Lorenzo della Costa
4. Church of Santa Maria di Nozarego
5. Chapel of Madonna della Neve

1. The scholarly tradition assigns the ancient property of the *Casone* to the Della Torre family of the Lavagna Counts. The massive construction has a very irregular quadrangular plan and watch boxes defining the original height of the fortress.

2. A drawing of 1693 represents the stately building of San Gioacchino already including a tower. The chapel, still existing inside the building, was commissioned in 1613 by Somascan father Andrea Contardo, who dedicated it to Saints Anna and Gioacchino enriching it with refined stuccoes and a painting by Giovanni Battista Paggi.

3. Transformed over the centuries by substantial restructuring works, the Church of San Lorenzo still shows traces of the medieval building already mentioned in a will dated 1191. The Chapel of Sant'Andrea dates back to the end of the 15th century; it was designed to house the *Bruges Triptych*, a masterpiece probably commissioned by Andrea della Costa to Hans Memling and completed by one of his pupils. Another valuable work is the *Martyrdom of San Lorenzo* attributed to Luca Cambiasi (about 1575).

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5. The Chapel of Madonna della Neve presents the typical features of the religious buildings which rose, in the 17th century, along processional routes. In the 18th century it was one of the many properties of the Costa family, that in more ancient times was part of the Fieschi *consorteria* (association of aristocratic families).



Salita Banchi, Saltinciello, Costapiana, San Lorenzo, Nozarego, harbour.

Walking Time: 4 hours.

The walk may be shortened by going down through via Romana (A), or via Costasecca (B), or via Giovanni Pino (C).

The itinerary makes a tour of the hills surrounding the town, offering spectacular views of the gulf. At the beginning, the route follows the ancient path to Rapallo, but at the first crossroads turns north to reach the ridge and San Lorenzo village. To the east, instead, the hill ridge slopes down towards the promontory on which stands the Pagana Fortress, built in 1625 to defend the coast from the dreaded landings of the French-Piedmontese navy. As the route from the fortress to the Ruta pass must have been garrisoned, the towers of some modern villas might well incorporate 17th-century redans. However, fortresses might have been there at a much earlier time, as at least one –Costapiana castle– is documented in 1395. The road coming from the medieval bridge in Rapallo reached exactly the Costapiana flat area: as this castle had a particularly remarkable architectural structure, the road it controlled must have been very busy. Another ancient route is the one going from San Lorenzo to Nozarego and, as an alternative, also to the pass leading to the Abbey of San Fruttuoso.