



REGIONE DEL VENETO



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A village,
a hundred horizons



Veneto
Tra la terra e il cielo

www.veneto.eu

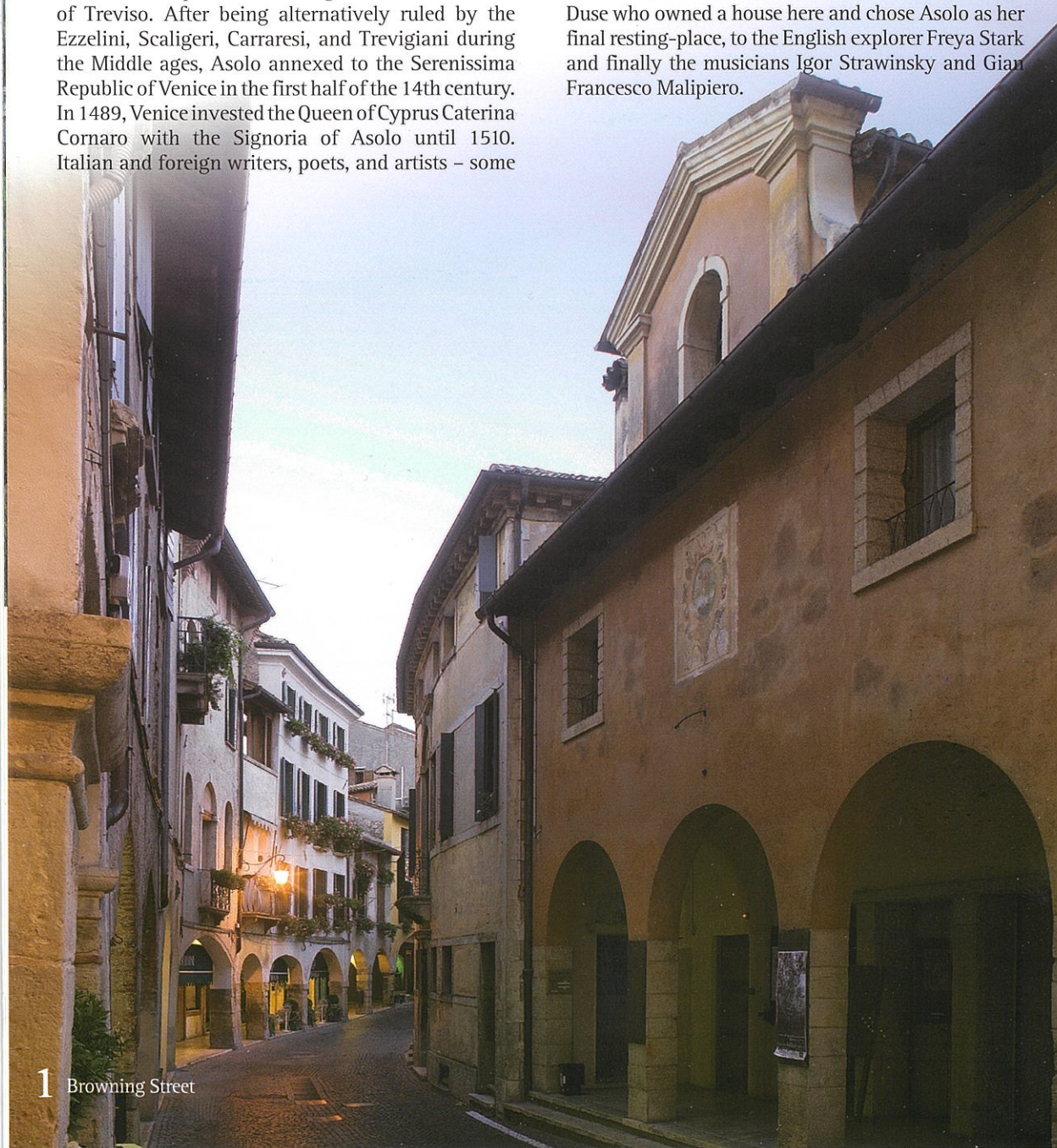


Città di Asolo

A hundred horizons

Thanks to its privileged position and its mild climate, Asolo has been naturally selected as a residential area since pre-historic times. It started as a settlement of Venetian populations and then became an important Municipium in Roman times (1st century b.C.), also mentioned by Pliny the Elder. A centre of Christianity since the earliest times, it was the bishop's seat until 969, when Emperor Otto I assigned it to the Diocese of Treviso. After being alternatively ruled by the Ezzelini, Scaligeri, Carraresi, and Trevigiani during the Middle ages, Asolo annexed to the Serenissima Republic of Venice in the first half of the 14th century. In 1489, Venice invested the Queen of Cyprus Caterina Cornaro with the Signoria of Asolo until 1510. Italian and foreign writers, poets, and artists – some

of them brought here by historical events, others simply attracted by the beauty of the town – visited and loved Asolo: from Pietro Bembo, who wrote his essay "Gli Asolani", to Lorenzo Lotto and Giorgione, whose works depicted its charming landscape, from Palladio, Massari and Canova to the poets Robert Browning, who dedicated its work *Asolando* and Giosuè Carducci, who referred to Asolo as "the town with a hundred horizons", to get to the painters Eugene Benson and Marius Pictor, to the actress Eleonora Duse who owned a house here and chose Asolo as her final resting-place, to the English explorer Freya Stark and finally the musicians Igor Stravinsky and Gian Francesco Malipiero.



Discover Asolo and its wonders

Walking along the village streets, you can find romantic places rich of history, surrounded by an emotional landscape.

The Castle

The imposing old Castle (2), Caterina Cornaro's palace, underwent several changes in time. Today the building houses the Duse Theatre.

Interesting are the two towers that still exist: the Reata Tower, with the outside stairway and the two prisons superimposed, and the Civic Tower or Clock Tower, that was the old headquarters of the prison.



The Cathedral and other Churches

The very old Cathedral was originally built on the site of a pre-existing Roman construction and renovated in 1747 based on a project by the architect Giorgio Massari. The Cathedral houses Lorenzo Lotto's beautiful "Assunta" (1480-1556) (3), followed by another Assunta by Jacopo da Ponte ("il Bassano", 1510-1592), by Sebastiano Bastiani's 15th-century San Girolamo, and by Pietro Damini's San Prosdocimo. The apse is overlooked by Quarena's imposing altar-piece, a copy of Titian's, flanked by marble angels by Canova's masters Torretti. Surrounded by huge trees in the Foresto Vecchio street, the Church of San Gottardo (4) still preserves the vestiges of its 14th century structure, and houses interesting frescoes also on the facade. Very close to the steps leading to the Rocca stands the Convent of SS. Pietro e Paolo, erected in the 17th century, which was a Benedictine monastery until 1807. Built by the Brotherhood of Santa Maria dei Battuti in the 14th century as was the nearby Hospital, the church of Santa Caterina d'Alessandria still houses some valuable frescoes from the 14th to 16th century. A little further on, the garden of the Church of Sant'Anna, offers a magnificent view over Mount Grappa: Eleonora Duse, who cherished this scenery, was buried in the church cemetery as was Freya Stark.



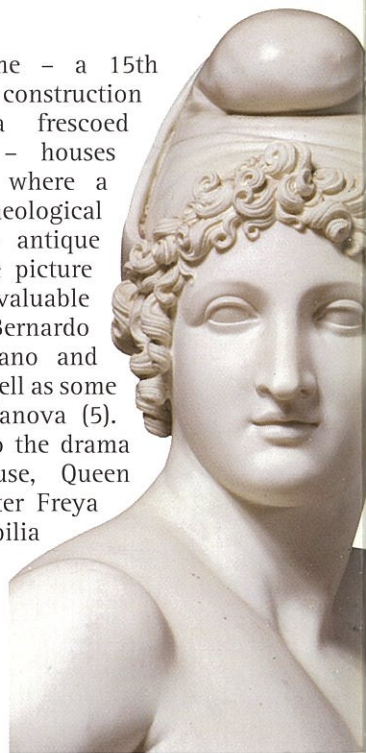
3 Detail of Lorenzo Lotto's altarpiece



4 Church of San Gottardo

The Museum

Palazzo della Ragione – a 15th century harmonious construction featuring a Loggia frescoed with battle scenes – houses the Town Museum, where a comprehensive archaeological section presents the antique glories of Asolo. The picture gallery contains valuable paintings by Bernardo Bellotto, Luca Giordano and Bernardo Strozzi, as well as some works by Antonio Canova (5). The rooms devoted to the drama actress Eleonora Duse, Queen Cornaro and the writer Freya Stark, with memorabilia and portraits of the three great women, mark the end of this virtual tour into the historical and artistic heart of Asolo.



Villas and residences

Prestigious, cosy Asolan dwellings hosted illustrious men and women who were enraptured by the atmosphere of Asolo. The windows of the house which used to be Duse's open up to the hilly landscape from Via Canova, where the facade shows the verses dedicated to her by the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio. In the garden of Villa Freya – the dwelling of the English writer and traveller Freya Stark – the remains of the foundations of a

roman theatre are still visible. Casa Malipiero has hosted the Venetian musician G. F. Malipiero for many years, where as the strange Case Anseatiche were the architect and painter Mario de Maria's (Marius Pictor) dwelling. Not far from there, the bizarre Casa Longobarda by Queen Cornaro's architect Francesco Graziolo is populated with decorations. Finally, the impressive Villa degli Armeni (6) with its outstanding 16th century architecture stands on the top of a hill behind Palazzo Beltramini, now the Town Hall, renovated by Massari in the 18th century.



The “Rocca”

The symbol of Asolo is this colossal monument overlooking the Asolan hills from the top of Monte Ricco. From that privileged position, the visitor is offered a spectacular view over the old town centre and the surrounding landscape. The irregular plan for the building dates back to a time-span which goes from the end of the 12th to the beginning of the 13th century, although it was erected on a pre-existing settlement site from the 10th – 12th century.



The Women of Asolo

Caterina Cornaro (1454-1510)

The Lady of Asolo, Queen of Cyprus, Armenia and Jerusalem, Caterina Cornaro (9) was the first of three great women who lived in Asolo.

Although in very different epochs, they all had that extraordinary appeal that made them true protagonists of the history of Asolo. After a childhood spent in the myth of the Eastern culture and her upbringing as a future into a sumptuous Renaissance ambience, with a court that gathered such artists and intellectuals as Pietro Bembo, who elected it as a background scenery for his essay *Gli Asolani*.

Visit: the Castle; Caterina Cornaro Museum section

Eleonora Duse (1858-1924)

Caterina Cornaro's Castle houses today the Theatre named after Eleonora Duse (10). Truly enraptured by Asolo, the internationally appreciated "Divine" (as she was called) found her last resting-place in this "small town of lace and poetry". Her intense life and the fascination of the characters she put on stage have made a never-ending show of her story, still living in the heart of the town where she chose her last dwelling.

Visit: Eleonora Duse Museum section; Duse Theatre; Duse House; Cemetery of Sant'Anna (11)

Freya Stark (1893- 1993)

A passionate writer and photographer, the last heiress of an illustrious stock of English travelers, Freya Stark (12), too, elected Asolo as her inexhaustible source of inspiration.

Her adventurous, endeavouring and courageous spirit rests now not far from Eleonora Duse, in that small town where she came back from her innumerable travels.

Visit: Villa Freya with garden; Freya Stark Museum section; Cemetery of Sant'Anna





6 “Fresco” of Villa Contarini degli Armeni

Asolo Delights

The ways to Asolo are sinuous uphill roads which gradually take their distance from the plains. Their gentle rhythm introduces the taste of its delighting atmosphere. Strolling along its streets (“asolando”, as Robert Browning called it), spectacular views are offered behind

the walls of its old buildings, where nature has preserved the original dimension of space, silence and harmony as a source of inspiration: to prove it is the walk of San Martino (13). Asolo is the ideal stage for important events of music, theatre, and photography, and it also hosts a traditional antiques market. Cultural taste meets culinary taste: just follow the various aromas of the town to discover the traditional hostarias and elegant cafés where you can taste the typical “cicchetti” (appetizers) and excellent local produce including oil, honey, Ghisola cake and the dairy products from Pedemontana and of nearby Mount Grappa, Asolo Prosecco Superiore D.O.C.G. and Recantina D.O.C. Montello and Colli Asolani, result of an ancient vine variety, grown since 1600.



13 San Martino's walk





IAT Asolo e Pedemontana del Grappa
piazza Garibaldi – Asolo Tel. +39 0423529046 iat@comune.asolo.tv.it
opening hour: Thursday – Sunday 9.30 – 12.30, 15.00 – 18.00
www.asolo.it



From the east:
Toll booth Treviso Nord, through Montebelluna/Toll booth Treviso Sud, through Castelfranco

From the south:
Toll booth Padova, through Castelfranco, Nuova Strada del Santo

From the west:
Toll booth Vicenza Nord, expressway exit Valdastico, through Cittadella/
Castelfranco and Toll booth Dueville, through Bassano I



Closer railway stations:
Montebelluna, km 15
Castelfranco Veneto, km 16
Bassano del Grappa, km 16
Cornuda, km 8



Closer airports:
Marco Polo Venezia
Canova Treviso



USEFUL NUMBERS

Town hall: Tel. +39 0423 524611
Local police: Tel. +39 0423 950044
Civic library: Tel. +39 0423 951317

CIVIC MUSEUM:

via Regina Cornaro, 74 Tel. +39 0423/952313
timetable: Saturday, Sunday and national holidays (except 25 December, 1 January, Easter) 9.30 – 12.30/ 15.00 – 18.00

CATHEDRAL: opened from 8.00 to 18.00

CHURCH OF SANTA CATERINA: opened from 8.00 to 19.00

Cover: view of Asolo

