




Villa Godi Malinverni



**The first villa of Andrea Palladio -1542
Lugo di Vicenza**

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 Villa Godi Malinverni

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Andrea Palladio (1508-1580)

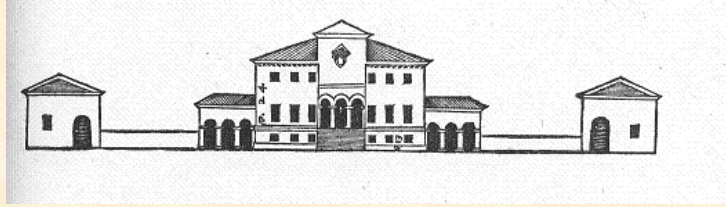


Palladio was born in 1508 to miller Pietro della Gondola; in 1523 he became an apprentice stonemason in Vicenza; in 1524 he joined the *fraglia dei muratori* at the workshop of Pedemuro in San Biagio, Vicenza. In 1535 he met the humanist Giangiorgio Trissino and became his pupil. It was Trissino himself who christened him Palladio, inspired by the character in one of his works. In 1537 he began work on the design of the Villa Godi Malinverni, after having joined Trissino in the remodeling of the Villa Cricoli in Vicenza. He then went to Rome where he became acquainted with Greek and Roman architecture and fell in love with it. Returning to the Venetian lands, he began to build villas, palaces, and churches for the most powerful Venetian families, incorporating into the designs columns, pronaos, tympanums, and all those elements of classical taste that later made him famous. Palladio is thus credited with the great ability to repurpose the typical architecture of the classical religious world in civil contexts such as dwellings, town and country. In 1570 he published the treatise **The Four Books of Architecture** through which his models had a profound influence on Western architecture. He died in 1580 before he saw another of his masterpieces completed: the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza. Thanks to the dissemination of his treatises, Palladio's architecture soon became famous throughout Europe, giving rise to a phenomenon known as Palladianism, which drew on classical Greek and Roman principles. In England, Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren were inspired by his style. Another admirer of his was the architect Richard Boyle, better known as Lord Burlington, who-with William Kent-designed Chiswick House. The White House itself, residence of the president of the United States of America, is designed in the Palladian style.

The city of Vicenza and the Palladian villas of the Veneto region are one of the **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**.

By Resolution No. 259 of December 6, 2010, the U.S. Congress recognized Palladio as **the father of American architecture**.

The Architecture



The commissioner of the villa was Gerolamo Godi, as per the relief placed above the loggia at the entrance to the main body, who wanted to create it as a place of control over his territories in the upper Vicenza area, but also as a place of representation and self-celebration. Work ran from about **1537 to 1542**.

The Architecture is similar to a castle: the “colombaia” behind, almost like a **turret**, allows to see and control the entire plain; the central staircase, the main access to the noble halls, restricted to the central arch of the loggia, recalls the concept of the medieval lift bridge and thus to the need to control the entrances to the private spaces of the Godi family.

The design is in **perfect symmetry** by associating the loggia and the central hall, the heart of the villa, with two side rooms each composed of 4 rooms.

As for the two side wings, only the one on the left, with three arches, is part of the original design; the one on the right, which is longer and opened by five arches and as many windows above, was built in the late 1570s. As the architect's first work, Villa Godi Malinverni is characterized by a restrained architecture that is still influenced by medieval architecture and lacks the classical elements that would mark Palladio's style after his Roman travels.

The Frescoes

Gualtiero Padovano (Padua, c. 1510-1552), Battista Del Moro (Verona, 1514-1575) Battista Zelotti (Verona, 1526-Mantova, 1578) were the three artists hired to fresco the villa, from 1542 to 1562. The villa's interior holds two schools of painting, markedly different from each other in terms of the themes covered and the use of colors.

Looking at the facade of the villa, in the left wing and in the central hall, one can visit the **classical school**, with Battista del Moro and Battista Zelotti: we find Greek gods and landscapes in the windows, depictions of male figures expressing strength and virility and female figures recalling abundance and fertility, caryatids (as opposed to the use of telamons in the later rooms), depictions of epic scenes. The colors of the frescoes are muted, not only because they have not undergone resaturation, except in very small areas, but because the school made use of 'antique pink, sapphire blue and yellow ochre.

In the right wing of the villa, however, one can visit the **mystical school**, featuring Gualtiero Padovano. The artist often employs symmetries with veneration at the domestic hearth, with the use of satyrs; in place of caryatids he repurposes telamons, mixed column and man/animal figures that are almost demonic and disturbing; the depiction of Greek deities should derive from the influence of the classical school (it should be remembered that the two schools worked almost simultaneously). The colors of the rooms are much more garish, this is not only because of the restoration carried out after World War I, but mainly because the artist had already used an acid green and a more energetic yellow.

The Poets' and Muses' Room



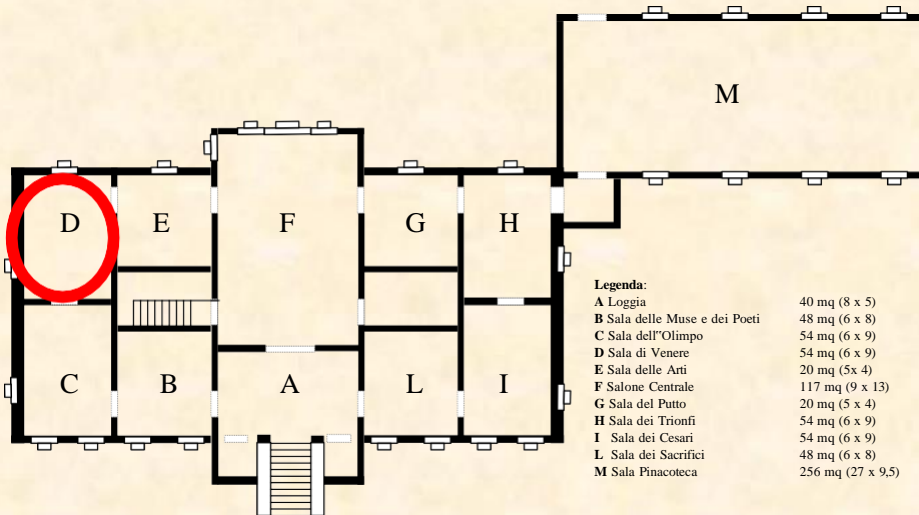
(Battista del Moro) Large monochrome caryatids, resting on a plinth, support an entablature with depictions of putti with books and musical instruments above. In the panels on the walls appear some figures identifiable as Poets (note the laurel wreath) accompanied by the Nine Muses, but only some of them bear the attributes necessary for their recognition. In particular, leaving the entrance door behind, the muse of Astronomy Urania can be identified on the right. On the fireplace, on the other hand, Dante (an important figure in Italian literature) is represented. The chandelier is from the 18th century, made of Murano glass.

The Olympus' Room



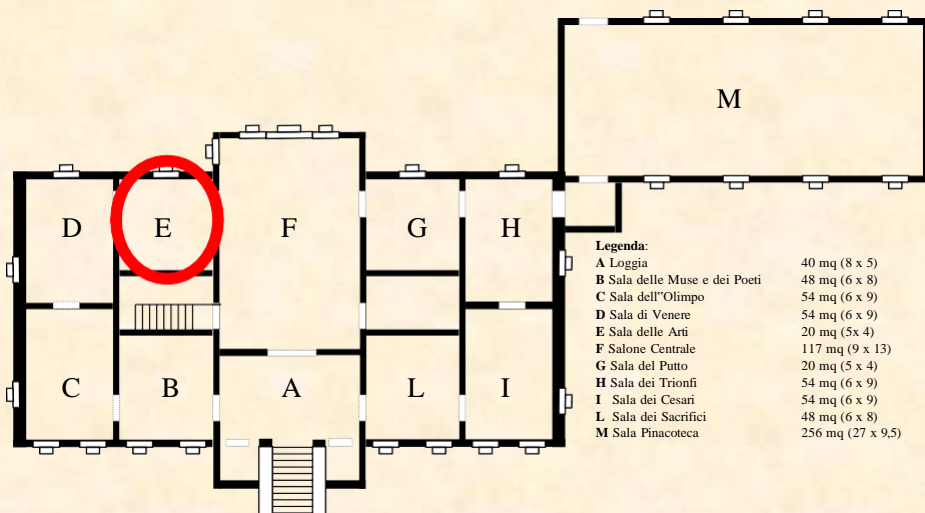
(Battista Zelotti) A low plinth supports architectural ruins in faux white marble and brick inserts; fragments of statues are found in the niches. The windows and doors are decorated with faux frames with festoons on the sides and small spandrels. Coming out of the fireplace, we find a number of deities lying on clouds with delicate iridescent colors: Jupiter and Juno in the center, then Cybele (goddess of architecture with a tower on her head), Ceres (goddess of the harvest with a bundle of ears of corn), Mercury, Chronos (goddess of time with a scythe), Diana (goddess of hunting with a bow)... Looking at the fireplace to our right, we see Venus and Cupid, Bacchus (goddess of wine) and other male and female deities. On the mantelpiece is the Fall of Vulcan, a figure comparable to those in the Palazzo Tè in Mantua, but lacking the grotesque sense that characterizes Giulio Romano's depictions. On the left we find Mars with Neptune and a maiden. The hatching in the background is the result of the author's later reflection. In this work we perceive the indifference of the deities to human affairs. No deity, on his throne made of clouds, turns his gaze downward, dwelling on mortal observers. Again, the chandelier is made of Murano glass and dates from the 18th century.

The Venus' Room



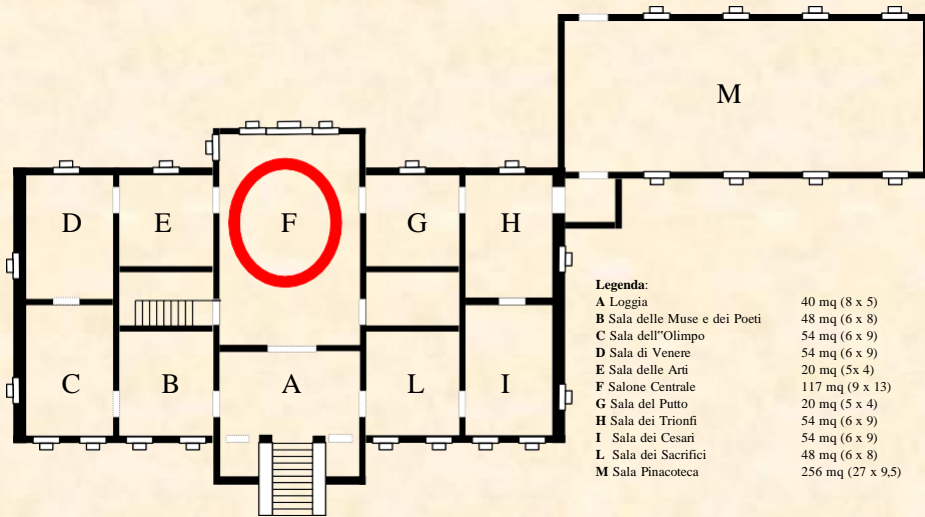
(Battista Zelotti) The room takes its name from the depiction of Venus, Cupid and Vulcan made on the chimney hood: the gilded decoration of the triclinium where Venus stands and the contrast between the goddess's pinkish skin and the snow-white cloth covering her appear particularly refined. Long Ionic columns divide the room. Leaving behind the fireplace to our right, above the door, we have the depiction of Justice, flanked by Pluto on the left and Chronos on the right. Moving our gaze to the wall opposite the fireplace, there appears a large panel depicting Euryalus and Niso, the protagonists of one of the most poignant scenes in Virgil's Aeneid. To the left, a boy and a page emerge from a false door in a trompe l'oeil depiction, a recurring element in Paolo Veronese's work as well. Above this false door is a depiction of Temperance, while above the exit leading to the next room is a depiction of Fortitude. On the adjoining wall still figures of statues within mock niches representing Jupiter (marked by the eagle) and Neptune. The inlaid wooden chandelier dates from the 17th century and comes from a Venetian galley.

The Arts' Room



(Battista Zelotti) It takes its name from the allegorical figures of the Arts painted above the faux arches that frame gilded statues and bronze busts. At the side of the doors, in sand tint, Spring is depicted, and opposite it Summer. Both depictions are flanked by prisoners. A ruined Greek landscape is depicted in the window mock-up, the frame of which is embellished with trophies with putti, weapons, and musical instruments. Completing the decoration are niches with mock statues of deities inside: Bacchus, Apollo, Mercury and another unidentified deity. The chandelier is made of Murano glass from the 18th century.

The Main Hall



(Battista Zelotti) The walls are divided by light-colored architectural elements (Corinthian columns and tympanum structures supported by a base decorated with monochrome panels) of obvious Palladian flavor. Placing oneself in the center of the room, facing the door, one can notice the presence in the walls to the right and left of two false windows: in the first appears a landscape with the Rape of Europa (when Zeus transforms himself into a bull and kidnaps Europa), in the second the Rape of Ganymede, brought to Olympus by an eagle Zeus. Traditionally, the gentleman depicted sitting at the window is believed to be Gerolamo Godi. Looking at the loggia, on the left wall the Battle between Darius and Alexander is depicted; on the opposite wall the Restitution of Darius' body by Alexander. For both scenes, the architectural frame was created to give the illusion that we are facing two episodes taking place outside. Completing the decoration are putti holding bunches of roses and female figures, often seated on the frames. Above the main portal facing the loggia is the allegorical scene with Hercules between Virtue and Fatigue, within an elaborate wooden frame. The inner lintel above the entrance door is engraved with the motto “et libera nos a malo” (and deliver us from evil...which contrasts with the engraving on the outer side of the same lintel “Procul este profani” forbidden to the profane...probably an invitation to those who were not welcome to leave and a blessing to guests). One last note: The chandelier is from the 18th century, made of Murano glass

The Child's Room



(Gualtiero Padovano) The room owes its name to the child sitting at the window in front of the landscape, probably representing a glimpse of the area. It is decorated with Ionic columns and faux niches housing statues of gods. Along the cornice runs a frieze with other gods; during the 19th century this whole part had undergone a remodeling with the addition of dark drapes to cover the nudity, later removed during restoration. The decoration, here as in all the rooms frescoed by Gualtiero Padovano, is completed by panels with grotesques, a particular type of decoration typical of Roman domus that developed during the Renaissance following the discovery of Nero's Domus Aurea. At the time of its discovery, its dome, full of these decorations, was completely buried, looking like a “cave” to the eyes of early explorers: hence the name of this type of decoration, which often represented elements related to alchemy or the peasant world. The doors feature similar decoration. The chandelier is made of Bohemian crystal, from the 18th century.

The Triumphs' Room



(Gualtiero Padovano) So called from the continuous frieze placed at the top, where the reference to Mantegna's depiction of Caesar's Triumphs is evident, from which the moonlit shape of the figures is taken. Of interest is the large landscape located on the wall opposite the fireplace, where the Colossus of Rhodes is depicted. On the hood of the fireplace is depicted Securitas, the patron deity of the domestic hearth. The decoration of the walls is entrusted to telamons supporting the entablature and monochrome panels. Different is the scene on the ceiling, created by Zelotti, where Minerva and Hercules freeing Prometheus chained to the mountain is depicted in an oval set within a wooden frame. Also by Zelotti's hand are the other panels with putti that complete the ceiling. In this room the lights are supported by flashlight stands dating from the seventeenth century.

The Caesars' Room



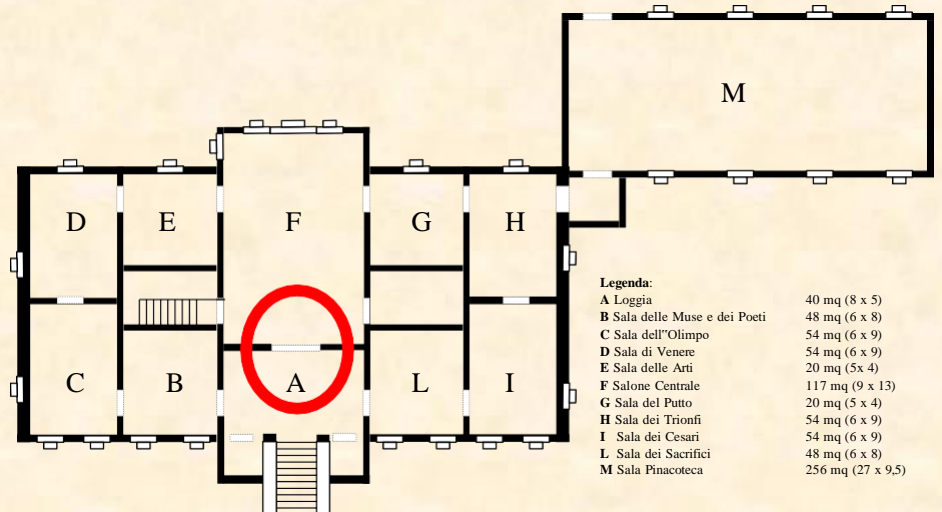
(Gualtiero Padovano) The use of color is interesting. Corinthian columns with gilded capitals divide the walls into panels open to serene landscapes (always depicting local realities), characterized by wide blue skies, mountains and rivers in which the presence of man is limited to small colored figures or a few architectural elements. The room takes its name from the busts of emperors made as overlays and above the fireplace hood. The series of “busts” originated from the iconographic motif of emperors, often used in the interior decoration of villas. As a rule, the succession of emperors comes from Suetonius' “De vita duodecim Caesarum libri VIII.” Since the choice of figures was bent to the self-celebratory intentions of the patron, Caesars could appear who were not part of the series identified by the Latin writer; in fact, often the patron himself considered himself a direct descendant of one of the families of Roman emperors and thus inserted the reference to his illustrious origins, modifying the original series.

The Sacrifice Room



(Gualtiero Padovano) Doric columns support a continuous frieze alternating with triglyphs and bucranium metopes (with an ox skull) typical of classical temple decorations. In the spaces between the columns are painted landscapes and faux ashlar niches with statues of deities. The room takes its name from the depiction of the overlays, with scenes of Roman sacrifices, conducted in monochrome. The classical theme is also predominant here, used both to celebrate the power and culture of the patron.

The Loggia



(Gualtiero Padovano) The decoration is connected to the very structure of the loggia. The ceiling is dominated by the panel with Mercury and Spring. Traditionally, in the landscapes painted on the walls one can recognize the depiction of the valley on which the villa overlooks, recalling the landscape seen beyond the columns of the loggia. In the arches above the doorways to the rooms are grotesque depictions (the vestal of abundance is depicted holding baskets with the fruits of the earth and the serpent, intelligence, which keeps away the satyrs, evil), below these two false doors contain depictions of two characters: a peasant woman with a spindle and a peasant with a basket of agricultural products. It should not be forgotten that silkworms were often cultivated in the broli adjacent to the villas, and the production of textiles was one of the main livelihoods of the patrons. Water was also a necessary element of villa life, and it is precisely the river that flowed in the vicinity of the mansion itself that is the protagonist of the depictions in these landscapes. Above the entrance portal is a depiction of Securitas, protecting the family. In the lintel is carved the phrase “procul este profani” - “stay away or you laymen,” a phrase that can be interpreted as the intent of the patron to keep away those who do not have the skills to understand the iconographic program chosen for his mansion.

The Seasons' Room



Hall frescoed by Zelotti, in doubt the collaboration of Veronese. The fresco in the lower part is rather deteriorated by moisture seeping from the terracotta floor, which is still the original 16th-century one.

The vault is supported by caryatids placed on either side of four arches enclosing monochrome yellow earthen statues of the seasons.

On the fireplace is a fresco of Truth, on the opposite wall a landscape: prisoners and opulent women complete the decorations. In the center of the ceiling is a tondo with Virtue driving out Vice, akin to that found in the Doge's Palace in Venice.

The Kitchen



The 16th-century kitchenette is believed to be one of the most characteristic of this period. It includes: a large period fireplace equipped with an 18th-century rotisserie, a bucket with a water heater, a bread oven, a set of historic pans, and a pendulum clock from the 1600s.

The Gardens and the Park



The gardens of Villa Godi Malinverni are **the only ones designed by Palladio himself**, as evidenced in his *Quattro libri dell'Architettura* (1570). They include the front gardens of the villa and the rear gardens. The front gardens were once divided into three parts by internal walls. In front of the 1533 barchessa, the service building intended for work activities, extended the courtyard devoted to animals and agricultural implements. The **main formal garden** was the area in front of the villa bordered by walls that rose on the left and right sides of the mansion. The hemicycle in front was the main entrance to the villa, divided from the noble courtyard by a wall. From this hemicycle, where the fountain is today, started the road that connected the villa directly with the town of Lugo di Vicenza.

Finally, the third part, now a garden surrounded by statues placed in the twentieth century, was the villa's vegetable garden. The Italian gardens behind the villa, on the other hand, include **hanging gardens and a secret garden**. The hanging gardens include fountains, 17th-century allegorical statues from the Albanese workshop, boxwood hedges and the ancient cedraia, necessary complements to the villa's living quarters and the cultivation of cedrus species. The layout of these small gardens, likely designed by Palladio, dates back to the late 16th century. Leaving the kitchen,

on the other hand, it is possible to visit the secret garden, a place intended for the cultivation of medicinal plants and the privacy of the nobility, enriched by a **1555 well-tube designed by Palladio**, the last sign of the architect's presence at the villa.



The villa has an enormous historical park that extends for about **7 hectares behind the villa**, in dialogue with the rear gardens. The park, with its centuries-old trees and 2600 metres of paths, was designed in **1852**. This place is only the latest version of a space that has changed appearance and function over the centuries. Originally it was the brolo of the Villa. In the 19th century, the English-style park was created to replace the brolo. It was probably designed **by architect Antonio Caregaro Negrin**, commissioned by **Count Andrea Piovene**, the same person who commissioned the Fossil Museum. The park is an oasis of peace immersed in the green foothills, where one can stroll peacefully along the shady avenues once travelled by carriages. The park is home to numerous centuries-old plants. It contains around 1,400 trees, including larch pines, yews, cedars, magnolias, ginkgo bilobas and tassels. The park is dotted with flowery corners with a total of **80,000 flowers** including collections of roses, peonies, irises, tulips, narcissus, hyacinths, anemones and crocuses, whose seasonal blooms can be enjoyed at various times of the year. In keeping with the romantic tradition, the park is dotted with corners designed to amaze and surprise the visitor by alternating breathtaking natural elements with surprising artificial ones. In the park, the arrangement of the plants is studied in detail to achieve these effects, and the plants are placed according to a precise design to stand out like patches of colour on the landscape. Inside the park of Villa Godi Malinverni it is possible to visit the ‘Corner of Silence’, with its romantic pond, the ‘Corner of Memories’ with the 19th century epitaphs of the Piovene family and the tomb of Remo Malinverni, the ‘Magnolia Corner’, the ancient fish pond and the cedar avenue leading to the original Palladian entrance gate (Porta Rustica) on the top of which is engraved the phrase *Ingredere et laetaberis* - enter and you will be happy.

The Paleontological Museum



“Man who wanders among these walls from which thirty thousand millennia of history of the ancient ages of the earth look at you; consider that the whole history of mankind, from its origins to the present day, is in comparison nothing but the history of a day, and that of your existence the history of a moment, of an instant in infinity.”

Remo Malinverni

The museum was founded in 1852 by **Count Andrea Piovene** with the fossils found in the same year by geologist Achille de Zigno in the nearby Chiavon (a stream that flows near Breganze).

The poet Giacomo Zanella drew inspiration from a visit to the museum to compose the poem

“The fossil palms in the villa of Count Piovene in Lonedo.”

In 1972 the Museum could have its final arrangement by Prof. Giuliano Piccoli, who classified the specimens, in collaboration with Prof. Remo Malinverni.

In 2007 the Museum was restored by Dr. Ismaele Sostizzo with the collaboration of three young volunteers, under the patronage of Pro-Lugo association.

The exhibits date back to the Oligocene period, which is about 30 million years ago.

Flora

As many as 352 species of which 215 from Chiavon, 69 from Salcedo and 68 common to the two localities are kept within the Museum. The aforementioned flora offers similarities with present-day types from the American continent, part with those of Asia and Africa as well as the Australian continent and the Mediterranean basin, while that of Bolca has more affinities with the present-day floras of the East Indies and Australia. Very famous are the palms, of which the imposing fossil palm, placed horizontally in the center of the Museum's hall, 9.85 meters high, discovered in 1863, complete with roots, trunk and leaves, whose extraction required 4 years of work, is worthy of particular note. It is considered an extraordinary find also and especially because it is the largest fully preserved specimen of Fossil Palm discovered so far in Europe.

Fauna

Collected in the museum are foraminifera, corals, brachypods, lamellibranchs, mollusks, gastropods, crustaceans, echinoderms, and fish. The latter are of the carp genus.

The Family

The origins of the Godi family date back to 1200

Godi Gerolamo

He was Palladio's patron in the construction of the villa at Lonedo. He lived in Vicenza, in the same district as Palladio. In 1554, he was Provveditore alla Legge of the Palazzo della Ragione in Vicenza.

Godi Orazio

By sentence of 1578 he was banished for murdering Fabio Piovene, son of Tommaso Piovene, and his property in Carrè and Marano was confiscated and given to the rival family. His house in Vicenza was razed to the ground by decree of the Council of Ten and rebuilt in 1770 with the following inscription: 'Where the houses of the murderous Orazio Godi were razed to the ground by decree of the Ten in 1578, the Storato brothers built this wing of their house and staircase in 1773. Giovanni Scola heir pos. 1876'. It seems, however, that he managed to escape the wrath of the Serenissima. The Venetian government showed the utmost benevolence towards his children by returning to them more than thirty thousand ducats that had already been confiscated from the family, arousing the wonderment of Magagnò (Battista Maganza da Este) who dedicated one of his poems to this fact.

Godi Marzio

Born in 1655, he had a reputation as a tyrant for the many atrocities he committed. It is said that, wanting revenge on two individuals who had offended him, he 'had them taken by his bravos and led them to the cellar, where they died choking on wine'. Moreover, 'he had his braves take the best and most beautiful maidens of the village and make them undress and dance naked, and after he had given vent to his lust, he sent them home'. He was put in prison from which he escaped and went to Trento where he was killed by a natural son in 1699.

In the 18th century, ownership of the villa passed to the Piovene family.

Maximilian was the last survivor of the Godi - Pigafetta family, and was buried in S. Michele in Vicenza (Godi Chapel).

During the First World War the villa was the seat of the British command and the Prince of Wales, the future **King Edward VIII**, stayed there.

In 1960, the villa was purchased by **Prof. Remo Malinverni** who restored it to its splendour after 10 years of restoration and opened it to the public. Since then, the villa has been owned by the family.

The Museum “The Prince’s Villa”



Since 2019, the former cellars of the villa have housed the museum “The Prince's Villa.”

During World War I, many villas and historic residences in the Veneto region were important military centers. Their location made these villas very safe areas from where commanders could coordinate and plan war actions. Villa Godi Malinverni, from 1917 to 1918, was chosen as the headquarters of the British army. From here, The British command led by the Chief of the British General Staff, Lord Caravan could coordinate the 36,000 men deployed to the front in support of the Italian army. It was at Villa Godi Malinverni that **His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, future King Edward VIII of England**, stayed for almost a year.

The second figure to whom the museum is dedicated is **Vera Brittain**. English writer, pacifist and feminist, author in the best-selling Testament of Youth (Lost Generation) published in 1933, a pacifist manifesto that made her famous. During the war she lost her fiancé on the Western Front and her brother on the Asiago Plateau, now buried in the British cemetery in Granezza. When the writer died in 1970, her ashes were scattered right over her brother's grave, as per Vera's own wishes.

Inside the museum are relics of the Great War, publications of the time, infographics, illustrative panels and videos that tell the story of the British army's presence in the Vicenza area

