

LIGNANO PINETA  
COMUNE DI  
LIGNANO SABBIADORO  
PROV. DI UDINE



A TRIESTE

KM  
87,5

MONTE GRISA  
LOC. CONTOVELLO  
DISTRETTO I  
DI TRIESTE  
PROV. DI TRIESTE



A SAN GIOVANNI  
AL NATISONE

KM  
52,6

MATTIAZZI IN NORTHERN ITALY

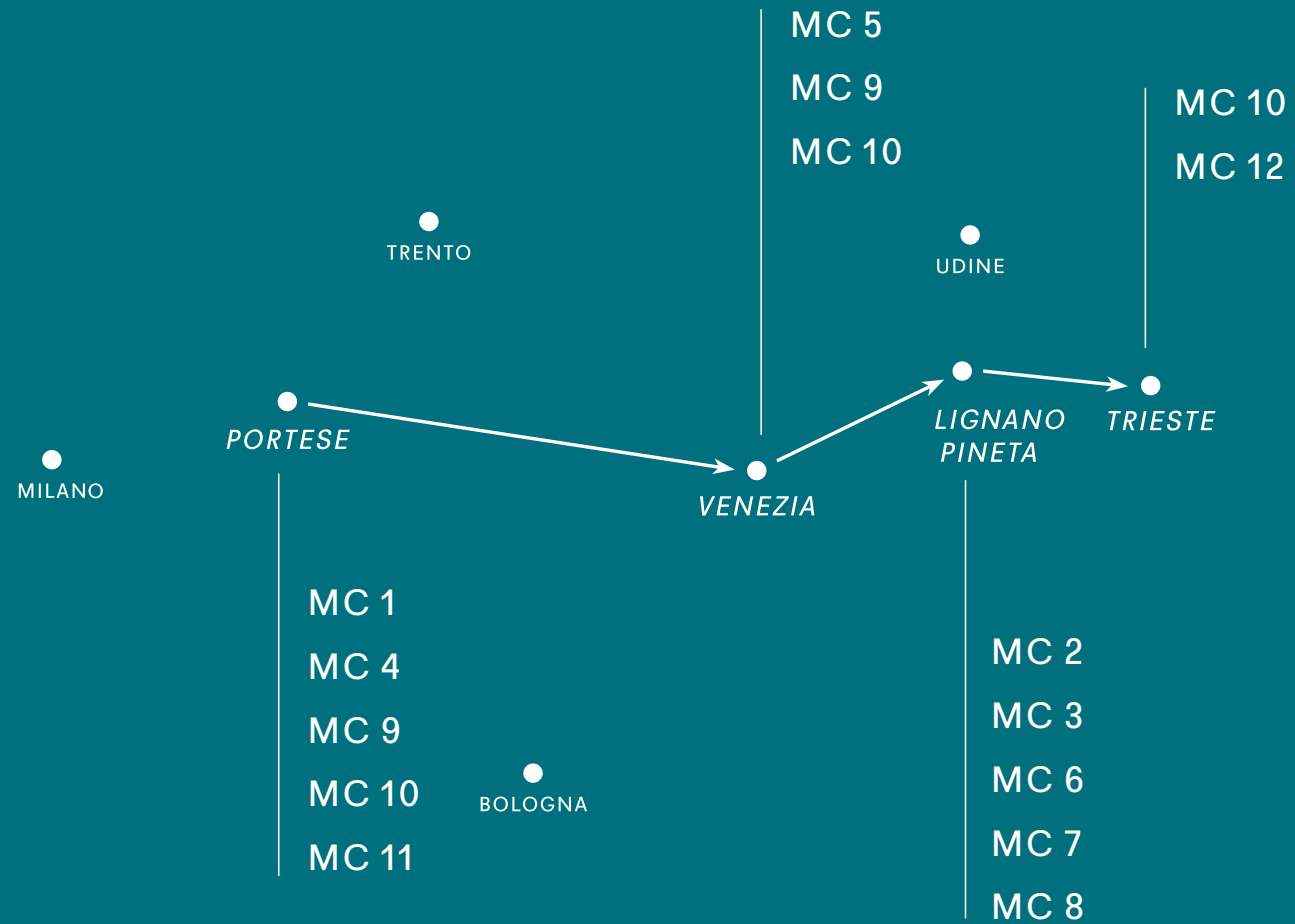
*MATTIAZZI IN NORTHERN ITALY*

# THIS IS A JOURNEY TO *FOUR* *PLACES*

...cutting straight across northern Italy from the western shore of *Lake Garda*, where we enjoy the best drink of the trip in appropriate surroundings at sunset, to the *most eastern provinces of Italy*, where piety and an incredibly strong wind greet us. In between we visit old *Venice*, reach the sea and find a positively unique Italian post-war utopia – and that in an overcrowded *Adriatic summer resort*. It is a journey to four buildings, or rather, to four creators – a generation of people who put everything into their work, uncompromising, obsessed with detail and always committed to a greater idea.

Who set themselves the task of always doing their utmost. You may like these places or not. However, it is definitely worth taking a closer look at the real achievements and concerns of Italy's post-war architects. Since there is one thing we can all definitely learn from them: ATTITUDE. They embody the strength of will necessary to put our full effort into ideas that may appear crazy. Where the only thing that counts in the end is the precise implementation of a design – as if there were a higher need for exactly this shape, this building, on this site.

*Hubert Filser*



- MC 12 TRONCO *by SAM HECHT / INDUSTRIAL FACILITY*
- MC 11 UFFICI TABLE *by NITZAN COHEN*
- MC 10 CLERICI *by KONSTANTIN GRCIC*
- MC 9 UNCINO *by RONAN & ERWAN BOUROULLEC*
- MC 8 CHIARO *by LEON RANSMEIER*
- MC 7 RADICE *by SAM HECHT / INDUSTRIAL FACILITY*
- MC 6 FIONDA *by JASPER MORRISON*
- MC 5 SOLO *by Studio NITZAN COHEN*
- MC 4 MEDICI *by KONSTANTIN GRCIC*
- MC 3 OSSO *by RONAN & ERWAN BOUROULLEC*
- MC 2 BRANCA *by SAM HECHT / INDUSTRIAL FACILITY*
- MC 1 HE SAID / SHE SAID *by Studio NITZAN COHEN*

COMUNE DI  
PORTESE  
DISTRETTO XIV  
DI SALÒ  
PROV. DI BRESCIA



A VENEZIA  $\frac{\text{KM}}{172}$

LA SCALA Summer House,  
Via Benaco 11  
Portese del Garda,  
San Felice del Benaco.

*Architect: Vittoriano Viganò,  
built 1957 – 1960 for  
André Bloc, founder and  
publisher of the magazine  
“L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui”.*

# THIS BUILDING TELLS A TALE OF GRANDEZZA.

*Mr Vergani*, the 87-year-old owner of the LA SCALA residence on the western shore of Lake Garda has come over from his home at Lake Lugano to open the gate for us personally. Of course, he is still driving his Jaguar himself and as part of his welcome he also insists on mixing his guests a Campari Soda, with hands that are shaking ever so slightly. Then, with a friendly wave, Mr Vergani invites us out onto the patio. The lake is calm late on this hazy afternoon and in the distance we can make out the old palazzi on the Isola del Garda. The old gentleman drinks his Campari quickly and proceeds to tell us how he and his wife first saw this house from the lake. The fall winds tumbling over the steep cliffs on the western shores of the lake kept forcing their sailing boat into the bay below (which is why it is known as Baia del Vento). Eventually, in the mid-1960s, the owner *André Bloc* sold the house to Mr Vergani.

Houses like LA SCALA are not being built any longer. They are rare jewels, although some might disagree with that description. This summer residence is really a flat pavilion pushing its solid concrete floor plate out into the air above the lake: a peacefully formal, floating construction of concrete, steel and glass. Slender steel pillars bear the weight of identical ceiling plates and the gentle glass panes of sliding walls define the interior. Despite its harsh shapes, the house exudes an air of relaxed joviality. Its walls have

most probably seen a few wild parties. Today, Mr Vergani is not going down to the lake, but we are allowed to go down alone, taking a path which we are surely permitted to describe as a little crazy. In order to descend down the steep cliff to the lakeshore, in the final design of the villa, the architect *Vittoriano Viganò* set one end of a 40-metre concrete beam into the clifftop and the other end into the ground down below. Bridging the heights in this way, and with 100 iron steps built into it, the beam offers the courageous visitor a chance to “walk through the air”. Whether this method of descending 35 metres should class as “brutalist” or just plain “brutal” might be matter of debate, but Viganò was not known for his compromises. His clear shapes and clear attitude had to shine through without any distortion.

So it is astonishing how gently the uncompromisingly designed Villa LA SCALA embeds itself into its environment when seen from above. The roof, almost trapezoidal in shape, blends almost completely into the surroundings, leaving only the fine outline of the stairs which appear as an extension of the house’s wall, leading down to Lake Garda where the line ends in a thin landing stage. In comparison, the neighbouring Fornella camping site is just an ugly set of orderly camping plots with a swimming pool attempting to imitate a fig leaf.

*Hubert Filser*





















LEFT: HE SAID CHAIR / SHE SAID CHAIR ASH FRAME  
RIGHT: HE SAID CHAIR ASH FRAME













LEFT: CLERICI LOUNGE ONE SEATER UPHOLSTERY OAK FRAME  
 RIGHT: CLERICI LOUNGE TWO SEATER UPHOLSTERY OAK FRAME





SESTIERE CASTELLO  
COMUNE DI VENEZIA  
PROV. DI VENEZIA



A LIGNANO  
PINETA

KM  
104

QUERINI STAMPALIA  
FOUNDATION,  
Castello 5252, Venice.

*Architect: Carlo Scarpa,  
reconstruction of the ground  
floor, 1959 – 1963.*

# WHEN A STRONG WIND IS BLOWING

... the tides into Venice's lagoons during the cold months of the year, the water levels at the old *palazzo* near the Church of Santa Maria Formosa also begin to rise. The canal water then flows through the forged paled gates, begins to climb up the steps in the vestibule and then cascades through specially built drainage channels into the space left of the gates. A little of the lagoon also fills up a narrow groove at the foot of a wall in the room on the right, swirling around the short walls protecting the interior space with its beautifully radiant mosaic. The main part of the museum as far as the garden is completely protected from the *acqua alta*.

When the native Venetian architect *Carlo Scarpa* redesigned the ground floor of the *palazzo* to serve as a museum of contemporary art, he built in a large room whose most attractive feature is to take in water. Is that not astonishing? He even had the floor lowered for this purpose. This revealed the foundations of ancient pillars which support the timberwork of the first floor. When the floodwaters rise within this room, the pillars are reflected in the water, creating a wonderful image: a quiet, reflective waterpool in the middle of a 16th-century palace. There is a stone jetty extending from the sides allowing museum visitors to proceed through the museum at high tide.

The renovation designed by *Carlo Scarpa* here is both sensible and symbolic: a measure to protect against floods that is also a work of art. Scarpa put in place a system composed of paths, steps and channels

which controls the way the floodwaters from the lagoons flow through the building: it welcomes those waters instead of preventing their entry. As Giuseppe Mazzariol, the Director of the Foundation in 1959, asked him to seal the *palazzo* off from the water, Carlo Scarpa responded: *"(It is) inside, inside, the floodwater, inside just as it is inside the whole city. The only question is how to master it, to control it, to make use of it as a radiant, reflective material: we will see the plays of light on the yellow and violet piece. It is something wonderful!"*

Scarpa spent his life becoming a master in the art of connecting old with new. He was never looking for the great gesture but rather the fine details. Every little aspect is thought through, every wall is planned right down to the last brick. Anyone who has ever seen one of Scarpa's drawings with his typical flowing strokes will understand how much love he put into the relationships between individual things or between them and the environment. If you immerse yourself in Scarpa's world, you find an indescribable wealth of shape and ideas – the result of a simply incredible urge to design and a great love of material, with its particular characteristics. This is how the architect known as the Master of Form even found a form for the floodwaters. It is an amazing idea: grasping water as a material and welcoming it into his building, where most others would only see it as an evil to be kept out!

*Hubert Filser*

























LEFT: UNCINO VERSION B ASH FRAME  
RIGHT: UNCINO VERSION A ASH FRAME

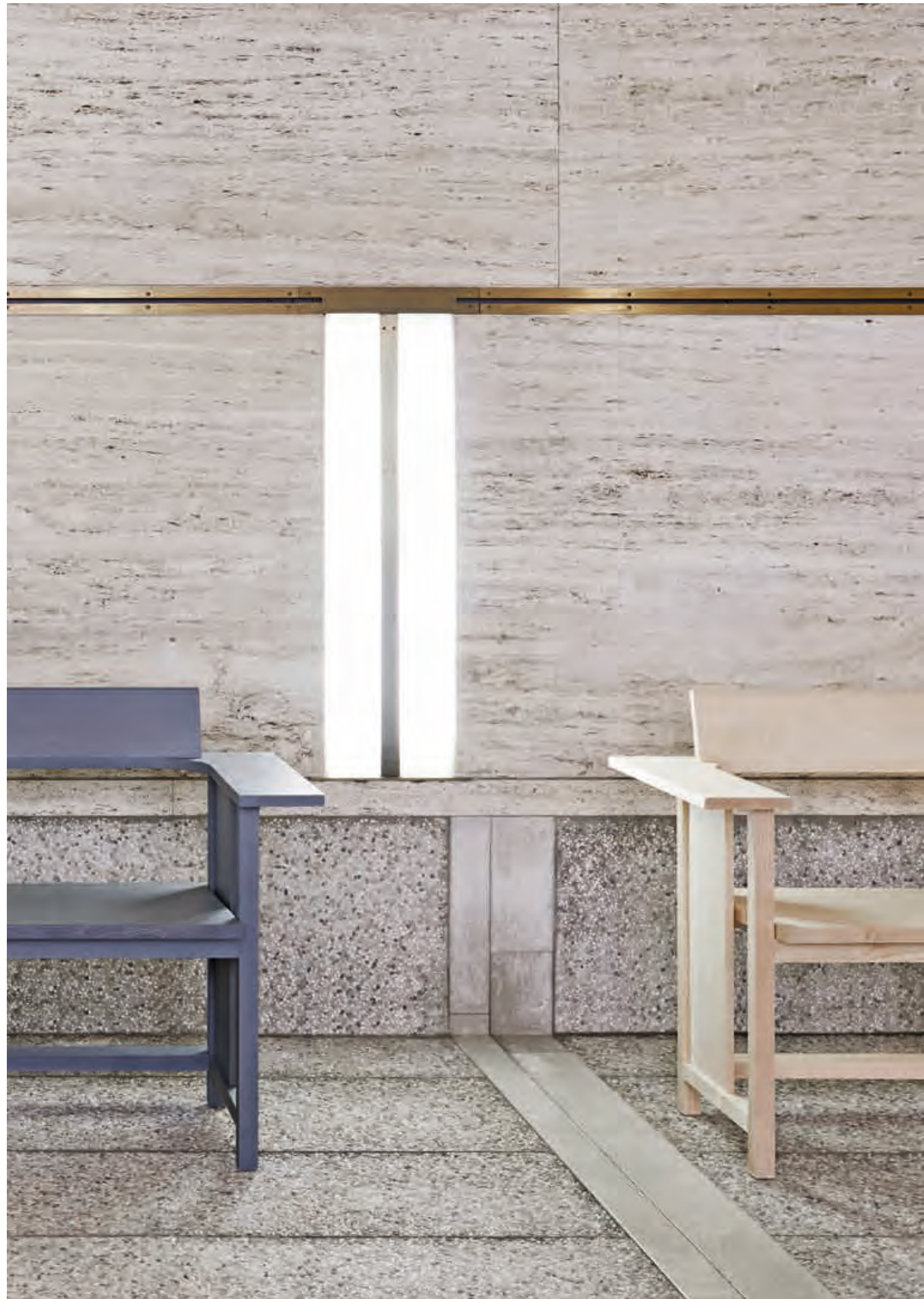






















LIGNANO PINETA  
COMUNE DI  
LIGNANO SABBIAADORO  
PROV. DI UDINE



A TRIESTE

KM  
87,5

VILLA MAINARDIS  
Summer House,  
Lignano Pineta,  
Raggio di Levante /  
Arco del Maestrale.

*Architect: Marcello D'Olivo,  
built 1955 – 1957.*



# IN 1953 THERE WAS NOTHING HERE

...except pine forests with their dark tree trunks: no tourists at the Adriatic, no Lignano Pineta, no bagni with their endless rows of sunloungers. The nearby marshes of the Lagune di Marano had only just been drained. Then *Marcello D'Olivo* came along with his idea of a rural holiday resort. The architect was not just a fan of the geometry of arcs and sinus curves, but of grandiose designs as well. It was an era of great utopian futures. With his visions he garnered the enthusiastic support of film makers and authors. Ernest Hemingway was even on site to hear him explain his new town. Starting in 1954, *Marcello D'Olivo* initially laid down the basic skeleton of the settlement with his streets. Then came the Villa Mainardis and another summer house right at the front, and finally a snake-shaped flat building sweeping from the centre of the spiralling street to the sea. The Hollywood Bar here, at Il Treno, was the place to be for a long time.

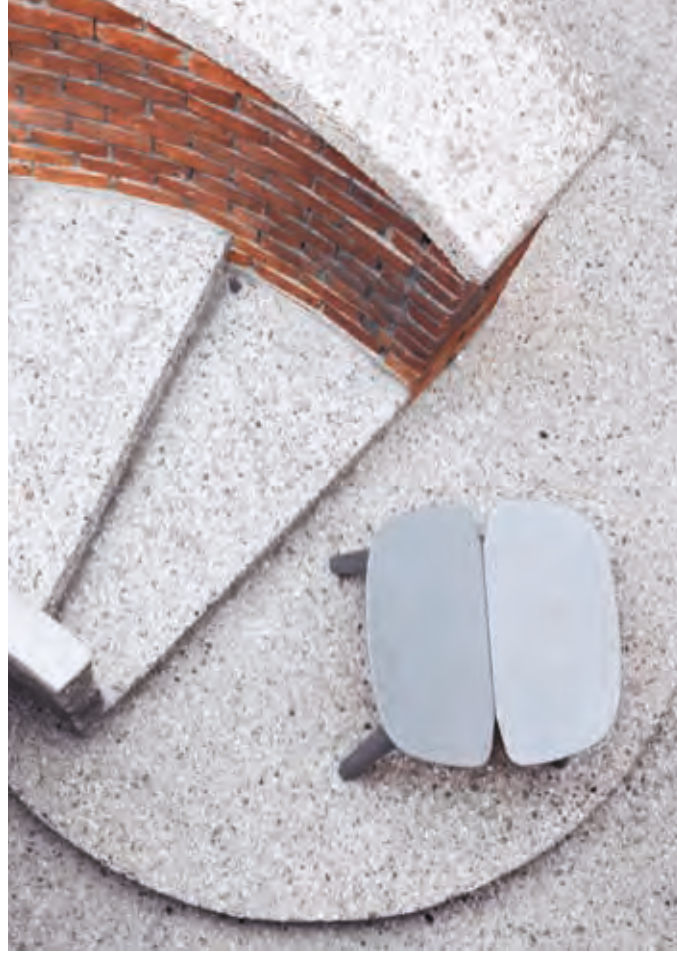
The best time to approach the Villa is on a warm summer morning when the town is still empty and free of tourists. The best way is along a very special route starting in the centre of Lignano Pineta at the Piazza Rosa dei Venti, the Wind Rose Square, right by the tourist information office. From here the route follows a series of arcs, initially very tight but becoming ever more sweeping: the Arco dell'Erica, then the Arco della Gondola which curves slowly to the sea, then it continues along the Arco del Caiccio away from the sea in an ever larger spiral past identical holiday houses. The route traverses the Treno several

times, until it comes to an end after its third time round the town. What a great feeling that would be!

It would be a worthy way to go to the Villa Mainardis, since it does indeed follow the very street which this house's architect, *Marcello D'Olivo* designed and built. Shortly before the end of the third circumambulation, you would simply need to turn off towards the sea at the Raggio di Levante and you would soon arrive at *D'Olivo's* summer house – a round house with sweeping walls. It stands on a small hill very close to the sea, directly behind the pines at the beach. It is slightly reminiscent of a doughnut with its circular opening in the centre. And it is through this opening you pass to enter the house. A spiralling stone staircase leads into the living area before continuing up to the roof. What a great idea to enter the house from the inside – from a staircase in the centre! The open sky is above you. That is the principle underlying this house: look outside, since that is where summer is. You simply have to open the windows very wide, step out onto the round balcony and look down into the wonderfully blue pool. Its sparkling tones form a magical oval as intensely blue as the swimming pool in the film of the same name. It would certainly be a wonderful place to write. As would the roof, where you can enjoy the first warming rays of sunshine with a strong cup of coffee and the wonderful feeling of being outside.

*Hubert Filser*





















LEFT: BRANCA STOOL ASH FRAME  
RIGHT: CHIARO LOUNGE ASH FRAME













LEFT: RADICE CHAIR / COUNTER STOOL ASH FRAME  
RIGHT: RADICE CHAIR ASH FRAME







MONTE GRISA  
LOC. CONTOVELLO  
DISTRETTO I  
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A SAN GIOVANNI  
AL NATISONE

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TEMPLE OF  
MONTE GRISA,  
PILGRIMAGE CHURCH,  
Antonio Guacci,  
Prosecco, Trieste.

*Architect: Antonio Guacci,  
built 1959 – 1966.*



# IT ALL BEGAN WITH A VOW.

If Trieste was saved from wartime destruction, Bishop *Antonio Santin* vowed to have a church built on a mountain above the city. The city was indeed spared, and his vow became a majestic construction to honour Saint Mary, and a place of gratitude and reconciliation after years of terrible war. That is the root note of the harmony at this coastal spot, some 335 metres above the Adriatic in the foothills of the Monte Grisa. So it is a deeply religious place we find ourselves in, visited by pilgrims from Italy and neighbouring Slovenia. Clear reasons, therefore, for anyone in charge of building a church here to incorporate this root note in their design. *Antonio Guacci* was this man, an engineer who loved to play with geometrical basic forms in his drawings: with circles, triangles, spheres and cylinders. He took these basic elements and composed wild, geometrical utopias. The gifted constructor and concrete specialist probably never dreamed of seeing one of these utopias built on Monte Grisa, but it was: the *Santuario Nazionale a Maria Madre e Regina*, as it is called today. It is a variation on the letters A and M, which can be made of triangles, especially if the base of the M is widened a little. A and M are the letters of Mary. *Guacci* built his entire church of triangles: from the imposing external shape to details such as the altar or confessionals inside. The church is a declension of two letters and a masterpiece of the art of engineering.

Even today, the padres of Monte Grisa talk about their “ship”, with the lower church

the upper church aligned across this and covering it, with the main altar as the ship’s bridge. Religious people love symbolic comparisons such as these. In any case, there is now an imposing nave (a term which does indeed have a nautical origin) of concrete standing spectacularly high on the edge of a plateau, buffeted by the strong winds blowing up the cliffs from the coast. It dominates the ten kilometres of coastline from Trieste to the tongue of land where Miramare Castle could be seen as the church’s architectural counterpoint: the cute former summer residence of the Habsburgs. Not everyone down in Trieste loves the stark concrete appearance of their pilgrims church, but they all love the majestic view it offers down across the sea.

In the interior, the rawness of the material is not as visible, especially in moments when the evening sun causes the concrete outside to glow. In those moments there is a bluey pink shade to the small light-filled triangles of the main facade, which blend together into one larger triangle inside. Then you are reminded that concrete itself is actually a very old material with deep roots in this country – in ancient Rome. After all, concrete was invented by the Romans, and Rome is home to the oldest of all concrete constructions, including the Pantheon with its gigantic concrete dome. By the way, this is 43 metres high: the same height as the pilgrims church on the Monte Grisa. And another coincidence: The Pantheon is also dedicated to Saint Mary and is still a church today.

*Hubert Filser*

that is reminiscent of the hold of a ship, and































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**MATTIAZZI**  
ITALY



FROM WEST TO EAST

COMUNE DI  
PORTESE  
DISTRETTO XIV  
DI SALÒ  
PROV. DI BRESCIA



A VENEZIA

KM  
172

SESTIERE CASTELLO  
COMUNE DI VENEZIA  
PROV. DI VENEZIA



A LIGNANO  
PINETA

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