



The Industrial Civilisation in Schio

Schio displays some interesting evidence of its Industrial Archaeology that is still visible today and linked mainly to the manufacturing and social activities of the Rossi family.

At the beginning of the 19th century, **Francesco Rossi** set up an exemplary process of industrialisation, but it was his son **Alessandro** who developed the local manufacturing business to very high levels during the 1800s. The itinerary to discover Schio's Industrial Archaeology begins in Piazza Alessandro Rossi, where the "**Omo**" stands, a monument dedicated by Rossi to his weavers (Giulio Monteverde, 1879).

Continuing along the town's industrial archaeology trail, at the crossroads between Via Pasubio and Via XX Settembre, we come across the **former Conte Wool Mill**, the early part of which along the Roggia Maestra artificial canal dates back to 1757; a charming exhibition room can be visited on the first floor of the restored building.

Returning along Via Pasubio, we head towards the **Francesco Rossi Wool Mill**, that was remodelled by Alessandro Rossi in 1849 on the foundations of his father's factory (1817).

Through the entrance door, the grandiose **Fabbrica Alta** can be seen, which was designed in 1862 by the Belgian architect Auguste Vivroux. Today in disuse, the building is five storeys high and each storey used to house a different phase of the wool production. Between 1966 and 1967 the production cycle was transferred to the town's new industrial area.

In front of the factory, we find the **Jacquard Garden** – a delightful and romantic "oasis", the work of the architect Antonio Caregaro Negrin from Vicenza. The garden is bounded on one side by the **Jacquard Theatre** with its façade adorned by twelve medallions representing illustrious citizens of Schio. A semicircular greenhouse can be seen in the centre of the garden and behind this extends a series of grottoes, paths and balcony viewpoints populated by mythological sculptures.

Returning towards the centre, we find the **Nursery School** dedicated to A. Rossi and set up in 1872 for the workers' children.

We go up Via XX Settembre opposite the nursery school and continue along the road until we reach Via Pietro Maraschin, the main axis of the **New Workers' District** with its different types of housing. At the edge of the district stands the prestigious **Civic Theatre**, built in 1906 and designed by the architect Ferruccio Chemello.

Religious Itinerary

The itinerary to discover the religious heritage of Schio begins in Piazza Alessandro Rossi, dominated by **St. Peter's Cathedral**, the original eighteenth century nucleus of which was remodelled and enriched during the 1800s. Together with the artistic decoration typical of the early twentieth century, the interior houses valuable works of art including four paintings by Alessandro Maganza and one by Palma il Vecchio.

Continuing in the area surrounding the cathedral, the Church of **St. James** is located in Via Cavour: inside, we find an excellent series of large canvases depicting the Sorrows of the Virgin, painted between 1868 and 1902 by Valentino Pupin and Tomaso Pasquotti. When we reach Via Fusinato we come across the **Temple of the Holy Family** (Bartolomeo Folladore, 1850): modelled on the Pantheon in Rome, inside it houses the urn containing the relics of Saint Giuseppina Bakhita and it has become a destination for the faithful who also come to visit the small museum dedicated to the Saint.

Another Church that should not be missed is the one of **St. Francis**, founded in 1400 by the Friars Minor of the Observance. The church houses the famous altarpiece by Francesco Verla dedicated to the wedding of St. Catherine of Alexandria (1512). In the immediate vicinity, a pleasant walk through the Grumi dei Frati public gardens leads to the votive chapel of **St. Mary in the Valley**, to the former church of **St. Mary of the Snow** that stands on the old site of the "Castle", to the small church of **St. Roch** and, finally to the **Church of St. Nicholas "of the Capuchins"**, which has been annexed to a Capuchin monastery since 1536.

Right in the historical centre of the town, going down Via Pasini, we come across the **Convent of the Augustinians**, which has been there since the late 1400s and the Church of **St. Anthony Abbot**, in Lombard Byzantine-style (Antonio Caregaro Negrin, 1879). Close to the town centre, in the area of Aste, stands the charming Church of **St. Martin**, founded in the seventh century and then remodelled in Romanic style, with frescoes dating from 1400. No longer used for worship nowadays and open only on special occasions, the church is a traditional destination for pilgrims and devotees of the Virgin Mary.

Finally, in the district of Giavenale, we find the small country church of **St. Justine**, that was probably of Lombard origin and reconstructed in 1581, at the wish of the Dal Ferro brothers, who were owners of the nearby Villa Barettoni (attributed to Scamozzi).

Mount Novegno, nature and history

A combination of nature and history set amongst the first spurs of the Vicenza Pre-Alps. It is **Mount Novegno** that rises like a natural placid altar next to the harsher massif of Pasubio, just near Schio. In winter, on the summit the snow covers the wide basin which, since ancient times, has been the destination of farmers who take their cattle there to graze in the summer months. From its highest peak, **Mount Rione** (1691 m.), the First World War Fort of the same name stands out.

The Vicenza backdrop of mountains and foothills is imbued with the **memory of the Great War**. The Novegno bears witness to the theatre of events that have become a part of Italy's history. Numerous traces of the past still mark the face of the mountain today including roads, tunnels, trenches, caves and fortified positions.

The symbol of all these vestiges is the **Rione Fort**, a small defence building that played a key role in the battles of June 1916, during the decisive hours of the *Strafexpedition*. The Austrians were making one last dire attempt to cross the Novegno, that they called the *Letzer Berg*: it was the only obstacle preventing them from descending upon Schio and invading the Vicenza plain.

The battle reached its climax on 12th and 13th June, when 72 Austrian battalions backed by 264 pieces of artillery attacked the Italian line which was defended by 14 battalions of infantry belonging to the already exhausted 35th Division. The trenches of Novegno, Mount Giove and the Campedello pass came under extremely heavy artillery fire for hours, a prelude to the repeated assaults led by the 3rd and 4th *Kaiserjäger* Regiment that lasted for two consecutive days, but the line did not succumb.

The bloody battles that were fought over 90 years ago left a lasting mark on the environment. **Today the Novegno is a perfect symbiosis of nature and remembrance**, an open-air workshop and a destination for history lovers, naturalists, mountain ramblers and mountain enthusiasts.

The ruins of small mountain shelters and the remains of Alpine paths are the legacies of an old **mountain economy** that is still visible to visitors attracted by the typical pre-Alpine flora that grows spontaneously in the meadows and in the thick woods. The Novegno is also inhabited by a discrete quantity of fauna: in fact marmots, roe deer and chamois are quite commonly seen.

Nature, Excursions, Gastronomy

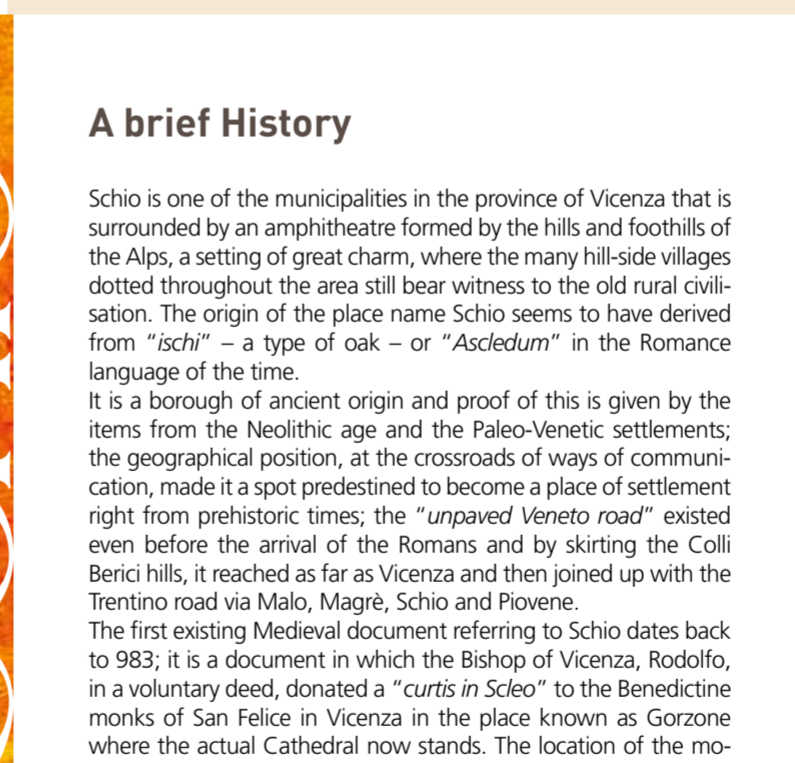
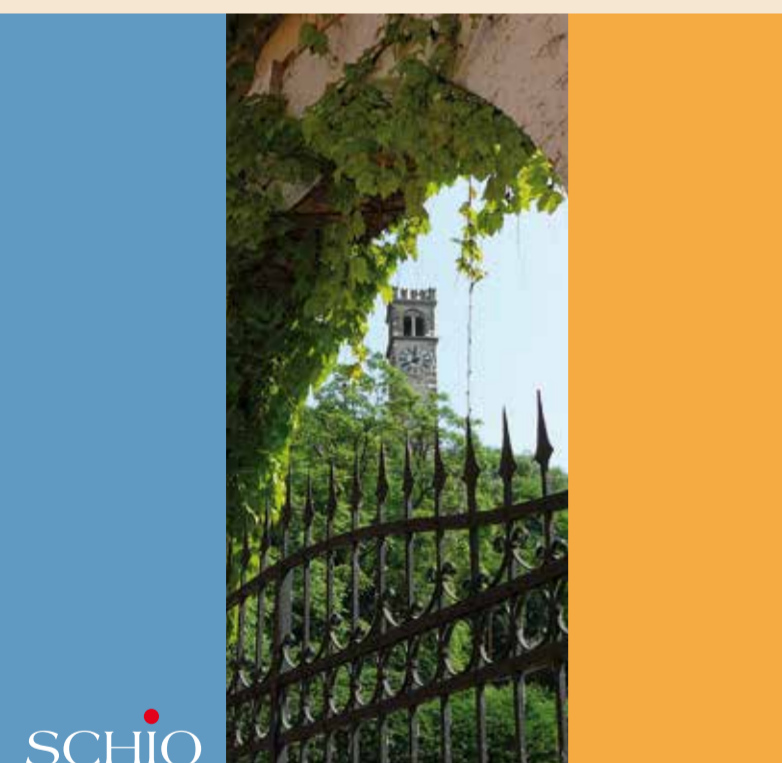
The area towards the north, on the outskirts of Schio, is distinguished by the **hilly area of Tretto**, with the characteristic districts of Santa Maria, San Rocco, Sant'Ulderico, Santa Caterina and Bosco. The name "Tretto" comes from the word "*trei*" in old Bavarian dialect meaning path and from the Medieval Latin word "*tretum*". Once an autonomous municipality, in 1968 it became a part of the Municipality of Schio.

The first settlements in this area date back to the year one thousand, when a large number of immigrants of German origin were sent here by the Maltraversi counts who were landowners bound to the German Emperor. The district of Tretto boasted a **rich subsoil**: between 1440 and 1600 there were as many as 111 silver, copper, iron and lead mines and, above all, kaolin mines, the "white earth" used in the production of porcelain, in the paper industry and for washing wool. In some periods of history, the kaolin of Tretto was the most highly prized and widely marketed in Italy; however, during the 20th century the mining activity gradually declined until all the mines were closed.

The **typical dwelling places** of Tretto are in "contrada" meaning hill-side villages (*contra*): in this hilly area there are about 70 of them and, together with the old washing troughs, wayside chapels and *casoni* (typical structures used to dry the kaolin), they represent an ideal destination for **walks and excursions** along the delightful paths on foot, mountain bike or horseback. Tretto also offers numerous possibilities for more demanding excursions like the ascent of Mount Novegno.

Festivals and events are organised in this hilly area to re-discover old traditions and typical products and dishes of Val Leogra: the PDO *sopressa*, a delicious sausage of pure pork, the goat's cheeses, chestnuts, walnuts and hazelnuts, mushrooms, cheeses and potatoes of Tretto, but also the polenta made with "maranelo" corn, the "gargati col consiero" and the rabbit "alla vallegrina" in a sweet and sour sauce.

Amongst the **typical sweets** of Schio visitors should not miss the "pandoli de Schio", the "bussolai" and the "gateau": a cake consisting of layers of meringue with zabaglione and chantilly creams.



A brief History

Schio is one of the municipalities in the province of Vicenza that is surrounded by an amphitheatre formed by the hills and foothills of the Alps, a setting of great charm, where the many hill-side villages dotted throughout the area still bear witness to the old rural civilisation. The origin of the place name Schio seems to have derived from "*ischi*" – a type of oak – or "*Ascedum*" in the Romance language of the time.

It is a borough of ancient origin and proof of this is given by the items from the Neolithic age and the Paleo-Venetic settlements; the geographical position, at the crossroads of ways of communication, made it a spot predestined to become a place of settlement right from prehistoric times; the "*unpaved Veneto road*" existed even before the arrival of the Romans and by skirting the Colli Berici hills, it reached as far as Vicenza and then joined up with the Trentino road via Malo, Magrè, Schio and Piovene.

The first existing Medieval document referring to Schio dates back to 983; it is a document in which the Bishop of Vicenza, Rodolfo, in a voluntary deed, donated a "*curtis in Scleo*" to the Benedictine monks of San Felice in Vicenza in the place known as Gorzone where the actual Cathedral now stands. The location of the modern day town centre originated from the transfer of the parish of Belvicino, the houses of which had been swept away by a flood, to Gorzone in Schio in 1123.

A free Municipality in 1228, and then the property of the Della Scala and of the Visconti families, Schio was widely developed under the dominion of the Serenissima and it became the main place

for wool production in the Republic. In fact, it was this very business that gave the town the famous nickname of "little Manchester"; it is true to say that the vocation for industry has very old origins and has left the town a remarkable legacy consisting of precious evidence to its Industrial Archaeology. The economic development began in earnest and adopted more rational systems from the eighteenth century onwards with the work of Nicolò Tron, who founded a textile factory that attracted skilled workers from England and introduced new machines and work methods as far back as 1738. The art of wool-making reached its peak in the nineteenth century thanks to the first products made by Francesco Rossi and by virtue of the innovative entrepreneurial spirit of his son Alessandro Rossi who was able to develop his father's wool mill until it became the most important Italian wool company (Lanerossi). This pioneering aspect of industry proved to be a vital element for local entrepreneurial culture and in time it has led to the creation of a unique and extraordinary industrial area.



SCHIO

MAP AND CITY GUIDE

INFORMATION
Ufficio Promozione del Territorio
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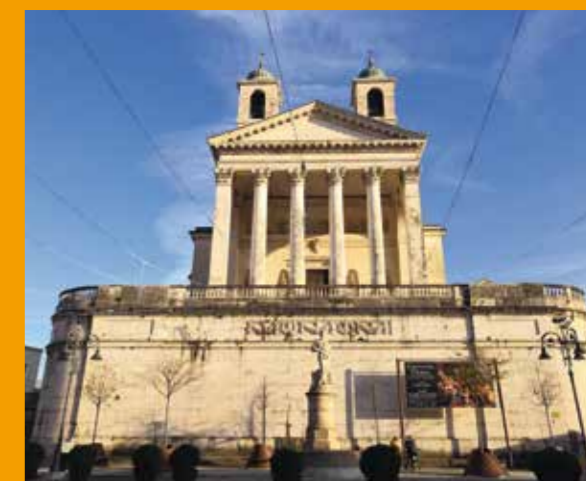
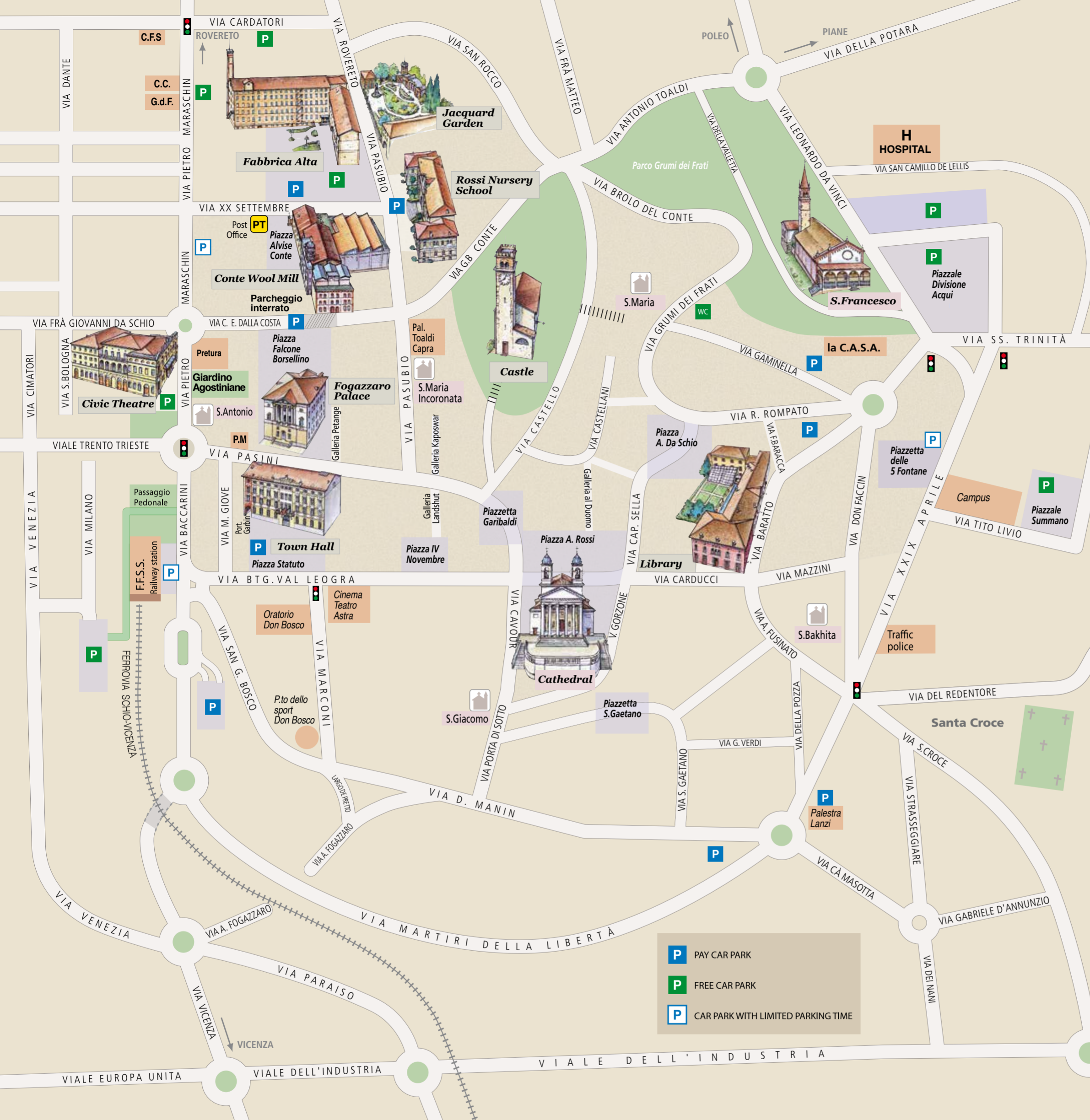
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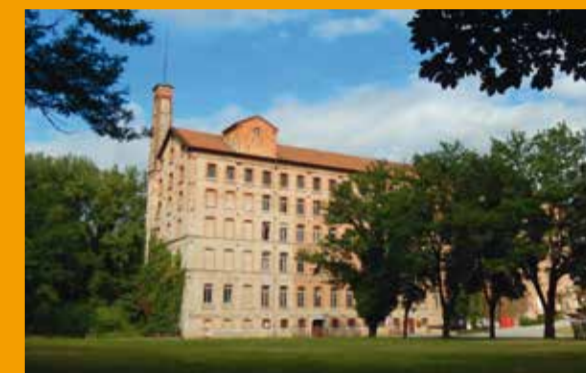


Comune di Schio



St. Peter's Cathedral

Dedicated to St. Peter and located on the Gorzone hill, it was the centre of the whole of the religious life in Schio from as early as the 13th century. Its current formation with three naves, classical pronaos and lateral steps is the result of architectural work carried out at different times between 1700 and 1800.



Fabbbrica Alta

Built to the order of Alessandro Rossi in 1862, it represents one of the symbols of the first Italian industrialisation. Inside there are huge halls divided into three bays with 125 cast iron columns. Although it is not currently in use, the building is at the centre of a Recovery Plan involving the whole surrounding area known as Lanerossi.



Jacquard Garden

An exceptional monument of industrial archaeology, as well as landscape architecture, the romantic garden of the Rossi wool mill, known as Jacquard, was created by Antonio Caregato Negrin between 1859 and 1878. The Jacquard Garden is now private property.

Palasport
Area Campagnola
Swimming pools

P



Foggazzaro Palace

The palace which features a Corinthian portico, an ashlar basement and two wings (barchesse) with turrets, was built in 1810 to a design by Carlo Barrera. Renovated in 2004, today it is used to hold cultural activities such as exhibitions, conferences and concerts.



"Renato Bortoli" Civic Library

Housed in the renovated group of historical buildings that were formerly the "Ospedale Baratto", built in 1611, and the district prison under Austrian rule, the library offers numerous services including a lending library, consultation, newspaper and periodical library, reading room, archive consultation, children's and teenagers' section and internet point.



Schio Town hall

Built in 1799 to a design by Carlo Barrera and previously used as the Garbin Palace and Wool Mill, it has been home to the town council since 1914. The simplicity of the façade overlooking the square contrasts with the more articulate main prospect along Via Pasini.



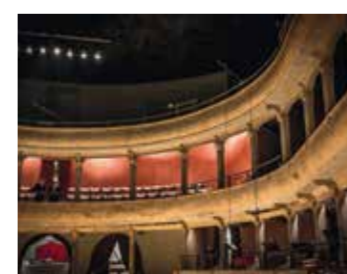
Castle

The so-called "Castle" of Schio is really a former church (St. Mary of the Snow) that stands on the ruins of the old castle which was destroyed by the Venetians in 1512 following the troubled events of the League of Cambrai. In a panoramic position offering a marvellous view of Schio, it is today the home of the town's Photographic Circle.



Conte Wool Mill

It is the oldest wool mill of the town and was founded in 1757 by Giovanni Battista Conte and then extended over time with the building of new plants and structures in reinforced concrete. Following remarkable restoration works, in 2007, on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of its foundation, it was reopened to the public for exhibitions and as a museum.



Civic Theatre

It was inaugurated on 9th June 1909 with a performance of "Mefistofele" by Arrigo Boito. Seriously damaged during the war, it gradually fell into disuse. Today, some of the rooms such as the foyer and the Calendoli room are used for exhibitions and conferences. A work of architectural restoration and conservation is currently being developed.



Rossi Nursery School

Named after Alessandro Rossi who entrusted the building work to Antonio Caregato Negrin in 1872, the nursery school looked after the children of Lanerossi wool mill workers until about 1990. Today, the building is being restored and will become a "music centre" with spaces dedicated to musical groups and town associations.



The Church of St. Francis

A fourteenth century church with an adjacent monastery of the Friars Minor of the Observance (which was suppressed in 1810). Extended during the 1500s, it houses numerous works of art inside and in the cloister, including the great altarpiece by Francesco Verla. Apart from religious functions, concerts are also held there.