

Pordenone, Park of the Castle of Torre and of the Roman Villa

The Park of the Castle of Torre and the Roman Villa can be divided into three distinct areas that find their point of union in the bridge over the Noncello. It is the area of competence of the ancient castle, the area facing the old dye-works and the archaeological area of the Roman Villa.

The park of Castello di Torre has recently been redeveloped with restoration interventions that have tried to recover and enhance existing naturalistic elements and to transform the part between the *bastia* and the castle, with its precious archaeological finds, into a space open to the public for educational purposes.

The most significant morphological feature of this park is the location of the castle on a hill in a strategically dominant position overlooking the Noncello and which guaranteed the indispensable security for a medieval castle. The building is located on a thirty-meter-high ground, while the underlying countryside is at an altitude of twenty-three meters. The rise, perhaps artificially levelled, or at least levelled, to accommodate the village and the *bastia*, is very steep towards the Noncello and on the east side.

Today the ancient castle of the Counts of Ragogna is public property and home to the Archaeological Museum of Western Friuli, managed by the Municipality of Pordenone.

Near the entrance to the castle was created a garden aesthetically linked to the tradition of Italian historic gardens, characterized by some large paulownia specimens and two specimens of *lauroceraso* very interesting from an aesthetic point of view. There are also examples of willows, plane trees, maples, oaks and, in the flower beds, different varieties of hydrangeas together with roses of ancient and modern cultivars.

The nearby archaeological area, with the remains of the Roman villa, is instead surrounded by an absolutely natural wood. The first excavations that led to the discovery of this archaeological site were carried out around 1950 by Count Giuseppe di Ragogna, a passionate researcher of the territory and owner of the ancient castle. Initially the finds brought to light were interpreted as Roman baths due to the presence of the bases of pillars, but later, after more detailed investigations, researchers and archaeologists agreed in identifying in the excavation a residential complex: a Roman villa.

In the neighbourhood of the villa, the lively interspersed water puddles, the adjacent Noncello, the dense brushes, not very accessible and interposed with clearings, favour the life of a rich and diversified fauna: in warm spring days it is possible to appreciate the singing of many species of birds typical of the forest and, with a little luck, observe mammals such as the badger, the fox, the squirrel and the beech marten.

The Science Imaginary, a visited Science Centre where students engage in different scientific experiences, is based in the old dye-works. The green area surrounding the ancient industrial building is particularly appreciated by dog lovers, due to the large lawn served by a safe access road and equipped with numerous benches.

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