

Porcu Satta House Museum

The Museum is housed in an elegant building. Giovanni Porcu Duras, the local village doctor for over forty years, and his wife, Rosina Satta Mulas, a noblewoman, had their house built in 1901. The doctor was very popular and held in high esteem for his professional expertise in the neighbouring villages as well. He was also admired for his profound sensitivity and generosity towards the poor.

The building has a rather interesting architectural appeal, uncommon for small Sardinian villages. Above the main entrance is an iron lunette with the inscription of the owner's initials on it, as was customary for aristocratic dwellings.

In the hallway, a glass cabinet displays Dr Porcu's medical instruments. From there, a staircase leads to several rooms on the upper floors. The rooms on the first floor, namely the main floor, were decorated with artworks painted by Giovanni Molinari. The floors are paved with exquisite and beautifully preserved cement tiles, which are decorated with different patterns and colours, in keeping with the decorations of the rooms.

Traditional Sardinian jewels are displayed on the walls of each room. Created by a local goldsmith, Giovanni Rocca, whose family business spans several generations, the collection consists of amulets traditionally used in Sardinia to ward off evil influences or ill luck caused by jealousy or wickedness, and referred to as *ocru malu*, or evil eye. The exhibition also displays object labels that describe the origin of the artefacts and the techniques used to make them.

Three traditional dresses (a Sunday dress, a wedding gown and a mourning dress), a man's shirt and a black coat made from orbace - a Sardinian rough woollen cloth - are exhibited in one of the rooms. The Sunday dress is characterised by light green and bright red colours; the wedding gown is made from brown wool and velvet in different shades of purple, with light coloured silk hems and sequin embroidery; while the mourning dress consists of a white shirt that stands out against a plain dark dress.

On the same floor is a room furnished with 1920s dark wood furniture designed by Francesco Ciusa, who worked as a sculptor. The carved patterns of the furniture are similar to those of the chests that were traditionally found in Sardinian houses. The walls are painted with motifs that replicate a wood finish, while a chess board, playing cards and a paper are painted in the middle section of the ceiling, suggesting that this once was a recreational room.

The room next door was the reception room. It was called "red" room, because of its elegant red velvet three-piece suite embroidered with white floral motifs. The walls are upholstered with flower-patterned wallpaper in shades of pink against a green background, while the floor is paved with cement tiles decorated with star shaped patterns. One of the rooms nearby is frescoed with red geometric patterns. The floor tiles are also red. Paint brushes, a sketchbook and musical instruments are frescoed in the middle of the ceiling, to suggest that this once was a hobby room.

The second floor includes several rooms, an ethnographic exhibition consisting of farming tools, wheat grinding and milling tools, wood and reed carving games. A local artisan also beautifully recreated the working areas and the tools that were used in the past, such as carts, weaving looms and wool spinning wheels.

To visit the museum, contact Gavoi Town Council online.

Text by Laura Melis

