

## Church of Loret'Attesu

Erected between the 18th and 19th centuries and extensively restored between 1996 and 1997, the country church of Nostra Signora delle Nevi - which is also called Loret'Attesu, namely 'the far Loreto' to differentiate it from the church of Nostra Signora di Loreto (Loreto 'e vidda') located in the village - is situated in the countryside near the town of Mamoiada on the Elisi plateau, a hilly area famed for its vineyards and wine production.

The building, made from local stone, is quite plain: it has a regular, rectangular plan, a single nave with a presbytery and sacristy, a pitched roof and a lath ceiling. The ancient altar facing north-east is made of plastered masonry, whereas the other altar is of granite. The gabled façade has an arched entrance, with an oculus above it, and is surmounted by a bell-gable topped by a cross. The sacristy, divided into two rooms, is attached to the south flank of the church, and the side entrance is framed by a loggia. The façades are all painted in pink, with the exception of the stone buttresses that support the wall facing north. A tree-lined path that was built quite recently leads to the main entrance, whereas the back and north side of the building overlook the vineyards.

The walls inside are painted in a light blue. On the left-hand side wall there are small paintings depicting Gospel scenes in groups of four. They were painted in 2017 by artist and priest Giovanni Censi of Gerano. Above the altar is a stone scallop-shell niche framed by columns and surmounted by a triangular gable with an angel's face. The niche houses a statue of the Virgin Mary stepping on a snake.

According to sources, mass was regularly held here until 1800. The last priest was canon Deiana, who used to live in a two-storey farmhouse called *Sa domo de Su Canonicu*, which is still standing. Today the annual celebrations take place on the second Sunday of May and on the 5th of August, when a procession walks 4 km from the village to the church. During the rest of the year, if you want to visit the church you have to contact the parish priest of Mamoiada.

Text by Cecilia Mariani

