



The eye is drawn irresistibly upward by the light from the lantern, which rushes impetuously over the elaborate basketwork geometry of the tall, tapering cupola.

The greatly revered sacred relic for which this chapel was built—the shroud in which the body of Christ is believed to have been wrapped after His descent from the Cross—is said to have been taken from Jerusalem to Cyprus, and from there to France in the 15th century, from where it was brought to Turin by Emanuele Filiberto in 1578. In 1988 carbon dating seemed to point to a date between 1260 and 1390, but discussion still continues, particularly as another, still fainter image was detected on the reverse side of the shroud in 2002. The relic is closely guarded and is rarely on display: public outings for this century to date are/were 2000 and 2010.

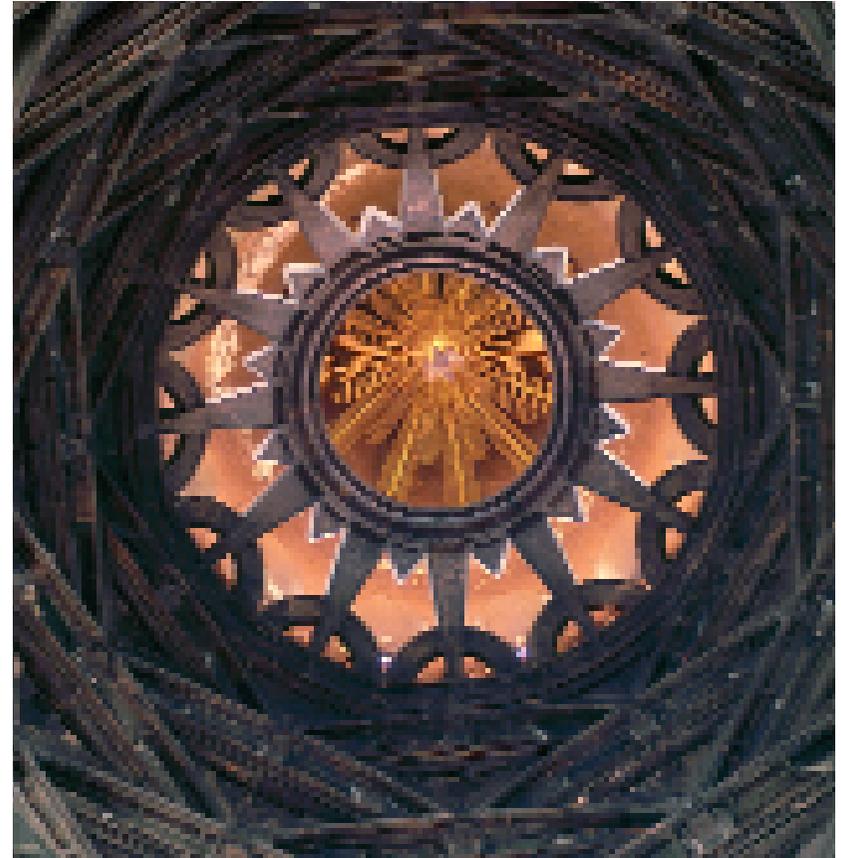
### Piazza San Carlo

The western gateway to the Baroque city centre is the arcaded Piazza San Carlo (*map p. 16, 6*), a handsome monumental square begun in 1640. The equestrian monument to Duke Emanuele Filiberto (*El caval d'bròns*; 1838) shows him sheathing his sword after his victory over the French (*see p. 13*). Beneath the porticoes of the two long yellow and grey *palazzi* are several cafés, including, on the corner of Via San Teresa, the well-known **Caffè San Carlo**. This and the **Caval d'Bròns** (at no. 155) have excellent chocolate and *gianduja*. At the east end of the piazza, on the south side of busy Via Roma, is Guarino Guarini's Palazzo dell'Accademia delle Scienze, now home to two outstanding museums. The **Egyptian Museum** (*open Tues–Sun: June–Sept 9.30–8.30, Sept–June 8.30–7.30*) is the finest Egyptian museum in Italy. The **Galleria Sabauda** (*open Tues, Fri, Sat, Sun 8.30–2, Wed and Thur 2–7.30*) presents the paintings collected by the royal house of Piedmont from the 16th century onwards. Rich in Flemish and Dutch works, it is interesting also for its paintings by Piedmontese masters, some of them hardly represented elsewhere. There are good works by Gaudenzio Ferrari, who worked extensively in Piedmont and Lombardy.

The paintings on the second floor reflect the artistic taste of the Savoy dynasty. The first section (from Emanuele Filiberto to Carlo Emanuele I; 1550–1630) has some splendid works from 16th-century Venice (Bassano, Veronese and Tintoretto), by the Florentine Agnolo Bronzino and the Bolognese Guercino, and by Caravaggio's Lombard followers. The second part (from Vittorio Amedeo I to Vittorio Amedeo II; 1630–1730) has 17th- and 18th-century paintings including Guido Reni's particularly gruesome *Apollo Flaying Marsyas*, as well as works acquired for the royal residences under the guidance of Filippo Juvarra. The third section (from Carlo Emanuele III to Carlo Felice; 1730–1831) focuses on 18th-century academic painting and the early 19th-century taste for *veduti* and landscapes.

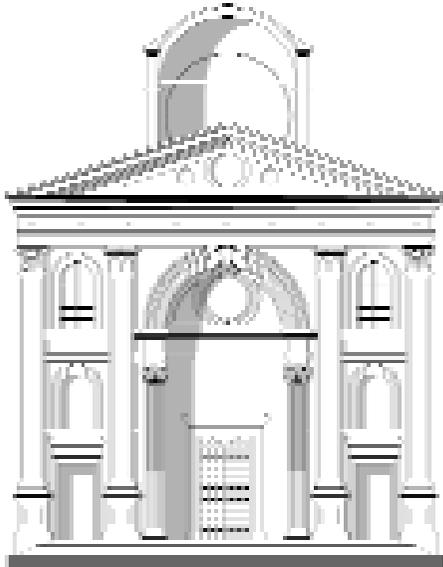
### Via Po and the Mole Antonelliana

It is difficult to say if Via Po or Via Roma is Turin's most striking street. Via Roma, connecting Piazza San Carlo with Piazza Castello, is certainly the more elegant, lined with the city's best shops; but Via Po, leading from Piazza Castello towards the river, provides a splendid architectural frame for the wooded hills on the Po's south bank. This neigh-



Close-up view of Guarini's extraordinary cupola of the Chapel of the Holy Shroud. Though taken before restoration, this image clearly shows the intricate woven effect of the stonework, which clambers upwards tier on tier to the golden symbol of the Trinity at the summit.

bourhood is also home to the building that has become the symbol of Turin, the **Mole Antonelliana** (*map p. 17, 11*). It was begun as a synagogue in 1863, just months after Vittorio Emanuele II granted freedom of worship to Jews in the new kingdom of Italy. The architect, Alessandro Antonelli, was commissioned to build something 47m tall, but changed the plans to something over twice that height. The delays and additional cost sparked a dispute which led to the City of Turin giving the Jewish congregation a new site, and providing Antonelli with the funds to complete his building, which rose to a final height of 167m. Recast by the municipality as a monument to Italian unity, it was the first seat of the Risorgimento Museum now in Palazzo Carignano. In the 1990s the building was fitted with a glass lift (*open Tues–Fri 10–4, Sat–Sun and holidays 9–7;*



The basilica of Sant'Andrea at Mantua is the most complete architectural work by the great Renaissance theorist Leon Battista Alberti. Here we see the use of the giant order, rising through three storeys, which was later to become a feature of Michelangelo's architecture. The tripartite façade is also drawn from Classical models, being a sort of fusion in foreshortened dimension of a porticoed temple-front and a triple triumphal arch, with the entrance under the central barrel vault.

appeared on its early coinage). Built by Luca Fancelli in 1472–94, after Alberti's death, then enlarged in 1530 under the direction of Giulio Romano, and with a dome added by Filippo Juvarra in 1732, Sant'Andrea is nevertheless wholly Alberti's in conception. The huge interior has a spacious barrel-vaulted nave without columns or aisles. The rectangular side chapels are also barrel vaulted. Mantegna lies buried here, his tomb adorned by a bronze bust. The Holy Blood is still housed here, in the crypt.

### Palazzo Te

On the southern edge of the old town, about 1.5km from Piazza Sordello, is Palazzo Te (*open Mon 1–6, Tues–Sun 9–6, last entry 30mins before closing*). It was built in 1525, on the site of the family stables, by Federico Gonzaga, son of Isabella d'Este and the first duke of Mantua, as a summer villa. It is Giulio Romano's most famous work, and an important example of Mannerist architecture: inside the courtyard he subverts the rules

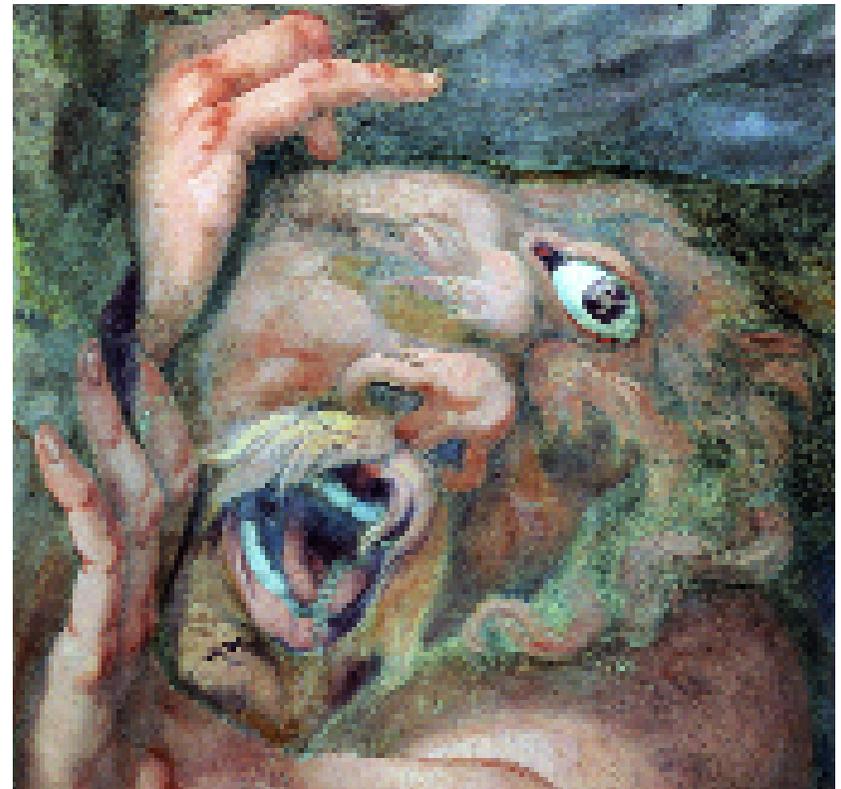
of Classical architecture by designing sections of the entablature (every third triglyph) to look as though they are slipping out of place. The interior of the palace is famous for its painted decoration. The **Sala dei Cavalli** has frescoed portraits of horses from the Gonzaga stables. The Gonzaga were famous connoisseurs of horseflesh: Henry VIII of England, it is said, insisted on a Mantuan horse for ceremonial occasions. The **Sala dei Giganti**, in which painting and architecture are united in a theatrical *trompe l'oeil*, was designed by Giulio Romano and executed by his pupil Rinaldo Mantovano and others. It represents the *Fall of the Giants*, crushed by the thunderbolts of Jupiter hurled from Mount Olympus. Standing here and looking at these extraordinary scenes, it is difficult to believe that they sprang from the brain of a pupil of Raphael: just as Giulio plays with the canons of Classical architecture, so he here goes completely beyond the dignified bounds of Classical art. The debt he owes to Michelangelo (the Sistine ceiling had been unveiled in 1512) is clear. The notorious **Sala di Psiche** is covered with scenes from the story of Eros and Psyche, unabashedly erotic in content.

### The city centre

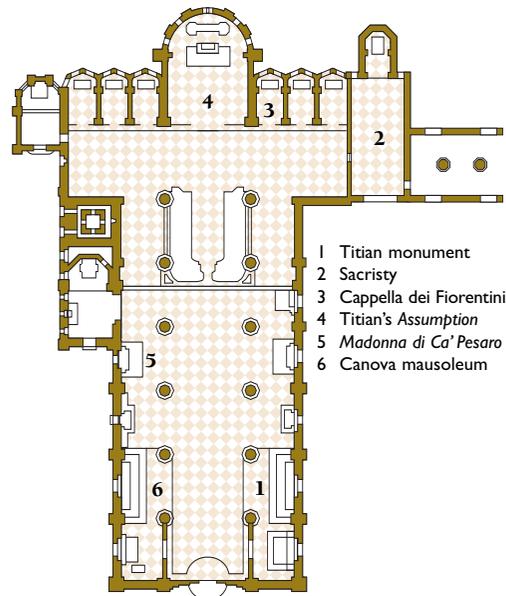
Opposite the Palazzo Ducale are two battlemented palaces of the Bonacolsi, the family who ruled Mantua before the Gonzaga. Above the first rises the **Torre della Gabbia**, from which an iron cage, the *gabbia*, protrudes (seen from Via Cavour). In this cage condemned prisoners were exposed, both to the elements and to the jeers and insults of the populace below. At the end of the piazza is the duomo, with an unattractive façade of 1756 and a light interior by Giulio Romano. It is eclipsed in fame and architectural importance by the **Basilica of Sant'Andrea**, flanking the charming market square, Piazza delle Erbe. This church was commissioned from Leon Battista Alberti by Lodovico II in 1470, to house the relic of the Holy Blood (an important symbol for Mantua, which

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Detail from Giulio Romano's *Fall of the Giants* in Palazzo Te (1528).



## SANTA MARIA GLORIOSA DEI FRARI



- 1 Titian monument
- 2 Sacristy
- 3 Cappella dei Fiorentini
- 4 Titian's Assumption
- 5 *Madonna di Ca' Pesaro*
- 6 Canova mausoleum

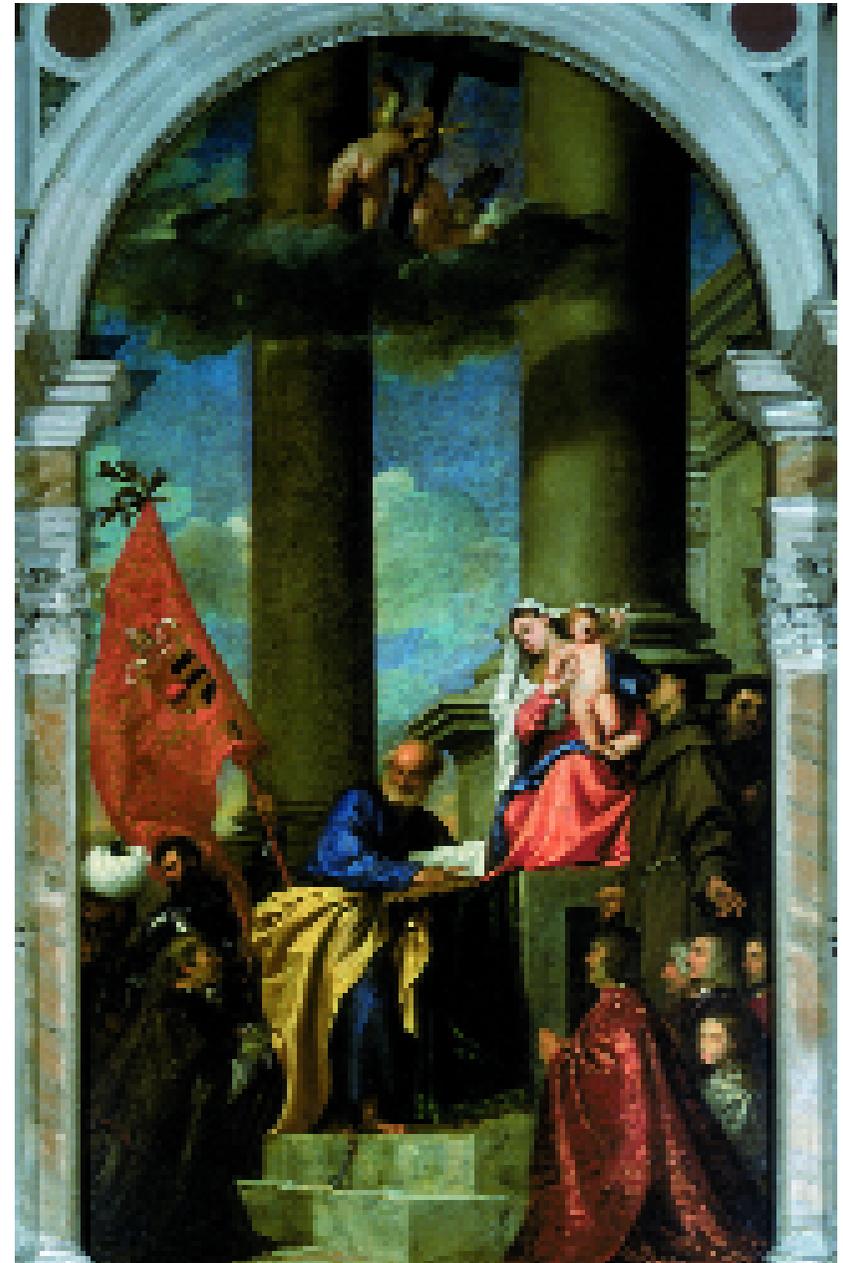
instruments at her feet. On the left stand Sts Nicholas of Bari and Peter, and on the right stand St Mark and St Benedict. **(3) Cappella dei Fiorentini:** Dedicated to St John the Baptist, their patron saint, this chapel was sponsored by the Florentines, and the statue of the saint is by Donatello. Signed and dated 1438, it is his first work in the Veneto, and his first statue to be made of wood. The startling, emaciated appearance of the saint has direct references to his other (later) St John the Baptist in Siena. **(4) Apse:** Titian's magnificent *Assumption* hangs here, a masterpiece of the High Renaissance. It was painted for this space and is the largest altarpiece in

Venice. Unveiled in 1588, it was an astonishing painting for its time. Titian's use of the colour red for the robes of the Apostles, the Virgin and the Almighty creates a subliminal triangle and gives a very physical impression of Mary's ascent. The Virgin is physical rather than ethereal. Carried aloft by tumbling cherubim, she is depicted as a beautiful, flesh-and-blood woman.

**(5) *Madonna di Ca' Pesaro:*** This is another of Titian's great altarpieces, and again he creates the unexpected. The positioning of the Madonna to the right of the picture, rather than in the centre, was an unusual departure. The donor, Jacopo Pesaro, kneels to the left, the

banner above his head representing his naval victory over the Turks in 1502. **(6) Mausoleum of Canova:** This Neoclassical monument was originally designed by Canova to commemorate Titian, but the Zandomeneghi design was chosen instead. Canova's pupils (including Luigi Zandomeneghi) erected this to his memory. In the form of a pyramid, an ancient funerary convention (see p. 264; *Chigi Chapel*), it shows the winged figure of Genius and the lion of St Mark protecting the tomb, while the Arts are represented as female mourners. Canova's portrait is held by angels above the tomb's open door. The snake devouring its tail is a symbol of immortality.

Titian: *Madonna di Ca' Pesaro* (1519–26), a new interpretation of the 'Madonna and Saints' type of altarpiece, with the Virgin placed off-centre yet still the focal point of the composition. Many later artists, including Annibale Carracci, were to use this idea in their work.





The famous *View of an Ideal City*, probably by Francesco Laurana (after 1470), in the ducal palace of Urbino. The plan of the city is in perfect perspective, with streets running away from a wide central square with public fountains, dominated by a circular sacred building. The Renaissance admiration for the harmony and proportion of Classical Roman architecture is made manifest.

ricotta cheese, egg and nutmeg. *Vincisgrassi* are the typical lasagne of this part of Italy; they feature a robust meat filling.

Among the many wines of the region, the best known is the dry white Verdicchio; delicious, dry red wines include the full-bodied Conero Rosso, Rosso Piceno and Lacrima di Morro d'Alba.

## URBINO

One of the loveliest of all Renaissance cities, Urbino (*map p. 420, B1*) is the scene of Castiglione's *The Courtier*, the famous handbook of Italian Renaissance manners and ideals. Under the auspices of Federico da Montefeltro, Urbino became the ideal city, and his palace was a meeting place of artists, architects, writers, poets and musicians.

Federico spent his youth as a soldier, serving as *condottiere* to the Visconti of Milan. He became lord of Urbino in 1444, and after the death of his first wife 16 years later, married Battista Sforza. It was she who convinced him to turn Urbino into an 'ideal city'. Battista died aged only 26. Their double portrait by Piero della Francesca hangs in the Uffizi, and Francesco appears as donor in the same artist's Montefeltro altarpiece in the Brera in Milan, painted just after his wife's death. In 1472 one of the daughters of Federico was given in marriage to Giovanni della Rovere, a nephew of

Pope Sixtus IV from the Ligurian town of Savona. Their son, Francesco Maria I della Rovere (1490–1538), inherited the duchy of Urbino when the Montefeltro family died out in 1508. The della Rovere were great patrons of the arts. Pope Julius II was the patron of Michelangelo. Guidubaldo II, son of Francesco Maria, commissioned from Titian the famous painting known as the *Venus of Urbino* (now in the Uffizi; *see p. 181*). The last of the della Rovere dukes died in 1631. His granddaughter Vittoria, the last of the family line, married Ferdinando II de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, in 1634. Her fabled dowry, which included works of art by Raphael, came with her to the Tuscan capital, where much of it is still on view in Palazzo Pitti.

### Palazzo Ducale

The former residence of the Urbino dukes (*open Mon 8.30–2, last entry 12.30; Tues–Sun 8.30–7.15, last entry 6*) is the quintessential Italian Renaissance palace. Its sheer walls and tall towers dominate the town from every point of view. No expense was spared in its building and decoration, and when complete it housed a court that threw its doors wide to the leading Humanists and artists of the age: Leon Battista Alberti, Pisanello, Paolo Uccello, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Piero della Francesca and Botticelli.

The palace as it appears today is largely the work of the Dalmatian architect Luciano Laurana, summoned by Federico in 1465 to enlarge the earlier palace, built some 20 years before. This older building, with its mullioned windows, overlooks Piazza del Rinascimento. Laurana's magnificent extensions include the harmonious, porticoed *cour d'honneur* and the famous valley front, with its tiered balconies and tall turrets. The versatile Siennese artist Francesco di Giorgio Martini, who was at once sculptor, engineer and architect, designed the two wings on Piazza Duca Federico.

• **Public transport in Palermo:** City buses run by AMAT, although crowded, infrequent and slow, run to all the major sights. Tickets must be purchased at tobacconists or newsagents and stamped on board. Buses 309 and 389 from Piazza Indipendenza (frequent service in 20–30mins) to Monreale.

• **By bus:** Direct daily buses from Via Balsamo, near the railway station, to Trapani (c. 2hrs, [www.interbus.it](http://www.interbus.it)); to Agrigento (operated by Cuffaro); to Cefalù, Piazza Armerina and Messina (operated by SAIS-Interbus, [www.saisautolinee.it](http://www.saisautolinee.it)). From Cefalù buses run by SAIS leave from the railway station for the villages of the Madonie mountains.

• **By train:** Palermo has services to Agrigento, Messina, Trapani and Enna. Cefalù is on the main Palermo–Messina line.

#### WHERE TO STAY IN PALERMO PROVINCE

##### Castelbuono

€€€€ **Relais Sant'Anastasia.** Beautiful old abbey with 29 lovely rooms, pool and restaurant, on an estate producing wine since Norman times. *Contrada Sant'Anastasia*, T: 0921 672233, [www.santa-anastasia-relais.it](http://www.santa-anastasia-relais.it).

##### Cefalù

€€ **Villa Gaia.** Tiny hotel on the seafront; 12 clean and very comfortable rooms with power showers and delicious breakfasts. *Via Pintorno*, T: 0921 420992, [www.villagaiahotel.it](http://www.villagaiahotel.it).

##### Palermo

€€€€ **Villa Igiea Hilton.** Famous Art Nouveau masterpiece built for Donna Franca Florio (see p. 372) in a stunning setting under Mt Pellegrino. Many crowned heads of Europe have stayed here. At Acquasanta, north of the centre. *Salita Belmonte 43*, T: 091 631 2111, [www.villa-igiea-palermo.com](http://www.villa-igiea-palermo.com).

€€€ **Centrale Palace.** One of Palermo's oldest hotels, an 18th-century palace close to the cathedral. Good rooftop restaurant with won-

derful views over the city. Well-appointed rooms. Parking. *Corso Vittorio Emanuele 327*, T: 091 336666, [www.centralepalacehotel.it](http://www.centralepalacehotel.it).

€€ **Hotel Garibaldi.** Quietly elegant rooms in a restructured palace. *Via Emerico Amari 146*, T: 091 601 7111, [www.gshotels.it](http://www.gshotels.it).

#### WHERE TO EAT IN PALERMO PROVINCE

##### Castelbuono

€€€ **Nangalarruni.** People come from afar to feast on home-made pasta, grilled and roasted meat, and especially on the wild mushrooms found by the owner, Giuseppe Carollo. Local wines. Closed Wed. *Via Alberghi delle Confraternite 5*, T: 0921 671428.

##### Cefalù

€€ **Otaria del Duomo.** Good Sicilian food and wine, close to the cathedral. Closed Mon in winter. *Via Seminario 5*, T: 0921 421838.

##### Mondello

€€€ **Bye Bye Blues.** Fish dishes a speciality, but the vegetable *antipasti* are magnificent, too. Superb desserts, good wine list. Closed Tues. *Via del Garofalo 23*, T: 091 684 1415.

##### Palermo

€€ **Antica Focacceria San Francesco.** The place for traditional snacks, *panelle* (chick-pea fritters), *purpu* (boiled octopus), *stiggiole* (stuffed grilled lamb intestines). The owner has risked his life taking a stand against the Mafia. Closed Tues. *Via Alessandro Paternostro 58 (San Francesco)*, T: 091 320264.

€€ **Antica Trattoria del Monsù.** Famous for delicious pizza. Great Sicilian atmosphere. Closed Mon evening. *Via Volturmo 41 (Opera House)*, T: 091 327774.

€€€ **Il Ristorantino.** Refined little restaurant offering many surprising starters and main dishes, followed by equally unusual desserts. Exceptional wine list. Closed Mon. *Piazza de Gasperi (Favorita)*, T: 091 512861.

## TRAPANI & ITS PROVINCE

Called *Drepanon*, scythe, in the past, for its perfectly-shaped harbour (said to have been dropped by the distraught Demeter, when searching for her kidnapped daughter Persephone; see p. 366), **Trapani** (map p. 419, A2) was the emporium of ancient Erice. It is now a large and busy city, the centre of the sea-salt industry, which dates back to the days of the Phoenicians. The old centre is largely unspoilt, and is little visited by tourists. In the modern part of town is the **Santuario dell'Annunziata** (open 9–12 & 4–7), once an isolated church outside the city limits, now an 18th-century building with some surviving medieval chapels. Here you will find the lovely, much venerated Madonna di Trapani, a 14th-century marble statue from Pisa, perhaps the work of Nino Pisano. During the days of Pisa's maritime republic (11th–13th centuries), she had extensive contact with the Muslim and Byzantine world. Close by, at 200 Via Conte Pepoli, is the **Museo Pepoli** (open Mon–Sat 9–1.30, Sun and holidays 9–12.30), with a superb collection of the work of local craftsmen from the 17th–19th centuries, in wax, alabaster, and especially the unique blood-red local coral.

### Erice

Built entirely of grey limestone, Erice (map p. 419, A2) stands on the wind-blown, misty summit of Monte San Giuliano. It is a perfect example of a medieval walled city. Today it is a place of mossy churches, sequestered convents and surprising hidden courtyards with pots of basil and geraniums, its silent, cobbled streets filled with wafting aromas of vanilla, cinnamon and toasted almonds. In Antiquity it was the Elymian *Eryx*, founded by the legendary survivors of the Trojan War, who were led here by Aeneas. It was famous throughout the Mediterranean for its temple dedicated to Astarte, goddess of fertility, known to the Romans as Venus Erycina. The **Castello di Venere** (open 9–1), with views as far as Mt Etna, now stands on the site of what was once a centre of sanctified prostitution. Here girl slaves were dedicated as temple prostitutes, beginning their careers at the onset of puberty and retiring at 21, rich and plump (they were fed a special diet of milk and honey) and much in demand as wives.

### Segesta

The view of the perfectly-proportioned Doric temple of Segesta (map p. 419, A2; open 9–1hr before sunset), amid the rolling hills with their vineyards and groves of olives, has been admired by travellers for centuries. It is thought that it was purpose-built in 426 BC to impress the Athenians, with whom the city was seeking an alliance, rather than as a place of worship; in fact it was never finished, and was probably never intended to be. The columns have no fluting, and there is no trace of a cella inside. Monte Barbaro, the hill to the east, was the site of the city; on the north slope is the ancient theatre, offering indescribably lovely views. The tyrant Agathocles of Syracuse sacked the town in 307 BC and catapulted thousands of the inhabitants to their deaths in the ravine behind the temple. Even today, in bright sunlight, it is an eerie place, with jackdaws cawing overhead. Although inhabited by the Arabs, Segesta was abandoned by the 13th century.