

Carini



Carini is a fascinating ancient village in the Metropolitan City of Palermo, Sicily, which offers incredible and charming cultural attractions.

On the coast of Carini are some ruins of the ancient Hyccara, probably a fishing village was founded by Siculi, but it became an even more important town during the Phoenician domination. When Romans conquered the area, this tiny village achieved great importance. Many signs, including the christian catacombs at Villagrazia, show that a Christian community existed at Carini from the 3rd century. In 1072, Normans battled the Roman troops, conquering the area where they built the famous Castle of Carini. Close to Carini there are two interesting natural areas: the Grotta dei Puntali Nature Reserve and the Grotta di Carburangeli Nature Reserve.

Carini Castle



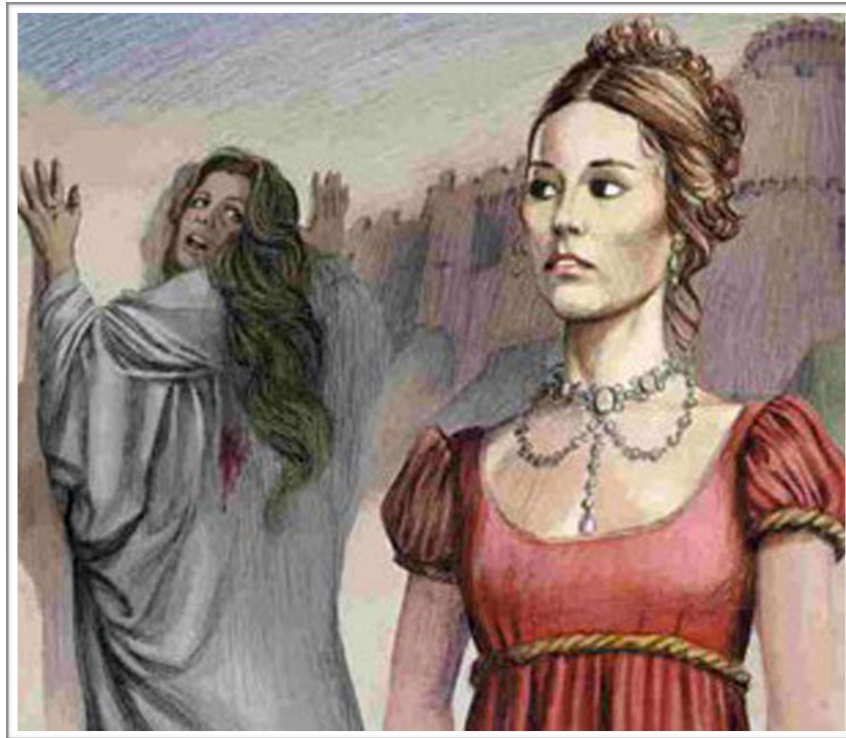
The castle of Carini is in the old centre of Carini. A castle has occupied the location since Norman times in the 11th century though the current castle was extensively renovated in the 16th century. The castle has a large courtyard, where there is the residential structure made primarily in two elevations.

The ground floor originally contained the food hall but was converted into a library. There is a chapel in the eastern section with frescoes from the 17th century and a wooden tabernacle also from the 17th century. Outside the chapel, a portal giving access to the bastion, where the remains of a perimeter wall are visible.

The second floor comprises: the ballroom, classic example of fifteenth-century room with coffered wooden ceiling, fireplace adorned with the emblem of La Grua and large windows with leaning seats and from the sleeping area, composed of frescoed rooms, where you can admire a beautiful eighteenth-century decorated door that characterizes the alcove. A small circular staircase leads to the kitchen, while another adjoining rooms on the upper floors. From the west side there is access to an area called "Foresteria." A staircase leads to the castle tower or male.

The castle was the setting for a tragedy in 1563 when the Baronessa di Carini was murdered.

Laura Lanza, the Baroness of Carini



The Baroness of Carini is a beautiful ballad in the Sicilian language, passed down orally over centuries. It tells the heartbreaking story of illicit lovers and a family murder.

In 1536, the Baron of the castle was Vincenzo Talamanca-La Grua, Baron of Carini and owner of the Castle, who in 1543 married Donna Laura Lanza Di Trabia. It was here, in this Castle, the morning of 4 December 1563, that the Baroness of Carini was murdered by her father.

This wicked deed may have become a forgotten secret if an anonymous poet hadn't romanticized that tragedy of the Talamanca-La Grua family, giving us one of the most beautiful poems of Sicilian literature. The poet renamed the protagonists for fear or respect toward the three powerful families whose reputation would have been dragged through the mud.

The poem was passed down orally from one man to another over many generations. It was finally recorded by Salvatore Salomone-Marino, a folkloristic poet, who heard it live from Giuseppe Gargagliano, a story singer in Carini. Salomone-Marino modified and refined the poem, documented it the best he could, and, in 1870, he published it.

History tells us that Donna Laura Lanza-La Grua was killed by her father and her husband, Baron Vincenzo Talamanca-La Grua. Thus she was killed together with Ludovico Vernagallo.

Carini's Mother Church



The Mother Church was built in the 15th century but extensively altered in the 18th century.

Remarkable its size for a small town like Carini in 1500, the Mother church has the shape of a Latin cross with nave and two aisles. The main façade faces east and overlooks the most important square in town. In the church are works that show not only Sicilian art history, besides to works of the two cripple from Ganci, D'Anna, Chiesa Madre Testa, Tancredi, Serpotta, Gagini, Bagnasco and Manno, also contains an important painting, the 'Adoration of the Magi' by Alessandro Allori who was a great Tuscan painter. There is also a notable wooden crucifix with a silver crown which is in the chapel dedicated to the Crucifixion

The central bronze main gate, where the four gospel writers and the Crucifix are represented, is a work of the sculptor Governali and was made for the celebration of the first 500th anniversary of its foundation. Entering in the church we can see the wonderful frescoes in the ceiling where stories taken from the old testament are represented on the main aisle, while in the side naves are stories taken from the new testament, and made by Onofrio Tomaselli.

The Blessed Sacrament Oratory



Today the oratory presents itself as one of the best examples of stuccos by Giacomo Serpotta's school.

They date back to the eighteenth century and are the work of the son of Giacomo, Procopio and the Trapani painter Vincenzo Messina.

At the corners and along the walls are eight statues of the Virtues and other personifications. The rest of the decoration illustrates instead the mystery of the Eucharist, with Il Santissimo receiving the adoration of a beast, the Adoration of the mule by order of St. Anthony of Padua, the miracles of Bolsena, of Turin and of San Pasquale.

The vault is decorated with frescoes with the Triumph of the Eucharist in the center and Evangelists, Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament on the sides.

The altar houses the altarpiece of the Last Supper, a work of the early seventeenth century attributed to Pietro D'Asaro.