

THE GARDEN OF CASA DELL'ABATE NALDI

The garden of Casa dell'Abate Naldi is part of the system of vegetable gardens inside the medieval walls of San Quirico which had to guarantee the sustainment of the population in case of siege. When the house was built in the XVII century, the walls of the preexisting houses were used and the hill on the back of the house was excavated to create a court and the garden above. Therefore, the garden lays at the same level of the noble floor from which there is direct access and this is the peculiarity: a proper garden, with trees and bushes, which seamlessly continues the inhabited spaces.

Here is described in the words of Lorenza Cipolla:

“Originally the garden was smaller because the two lateral terraces were two wings of the building which collapsed after the bombing in 1944. My mother-in-law, Anna Simonelli, decided to not reconstruct the fallen rooms and instead she built two beautiful terraces that we use several months of the year. During the postwar the garden, which was an Italian garden, was utilized also as a vegetable garden and an orchard, with an apricot tree, a persimmon, a jujube and table grape in the best exposed part of the arbor, running along the back wall and separating it from the street behind. Other things were lost in the bombing: the orangery against the south-facing wall, the vases of lemon trees and the two palms in the middle of the bigger flowerbeds.

Vittorio and I have restored the box hedges and the terracotta vases with oranges and lemons, but we did not want to take away the other fruit trees that we had grown fond of. In the lateral flowerbeds we grow aromatic plants for the kitchen and flowers to décor the house in the warm season: dahlias, cosmos, snapdragons and amaranths, as well as marigolds, petunias and other short flowers for the vases on the garden walls that overlook the court.

The back wall, behind the arbor, is covered in ivy which creates a nice dark green backdrop. The court on the ground floor is a garden as well, where the travertine well is located. It is much cooler than the overlying garden and it is suitable for hydrangeas and geraniums which offer a generous and colored blooming for many months.

During the nice weather the garden is the most lived part of the house. The north-south orientation allows to find both a shaded area at any time of the day, where it is possible to consume a meal even during the warmest hours and an area where to rest in the sun during spring and autumn.

When the house is open, a break in the garden is mandatory for the visitors, often accompanied by an aperitif, as well as after every summer concert. Sometimes in agreement with the musicians, we proposed an open-air concert: near the well on the ground floor or in the Italian garden, and in one occasion we had a soloist cello in the candlelight after dinner.”