



1:80000 scale. Map created on InkAtlas.com. Copyright OpenStreetMap contributors (openstreetmap.org), OpenTopoMap (CC-BY-SA), 2021.

The numbering of the church refers to the **General Map of the Romanesque Hills Route**.

How to get to and visit the church of San Genesio:

Fraction of San Genesio, Castagneto Po (TO).
GPS Coordinates: Lat. 45.15977 | Long. 7.88532

Open the first Sunday of each month in the period
from April to October, supervised by the volunteers.
On request on the other days.

Informations: +39 3397476895 / +39 011912921
www.comune.castagnetopo.to.it

Local attractions in and around Castagneto Po:

- Church of San Pietro, fr. Navigliano, San Sebastiano Po;
- Abbey of Santa Fede, Cavagnolo;
- Church of San Siro, Casalborgone;
- Church of San Giovanni, Berzano di San Pietro;
- Church of Santi Pietro e Paolo, Castagneto Po;
- *Bosco di Vaj* Nature Reserve, Castagneto Po, trails and viewpoint at the Croce near *Bric del Vaj*, 583 m. asl.

Local events and shows:

- Patron Saint's Festival of San Genesio, second Sunday of May;
- Patron Saint's Festival of Castagneto Po, first Sunday of Sept.;
- Stramangiando, eno-gastronomic walk on the paths of Castagneto, third Sunday of September;
- Pom Matan Festival, early September, S. Sebastiano da Po;
- Feast of Madonna Assunta, Monte da Po, 15 August.



Social Promotion
Association

Information point and contacts: Albugnano (AT), Abbey of Vezzolano

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www.vezzolano.it

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Instagram: reteromanicadicollina



The Romanesque Hills Route
promotes knowledge and use
of the romanese heritage of the local
areas between the river Po
and Monferrato.

With the collaboration of:



With the support of:

Municipalities and Parishes of Albugnano, Andezeno, Aramengo, Berzano di San Pietro, Brusasco, Buttigliera d'Asti, Casalborgone, Castagneto Po, Castell'Alfero, Castelnuovo don Bosco, Cavagnolo, Cerreto d'Asti, Cocconato, Cortazzone, Lauriano, Marentino, Mombello di Torino, Montafia, Montechiaro d'Asti, Montiglio Monferrato, Portacomaro, San Sebastiano da Po, Tigliole, Tonengo.

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Translation: Wall Street English, Chieri (TO)



Church of San Genesio

Castagneto Po

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Abbeys and churches between
the river Po and Monferrato

Description of the local area

The church stands in woodland, on the side of the hill of Castagneto Po (351 metres a.s.l.). It is surrounded by small areas of cultivation making up the hamlet of San Genesio. At the side of the church, tucked under the hill to the north, the country road sets out through the valley of San Genesio. In front of the façade there is a large forecourt with a parking area and a children's play area. On the south side of this forecourt there is a plain, plastered building housing the 'San Genesio Fountain', a source of healthy spa water.



Historical details

The first definite evidence of the church is dated by a document of 1156, when a married couple from Castagneto sold a plot of land to the ecclesiastic community of San Genesio, represented by the parish priest (prepositus) Ottone and by Costanzo. Later on, starting from 1235, various documents mention parish priests and clerics from San Genesio di Castagneto, counting, from the second half of the 1300s, among the churches tied to the parish church of San Sebastiano and subject to the Bishop of Ivrea, also the temporal lord of Castagneto. The church was partially destroyed in the war of 1706 and in its present form it is widely reworked and extended in the early 1800s, to a project financed by Arturo Ceriana, mayor of Castagneto Po at the time. The refacing work was inspired by the Romanesque style, recreating its typical style and decorations, while eliminating the Baroque parts of the prior reconstruction from the XVIIth century. The reconstruction involved the demolition of the old façade, which was rebuilt about ten metres further forward, the two side walls, straightening the south wall which was originally oblique, and the two internal buttresses between the naves. Demolition of the southern apse to make way for construction of the sacristy had occurred at an earlier date. There is mention of an underground crypt, inaccessible at present, below the sacristy. According to the contents of an inventory of the Church in 1939, this room was connected to the secondary apse on the left wing by a staircase and perhaps gave access also to the sulfur water source underneath. Some histor-

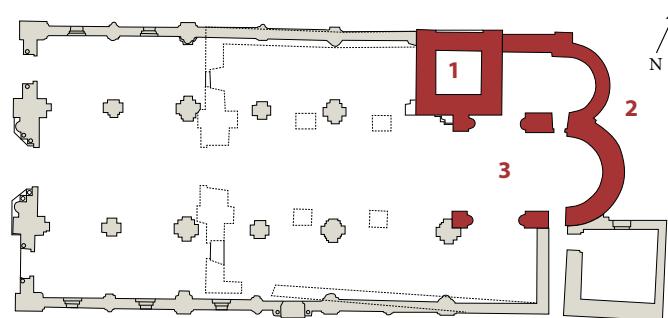


ians think it might be the remains of a shrine from the Ligurian age devoted to a pagan deity, patron of the 'miraculous' water.

Description

The building is aligned east-west, with a basilica plan of three naves, two apses and square based bell tower, embedded in the north nave. As a result of its major transformations over the centuries, especially at the beginning of the last century, it is today 26 m in length and 13.5 m in width. The church retains some of its surviving Romanesque parts, which can be dated to the XIIth century: the two apses, the choir and the bell tower; one of the most notable Romanesque bell towers in Piedmont, of interest, among other things, for studying relationships between Lombard techniques and those of western France. This Romanesque part is worth our attention.

1. The bell tower, in squared stone blocks, rises through seven floors, indicated by multiple rows of stone cornices, some of which are tiled with a 'saw tooth' pattern. The bottom three levels are almost completely embedded in the church on three sides and have no openings, except for a narrow slit on the first floor of the north side, the only side that is fully visible. On each side of the fourth floor, there is a high single pane window with a monolithic lintel carved to form a false arch with a decorated lunette; to the north there is a carved serpent, to the east a classical style leaf encircled by a ring with a diamond motif and to the west inter-



twined leaves. On the west side an iron stairway gives access to the bell tower from the outside balcony of the church. On the fifth floor there are double windows on each side, with recessed central columns and 'crutch' capital with leaf carvings. There are similar double windows on the sixth floor, two of which are visible (east and west), while north and south are closed off by the clock faces. The upper part of the top seventh floor is in brickwork, as are the pointed arches of some of the triple windows, while others have a lintel over them. These types of arches, which are abnormal for Romanesque in Monferrato, are supposedly a result of subsequent partial renovation work.

2. The central apse and secondary apse on the north side are made in hewn, semicircular stone blocks and roofed with semidomed vaults. The central one, partly embedded in added constructions, is illuminated by three single pane windows with pointed arches and splayed jambs. The monolithic hanging arch top is framed by a cornice with multiple protruding mouldings. The apse on the north side stands on a shoe foundation and is divided into three sections by stone and brick buttresses; it is topped by pointed hanging arches in brickwork resting on dentils, probably partly replaced; a cornice of shaped stone.

3. The rectangular-shaped choir is attached to this apse and roofed over by a cross vault with brick and stone ribs; it is separated from the presbytery by a pointed arch.



Interesting fact

Next to the church there is an extremely ancient source of sulphurous salsobromiodic water, sufficiently rich in healing properties to be defined as 'miracle working'; just as its origins seem to be miraculous. There is actually a legend that in the burial place of San Genesio, three fountains began to spout separately; one with oil, another with milk and the third with sulphur, which blended together to give origin to the sulfur water.

The source is still active nowadays but cannot be reached.