

## THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE

### The Name

The name of Candelo is perhaps to be connected with the pre-celtic origins of the village. The two elements, which form its name: candt= stone and elu a suffix indicating places situated on rises or watercourse, lead us to take into consideration the presence of Ligurians, who lived in Piedmont before the celtic invasions.

The word Ricetto, is derived from the latin word receptum (shelter) and it indicates a protected place, surrounded by fortifications.

### The Escutcheon

They are dated of 1614, the period of the heraldic consignment it is described in this way: "A shield coloured in red and silver with two flaming silver coloured candles on the road part and two flaming red coloured candles on the silver part."

### History

- **988**, The name of Candelo (Canderium) appears for the first time, in an act where Ottone III confirms its feudal possession to Manfredo. The following year Ottone III put Candelo under the control of the Church of Vercelli.

- **1179**, The Counts of Biandrate transfer their possessions in Candelo to the Church of Vercelli.

- **End of the XIIIth Century-Beginning of the XIVth century**, the inhabitants of Candelo built Ricetto on a land, property of local Princes: After paying yearly census they finally manage to redeem it.

- **1360**, 157 small houses are present inside Ricetto (nowaday there are 200 of them)

- **1374**, Candelo declares its spontaneous devotion to the Dukes of Savoia; it is the first among Biella lands. From 1381 to 1387 it is under the jurisdiction of the Captain of Santhia, in 1387 Amedeo VII of Savoia put Candelo under the control of Gerardo Fontana.

- **1496**, The members of family Fontana transfer the feud of Candelo to Sebastiano Ferrero, who had already been councillor and treasurer of finances, at first for the dukedom of Savoia and then for that of Milan, and had already other feuds in Biella. At the death of Sebastiano Ferrero his nephew Filiberto succeeded. Filiberto was adopted by Ludovico Fieschi, Count of Masserano in 1517; with him starts the dynasty of Ferrero-Fieschi.

- **1554-1558**, Candelo is involved in the struggles between France and Spain, and it is occupied several times by french soldiers. During one of the frequent reversals of situation, the spanish army forced the french soldiers, barricaded inside Ricetto, to surrender. Ricetto is seriously damaged. In 1561 fortifications and warehouses of Ricetto are repaired

- **1577**, the feud of Candelo becomes a county in favour of Besso Ferrero Fieschi.

- **1630-32**, Population is hardly reduced by the epidemy of plague. **From 1644 to 1649** new spanish invasions causes fires and distructions

- **1785**, Carlo Sebastiano Ferrero Fieschi is the last Candelo feudatory. The political-administrative structure of the village is transformed by the napoleonic occupation.

- **1819**, beginning of the construction of the Town Hall, on the ancient walls of Ricetto. The realization of the current place is dated of the same year.

Ricetto is a fortification built to defend local population, it was not used by local princes to oppress people.

Ricetto means "shelter": a place for the poor goods and chattels of the local families, for their corn, for the barrels of their light wine, a little sour, but tasty. The strength of the local population, friendly, at the same time determined and independent, is here within these battlemented walls, with the lanes grid formed, where the one floor small houses are one

next to the other as if they want to pluck up courage or more simply to keep company one another .

### **The Character**

As soon as you pass the Door-Tower of Ricetto, you immediately notice, on the right side, the most imposing building: it is "The house of the Prince" Sebastiano Ferrero made build it after obtaining , in 1496, from Filippo, duke of Savoia, the feud of Candelo with all the rights, incomes, jurisdictions.

In 1499 Mr Ferrero made claims on Ricetto, contestating the quantity of "fuotatico" the census that people living in Candelo had to pay to him. The judges, called to settle this question, rejected his requests.

Sebastiano Ferrero was born in Biella in 1438, he inherited and bought various feuds in this area, as far as he was called to the royal court by Carlo I duke of Savoia. After Carlo's death Sebastiano Ferrero was appointed by the regent Bianca di Monferrato as, Councillor of State and General Treasurer. After the conquest of the dukedom of Milan by the French army, Sebastiano Ferrero moved to Milan where he became Councillor, General Treasurer and Finance Administrator. He died in 1519

### **Curiosity**

The oldest people of Candelo say that, in ancient times, from Ricetto, perhaps in proximity to the south-west angle tower, started a gallery that drove directly to the banks of the stream Cervo, but there are no documents that confirm its construction and its exact position.

Another curiosity: Ricetto was the setting of "La Freccia Nera" the well known tv film dated of 1960 and set in medieval times.

### **RICETTO OF CANDELO**

#### **ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SUBURBS IN ITALY**

1. Circle walls and via di lizza The whole fortified nucleus was and is nowadays surrounded by a strong curtain, whose wall covering is mainly formed of cobblestones placed herringbone with little mortar and without pierings. The via di lizza, very important in case of wars, now disappeared in its three quarters, ran inside along the whole perimeter. The thickness of the walls is valued to be between 50cm and 80 cm.
2. Tower of curtain It is situated on the north-west forehead of the walls. It is the only tower of Ricetto with square plan. At the basement there is a opening whose function is to collect rainwaters which are carried here thanks to the slope of the place.
3. Road system The inner streets are called "rue" they are roughly lastricated with cobblestones taken from rivers. "rue" have a little slope so to allow the discharge of the waters of the surface towards the square tower of curtain.
4. Marc's press Inside this cell you can find a screw press, that represents the symbol of the civilization of the viti wine culture. It was used for the pressing of the marks, everybody can use it. We have the signs of the existence of two presses inside Ricetto, but only this one, dated of 1763, has managed to survive.
5. Riane The two sleeves of each block are separated by the "riana" or "rittana" which has several functions, draught, draining of rainwaters, and doubling of covering pitches, so to enlightening the structures.

6. The House of the Prince It was built by Sebastiano Ferrero, who had been feudatory in Candelo since 1496. Its realization involved the transformation of a complete block.
7. Rivellino It is a sort of tower (usually fortified), it was situated in front of the entrance one and it prevented the strong arms (fire and throwing) from beating directly the entrance. In times of peace La Credenza, The Communiy Council, used to meet inside this tower,. It was destroyed at the beginning of the XIXth century to permit the construction of the current square.
8. Moat It is not demonstrated if there was water in it or if it was completely dry, It was definitely filled up between XVIII-XIX centuries.
9. Door Tower It was a defense for the only entrance to Ricetto. At first, as the other towers, its opening was towards the interior, it had no covering structure so to prevent from fires and collapses. The floors were arranged very rapidly intersecting beams in some holes. There were two drawbridges, we can see the cracks in which moved bolzoni, the wooden beams which served to raise and lower the bridges.
10. Building Cells Agricultural products were stocked here. Rarely and for a short time they served as refuge for inhabitants and animals. The lower room (caneva) has constant temperature (12°-15°C) and it's ideal for wine-making. The upper room (solarium) was right to keep cereal and similar products. The entry to the upper floor was allowed by a wooden balcony (lobbia) climbing up a ladder.
11. Portals The most ancient portals were made completely of stone, their structure was composed by a three aschlar arch, two impost arches and two pier ones. Some occasional arrangements introduced the replacemnt of lileo brick structure arch.
12. Town Hall Its building started in 1819, according to a project made by Nicola Tarino, from Biella. For its construction, in neoclassical style, it was necessary to demolish a tract of walls and some cells, situated in front of it.
13. West Towers The most soaring tower, called "Torre della Gogna", was originally one of the angle towers, in the XVIth century it was closed and transformed in a prison. The highest tower of the place was built In the XVIIth century, owing to judicial aims.

### **The daily middle ages of the Ricetto in Candelo**

"Il Ricetto di Candelo" is a popular collective fortification built in the XIV century. It has a surface of 13,000 sqmt. It is composed of about 200 small country houses that are very well preserved.

In time of war or danger the fortified village served as a temporary shelter for the whole population with precious belongings, while in time of peace it was used as a warehouse-depot or cellar for the production and the conservation of the wine.

Ricetto is unique on the European scale; thanks to the fact that it has never forgotten its original functionnamely that one of an agricultural depot of products and above all grapes, wine and grain- and its main strcture.

It was built thanks to the initiative and the will of the population who wanted to defend the most precious things for the people of that period: they were neither gold nor gems, but the foodstuffs and the possessions of the same residents (tools, livestock, agricultural and other tools).

The agricultural tools and wine were generally kept on the floor below, whereas the grain were dried up on the "lobbie", they were a kind of wooden balconies nowadays they are rather disappeared

Elsewhere the destiny of the other kinds of Ricetto was harsh, since they were some palaces, which were created in a folk environment and wisdom, they rapidly underwent the ups and downs of the reuse, and they became some residential places. With the result of the nearly total disappearance of their origin.

All this did not happen as regards Ricetto in Candelo thanks to the persistence that was deep-rooted in the local population of the traditions of the folk wisdom. Today, while entering by the towerdoor, tourist can take a leap into the Middle Ages, we do not mean the period of the Princes of the castles, and that is well-known by every body but the common daily life in the Middle Ages, the one of the ordinary people, exhibition that offers a total immersion in the flavours and the atmosphere of the medieval age of the visitors, thanks to some thematic suppers, animation, recalling, shows and Piedmont winegastronomy, returns in the historical setting of the Ricetto in Candelo.

It is its fifth edition; Sapor di Medioevo offers again the possibility to the visitors of a revival of the atmosphere and the awesomeness of an inhabited village in the full medieval age through a strict historical recalling. The visitors who will go into the walls, they will find themselves as project as if by magic in the XIVth century. More than 200 people who wear medieval dresses will give life to different scenes of daily life along the ancient rue, by reconstructing the various actions, sounds, and noises that were characteristic of the period in a faithful way. Some jugglers and acrobats, people walking on stilts and showmen, musicians and jesters, dancers and troubadours, clowns and jugglers, will enliven the roads by making different parades, concerts, revelries and eccentricities to entertain and to astonish the visitors during the day of the event.

This atmosphere that is rich in ladies and knights, soldiers and popular, pilgrims and monks, archers and crossbowmen, falconers and armed patrols will transport the visitors in the year 1374, when the community of Candelo made an act of spontaneous devotion to the Savoia Royal Family.

Thanks to the transformation of some cells of the Ricetto into different perfectly working medieval shops it will be possible to observe the work of a surgeon, of a copyist from closer, as it took place many centuries ago.

The wine-gastronomic suggestion will be added to the visual one: the exhibition in fact will not only be inaugurated by a supper in medieval style (on reservation) but it will also offer to the visitors the possibility to taste and to buy different typical products (some of them are of the very ancient origins of the area of Biella and of Piedmont in the taverns, which are placed along the various rue, whereas in the restaurants that are located inside the walls it will be possible to have supper by candlelight with some menus that draw their inspiration from the medieval recipes. All the people who want to make some excursions can benefit from the guided tours in the village and S.Maria Maggiore medieval church, that are offered by ProLoco of Candelo. It is absolutely necessary to make a tour of the historical residences of the region of Biella ( and that have been included in the project: Andar per Borghi, a tour along the different villages, it was awarded in 2005 by Italia Medievale) where it is possible to be accommodated in some refined bed&breakfast facilities.