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The Argentina Villa

The Argentina villa, both for its architecture and also for its decorative artefacts, may be considered the most significant expression of the modernist language, not only of Viareggio but of the entire Versilia. The building rose up in 1868 in a vast garden in Via A. Fratti, on the corner of via A. Vespucci, in the residential area called "four winds" of Viareggio.

The architect Alfredo Belluomini carried out the project of expansion and restructuring in 1926, while the painter Galileo Chini intervened with numerous decorations both outside and inside. The ceramics of Galileo Chini, framed by modernistic decorations, decorated its facades. In fact, the villa exhibits one of the greatest testimonies of ceramics destined for architecture, produced by the Chini Furnaces in Borgo San Lorenzo.

The bands of crowning under the eaves are formed of tiles of various decorative and chromatic types. Chessboard motifs frame puttos bearing vegetable triumphs and are alternated with stylized designs of Oriental-style trees of happiness. The decorative organization recalls, even in the colours, the traditional motifs of the majolica of the Florentine Renaissance, an important reference point for the Chini manufacturing "Arts of Ceramics". These decorations turn out to be very similar to those carried out by Chini for the "Berzieri" Thermal Spas in Salsomaggiore.

Later on, the villa was transformed into a hotel, thus undergoing an extension in the back part to the north, until it overlooked with the view onto via A. Fratti, adherent to the existing one.

On the inside of the villa, Galileo certainly worked too, above all, in the main hall on the ground floor, where rich decorations with silver-plated stuccoes accompany the great wall painting of G. Biasi, realized in the Twenties and entitled "Departure per the tiger hunt".

The villa belongs to the Province of Lucca.