

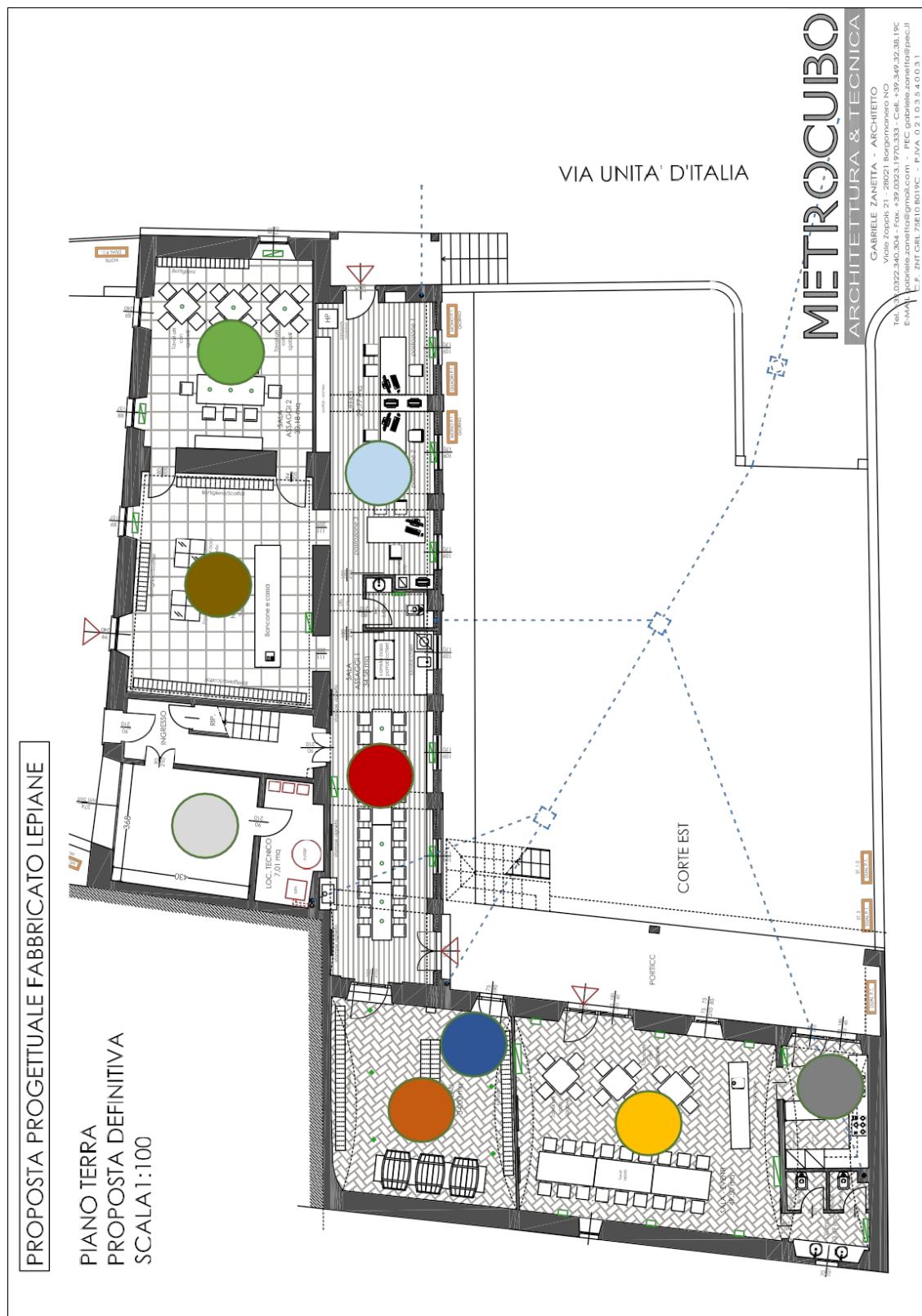
CASA LE PIANE / BOCA

Piazza Matteotti 2

The purchase of the property on Boca's main square marks the end of an important chapter for Le Piane and Boca. Le Piane finally has the headquarters it deserves, showing our customers and the wider public what Le Piane represents in Boca. Without Le Piane's contribution, not only would Boca look different, but one of Italy's most important and distinctive wine regions would be missing from the Italian wine landscape. The purchase and use of one of the oldest and most central buildings in Boca is symbolic of this and will contribute to Le Piane's further influence far beyond Boca. That is why we feel it is important to present this building and its history in detail here and at the same time place it in a historical context in relation to the history of our surroundings and the three most important countries of origin of our shareholders: Italy-Piedmont, Finland, Switzerland and Austria.



While four major shareholders took over the upper floors, Le Piane was able to purchase the entire ground floor. This enables the co-owners to keep the costs of the overall renovation of the common areas, such as courtyards and facades, low and to secure the rooms necessary for Le Piane as representative rooms for the winery in the long term.



- Le Piane shop and wines from friends (37m2)
- \"Salon vert\" for library, lounge and meetings (up to 6-8 people) (30m2) Office (30m2) for 4 workstations
- Tasting room (up to 24 people) (35m²)
- \"Caveau\" (up to 12 people) with exhibition of all vintages from Le Piane (34m²)
- \"Ghiacciaia\" or \"The founders' room\" with exhibition of Antonio Cerri wines (10 m²)
- Multipurpose room or studio (not yet planned)
- Kitchen (20m²)
- Service room (for all parties) (25 m²)

TOTAL GUEST ROOMS: 196 m² / TOTAL OFFICE AND SERVICE ROOMS: 65 m²
Next: A small WC for shop/office (4.2 m²) and a large WC (6.5 m²)

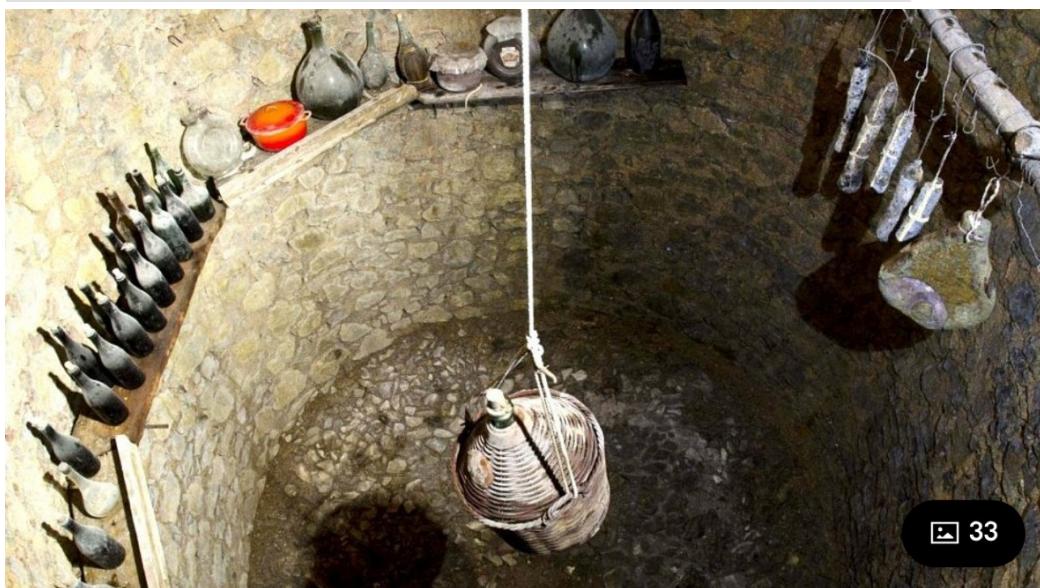
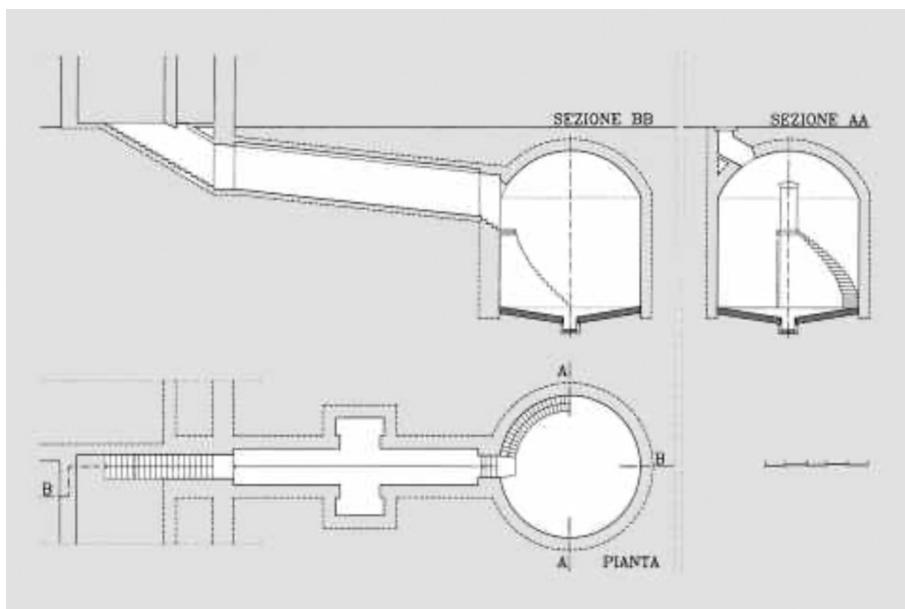
In the side wing on the upper floor, studios can be built in the future by one party, which Le Piane can then use for part-time employees, interns and customers:



La Ghiacciaia:

The major discovery during the current renovation phase is the historic ice house. Underneath the "Caveau", covered by a small stone slab, a large ice cellar came to light. Its absolutely perfect condition and size (diameter 3.30 m, height 4.20 m) are extraordinary. These ice cellars were often built in the vicinity of butchers' shops or restaurants and were used to preserve meat and cheese during the summer months. They were filled with snow and ice to about half their height and were thus walk-in refrigerators. What is unusual is the absence of a door at mid-height for easy access to the cellar. The upper opening is small and the goods had to be brought in through this narrow hole using a steep ladder.

Normally, the layout is as shown in the picture below. Our plan is to make our "ghiacciaia" accessible in this way. We are also planning to create a museum inside, called "The Founders' Room", with bottles from Cerri and Le Piane as well as documents and historical reading material. This will allow the ghiacciaia to be used as a small reading room or for standing aperitifs.



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Ghiacciaia in the Varese area (Lake Monate)

History of Casa Le Piane:

The history known to us was published in 2024 in a scientific book by Andrea Cominazzi "Microcosmo Bochese". All documents up to 1900 originate from this source.



It is not known exactly when Casa Le Piane was built, but it is likely to have been in the 17th century. The first document in our possession (see above) dates from 1723, when the house belonged to the Fortis family, who played an important role in the history of Boca. This prominent family was not from Boca, but came from Lake Orta, which is why the house was also called "Casa dei forestieri" (house of foreigners). They probably built the house when they moved from Orta around 1650 and lived there until they moved away 100 years later.

The first cadastral map was drawn up in Boca in 1723 with the "Catasto Teresiana" and dates back to Maria Theresa, the Austrian Empress. Until 1733, Boca was also under the rule of the Habsburgs. During the War of the Polish Succession, Boca and all parts of what was then Lombardy up to the Ticino River were taken over by the King of Sardinia, Carlo Emanuele III of Savoy, and the province of Novara thus became part of Piedmont. To pay for the war, the king demanded a high tribute in grain or money from his subjects. Boca had too little grain and asked for the tribute to be waived, but this was not granted. Boca received a loan from a wealthy citizen of Orta, which was guaranteed by two foreign families in Boca: Marquis Rovida from Milan and Giuseppe Fortis (lawyer) from Orta, both residing in Boca on what is now Piazza Matteotti. These were also the largest landowners and taxpayers in the village. The village had not yet recovered from the war when, in 1741, a severe hailstorm virtually destroyed the wine harvest and plunged the village into poverty. Once again, important families granted loans to the community and bought land from impoverished farmers (who continued to farm it). This enabled the community to prevent the emigration of its inhabitants. The Fortis family always played a leading role and the house functioned as a bank for the local population.

From 1751 onwards, another family (Bonola) from Lake Orta became important, while the lawyer's children moved away from Boca to Vacciago (Lake Orta) and Sarzana in 1754, selling their land and the house in 1757. The notary Piero Maria Borroni from Vacciago, who executed the deed of sale, was the husband of Antonia Fortis. The new owner was Bernardo Pansiotti from Varallo Sesia (who had been a tax collector in Boca 20 years earlier). The deed of sale states "una casa da nobile sita nella detta Terra di Bocha" (a noble house in Boca (note the old spelling of Boca)) and, in addition to various rooms, it also had a stable, wine cellar, wine press room, a large courtyard and a garden. Bernardo and his son Luigi used the house during the holidays, and it was inhabited by their administrator Giovanni Domenico Bisetti. Part of the house (the front part, which was later demolished) was purchased from the Pansiotti family around 1800 by a nephew of the administrator with the same name, Giovanni Domenico, "the lawyer". Born in Boca, he had acquired considerable wealth and prestige in Bergamo and often visited his birthplace to devote himself to improving conditions in the village and leading it out of poverty and backwardness. He sensitised the population to accept new ideas of the time. In the 1930s and 1940s, he was a prudent mayor and his brother Gaudenzio Leopoldo was municipal secretary (until 1865). Later, he served on the municipal council for many years, where he fought for the new Traversagna road link (Boca-Grignasco), which was intended to facilitate the sale of wine by the farmers of Grignasco in Borgomanero. However, even though the construction of the road was completed in the municipality of Boca, it took until 1918 for it to be completed as far as Grignasco. In 1850, Bisetti was a member of the provincial council.

In the 1820s, Margherita Agnelli, the wife of the owner, converted the house into a place of leisure (loisir): the house with gardens or, as she writes, "an open place for games" shaded by beech trees and a pavilion with a domed roof covered with climbing plants. The gardens are located on the Bisetti estate (now demolished, marked with an F). Behind it, in area E, the house of the former owners, the Pansiotti family, can be seen today.



After the death (February 1858) of the lawyer Bisetti, the front house of the Bisetti estate was sold in 1867 for 16,000 lire (€94,000) to the municipality (under Mayor Isidoro Del Boca), which converted it into a community centre. The rear part (our house) was purchased in 1855 by the notary Francesco Negri from Borgosesia from the Pansiotti heirs, who set up an osteria run by Giovanni Antonio Erbetta.

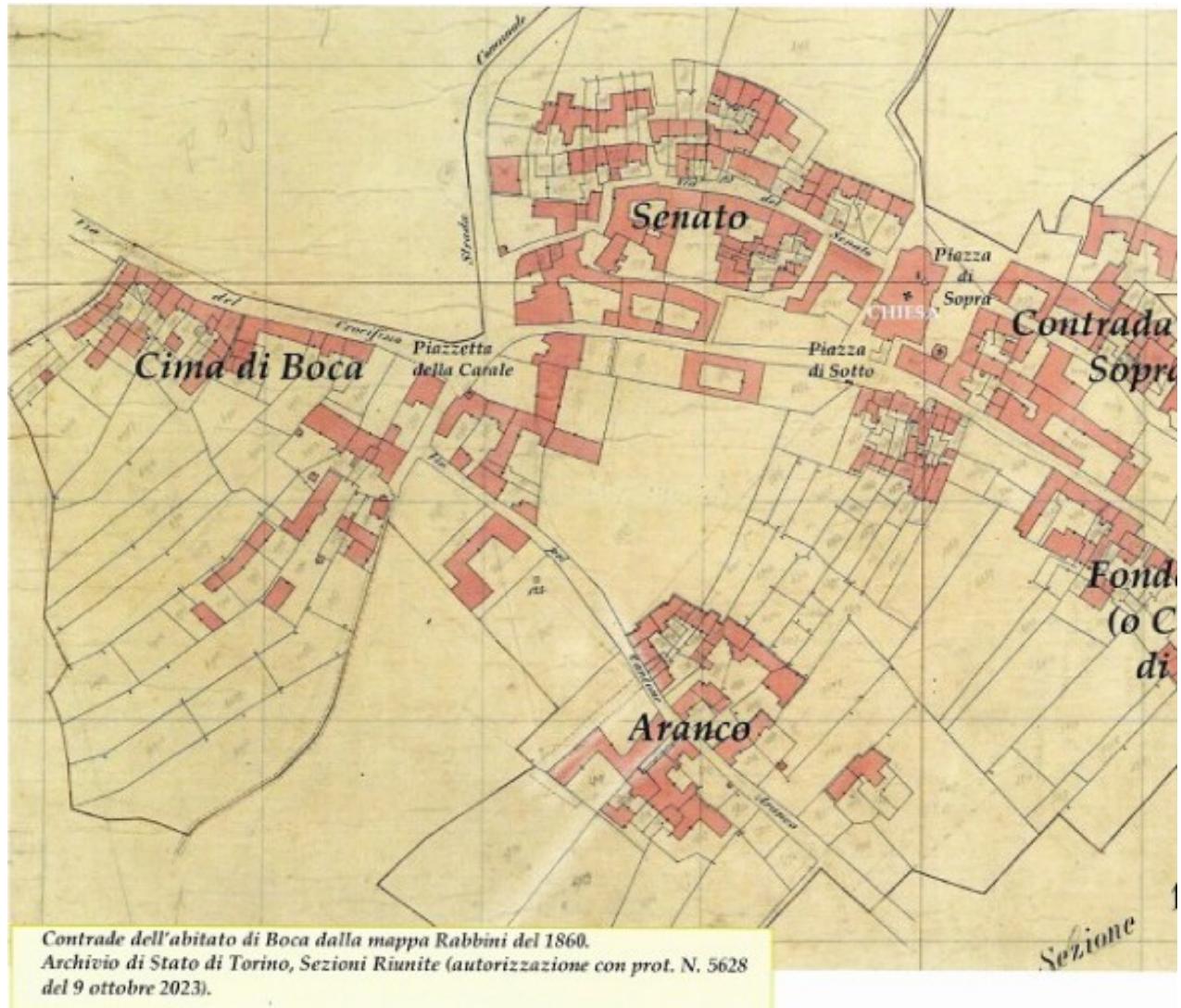
The gardens disappeared when Piazza IV Novembre and the new road to Cavallirio were built (1879). In 1876, Francesco Negri was elected to the municipal council and, although Isidoro Del Boca was still mayor, Negri was effectively in charge of the municipality. With his progressive policies, he wanted to open up Boca and modernise it, challenging its village mentality.

Negri was born in Borgosesia in 1814 and worked there for many years as a notary, then as a court clerk, before moving to Milan. With his intelligence and expertise, he was superior to everyone else and soon had the entire municipal council behind him. He wanted a liberal municipal administration that encouraged citizens to strictly obey the law. Municipal council meetings became public.

He also wanted to transform the school into a modern public school for all children, no longer influenced by the church. To this end, he replaced a priest teacher with a female teacher. This turned the church against him (Rome had been taken over by the Italian state seven years earlier and the clergy were declared opponents of the state and its representatives anyway). He also pushed ahead with the reorganisation of the local police, forestry and agricultural regulations, and the funeral system. Although he was ahead of his time,

he made more and more enemies among the population (especially by demanding and enforcing strict compliance with the laws and being driven by the Church). As a result, he resigned from the local council in 1878 and many of his innovations were subsequently reversed.

But the new era also dawned in Boca. From 1890 onwards, a post office, a pharmacy and street lighting were installed in the main streets.



The ups and downs of Boca's economic fortunes were shaped by wine and therefore repeatedly affected by hail and crop failures. Short periods of relative prosperity alternated with long periods of economic crisis. Boca was primarily characterised by viticulture. The rest of the agriculture did not even cover the needs for self-sufficiency (wheat was only enough for three months). The wine had to be enough to pay taxes and other living expenses. Crises in viticulture were repeatedly followed by land sales to so-called foreigners and borrowing from them. Time and again, the municipality granted tax moratoriums for farmers and borrowed money from foreigners to alleviate the farmers' hardship. 1783 was one of the worst crisis years, with the numerically small group of "foreigners" owning 36.48% of the land parcels. The residents of the house on Piazza Matteotti were always at the forefront of these developments. Major hailstorms are recorded in 1741, 1831 and 1851, followed in 1852 by the arrival of a new

grape disease (oidium or mildew), which destroyed the entire harvest. This was followed by another grape disease (downy mildew or peronospera) and in 1879, phylloxera was detected for the first time in Italy near Boca (introduced from Bordeaux via Burgundy), which led to the gradual disappearance of the vineyards in the following years and their subsequent replanting. At that time, Boca had a population of around 1,300.

The population statistics for 1857 (four years before the founding of the state) are interesting. They listed the following:

Inhabitants	Persons	Families	Houses	Empty houses
	1318	250	106	20
	Male	Female		
	665	653		
Education	Illiterate	Read-only	Reading/writing	
	54.66	26.84	18.5	
Land ownership	118 owners	196 farmers as tenants	14 farmers with land	153 workers for foreign landowners



In the wake of this major crisis in viticulture, which reached its peak in 1897, Boca was officially declared a phylloxera zone with strict requirements for combating the pest by uprooting infected plants and vineyards and replanting with American rootstock vines, thus definitively impoverishing it and turning it into a village of emigrants. The main destinations for emigration were

French-speaking Switzerland, France and Argentina. The emigrants often worked in the hospitality industry, many of them in kitchens. This is why Boca has become famous for its many chefs, some of whom have gone on to have successful careers on cruise ships, in New York or in Cortina d'Ampezzo. The Balzano family, in particular, with Mario and Serafino, became important in connection with the "Casa Le Piane".

After his defeat in the elections, Francesco Negri soon sold the property (in the 1880s) to Gerolamo Farè (1850-1925), a wealthy citizen from Turin, who married Caterina Bisetti (1890-1984) in his old age and also ran the house as a hotel (Hotel Farè). Caterina worked in the osteria in the house in her younger years and thus got to know the new owner. Farè died in 1925. Caterina Bisetti-Farè and her sister Fausta continued to live in the house, and in 1962 Caterina sold the house to Serafino (1931-2008) and Marilena (*1945), children of Mario Balzano (1902-1979). The front part of the house, where the municipal administration was based, was demolished in 1966 to adapt the road to Cavallirio to the changed traffic conditions. The new community building was constructed 100 metres further south on this road.

Mario Balzano spent his life travelling the world as a chef, and his son Serafino became head chef at the renowned Hotel Posta in Cortina d'Ampezzo. Mario bought the house for his children in their names. While Marilena lived on the top floor, Serafino returned after his retirement and lived on the first floor. After his retirement, Mario seems to have run an osteria on the ground floor with his wife Maria Folpini (1910-1978), which was reduced to a bar after her death and leased to Nino Barbaglia. In 2002, Chiaretta Tinivella took over the bar until the end of 2013. Our wine shop was always integrated into the bar, and Chiaretta also cooked fantastic meals for our customers. Giampi Renolfi, who became our brilliant sales manager for Italy in 2013, entertained the village youngsters with games and music every evening after his official work as a bank manager. The loss of the now legendary "Bar Pinguino" prompted Le Piane to rent the ground floor premises in 2014 and set up offices there in addition to our direct sales and tasting room. In 2024, Serafino and Marilena's children finally agreed to sell the house at a low price, so Le Piane seized the opportunity to secure the house as its permanent business headquarters. In 2025, major renovations were carried out, resulting in the situation described at the beginning. The history of the house shows that this central property was waiting for Le Piane, as it has always been a source of great innovation. The 'foreigners' who owned it had financed the entire village and the often impoverished farmers for centuries. Perhaps this is the first time in history that the finances of Boca Holding AG and its 150 shareholders, as well as the 'poor' wine producer Le Piane, have come together in the same house. For the village of Boca and Le Piane, this house will acquire a great aura, which will certainly have an impact on the perception of Le Piane as one of the top wineries in Italy.



Casa Piazza Matteotti with the town hall attached on the left (demolished in 1966)



Ex palazzo municipale di Boca (edificio appartenuto in precedenza all'avvocato Giovanni Domenico Bisetti e al notaio Francesco Negri; già Casa Pansiotti, già Casa Fortis). L'edificio venne demolito nel 1966. Collezione privata.

Town hall attached to our house from Piazza IV Novembre

Veduta di Boca. Anni Trenta del Novecento.
Collezione privata.

1930s



In the background on the left, the open loggia, which is now closed by windows







View from the 2nd floor towards the vineyards



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