



Sunday 18 September 2016

THE DAY OF THE PALIO

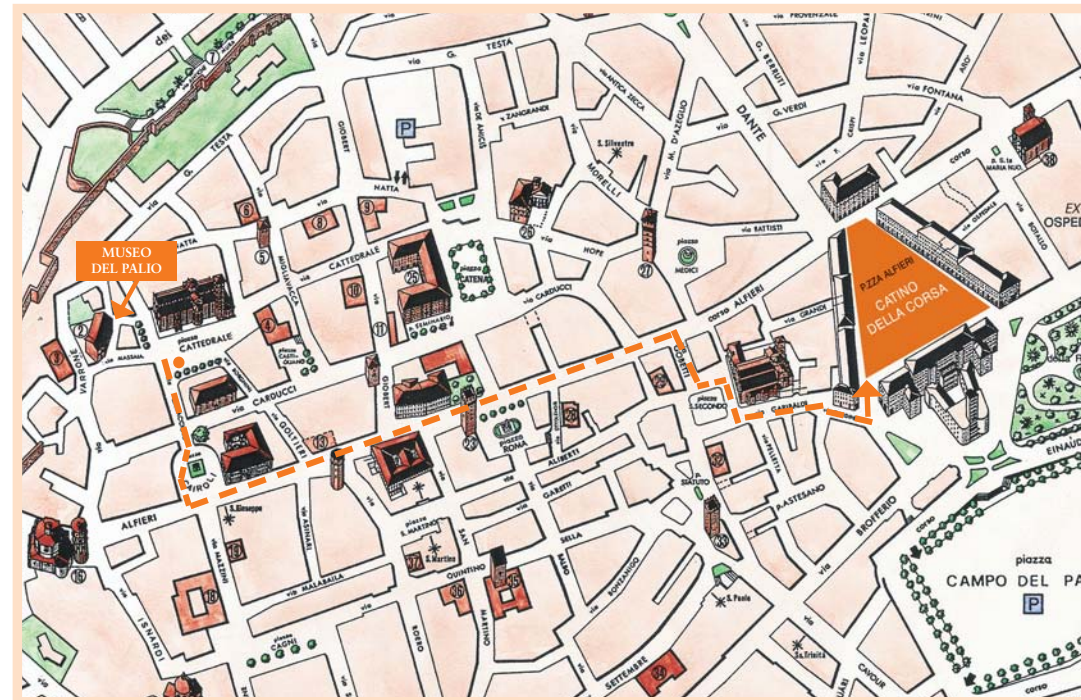
- 10:00 am in each of the Parishes of the city: ceremony for the benediction of the horse and rider
- 11:00 am Piazza San Secondo: exhibition of the A.S.T.A. flag-wavers
- 2:00 pm Piazza Cattedrale: start of the Historical Procession with one thousand two hundred participants in medieval costume. The procession is led by the A.S.T.A. flag-wavers and by the Team of the Captain of the Palio and portrays moments of medieval life: the winner of the previous year, in 2015 San Paolo, brings up the rear.
Route of the Historical Procession:
Piazza Cattedrale, Via Caracciolo, Piazza Cairoli, Corso Alfieri, Via Gobetti, Piazza San Secondo, Via Garibaldi, Via Gardini, Piazza Alfieri
- 4:00 pm Piazza Alfieri: Palio race with horses ridden bareback; three heats each with seven horses, final with nine contestants
- 5:00 pm Exhibition by the flag-wavers
- 6:00 pm Final and award of the Palio



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Città di Asti

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Asti
Storie di bellezza

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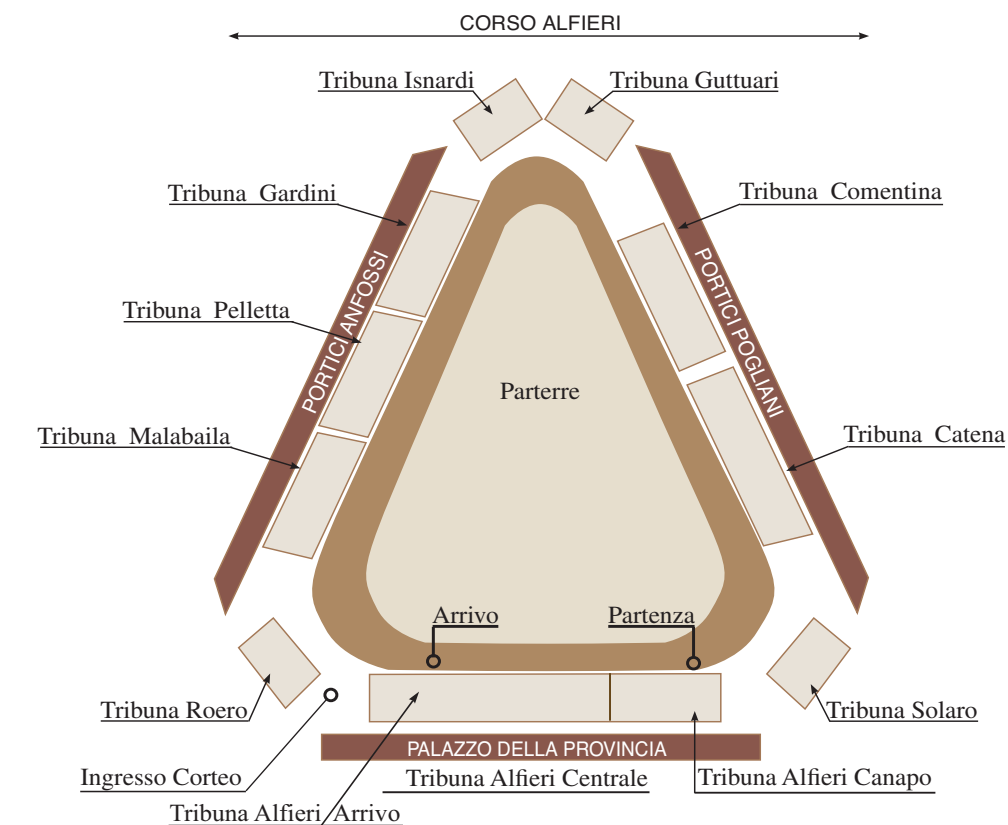
Palio di ASTI

18 September 2016



TICKET OFFICE

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Covered Grandstand
Alfieri (start) € 88
Alfieri (central) € 55
Alfieri (finish) € 45

Curved stretch stands
Solaro € 60
Roero € 44
Guttuari and Isnardi € 22

Stands along the straight stretch
Catena € 38
Malabaila € 28
Pelletta, Comentina
and Gardini € 22

free entry for children aged up to 5 years

Free entry to the Parterre



ASTI AND ITS HISTORY

The founding of the Roman settlement of Hasta, mentioned by Pliny as one of the most important Roman towns in the ancient Liguria region, dates from 125 and 123 BC.

After the period of the Roman Empire, it became the residence of the bishop and is mentioned as an important Longobard Duchy and the town where a major Court of Justice was held. Made into a County under the Franks, later governed by the bishops, the town flourished towards the end of the 11th century becoming, for a brief period, the most important free cities of Piedmont. In the 12th century it became one of the richest and most powerful cities in Italy, it was granted the right to mint coins and it engaged in busy trade with France, Flanders and England. After 1313, the city was conquered by the Angevins, then by the Visconti and finally by the Savoy (1575).

Following the Unification of Italy, the fortunes of the city mirrored those of the newly-formed nation, and events there followed those of Italy. Characterised since the 13th century by a lively economy, with profitable trade and dealings with other cities, even if often divided by the feuds between opposing noble families, Asti has retained a pleasant medieval atmosphere, with towers, noble residences and fortified houses. The population of Asti is now 76,437, and its patron saint is St. Secundus, whose feast day is the first Tuesday in May.

THE PALIO

The first written record of the race dates from 1275, the year in which, according to the Asti chronicler Guglielmo Ventura, the people of Asti held the Palio, for spite, beneath the walls of the enemy city of Alba, causing damage and destruction to the vineyards. The race now involves twenty-one competitors who in the preceding days strenuously seek to propitiate victory with gargantuan dinners, rituals to ward off ill-luck and salacious practical jokes against the rivals, up to the last exciting encounter on the race course, preceded by a magnificent procession, featuring over one thousand two hundred people in medieval costume. The track, specially prepared in the very central Piazza Alfieri, is 450 metres long: the race, on thoroughbreds ridden bareback, takes place in three heats featuring seven horses each, while the final is between nine horses. In both the heats and the final, the horses run around the track three times. The start is given by the “mossiere” who unhooks the “canapo”, a thick rope stretching from one side of the track to the other.



THE BANNER

The Palio, the large crimson velvet banner with the coats of arms of Asti, is the “dream” for which the twenty-one rivals compete. But “Palio” is also the name of the fiery and exciting race that inflames the passions of the Asti area each September. The Palio is run in the name of the Patron Saint of Asti, St. Secundus. There are two Palio banners: one offered by the City Council to the Church of St. Secundus in May, the other offered as the prize for the race in September.

These two Palio banners are made up of two essential elements: the painted “labarum”, with the coats of arms of the City of Asti and the actual “Palio”, which is a long length of crimson velvet joined to the “labarum”. The Palio is measured in “rasi”: sixteen for the Palio won in the race, ten for the Palio offered to the Collegiate Church.

A raso is an ancient Piedmontese unit of measurement, corresponding to sixty centimetres.

THE PRIZES

For 1st place: the Palio banner,
for 2016 it has been painted by the Turin painter Mauro Chessa

For 2nd place: a bag of silver coins

For 3rd place: silver spurs

For 4th place: a live rooster

For 5th place: the cockade

For the last competitor to arrive: the inchioda (anchovy) with salad

THE PROCESSION

The solemn procession preceding the race is a magnificent fresco commemorating the medieval history of the City: each group is led by the standard-bearer carrying the colours of the village, district or town, followed by the pageanteers dressed in historical costumes, who re-enact a different historical theme each year.



THE THEMES OF THE 2016 PROCESSION

- 1) Town of Baldichieri (colours: silver, light blue and gold) “Women in Medieval Times”
- 2) Town of Montechiaro (colours: white and sky blue) “The Troubadour Rambaldo da Vaqueiras narrating the rescue of Giacomina da Ventimiglia”
- 3) Town of Moncalvo (colours: white and red) “Ostrich eggs and the tree of life”
- 4) Torretta (colours: red, white and blue) “Orleans tapestry: an unknown jewel from Asti”
- 5) Viatosto (colours: white and light blue) “Legal and illicit love stories”
- 6) San Silvestro (colours: gold and silver) “The triumph of the Visconti serpent in the coats of arms of San Silvestro”
- 7) Town of Castell’Alfero (colours: light blue, white and gold) “The art of Asti fustian”
- 8) San Marzanotto (colours: blue and gold) “A pastime for medieval families: dancing”
- 9) Santa Caterina (colours: red and sky blue) “The privilege of minting coins in medieval Asti”
- 10) San Martino San Rocco (colours: white and green) “The nobleman Giovanni Roero welcomes Charles VIII on his arrival in Asti”
- 11) Don Bosco (colours: yellow and blue) “The King of England, Asti bankers and the crown jewels”
- 12) San Pietro (colours: red and green) “In geometriam: medieval language through symbols”
- 13) San Secondo (colours: white and red) “Jousts and equestrian games in medieval Asti”
- 14) Tanaro Trincere Torrazzo (colours: white and light blue) “St. Bernardine of Siena and his “trigramme” in Asti”
- 15) Town of Canelli (colours: white and light blue) “Campari, armed guards in the territory of Canelli”
- 16) Town of San Damiano (colours: red and blue) “The life of Margaret of Savoy-Achaea, Marchioness of Monferrat”
- 17) San Lazzaro (colours: yellow and green) “The Feast of the Patron Saint St. Lazarus of the lepers in medieval Asti”
- 18) Cathedral (colours: white and light blue) “Hospitium de Dom, from credit to charity”
- 19) Town of Nizza Monferrato (colours: yellow and red) “In vino salus et laetitia: our origins”
- 20) Santa Maria Nuova (colours: pink and light blue) “The barrier: a medieval marriage ritual”
- 21) San Paolo (colours: gold and red) “People celebrating and rejoicing the winning of the sought-after banner”

THE PALIO OF THE FLAG-WAVERS AND THE CHILDREN’S PAGEANT

The Palio of the Flag-Wavers

(held on Thursday 15 September at 9:00 pm in Piazza San Secondo – entry € 8) This is the most important contest for the teams of flag-wavers of the various districts. The prize awarded to the team that comes first is a “paliotto”, a smaller reproduction of the actual Palio banner.

The “Children’s pageant” is devoted to the youngest children

(Saturday 17 September from 2:00 pm). This picturesque parade, with very young participants dressed in costume, sets off from Corso Alfieri (west side) and arrives in Piazza Alfieri where they will watch the practice runs by the competing horses and riders. Just under a thousand children take part in the parade, a spectacular sight not to be missed.