

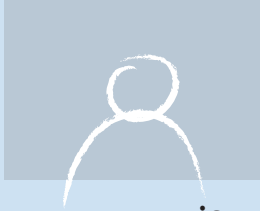


Provincia di  
Trapani

 **Salaparuta**

**Welcome**





## Salaparuta is...

**I**t might not be widely known that the first person in the world to record a Jazz record in New Orleans, was Nick La Rocca who was originally from Salaparuta and that the origins of Jazz can be traced back to a group of young jazz musicians, including Luis Prima and Roppolo, all originally from the town. It must also be known that the new Salaparuta, with its

layout of straight roads and large squares, rises a few kilometres from the old inhabited centre which was completely destroyed in the earthquake of '68. The suggestive foundations of the Mother Church and of the ex-Capuchin monastery have recently been recovered, and the town jealously protects the fifteenth century statue of Bianca di Navarra, which was

saved from the ruins. Visit the town during the setting up of the altars in honour of San Giuseppe (Saint Joseph) or the celebration of the 'ncontru - meeting, on Easter day, between the simulacrams of Christ and Mary, and don't forget to try a tasty and typical 'nfigghiulata accompanied by the delicious Salaparuta DOC wine which is produced here.

Urban landscape



Nick La Rocca and his band



Salaparuta DOC







## History

**S**ALAPARUTA: two names, one history, one site to indicate the ancient Sala (Hall) of the Arabs, then of the Paruta family who, in 1507 added their own family name to the name of the primitive town. The history goes back thousands of years and is linked to that of the surrounding territory: inhabited by the Sicanians, Elymians, Greeks and Romans it has also kept the imprint of the Arab domination in its agriculture and toponymy. The Arabs considered these fertile terrains, rich in water, to be ideal places to plant cultivations and gardens, build *cube*, water mills and, *casali* (groups of houses) called *rabatteddi*, which they

named Belich, Salah, Taruch. Rahal al Merath was the hamlet around the castle or a tower where the inhabitants of Salah moved, and later others, giving life to a new Sala which then became Sala dei Paruta, after the barony was bought by Ruggiero Paruta in 1436. These “mounts, woods, water”, grazing lands procured Ruggiero the title of *barone della Sala* - baron of the Sala but it was Geronimo Paruta, in 1503, who was given the royal right to expand the new inhabited area. Then after centuries, in 1968, the earthquake struck! Destruction and death determined the abandonment of the old urban centre and the

transferral of the town to Cusumano district, at the *Costa di li cuti*, at 170 metres above sea level. The new Salaparuta is a modern, sharp and dynamic town, with wide roads and squares and new houses and public buildings. Salaparuta is proud to have a famous person of Salaparutian origins: Nick La Rocca (1889-1961), a classic jazz cornet player who recorded the first jazz record of all time in 1917, whose father emigrated to New Orleans in 1876. Salaparuta commemorates Nick with a bust at the social centre and on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the recording, paid tribute to him with the *Nick La Rocca Memorial Day*.



## Landscape

Salaparuta nuova (new Salaparuta), rebuilt to a modern urban design, is situated in the valley of Alto Belice, on the right of the river and on the slopes of mount Porcello, in an area of variegated environmental and natural aspects where there is a view as far as mounts Alcamo and San Giuseppe Jato, towards the

mountain of Entella, down to the sea of Selinunte and over the nearby territories of Gibellina, Sambuca, Santa Margherita Belice and Montevago. The road bridge over the Belice with its high fan-shaped rails marks the valley between the provinces of Trapani and Agrigento. From the open spaces of the Mother Church of Salaparuta

vecchia (old Salaparuta), the agricultural landscape imposes its identity: valleys, hills, vineyards which indicate a zone of DOC wines and olive groves which fall into the Valle del Belice PDO zone. An urban landscape which was deeply affected by the earthquake of 1968, but which recognises itself in its territory.

View of Santo Vito district



Vineyards



View over Mount Balatizzo





## Nature

**T**he mosaic of natural elements, which trace back to the ancient Mediterranean wood are present all over as remaining strips of a system which has now almost completely disappeared. Mount Porcello and Sinapa Wood contain scrub formations of high value for

nature and landscape. Where the mountain walls are steep, there is rocky vegetation on particular, compact, rocky, extremely steep sub layers. There have been, however, reforestation interventions using exotic species. These plantations carry out the function of protecting from

hydro-geological ruin and allow the process of implantation of the Mediterranean scrub favouring the native flora and the evolution of the vegetation towards more advanced forms. The fauna and bird patrimony is varied and interesting.

Mount Porcello

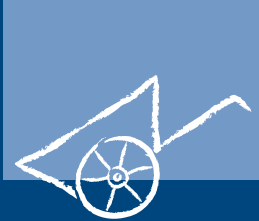


*Arbutus unedo*



*Pistacia terebinthus*





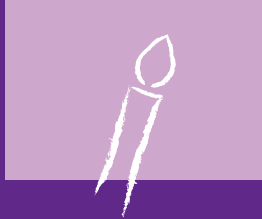
## Traditions

Expression of a tradition which is renewed every year are the symbolic altars of San Giuseppe (Saint Joseph) which are set up in private houses on the 18th and 19th of March as votive offerings, *la prummissioni*. Covered with fine embroidered sheets, they are decorated with large rounded loaves of bread called *cucciddati*, and with typical *squartucciati*, sheets of pasta filled with minced figs in symbolic shapes, modelled by the expert women of the town, who with patience and great skill, create incredible cuttings allowing the layer of figs to show. On the 18th

it is traditional to offer to those who visit the altar, pastries, bread and chickpeas: on receiving these, one must never say thank you, as the gift is an obligation of the host to the guest. On the 19th, a lunch is offered to three people, once poor people, alluding to the Sacred Family. It has a rich menu from which however, meat or fish is banned, but which must have a first course of spaghetti dressed with a special tomato sauce enriched with broccoli, asparagus and fennel, all over which breadcrumbs are sprinkled. The leftovers are offered to neighbours and

relatives. Another custom is the making, at Easter, of *cannatuna*, real eggs with decorations of sweet, coloured pasta. If today the photos of olden days depicting the women of Salaparuta with the *cerce* (*rutedda*) (circular flat stone) and the heavy *quartare* (jugs) on their heads might seem folkloristic, at the “*li Cannoli*” fountain, these photos assume a tangible value showing their hardworkingness, if considered in the context of a life poor in technology but dedicated to work which, for men took place in the fields, and in the tuff quarries.





## Religion Remembrance Bonds

**R**eligion is an element which characterises the inhabitants of the town who, over centuries, have always shown a fervent veneration towards their saint protectors, San Giuseppe and the Beata Vergine del Piraino - Blessed Virgin of Piraino, to whom impressive festivities are dedicated. There is great veneration towards the the stone with the image of the Madonna del Piraino on it, miraculously discovered in the XVI century, by a certain Beatrice whilst she was washing her clothes in a stream. The visit of Pope John Paul II in 1982 is remembered with reverence and emotion by the men and women of the town who

paid homage to him with the monument realized by the sculptor Giovanni Alessi. There are heartfelt celebrations of the rites of Holy Week which take place with devotion and ancient popular customs, beginning on the Thursday with the adoration of Eucharistic Christ in coena Domini. In the early afternoon of Good Friday, there are the moving three hours of agony, culminating with the death of Christ on the cross, with the bowing of His head, while in the evening there is procession of Christ in the urn. At midnight on Saturday, Jesus is resurrected, springing out of the tomb, activated by a mechanism. At midday on

Easter Sunday, pre-announced by an Angel, the spectacular *ncontru* - meeting between the Madonna and Christ Resurrected takes place in the presence of religious followers singing hosannas, and tourists. The miraculous crying of a chalk headboard depicting the Sacro Cuore di Gesù - Sacred heart of Jesus, which took place in a private house on the 13th, 14th, 15th and 25th January 1957, exactly the same days in which eleven years later the earthquake devastated the Belice Valley is still remembered. A community of emigrants in Australia and Argentina keep strong links to their native land.



## Art

The works of art recovered from the ruins left by the earthquake are now kept in two new churches: in the entrance to the Mother Church, there is the statue of the Regina Bianca di Navarra - The White Queen of Navarra, initially believed to be the simulacrum of Santa Caterina of Alessandria, one of the best examples of Sicilian

sculpture from the fifteenth century, it is believed to be by an unknown sculptor of Neapolitan training who has been given the name Maestro della Regina Bianca - Maestro of the White Queen. In the same church are held the fine Crocefisso - Crucifix (1755) by brother Benedetto Valenza on the main altar, and the stone with the Madonna del

Piraino (XVI century), that is Madonna with Child sitting on a pear tree, following a Hispanic-Portuguese iconography, with San Giovanni Battista (Saint John the baptist) and San Nicolò di Bari knelt at her feet. A processional wood group with the same subject (early XX century) can be found in the SS. Trinità church.

Mother Church, White queen



Mother Church, Crucifix



Mother Church, Madonna del Piraino





## Ruins of Salaparuta

What remains of the old inhabited centre of Salaparuta, destroyed by the earthquake of 1968, is a mass of ruins from which emerge remains of houses, the base of the square tower of the Paruta castle, the lower part of the perimeter walls of the Mother church, with the bases of the pilasters of the naves and the structures of

the lateral altars: it was in a basilica plan type with a nave and two side aisles, divided by pilasters, a transept and high cupola and it had a very slim façade in the southern part, typical of the best examples of Sicilian Baroque. On the external wall of the Sancetta house a niche commemorates the site of a miraculous event; the crying

of a chalk bolster depicting the Sacro Cuore di Gesù - Sacred heart of Jesus, in January 1957. The convento dei Cappuccini - Capuchin monastery (XVIII century) was recently restructured and consolidated by the insertion of new metallic structures. Of the connected church, only the façade remains with the decorated doorway.

Ruins, Mother Church



Ruins, Capuchin monastery



Ruins, castle





## Monuments

**O**n arrival in Salaparuta, one is welcomed by the *Monumento ai caduti* - war memorial monument (1926), the only structure saved from the old town, which had been wished for the community of emigrants of Brooklyn. Fine contemporary architecture are: the Mother Church, designed by Gaetano Averna, and worked on by

Luigi Giocondo which has a curious, fan-shaped layout and a façade characterised by a scaffolding of pilasters; the chiesa della Trinità (Trinity church), designed by architect Vito Corte, which is more simple and linear and has a large churchyard in front of it. Public buildings worth mentioning are the *Osservatorio architettonico* -

architectural Observatory, designed by Antonello Sotgia and Giuseppe Cangemi and destined to contain reconstruction plans for the public buildings of towns in the Belice valley and the social centre by the architect Saverio Bono, with an interplay of fullness and emptiness, straight lines and curves.

War memorial Monument



Architectural observatory



Social centre





Mother Church







## Wine and food

**W**ine production has always been practised in the territory and is now the main productive sector. The white and red wine produced in the territory of Salaparuta received the DOC recognition on the 8th of February 2006. The native vines, Catarratto, Grillo, Insoia, Grecanico and Nero D'Avola

exist alongside international ones such as: Chardonnay, Sangiovese, Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon which express extraordinarily fine oenological characteristics. PDO products of the territory include the *Nocellara del Belice* olive from which a fine extra virgin oil with a fruity flavour and an almondy

retro taste is made and the *Vastedda del Belice*, a PDO, stretched curd cheese made with milk from native sheep. A real delicacy is the *nfigghiulata*, bread filled with onion, potato and sausage. For San Martino on the 11th of November, *la muffuletta*, a particularly soft bread is prepared.

Native grapevine



*Vastedda del Belice*







## Shows and events

**P**iazza Paruta is the main gathering and meeting place, while the Multi-purpose Centre often holds conferences, exhibitions and events. In August, an event promoting the importance of typical local products with tastings accompanied by Salaparuta DOC wine takes

place. Exhibitions of various types take place in occasion of the festivities for San Giuseppe, including that of the *squartucciati*. Shows and concerts take place in the auditorium of the social centre and the Convento dei Cappuccini - Capuchin Monastery in old Salaparuta;

Also, jazz concerts are organised by the Centro Studi e Ricerche Nick La Rocca - Nick la Rocca Study and Research Centre. The city has also begun an initiative of national importance: the Primo trofeo nazionale di panca "Trofeo Sicilia - Città di Salaparuta".

*The meeting*



*Exhibition of the *squartucciati**



*Altar of Saint Joseph*









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