



ATOMAA

FALETTI

Casa Sorelle
Sanpietro,
Bergeggi, IT

“As for the architecture, (...) it may reflect — granting due credit to the creative temperament of Galvagni, an architect-painter (painters, when they engage in architecture, possess their own volumetric language: I think of Sironi) — Wrightian suggestions, with its cantilevered volumes.”

— **Gio Ponti, Domus 340, March 1958**

The restoration of Casa Sorelle Sanpietro in Torre del Mare, Bergeggi, represents a precious opportunity to reinterpret a fundamental chapter of Ligurian architectural culture from the second half of the 20th century. The intervention is situated within that experimental laboratory that was Torre del Mare, propelled by the entrepreneurial—and cultural—vision of Pierino Tizzoni.

It was Tizzoni himself, struck by and accompanied by the creative flair of Mario Galvagni, who acted as the tireless engine of this “signature intervention”. He was the same promoter who, years later, would transport that environmental sensitivity to Sardinia, giving life to the Costa Paradiso experience alongside Alberto Ponis.

In those years, Liguria became the testing ground for a new way of “Inhabiting the Vacation”: a theme that saw protagonists such as Marco Zanuso in Varazze, engaged in the search for a dialogue between industrial standards and the landscape; Giancarlo De Carlo in Colletta di Castelbianco; or the pine grove of Arenzano with Ignazio Gardella, Gio Ponti, Vico Magistretti, Marco Zanuso, and Caccia Dominioni. Among them, the young Galvagni brought a nearly pictorial sensitivity to Bergeggi.

Designed in 1956, the villa for the Sanpietro sisters is an essay in Galvagni’s “poetic and complex” language: the exposed reinforced concrete, raw and vibrant, becomes geological matter, anchoring the dwelling to the cliff and merging with the Mediterranean maquis. It is not an imposition, but an architecture that, citing the genius loci, is born from the rock.

The noble floor (the only inhabited floor in Galvagni’s original project), cantilevered over a base of structural concrete septa, lunges into the void with an almost Futurist gesture, shifting its material register.

Here, raw concrete gives way to cement smoothing and Klinker tiles.

On the planimetric level, the architectural organism reveals itself through greater geometric clarity: two rectangular volumes, slightly rotated relative to each other, define a clear division of functions and atmospheres. While the frontal body, intended for the living area, projects toward the southeast seeking the open sea, the sleeping area faces east, taking refuge in the intimacy of a glimpse protected by the shade of a maritime pine.

The formal theme of the triangle, so explicit in the structure, is reflected in the plan in a less obvious but equally rigorous manner—a natural result of this rotation. This geometric logic also governs the service blocks and the kitchen, which follow the same orientations.

The Alteration of the Eighties: Loss of Identity

Starting from the 1980s, the work underwent a profound and incoherent alteration that compromised its essence. This was not merely a loss of material identity, but a true compositional transformation. Originally, the lower level of the house was a free space, a void open to the rock that allowed the structure to “float” above the natural slope.

This space was occupied—through a sequence of openings in the structural septa and the creation of infill walls facing the sea—by an unauthorized dwelling (later regularized in the 1990s), radically modifying the building’s connection to the ground and the perception of the house as a suspended organism. Even the internal distribution of the upper floor was distorted, while the facades were literally whitewashed, erasing the chromatic and material dialogue between the klinker and the reinforced concrete.

The New Intervention: A Restoration of Critical Synthesis

The current intervention was born with the objective of remedying these stratifications through a process of critical restoration. The project is the result of extensive archival research conducted at the Municipality of Bergeggi and through consultation with the professionals who today curate Architect Galvagni's legacy. This investigative work culminated in a constant mediation and shared effort with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage Office, balancing conservative rigor with contemporary living requirements.

On the first floor below street level, corresponding to the original 1956 residence, the project carried out an almost philological restoration of the planimetric layout, while maintaining and incorporating the later additions. The memory of the house was recovered by removing every internal incoherent addition and reconstructing the window frames with extreme fidelity to the original design—not in white, as they had reached us today, but in dark mahogany. The new interior finishes, intentionally light and neutral, create a respectful contrast with the reinforced concrete structure, which has been brought back to light in its material honesty. The same logic was adopted for the fixed and loose furnishings, such as the living area populated by Enzo Mari's "Gambadilegno" in white—pieces that dialogue with the space without dominating it. This material approach stems from the desire not to propose a "pseudo-Galvagni" palette of materials where they had been lost for decades, but rather to elevate the original ones still present through a conservative approach.

Descending to the second floor below street level, where the 1980s intervention had distorted the volumes, a language of declared reinterpretation was chosen. Rather than following the logic of the incoherent low walls and small windows of the 80s that fragmented the space, the new intervention adopts a system of architectural clarity: large single-pane glass walls, without divisions, extending from septum to septum and from floor to ceiling, transforming the infills into transparent

diaphragms. This choice allows the original reinforced concrete structure, now restored, to return as the protagonist of the scene, letting light and rock enter the dwelling vigorously. The insertion of natural teak flooring creates a material dialogue between the interior environment and the exterior landscape.

Recovered Matter

The fundamental chapter of this intervention has been undoubtedly the restoration of the external surfaces, conducted in collaboration with a specialized restorer involved in other Mario Galvagni projects in Torre del Mare. Through stratigraphic investigations and an accurate study of the wooden formwork casts, it was possible to remove the white paint from the fair-faced concrete and the upper septa in cement finish; the same approach was adopted for the restoration of the klinker facades. Where a high level of degradation was found, a rigorous restoration was carried out, reproducing the material identically to heal the damaged parts without altering their perception.

The facade has thus regained its material texture, marked by time but now legible in its constructive integrity and in Galvagni's primordial intent.

In this project, the reference to the underpass connecting Torre del Mare to the beach is evident; there, klinker, concrete, and local stone express themselves in their materiality, without delegating visual expression to paint. The stratigraphies confirmed that in the Sanpietro house project, no portion was originally painted.

The roof was also subject to intervention, with the restoration of the original glass-block skylights, the removal of incoherent flashings that hid the authentic parapets, and the insertion of an elevator connecting the first floor below street level.

The addition of a small swimming pool and a light pergola in the outdoor spaces, though contemporary elements, was managed with discretion, using typical local split stone to avoid altering the balance between the built environment and nature.

Working on Galvagni's legacy means confronting a fragile memory and a utopian vision of the territory that has not yet been fully canonized by official criticism. The intervention does not intend to be—and is not—a mere celebration of the past, but rather a conscious reinterpretation that allows Casa Sorelle Sanpietro to return to its dialogue with the sea and the surrounding territory, with a well-calibrated mimesis, reaffirming the indissoluble bond between architecture and the Ligurian landscape.



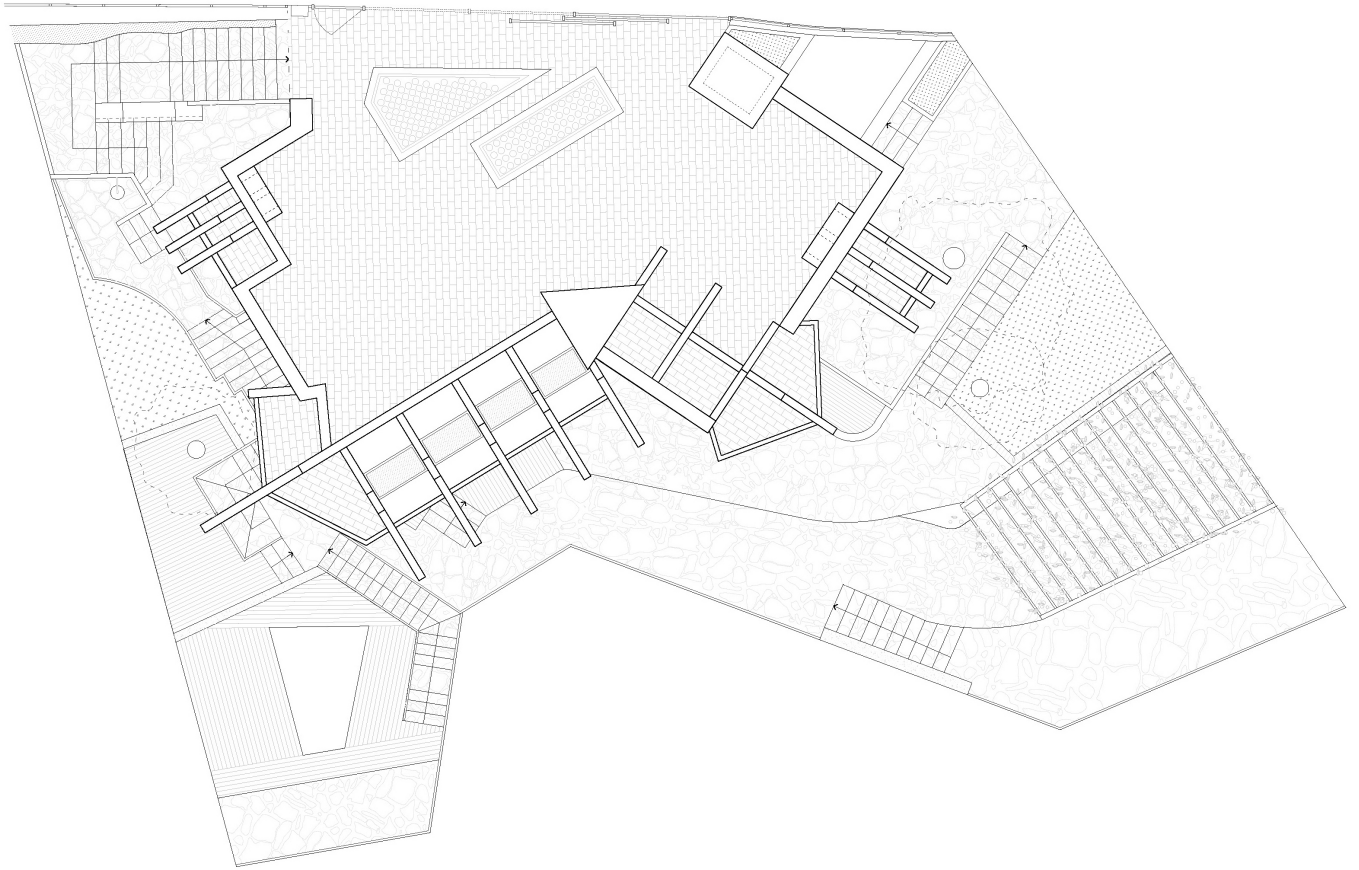
BRG

07-2025

Casa Sorelle Sanpietro

Bergeggi, IT

135 sqm



BRG

07-2025

Casa Sorelle Sanpietro

Bergaggi, IT

135 sqm



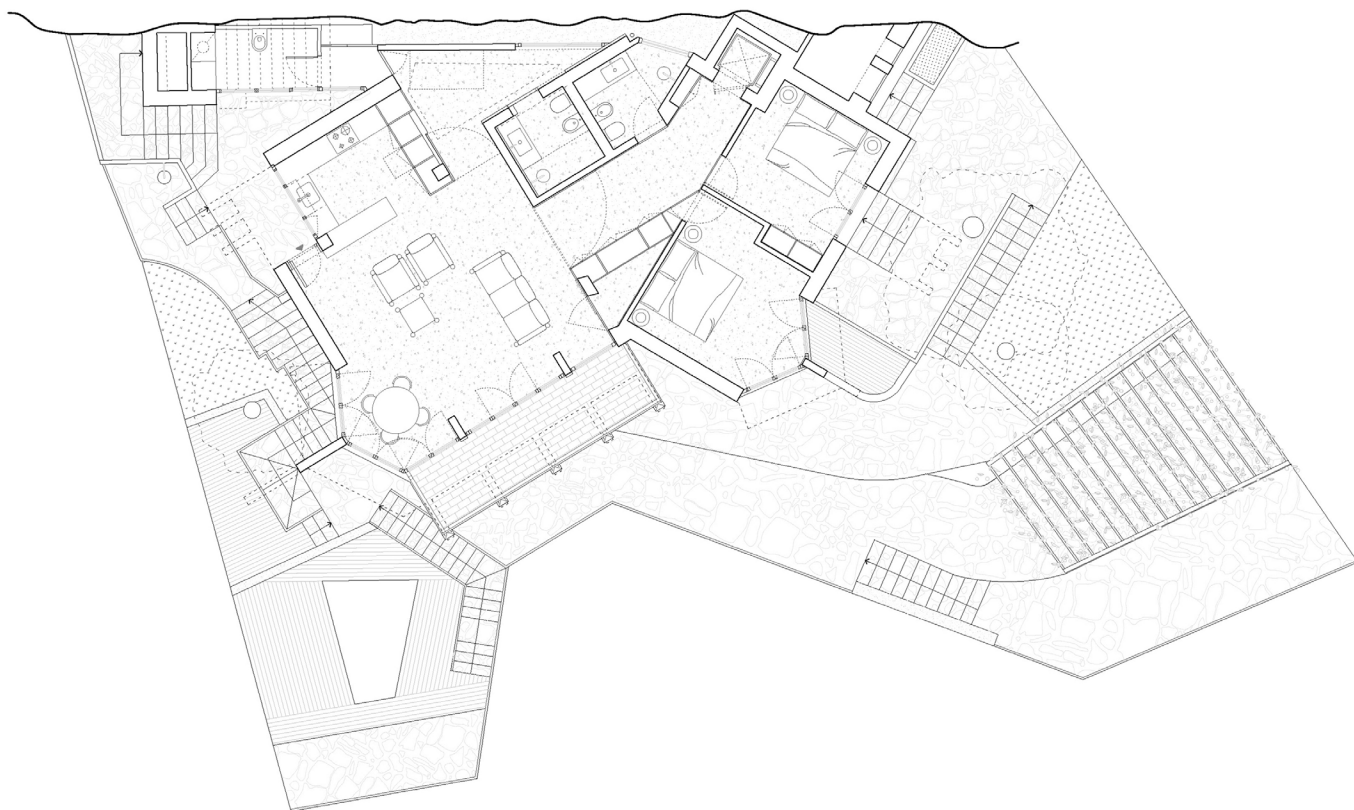
BRG

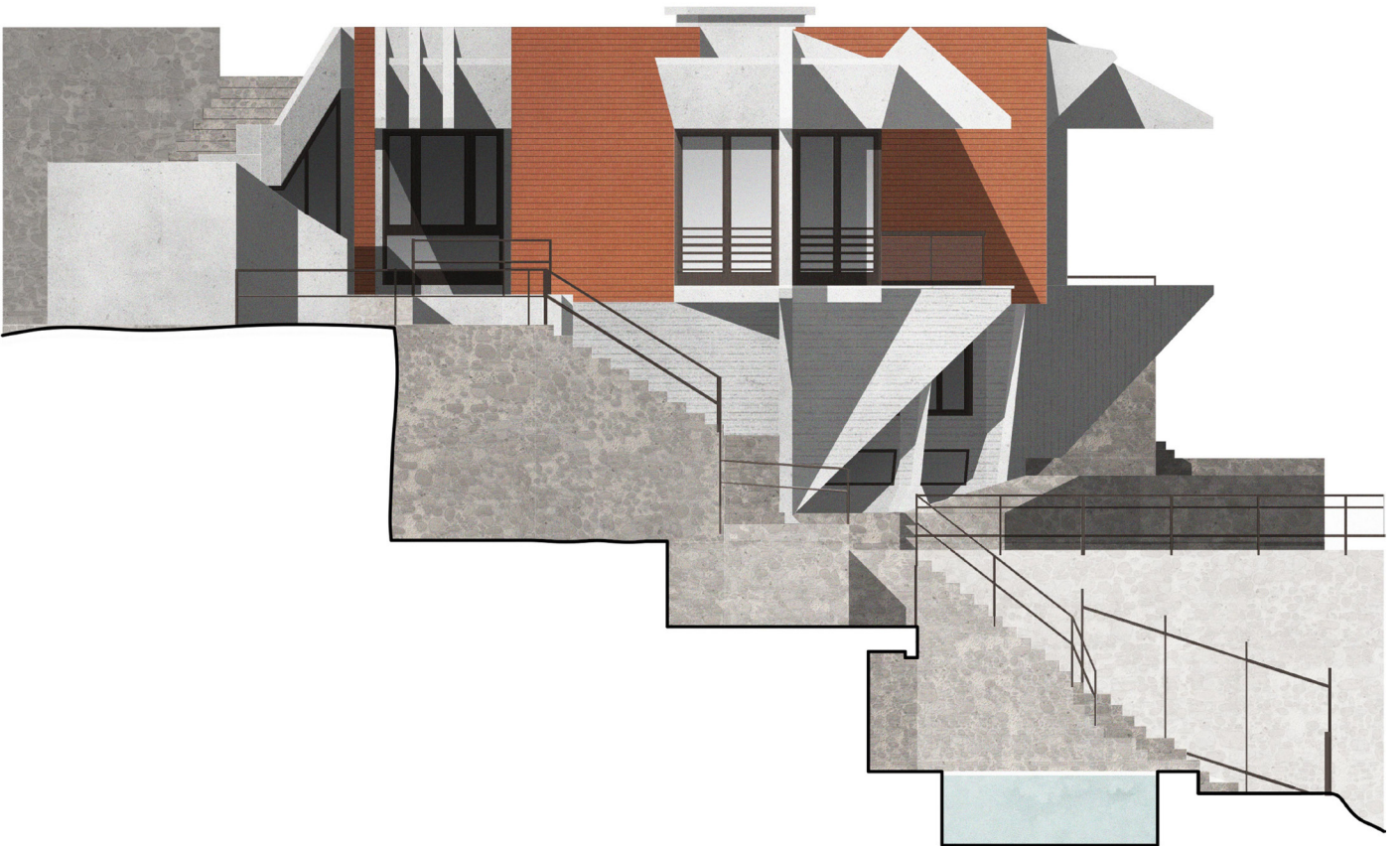
07-2025

Casa Sorelle Sanpietro

Bergeggi, IT

135 sqm





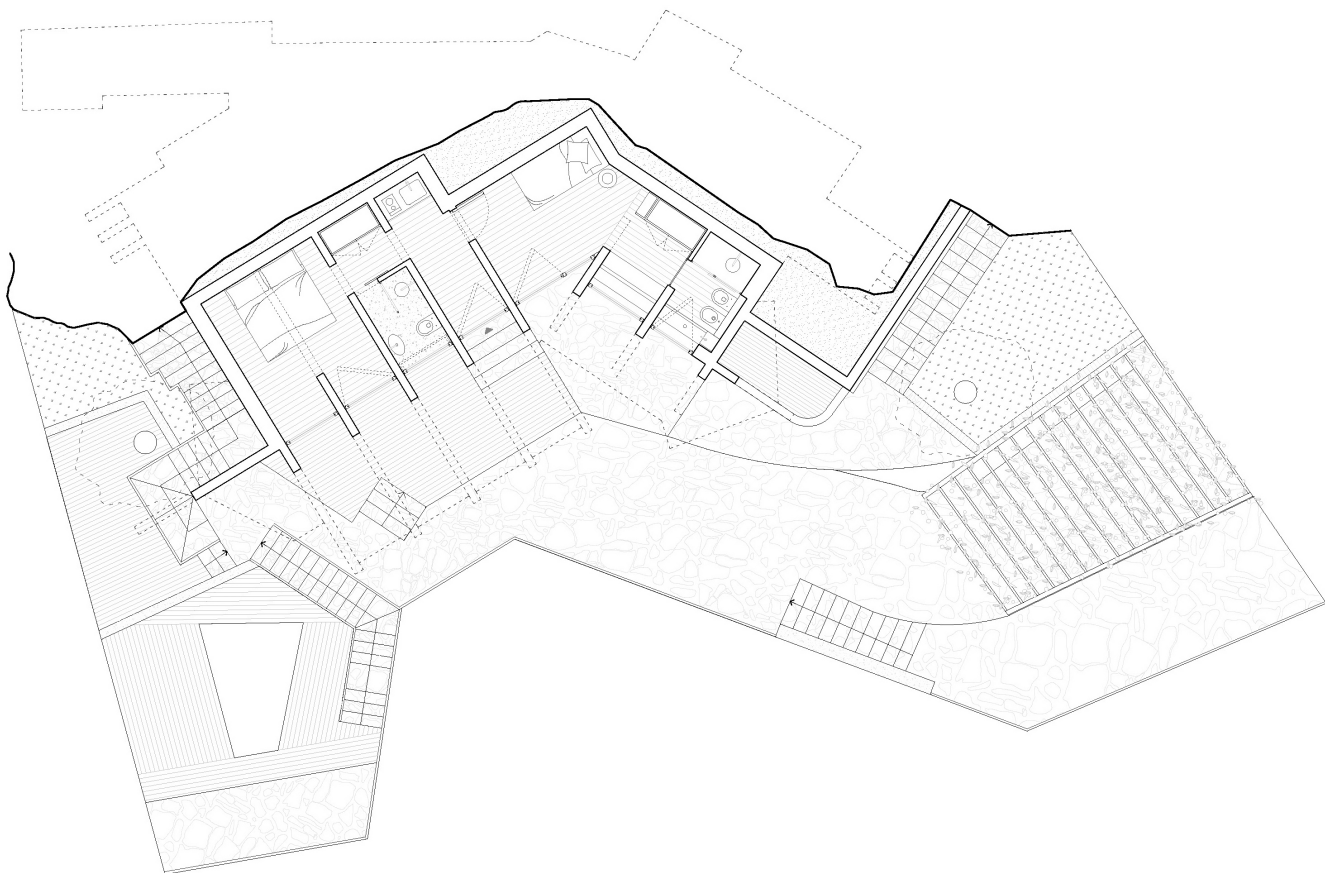
BRG

07-2025

Casa Sorelle Sanpietro

Bergeggi, IT

135 sqm





Credits

Client: Private

Typology: Seaside House

Location: Torre del Mare, Bergeggi (SV), Italy

Year: 2025

Architectural Project: ATOMAA & Samantha Furlotti:

Interior Design: F.F INTERIOR

Design Team: Andrea Del Pedro Pera, Umberto Maj, Cesare Galligani, Filippo Faletti, Samantha Furlotti

Superintendency for the Architectural and Landscape Heritage of Liguria:
Architect Andrea Canziani

Restorer: Alberto Capelli

Historical photographs and original drawings: © Historical Archive – Municipality of Bergeggi; © Arch. Mario Galvagni Archive

Photography: Allegra Martin