

## A short but intense period

One of the most important and ambitious urban and architectural interventions of the time is represented by the construction of a large complex dedicated to fun, culture and care of oneself: something widespread during the Art Nouveau period, especially in the places frequented by the jet set of that period. The founders and financiers of the company were Mr. and Mrs. Chavez, Argentine industrialists; the architect of the project was Giuseppe Pagani from Ticino. The vast area destined to the structures was originally owned by the Marquises Avogadro of Casanova, who commissioned one of the most prestigious villas of Stresa, "La Palazzola".

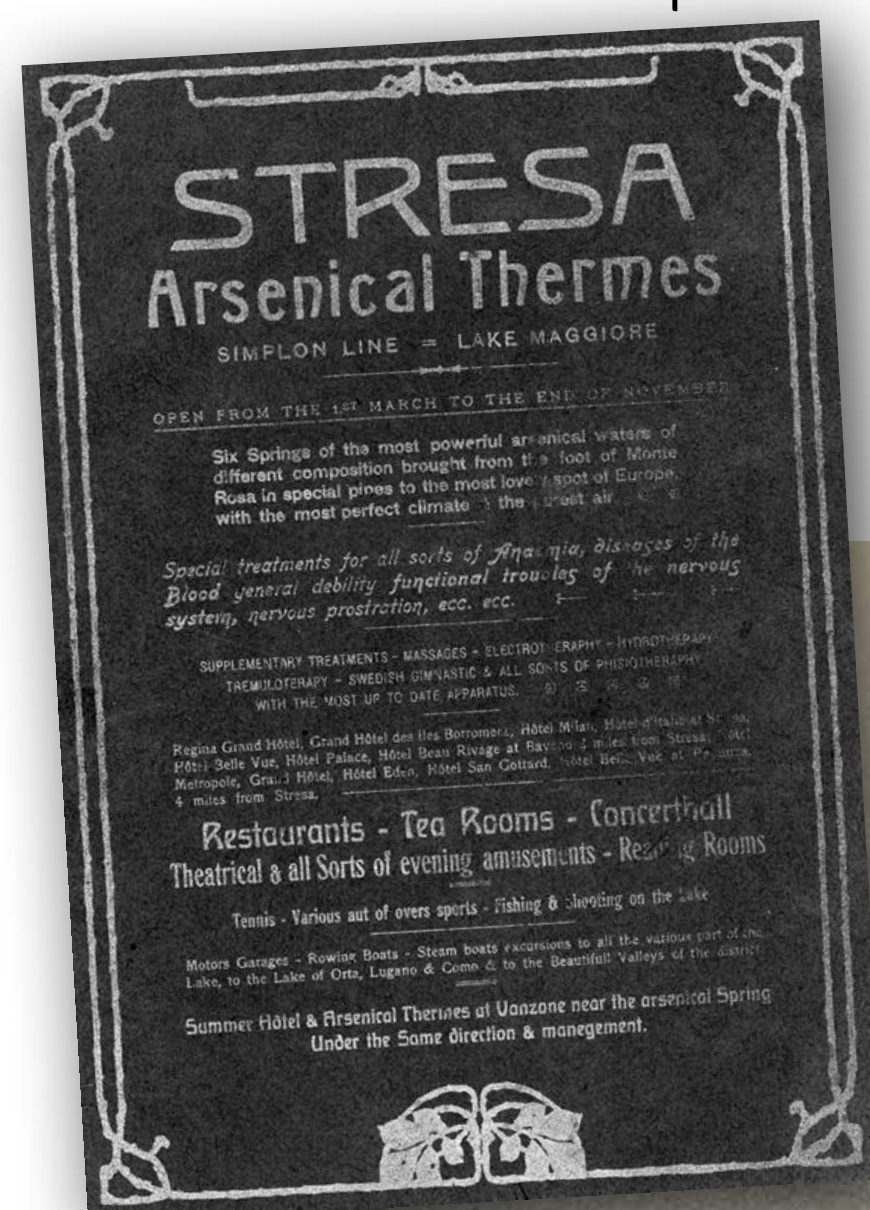
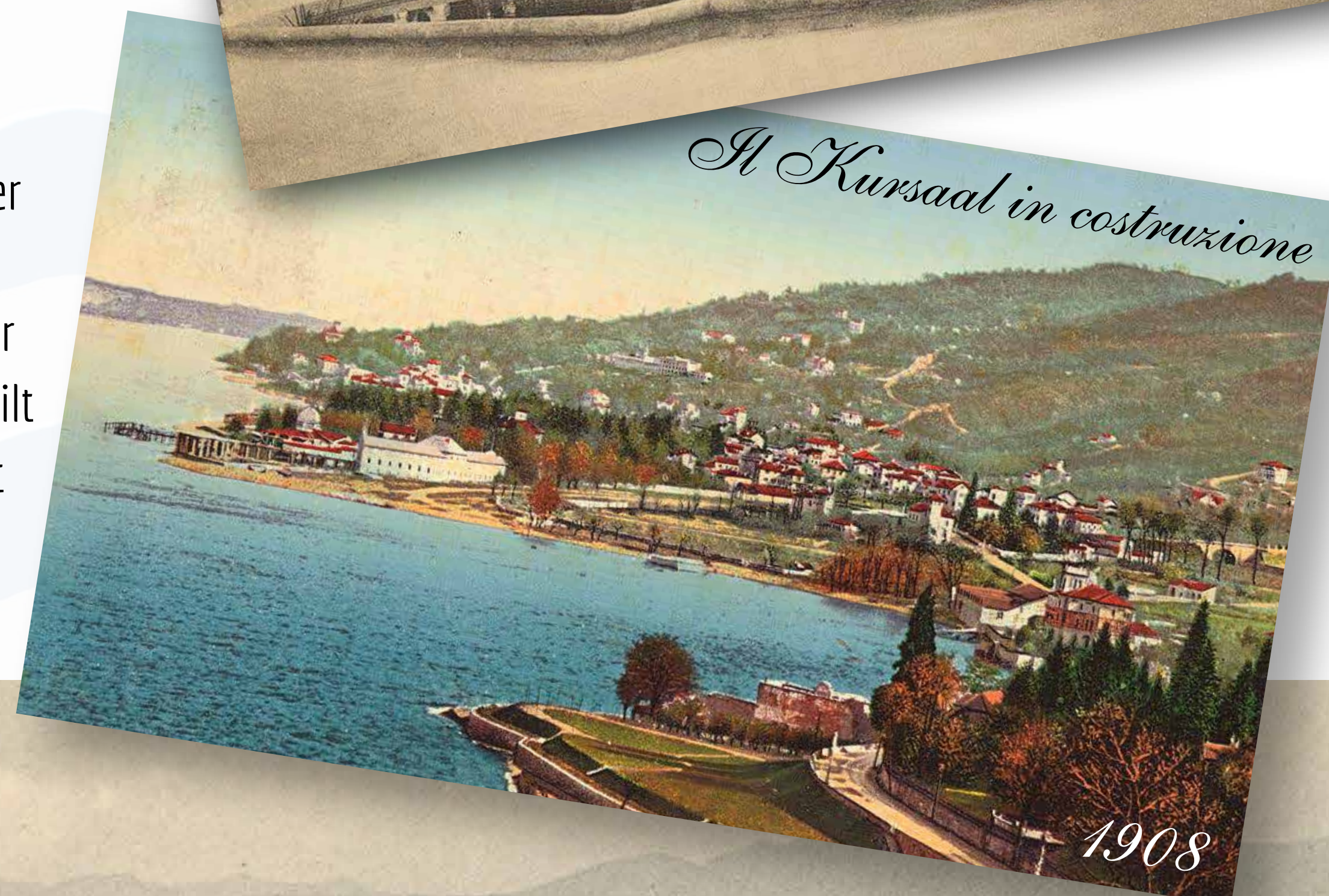
The Kursaal or "Casino des Thermes" was opened in the summer of 1909. It offered until the First World War a host of discerning events: theatre performances, concerts, exhibitions, gambling, parties, sports activities, spa treatments.

The most representative building was a structure in cast iron and glass with a central plan, surmounted by a dome, a shape that recalls the buildings on the French Riviera; it is equipped with large arches that open onto a unique panorama.

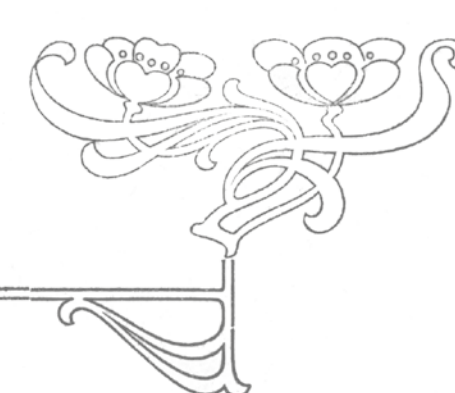
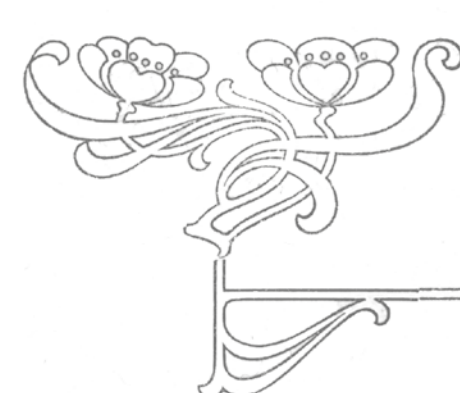
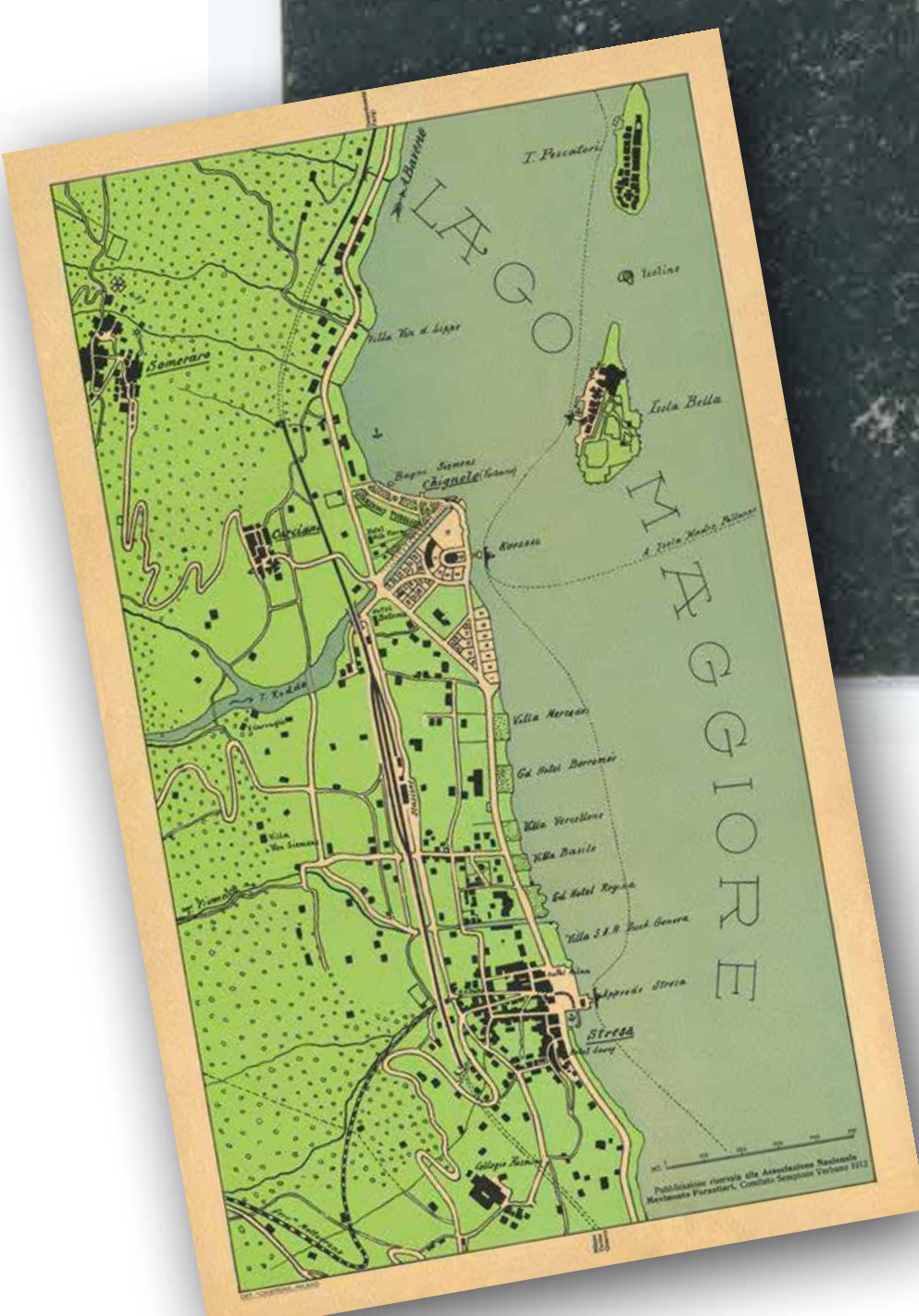
A walkway and a pretty pagoda overlooking the water allow you to enjoy the lake views. There is also a spa complex managed by the Società Miniere Arsenicali, using the healing waters of the Anzasca Valley (Vanzone), a project never realised due to the excessive costs and the beginning of the war. The complex is accessed through a portal, supported by four sentries that overlook the Sempione State Road (at the current Villa Pozzani), and through two roads, one pedestrian and one for vehicles and carriages.

An electric bus service runs "Stresa Centre-Palazzo delle Thermes". There is a casino available to customers, in operation until 1914 and then closed and reopened, with alternating events, in other locations (Corso Umberto I, Hotel Borromées and Regina Palace) until its final closure in 1946.

All this ends in the post-war period, when investors entrust Pagani himself with a new project for the area and obtain a plot for the construction of villas that will be built soon (Villa Castelli, Villa Pozzani, Villa Ricordi). The current lake front promenade now passes through what were the gardens of some of these villas.



**L'inaugurazione del Kursaal.**  
Stresa oggi è festante inaugurandosi il grandioso Kursaal.  
Il banchetto al quale sono invitati il Prefetto, le autorità e la stampa, avrà luogo all'Hotel des Iles Borromees.



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