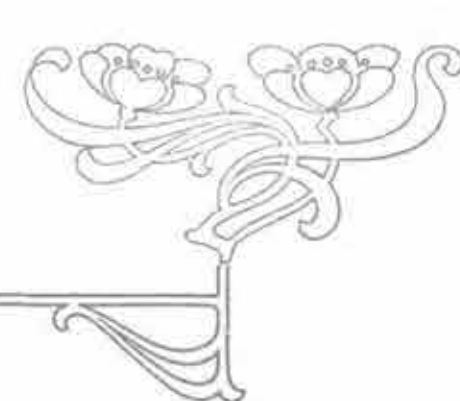
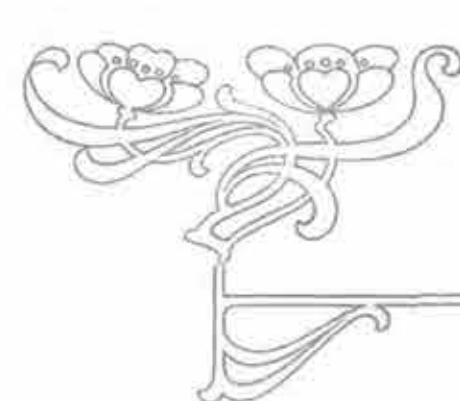
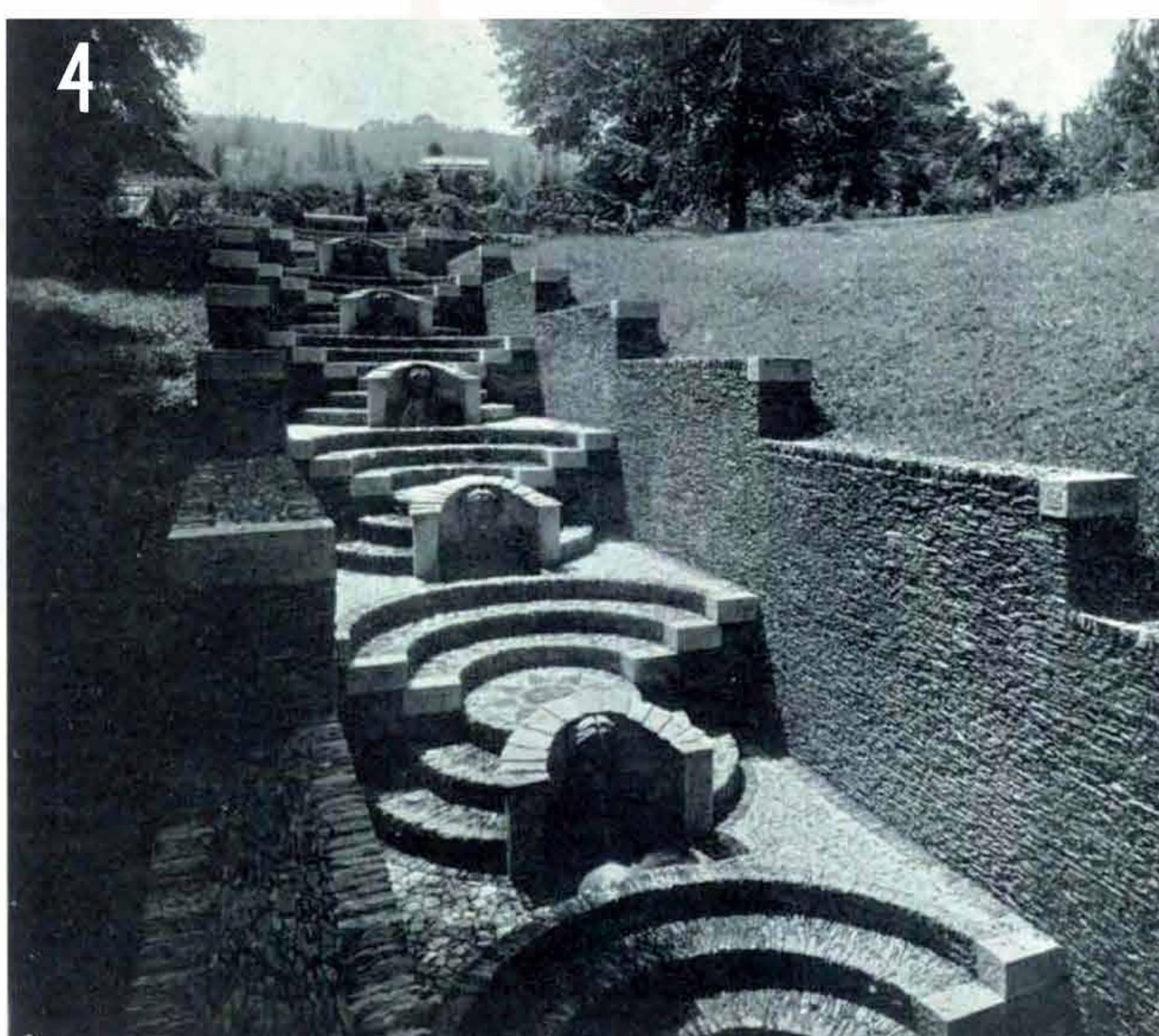
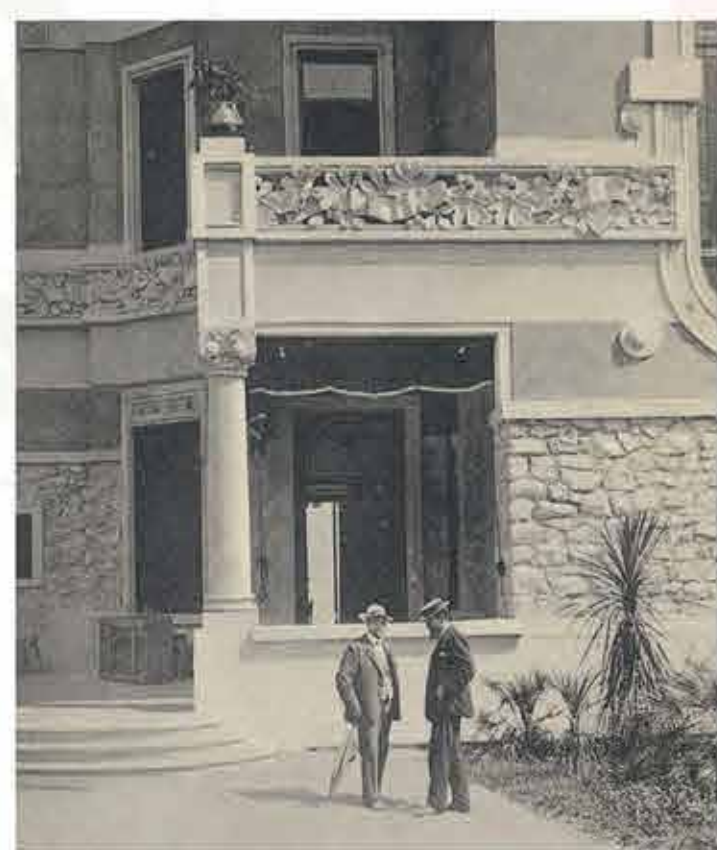
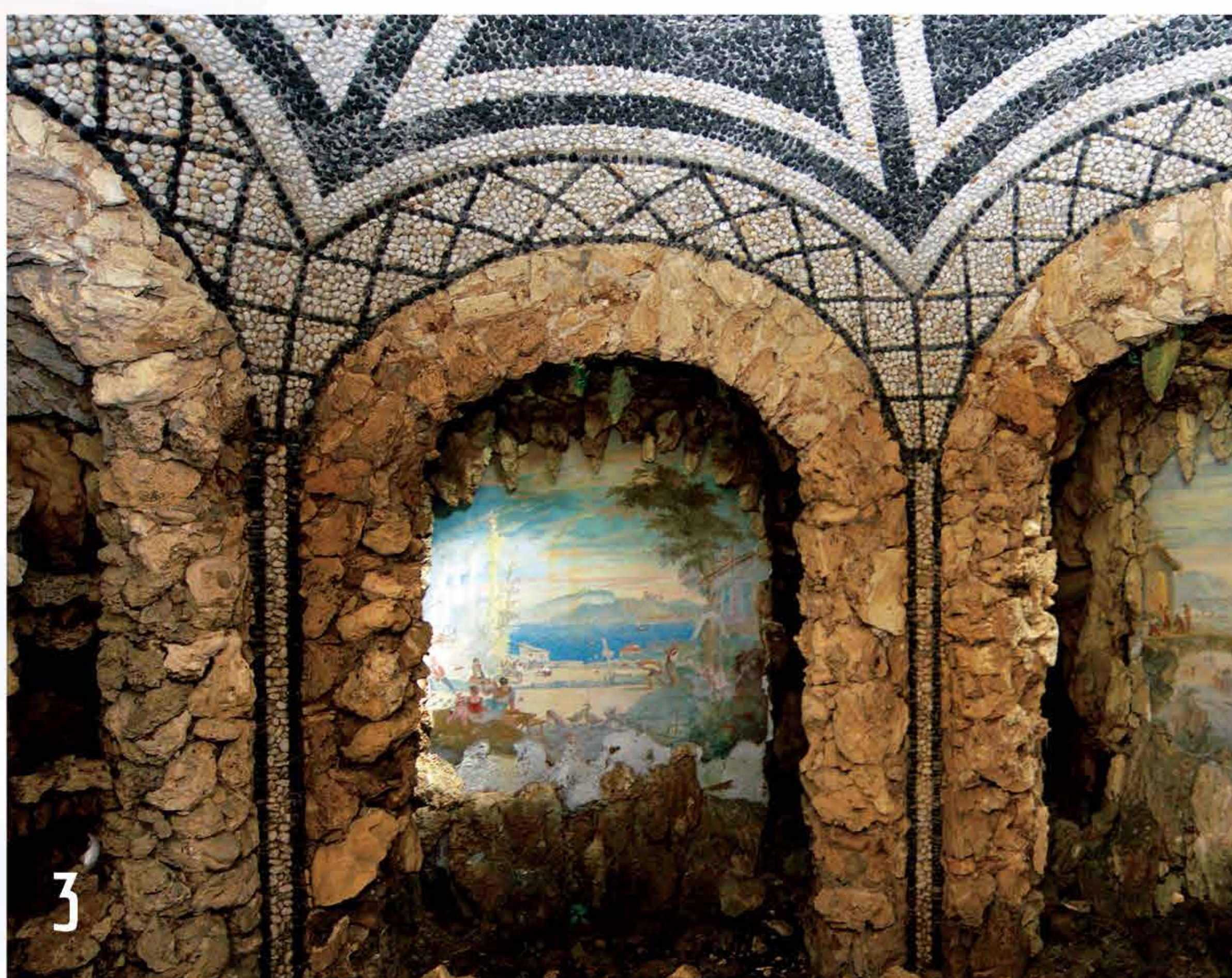


Hidden treasures in nature: Nymphaeum and Water Theater

Immersed in the greenery and fragrance of adjoining parks, and built where the view overlooks the entire lake, Villa Amalia-Bernocchi and Villa "Annita" Galimberti-Bernocchi share some significant historical events despite their stylistic differences.

The first villa, built around 1870 and later expanded, has a sober and elegant appearance with a classical flavor. The second villa, built in 1906, bears the prestigious signature of Giuseppe Sommaruga (1867-1917), perhaps the most important architect of Italian Liberty. This villa well represents the "floral style" with its lush friezes of leaves and flowers and its characteristic octagonal tower. Both villas date back to the crucial phases of Stresa's development: a period when, a few years after the unification of Italy (1861), the small town began to evolve with the first hotels and a few prestigious residences, becoming a coveted vacation spot and elite tourist destination, further favored by the opening of the Sempione railway in 1906, leading to uninterrupted growth.

Equipped with panoramic terraces and "English" gardens, shaded and flowered, descending with avenues to the Sempione road, these majestic residences allowed the owners, especially the Bernocchi family (prominent textile industrialists and patrons), to enjoy nature and water with their intense fragrances. The greenery of the parks preserves significant architectural and artistic testimonies: a "Nymphaeum," a "Water Theater" now covered by dense vegetation, a Liberty-style temple, and a large Statue of Liberty. The Nymphaeum is an artificial cave with a hexagonal plan, featuring a dome and floors decorated with mosaics of black and white pebbles. The painted walls are divided into niches with water features and adorned with stalactites made of volcanic stone. Giuseppe Ravanelli (1887-1956) depicted, with originality and vivacity, landscapes, buildings, boats, and scenes of 19th-century life on Lake Maggiore within the Nymphaeum. The Water Theater is a long artificial waterfall fed by a fountain. Built in 1929 with steps carved into the slope in geometric, linear, and circular shapes, it is the work of architect Alessandro Minali (1888-1960), who also designed the gazebo (now in ruins) that overlooks the boathouse on the beach in front.



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