

Contemporary architectures in inland Corsica: the projects of Amelia Tavella and Orma Architettura

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# ARCHALP

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## Le altre montagne

Les autres montagnes / Die anderen Berge  
/ Druge gore / The other mountains



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Dipartimento  
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Dipartimento di Architettura e Design  
Politecnico di Torino  
Viale Mattioli 39, 10125 Torino - Italy  
Tel. (+39) 0110905806  
fax (+39) 0110906379  
iam@polito.it  
www.polito.it/iam

**Fondazione Bologna University Press**

Via Saragozza 10, 40124 Bologna - Italy  
Tel. (+39) 051232882  
fax (+39) 051221019  
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# 1. RIGENERAZIONE





# Contemporary architectures in inland Corsica: the projects of Amelia Tavella and Orma Architettura

*Edited by Matteo Tempestini and Cristian Dallere*

The territory of Corsica is an extensive mountain range emerging from the Mediterranean Sea. From the morphological point of view, it is a mountainous region; the flat area coincides with the narrow Tyrrhenian coastal strip of the Aleria plain. With a very low population density, which grows extensively during the summer period, Corsica preserves specific environmental and landscape characteristics that determine the quality of the place; in this respect, it is worth noting that approximately one-third of the territory is a protected natural park. The island's main economic resources are tourism and the traditional agro-pastoral and wine economy. The essay illustrates four projects, two by the Orma Architettura studio and two by architect Amelia Tavella. All the architectures presented are united by the extreme control of the project, which determines their high design quality in terms of their relationship with the landscape, the built heritage and the local communities.

## **Matteo Tempestini**

After a master's degree thesis on the theme of repopulation in mountain areas, he is now architect and PhD fellow in Architecture, History and Design at Politecnico di Torino, where he has been undertaking research on contemporary architecture in Alpine territories. He is also member of the IAM (Istituto di Architettura Montana) research centre.

## **Cristian Dallere**

He is architect and PhD fellow in Architecture, History and Project at Politecnico di Torino where he is undertaking research in wood architecture culture over the alpine territories. He is also member of the IAM (Istituto di Architettura Montana) research centre.

## **Keywords**

*Contemporary architecture, mountain architecture, Corsica, heritage, renovation.*

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## Orma Architettura

# Observatoires du cerf corse

### Location:

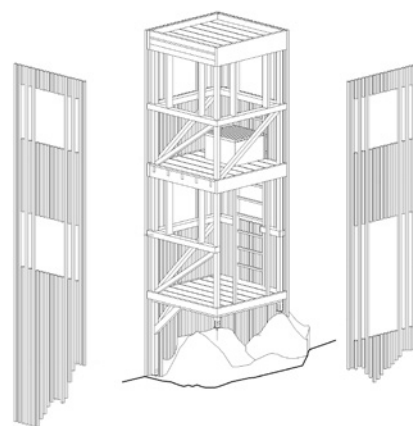
St Pierre de Venaco, Castifao, Quenza

### Chronology:

2017

### Photos:

David Giancatarina, Julien Kerdraon



1

The Corsican deer, endemic species disappeared in 1969, is resurrecting over the years thanks to a re-introduction program by the Corsican Natural Regional Park in 1985. This program is now entering a second phase that aims at informing and educating the population to raise awareness on the fragility of the species. At first, the Regional Natural Park of Corsica intended to order pre-manufactured observatories. However, the architects have presented the Park with a project that was to be built by local artisans respecting the budget.

The modest observatories, made of local wood («Laricio», an endemic pine), are located in the mountains of the Regional Park of Corsica, in three

distinct areas: Venaco, Castifao and Quenza. Built by local artisans, all the viewpoints have matching rectilinear forms that resemble tree trunks, adjusted to suit their specific locations. Each one is designed to adapt to the terrain and surrounding rocks. They also change according to the views on the landscape and to observe the deer, which explains why some of the observatories are more vertical than others. Each pavilion is adapted to its near and far environment and their slatted walls prevent deer from seeing the people inside. Their bases are unevenly finished, where the slats extend downwards to position precisely over the rockface and recall the appearance of undergrowth.

**Opening picture**  
Mirador, Corsica,  
France, Orma  
Architettura, 2017.

**Fig. 1**  
Design axonometry.



2

3



4



**Figs. 2-4**  
The three  
observatories.

# Auvent pour l'école d'Evisa

**Location:**

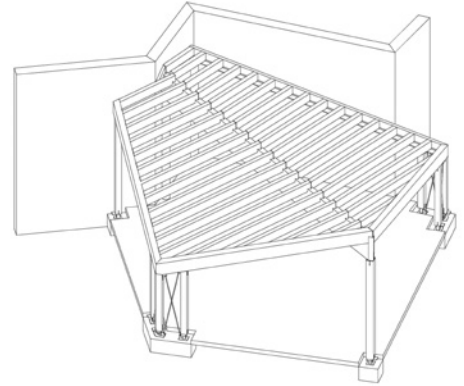
Evisa

**Chronology:**

2019

**Photos:**

David Giancatarina, Julien Kerdraon



The village of Evisa hosts several cultural events that require a multipurpose outdoor space. In the centre of the village are the town hall, the school, and a multipurpose space directly overlooking the schoolyard. Therefore, the municipality chose this “central” space, particularly the schoolyard, to construct a local wooden canopy for different uses. This canopy is a “micro-project” with an important social dimension through cultural, craft and educational aspects. It was built entirely on-site to tell the story and the know-how of this material to inhabitants and children. The architecture of Evisa is designed by massive buildings erected with great volumetric simplicity, surrounded by a forest of chestnut trees and *Laricio* pines. The latter was once the eco-

nomie lung of the territory, making the village of Evisa the capital of its micro-region.

The canopy is imagined as a homogeneous mass cut according to the site’s situations and constraints. Leaning against a dividing wall, it follows the strict limits of the site, but adapts to various situations. Indeed, its geometry stretches vertically to the West, opening towards the courtyard and the landscape view, and then lowers to the north not to obscure the light in the existing building. The particularity of the project is based on the desire to build the canopy using exclusively local wood resources within a radius of 30 km. The realization of this project is based on the reintegration of craftsmanship into architecture, allowing for a “tailor-made” design.

**Fig. 1**

Design axonometry.

**Figs. 2, 4**

The roofed space.

3



4



Fig. 3  
General view.

**Amelia Tavella Architectes**

# Rebirth of the Convent Saint-François

**Location:**

Santa Lucia di Tallano

**Chronology:**

2022

**Photos:**

Thibaut Dini



The Saint-François Convent was built in 1480. It was a defensive castle first and then a place of prayer and retreat. Today is listed as a historical monument, immersed in an olive grove and overlooking the village below. The designer decided to keep the parts of the building in a state of decay, which had only been restored, and to replace the missing parts with copper-clad volumes, which follow the shape of the

original volumes and house the House of the Territory. The new construction intervention is reversible and can be dismantled so that in the future the building can once again become a ruin. The copper cladding also helps to enhance the light that strikes the building, reflecting and refracting it as opposed to the massive existing granite walls. In this way, the cladding transforms the place into an experience.

**Fig. 1**  
The relationship with  
pre-existence.

**Fig. 2**  
Integration into the  
landscape.

**Fig. 3**  
General view.

**Fig. 4**  
View of the portico.





3



4



**Amelia Tavella Architectes**

# École a Strega

**Location:**

Santa-Maria-Siché

**Chronology:**

2018

**Photos:**

We Are Content(s)



The school, with its tapered shape, is located on a vast, virgin plot of land between two centenary oaks. One marks the entrance to the school, and the second becomes the centre of the playground area. The new wooden volume rests on the ruins of a former stone stable through a camouflage operation that allows for solid integration with the landscape. The roof, which provides thermal and acoustic comfort, highlights the site's topography thanks

to its gently sloping double pitch, contrasting the verticality of the surrounding mountains with its horizontality. The wooden cladding of the oblong volume of the building is punctuated by granite portions, with ashlar from the dismantling of other local buildings. The choice of the wooden structure is dictated by the potential this material offers in terms of space for a functional program such as a school.



**Figs. 1-2**  
Integration into the  
landscape.

**Fig. 3**  
North-East view.

**Fig. 4**  
View of the  
courtyard.

3



4

