

The local “PALIO”: a traditional FEAST in VANZAGO

Our town has been divided for many years into four boroughs called “riun” which correspond to town districts. Every borough has got a symbol:

- **RIUN STRAA CUBIORA:** symbolized by a street flanked by three trees and a little bridge on a canal. This symbol stands for the simplicity of the people living in the area.
- **RIUN CAN CAVAL:** it is situated in the East of Vanzago and its origin goes back to a popular legend which tells that, long time ago in a winter evening, in the little and mysterious “Cancaval wood”, people saw a man on horseback wrapped in a cloak: he looked like a hunter with his dog that ran around him, but it was a mysterious vision, very similar to the ghost of a rich landowner living in town. Therefore, the symbol is represented by the heads of a dog and a horse opposite each other.
- **RIUN CASINUTUN:** its symbol is a large farm-house which represents the most ancient area in Vanzago where in the past people used to live moments of simple and sincere life.
- **RIUN MUNASTE’:** it is situated in the North-West of town and its symbol is a monastery.

Since 1976 the four boroughs have been challenging each other in the local “Palio” and this year, during the whole month of September, the inhabitants of each borough did their best to build a decorated cart or wagon in accordance with the theme of the year and to prepare a parade, costumes, ballets and songs.

On Saturday 15 th September, at 8.00 p.m., the wagons followed by a lot of people, paraded across Vanzago and then headed for the oratory where a jury awarded a prize to the best wagon and the best parade.

As usual in the evening and on Sunday 16 th September a lot of games, a dinner in the open air, a bingo and wonderful fireworks were organized.

The theme of this year was “ THE FAIRY TALE”. People performed the following tales:

- ❖ RIUN CASINUTUN: “The charge of 101”,
- ❖ RIUN CAN CAVAL: “ Shrek”,
- ❖ RIUN STRAA CUBIORA: “Snow White and the seven dwarfs”,
- ❖ RIUN MUNASTE’: “Robin Hood”.

Children and a lot of adults took part in the “Palio” with great interest; in the courtyards, in great secret, people kept working for a long time hoping to be the winners.

The “Palio”, after adventurous games played by representatives of each “riun”, was conquered by “Riun Can Caval” which will keep it until next September; “Riun Munastè” won the prize for the best parade.

This event is also an opportunity for a popular show which usually coincides with the “oratory feast” that actually, because of historical and chronological reasons, took the place of the traditional feast dedicated to the patron saint in Vanzago.

Therefore we can say that this feast isn’t only a local parade supported by a neighbourhood pride but it became an expression of the unity of our citizens.