

**Sanremo – Monte Bignone Cableway. A «Yarn» to sew-up the storage, the legacy and the landscape of Sanremo's district**

by Luigi Viale

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Sanremo – Monte Bignone Cableway today belongs to a «Calvino's invisible city», bound to the sad memories of its citizens or to be seen only on postcards.

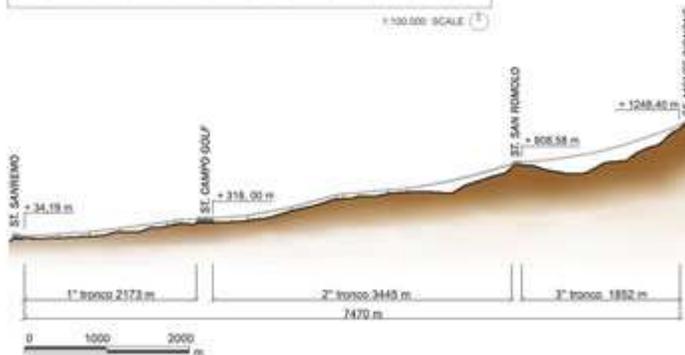
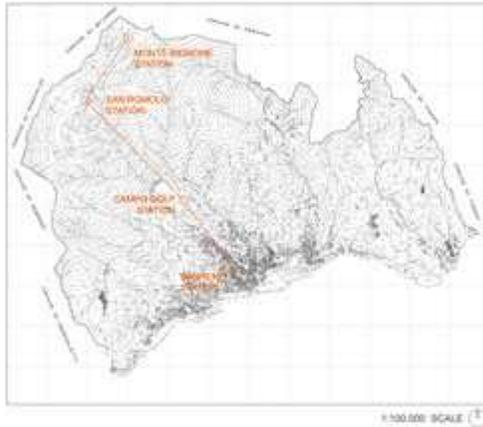
We can't see any image of the cabin and its «yarn» once stretched between earth, sea and sky, which marked the skyline of San Remo for half a century, since 1937 year of the plant's opening, until 1981 year of its definitive stop.

Now the question is why reactivate a cableway disused for the past thirty years, a costly operation in terms of realization and management.

STORAGE. For many years known as «the longest cableway in the world», its cabins celebrated the «pulley's civilizations» praised by the Futurists, contributed to the transition from elite to the popular tourism, overcame all obstacles, speculation so well: the trace is underlined by the unusually long and narrow shape of the buildings that «chokes» the journey's departure.

LEGACY. The cableway ride through the hinterland, flying over farms and ancient terrace cultivations built with stone walls; finally, on the top of the Mount Bignone, guardian of the Liguria's oldest human traces, the passenger can rediscover his origins in the last stage of realistic «time travel».

LANDSCAPE. The harmony between sky, sea and mountains, which for centuries marked the Liguria's transformation, has never been so compromised as today: the wires may restart the original dialog between coast and inland.



Top: the Cableway's arrival at Mount Bignone (archive's picture, about '50s). Middle: the line highlighted on the Sanremo's Territorial Map. Bottom: the Cableway's height profile.

The project's objective for the cableway's reactivation is the **PRESERVATION** of the ancient stations. This is possible only if the original dimensions are maintained in the new system (especially cabin's shape and wires' distances). Conceptually, the project can be simply summarized **SEWING UP** that yarn which was originally stretched between **EARTH** and **SKY**.

*Sanremo Station* (the cableway's departure) relates to the earth / ground element of the surrounding urban space, located on a hill above the market, and it turns to the panoramic views of the port, the old town and the hinterland dominated by the Mount Bignone.

The main entrance, administrative offices, ticket and info-points have been moved to the marketplace at the lowest level: a position easily accessible and visually distinguishable (in fact, the current station is hidden from the profiles of the recent buildings). The circular shape chosen for the vertical connection between place and station follows the traces of preexistence along a specific axis, that is traced between the Renaissance *La Ciapèla Tower* and the curve of the monumental staircase that joins the shelter of the terminal.

A new volume is added at the *Campo Golf Station*, to hold a restaurant and a bar-cafeteria. It is located at the lower level and closed externally by a stone wall, which is broken only by a glass veranda, to allow views towards pines and greens.

At *San Romolo Station* is changed the closing fifth of the driveway, enlarged to allow the access for the shuttle bus service, necessary to connect the cableway with the residential locality.

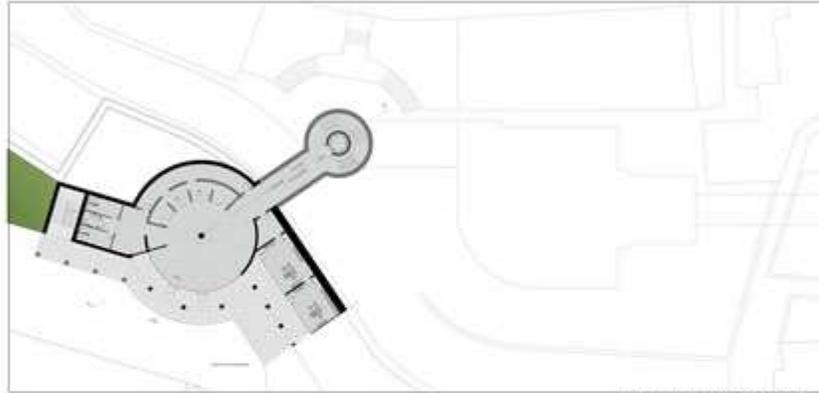
On the top of the Mount Bignone the «dialogue» between earth and sky is witnessed by the oldest artifacts: the Neolithic *Pian del Re Necropolis* (XIII<sup>th</sup> century BC) and the *Pre-Roman Castellaro* (V<sup>th</sup> century BC). On this theme, an astronomical observatory is built on the top of the station's roof, completely redesigned to accommodate the new volume.

After the late impressive leap of seventeen hundred meters suspended between sea, clouds and Alps, the cableway's journey continues along the vertical of the mountain itself, projecting the passenger directly to the sky and the stars.

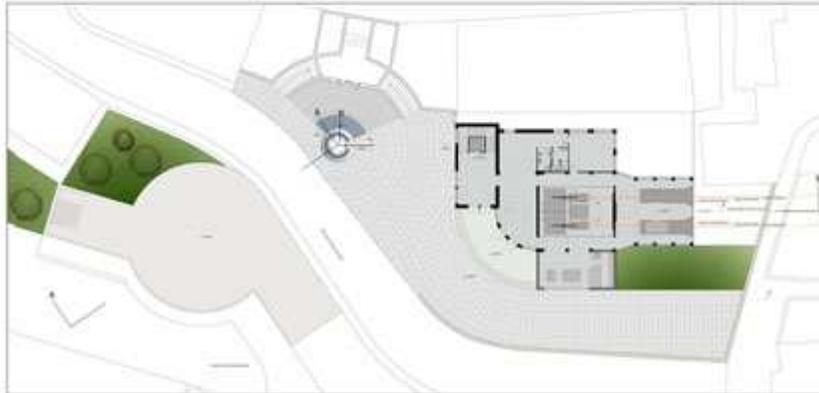
SANREMO STATION



MASTERPLAN 1:2000 SCALE

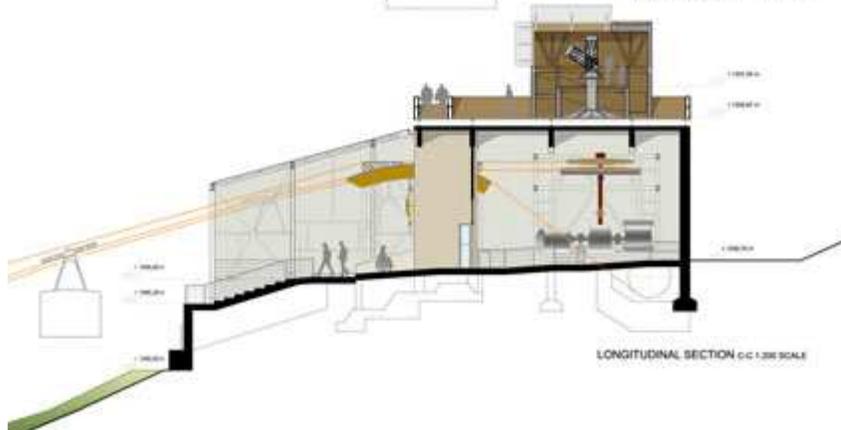
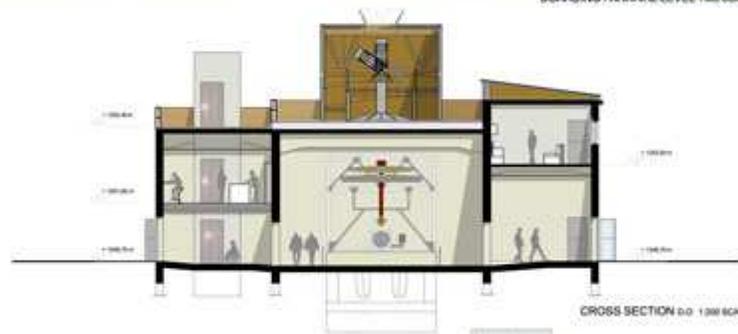


FIRST LEVEL (MARKET SQUARE)



TOP FLOOR (BOARDING / ARRIVAL LEVEL)

MONTE BIGNONE STATION



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