



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

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MASTER DEGREE COURSE IN ARCHITECTURE FOR  
SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

*Abstract*

**THE *CIABOT* IN THE LANGA OF BAROLO WINE:  
features of the landscape to make good use of  
for a sustainable network of scattered services.**

*Tutor*

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*by*

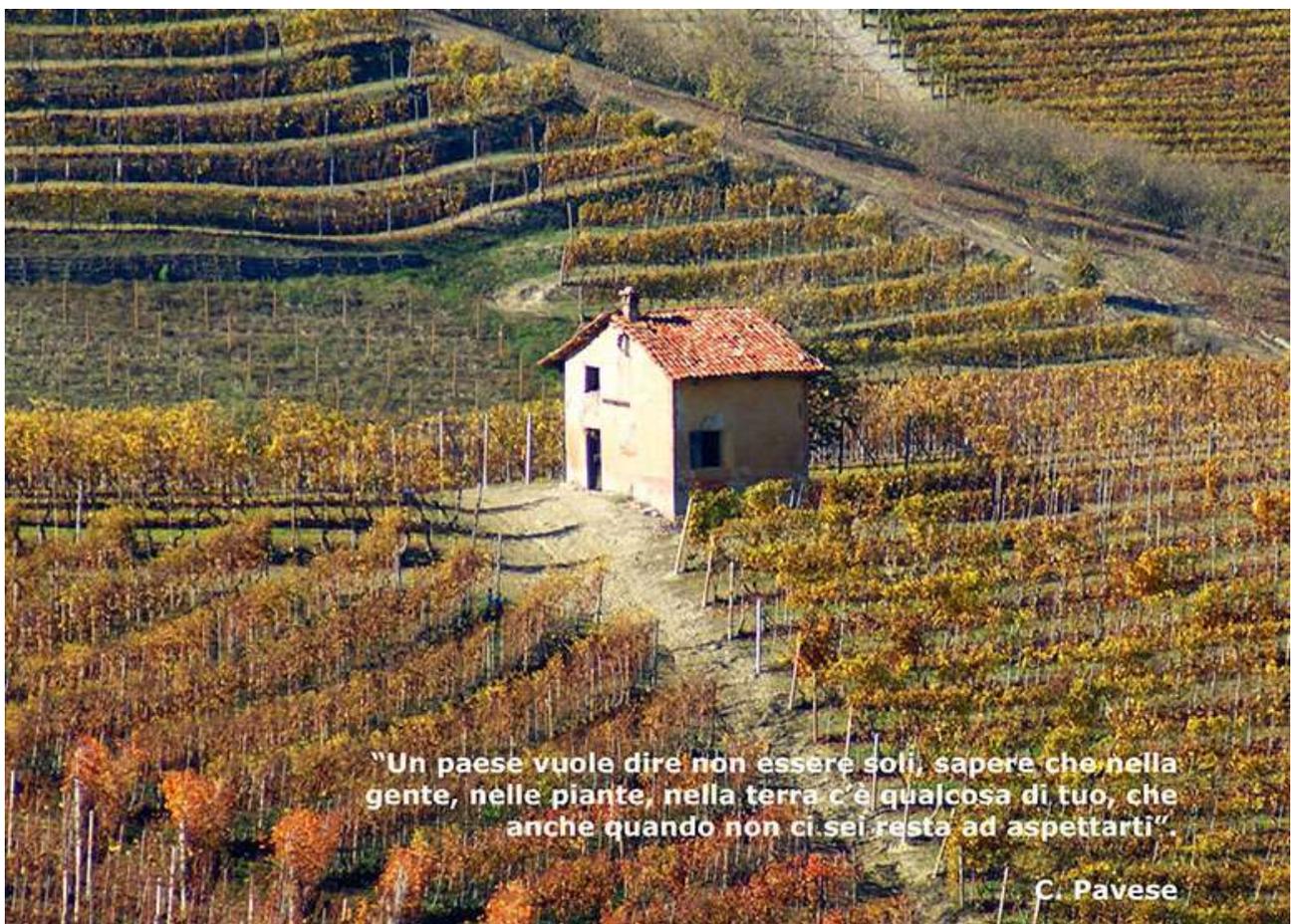
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This thesis was inspired by the love I feel for the area where I grew up and which has unquestionably left a tangible impression on my approach to architecture. For this reason, I decided to focus my attention on the UNESCO core zone of the Langa of Barolo wine, and more specifically on elements that, despite their fragility, are distinguishing features of this hillside landscape and had a considerable influence on the awarding of UNESCO world heritage site status to the Langhe: its *CIABOT*.

The *ciabot* are simple constructions, but they have proved - especially in the past - to be indispensable as places to take a break, store materials or even stay overnight when returning home on foot would have wasted too much time. Now, however, the *ciabot* have largely been made redundant in the context of work in the vineyard by the use of the tractor and cars, so they are often left abandoned.



It was precisely this harsh reality that led me to produce this dissertation. In order to guarantee that they receive the maintenance they need, I decided it was necessary to **reinvent the function of the *ciabot*** by putting them at the disposal of the greatest local economic engine: tourism, a sector showing strong growth. Tourism in the Langhe has now become experiential. Visitors want to live the area to the full, so what better experience than engaging in activities or even sleeping in a *ciabot* where the local vignerons used to carry on their daily lives?

My project envisages a group of vinegrowers making their *ciabot* available to create a **sustainable network of scattered services**.

This would allow for recovery of the restoration costs, and the creation of a further attraction for the many tourists seeking an authentic outdoor experience.

Following a tour of a wine cellar, visitors could decide to lunch in one of the *ciabot* amidst the vineyards while tasting the wines they have purchased.

Furthermore, a number of *ciabot* equipped for the purpose will make bicycles (including e-bikes) available for rental by anyone wishing to visit villages in the UNESCO vineyard landscape, who could then stay overnight in one of the *ciabot* with guest quarters. Several *ciabot* will be fitted out with displays of life in the countryside in days gone by, and signposted as places of interest, while others will stay open to provide a place to rest in the shade, or be set up as wood cabins for children to play in. Other services on offer will be D-I-Y bicycle repair shops, picnic areas or venues for showing art.

Users will simply have to register with an application to access the *ciabot*.

In order to decide which *ciabot* to include in the project and how it should be developed, it was necessary to conduct a census, collecting all the relevant data and photographs.

Given the area's vast size (over 31 hectares), its morphology and the number of cabins involved, this complicated work entailed a great deal of time stretching from summer through to the following winter. Furthermore, having to travel more than 300 km in order to record all 135 *ciabot*, I decided to explore the area by bicycle, both for the sake of convenience and so as to put myself in the place of tourists and gain a greater understanding of what would be appropriate for them.



some of the 135 *ciabot*

When the census had been completed, the **data collected were uploaded to the QGIS program**; in this way, if this work were to be published on the Piedmont Region **Geoportal**, whoever is interested in “adopting” a *ciabot* or in *developing apps for tourists* would be able to download both the program and the work file free-of-charge.

By uploading the file to Qgis it is possible to have all the information on a *ciabot* or to identify the ones which meet certain requirements; this was fundamental to the development of my project, as I have assigned a precise function to each *ciabot* on the basis of their architectural features, aspect and location.



Finally, I selected several to which I applied off-grid principles and UNESCO restoration guidelines, developing “project models” to serve as examples for others.

As this work plan has aroused the interest of Filippo Ghisi, President of Alba’s Turismo in Langa Association, and of Member of the European Parliament and G.A.L. President Alberto Cirio, I very much hope it will also help raise public awareness of the importance of safeguarding traditional structures, and enable these distinguishing features of the Langhe - so fragile, yet so important - to maintain their particular identity within the framework of an ever-changing society.

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