



## ONCE UPON A TIME

### ERBALUNGA & BRANDO

Everything starts with the sight of a Genoese tower, standing at the end of a tiny strip of rocks that seems to sink in the blue water.

The Corsicans are mountain dwellers.

However, on this strip of land that lengthens like a finger pointed towards the continent, the *Cap Corse*, people won over the sea.

They built their villages around their ports rather than their churches.

From its prosperous time, Erbalunga kept its *magazzini*, these houses open on the sea that facilitated the trade, and its pier, where some antique fishermen's boats seem to rest peacefully. Here and there, you will find some *palazzi americani*, "the houses of the Americans", oversized colonial-style residences surrounded by exotic trees, built by the numerous Corsican sailors and tradesmen who returned wealthy from the Caribbean islands and Latin America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The shaded small public squares invite to silence. In the 1930's, many painters came to the village and found inspiration here.

In the narrow alleys and small passages, the walker loses himself, without ever being misled.





## FROM THE CASA CALISTI TO THE HOTEL CASTEL BRANDO

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The "*Casa Calisti*" is one of the famous *palazzo americani* that can be found in the Cap Corse. Mr. de Zerbi, a military doctor under Napoleon III and the initial owner, made this house built in 1853. His family sold it to Mr. Calisti, an Erbalunga native who immigrated to the Dominican Republic in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, seeking fortune. Having become a wealthy sugar cane planter, this imposing, though simple, mansion became the symbol of Calisti's social ascension during his periodic visits back home. Erbalunga's old fishermen still tell tales about the legendary beauty of the planter's wife, a Creole princess, and the splendour of the festivities that came with the stays of the Calistis in Erbalunga. Years passed, and the Calistis' daughters and sons, who became Dominican Republic citizens, visited Erbalunga less and less frequently. The *Casa Calisti* became permanently unoccupied during several decades, slowly falling in a state of disrepair.

At the end of the 1980's, the Pieri family literally fell in love with the village, and acquired the house in order to transform it into their residence. A few months later, the family decided to share the beauty of the place with others, and to transform the *Casa Calisti* into a charming boutique hotel, a type of property that did not exist in Corsica at that time. At the end of a long and careful restoration of the house, the Hotel Castel Brando opened its doors in 1990. Over the years, the Pieri's, a couple of hoteliers by passion, then their two sons, never stopped to improve the property and to perfect the comfort and the quality of service offered to their guests. Seconded by an equally passionate staff, they received numerous marks of recognition and awards from the media, travel guides and professional organizations. Above all, their greatest reward lies in the satisfaction and the loyalty of the always-growing number of guests they are proud to serve, day after day and year after year.