

Casa da Ínsua – Hotel de Charme



Roteiro Batistini [Batistini Tour]

Leopoldo Luigi Batistini, Italian painter and ceramic artist, was born on the 12th of January 1865 in Ancona, Comune di Jesi. He emigrated to Portugal in 1889, where he married the Portuguese woman, Clotilde Pinto de Carvalho in Oliveira de Azeméis on the 10th of August 1889, who he would later come to divorce on the 20th of July 1912, decided by the *Juízo da Quarta Vara Civil* of Lisbon. He was a teacher at *Escola Industrial Avelar Brotero* in Coimbra, between 1889 and 1903. In 1903 he moved to Lisbon where he taught at the *Escola Industrial Marquês de Pombal* until 1930.

Among many awards and honours he received throughout his life, the following stand out: the Order of S. Tiago, awarded in 1902; the commendation of the Italian Crown in 1908: The “Gold medal to Leopoldo Batistini, painter of blue tiles”, at the Ibero-American exhibition in Seville in 1929, and the Portuguese Order of Industrial Merit in 1935. Among his works in painting, the painting of King Carlos I of Portugal should be noted, which is in the *Sala dos Capelos*, at the *Universidade de Coimbra*. He was the owner and majority shareholder of the *Fábrica de Cerâmica Constância*, in partnership with Viriato Silva and the Italian Francesco Stella. From the time he spent in Viseu remain, besides the works he made for *Casa da Ínsua*, several panels painted for the *Casa do Soar*, which are now exhibited at the Almeida Moreira Museum.

He died in Lisbon, on the 4th of January 1936, after living 47 years in Portugal. He was buried in the *Alto de S. João* cemetery.

This tour suggests some of Nicola Bigaglia’s works which can be seen at Casa da Ínsua.

Blue tiles panel from 1902 on the Fireplace at the Reception/Sala dos Azulejos [Blue Tiles Room]. On the fireplace by Nicola Bigaglia from the same year, on which the inscription VTILE DVLCI (Useful and Pleasant) can be read, there is a magnificent panel of relief tiles by Leopoldo Luigi Batistini, in which the fleur-de-lis stands out—Symbol of the Albuquerque family—framed by a border of clear naturalistic inspiration. Naturalism was a trend at the time and, in Portugal, its greatest representative was Rafael Bordallo Pinheiro, with his factory *Fábrica de Faianças das Caldas da Rainha*. After his death in 1904, his son, Manuel Gustavo, continued his aesthetic legacy at the head of the factory *Fábrica de Faianças Artísticas Bordalo Pinheiro*.

Blue tiles panel from the Chapel of the Casa da Ínsua or Our Lady “Madre Deus” Chapel, which presently is dedicated to “Nossa Senhora da Conceição” (Our Lady of Conception). The two blue tiles panels by Leopoldo Luigi Batistini date from 1895, but they would only be placed in this place in 1901. One of them represents the Birth of Jesus Christ, and the other his Crucifixion. The panels are placed on the side walls next to the altar and in them the images of Saint Francis Xavier stand out - patron of the discoveries, buried in Goa – along with Saint Teotónio - patron of the city and the diocese of Viseu, who was born in 1082 in Ganfei, Valença, and studied Theology in Coimbra and Viseu. He was appointed to Prior of the Cathedral of Viseu in 1112 and, after a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he was offered the position Bishop of Viseu, which he refused. He was an ally of Afonso Henriques against his mother, Teresa de Leão - legend has it that he even excommunicated her - and later became his advisor, when he was already King Afonso I of Portugal. After returning from another trip to the Holy Land, he, along with eleven other religious men, founded the monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, following the rule of the Canons of Saint Augustine, of which he became Prior. In 1152, he resigned from the priory of Santa Cruz and in 1153, Pope Alexander IV wished to appoint him bishop of Coimbra, a position he did not accept either. He died on the 18th of February 1162. He was buried in a chapel of the monastery church that he helped found, lying next to the place where the first king of Portugal lies. A year after his death, the Pope canonized him, making him the first Portuguese saint.

Blue tiles panel in the Sala das Camélias / Sala de Jantar [Camellia Room/Dining Room] where we can read the following inscription QUER DE INVERNO / QUER DE VERÃO / O LUME FEZ / FEIÇÃO [whether winter or summer, the fire is always light]] - a panel set in the upper part of the chimney, dated from 1897 and signed by Nicola Bigaglia together with Duarte Machado.

Painel de Santo António [Saint Anthony Panel] located at the end of Rua Camila de Faria, next to the exterior wall of the estate. A monumental blue tiles panel in relief, dedicated to Saint Anthony, where the apparition of the Virgin and the Child Jesus to Saint Anthony is represented. This panel is part of an altar carved in granite, a striking work signed by L. Batistini in 1909. The subsequent execution of the painting “The Apparition of the Virgin to Saint Anthony”, for the church of Loreto, on the same theme, seeks to strengthen and maintain a good relationship between these two Latin cultures, the Italian and the Portuguese. This panel - extremely important among the artistic collection of the Casa da Ínsua - celebrated its first century precisely on the same year Casa da Ínsua opened its doors as a boutique hotel in July 2009.