

# Views from Villa Bighi

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South-east view of Valletta from the Capuchins' Convent of Santa Liberata. (F.M. Giuntotardi after F. Benucci, 1817 - Engraving on paper; Albert Ganado Private Collection)

Bichi: Views From The Villa is the name of an exhibition which will run until September at the National Museum of Fine Arts in South Street, Valletta.

The display provides the fascinating history of the villa, its design, function and strategic location close to the entrance to Grand Harbour.

The exhibition, curated by Claude Busuttil, incorporates items from Albert Ganado's private collection and others from the collections at the Museum of Fine Arts, the Maritime Museum and the National Library. Five of the engravings are from the recently acquired Albert Ganado Map Collection.

Between 1999 and 2002, Dr Busuttil was the architect behind the Bighi Rehabilitation Project and is presently the architect of Villa Bighi for the Malta Council of Science and Technology.

The concept for this exhibition goes beyond mere aesthetics and appreciation for cultural heritage, however.

Dr Busuttil hopes the exhibition will generate awareness in two particular areas of Villa Bichi - the West Wing and the Zymotic block - which require restoration.

Situated on Salvatore Hill, between Rinella Bay and Kalkara creek, Villa Bichi was commissioned by Fra' Giovanni Bichi in 1675, and is believed to have been based on the designs of the noted Maltese baroque architect Lorenzo Gafà.

In 1800, the villa passed into the hands of the civil government while in 1829, the building and its lands were turned into a hospital for the British Royal Navy.

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