

# Viareggio's Carnival from 1873 to our days



6

**1873:** In this year people at Viareggio's *Caffè del Casinò* decided to celebrate Carnival with a great parade of floats in Via Regia. Lots of masqueraders joined in to enjoy this event. (photo 1)



1

**1921:** At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Carnival moved to the *Passeggiata* (the boardwalk along the seashore). The floats, made with wood and jute, were animated by music played by little bands placed on them. (photo 2)



2

**1925:** As the floats were getting bigger, the builders decided to use lighter materials. They created the *cartapesta* (paper-mache). Thanks to this innovation, the floats began to move. The first mobile character was Pierrot, who blinked his eyes. (photo 3)



3

**1931:** The event became very popular, so they decided to create an icon to symbolize Carnival. Burlamacco and his girlfriend Ondina (whose name means wave in English), designed by Umberto Bonetti, became the symbol of Viareggio's summer. Their colors, red and white, were typical of umbrellas on the beaches in the '30s. (photo 4)



4

**2001:** Due to the huge size of the floats, the builders needed a place to assemble them. So the Cittadella del Carnevale, with sixteen hangars, was created. In



5

this area there are two museums: one with the history of the Carnival floats, and the other dedicated to *Carnevalotto*, a contemporary collection of art dedicated to Carnival. (photo 5)

**Today:** The Viareggio Carnival lasts a whole month, with afternoon and evening parties, floats shows, and the *Rioni*, which are night events with typical Carnival music, where young people can have a lot of fun. (photo 6)

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Photographs:

1. Carnevale 1873, Via Regia
2. Carnevale 1921, Passeggiata
3. Pierrot 1925
4. Burlamacco & Ondina, 1931
5. Cittadella del Carnevale 2001
6. Un carro ... armato di allegria, 2014