

# Casa Rocca Piccola

One of the most interesting places to visit in Valletta, is the *Casa Rocca Piccola*. It is still the lived-in home of a noble Maltese family with a history going back over 400 years. It was named after the first owner, *Don Pietro La Rocca*, who was an Admiral of the Order of St. John.



*The Summer Room*

Afterwards it became the home for a succession of Italian aristocrats until finally it was sold to a Maltese nobleman in the latter half of the 18th century. What you will be privileged to see is the home of the 9th *Marquis de Piro* and his charming English born wife *Frances*, the Marchioness. They have four children and it is quite possible that one or more members of the family will be there to show you around! There are various items of memorabilia to be seen, not necessarily having any artistic merit but merely contributing to the overall picture of a lived-in home, albeit a grand one! The basement area is now used to house a collection of his views of costumes. Still to be seen are two intact bomb shelters, deep underground, which were used by the members of the family during the continuous bombing raids of the last world war.

There is a splendid marble staircase to climb when viewing the eight principal rooms and dominating the top landing is the imposing family coat of arms carved out of wood by the Maltese artist Edward Pirota. Although the

Palace has its own chapel, there is in the library a beautiful black lacquered portable chapel. When closed it disguises its true function but when opened it becomes a proper chapel with a tabernacle, relics and “the sign of the cross”. It is decorated with paintings of exotic birds and flora. In olden days portable chapels were easily taken to the country home of the nobility and also moved readily into a bedroom so that a child could be baptised immediately after birth and in the presence of the mother.



*The Library*



*Bomb Shelter*



*Chapel*



*The Green room*



*The Porphyry Room*

## Knights Hospitallers Exhibit at the Mediterranean Conference Centre

A unique walk-through heritage attraction dealing with the history and the work of the Knights of St. John notably their role as a Hospitaller Order of Chivalry in the medieval period on the island of Malta.

Beneath the 'Sacra Infermeria', as the Holy Infirmary was then known, and on the actual site of the historic hospital you will discover the chivalrous world of the renowned Hospitaller Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta.

Now you can go back in times through the sights and sounds of their period. From the Crusades to the Great Siege of 1565, the building of the glorious hospital, the development of surgery, the origins of modern day healthcare and medicine, and the ravages of plague, besides other glorious episodes. Travel across 700 years of the illustrious history of the Knights of St. John.

The Knights Hospitallers heritage attraction is dedicated to the very noble work of the knights focusing primarily on their work as a hospitaller order in the Island of Malta. Visitors can wander at their own pace and linger and focus on and where they choose and see amongst many others:

- \* How the origins of the Order started, particularly during the Crusades, and how the Knights continued to care for the sick and the needy after this era.

- \* How the order come to Malta and built the Holy Infirmary giving birth to the concept of modern day nursing and health care.

- \* How siege medicine was administered and battle wounds were treated in a display that re-enacts the night attack on Fort St. Elmo on 10th June 1565.

