



## BENICÀSSIM BELLE ÉPOQUE

Every year, on the first weekend of September, Benicàssim relives its modernist splendor with the Benicàssim Belle Époque Festival. This cultural event transforms Pilar Coloma Promenade into an early 20th-century stage, featuring attendees in elegant period costumes, historic vehicles, a craft and traditional trades market, period exhibitions,

contests, musical performances, theatrical shows, and many more surprises. A unique experience to immerse yourself in the history and heritage of Benicàssim.



Benicàssim Belle Époque Festival



# Benicàssim



Tourist Info Benicàssim  
[turismo.benicassim.es](http://turismo.benicassim.es)

Audio guides of Benicàssim  
[turismo.benicassim.es/audioguias](http://turismo.benicassim.es/audioguias)

Tickets for tourist activities  
[turismo.benicassim.es/tienda](http://turismo.benicassim.es/tienda)



Financiado por  
la Unión Europea  
NextGenerationEU



Plan de Recuperación,  
Transformación  
y Resiliencia



GVANEXT



Benicàssim  
Turisme



Edición 1/2025



## Benicàssim

# Route of the Villas

The beauty of a  
daydream architecture

EN



## VILLA ELISA MUNICIPAL PALACE

Built in 1942 as a summer residence on the plot where several pioneering villas were located, such as the villa of Pilar Coloma. It belonged to Elisa Carpi, wife of Count Joaquín Bau. It has the appearance of a Renaissance-style small palace, including three floors, a large porch, spacious terraces, and a rear courtyard in Andalusian style. More than thirty plant species can be found in its garden, highlighting an 18-meter-high monumental tree, the Ficus macrophylla.

It has been the property of Benicàssim Town Hall since 1982, and after its rehabilitation, the main areas such as the lobby, chapel, grand staircase, lounges, and kitchen have been preserved in their original state.

Villa Elisa is the venue for sociocultural activities, exhibitions, academic congresses, and events such as the Benicàssim Belle Époque Festival.



Villa Elisa Municipal Palace

# ROUTE OF THE VILLAS

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the construction of the northern railway line shaped the current landscape of Benicàssim.

In 1887, Joaquín Coloma Grau, the person in charge of these works, decided to take advantage of the excellent climate, the proximity to the capitals, and the picturesque surroundings to build a villa as a summer residence for his family. Therein lies the reason why this idyllic area is known as the "Valencian Biarritz": a set of summer residences in modernist style with splendid gardens, inhabited by the most avant-garde bourgeoisie of Castellón and Valencia.

At the foot of Torre de Sant Vicent Beach, located on Bernat Artola Promenade, we find the quietest and most decorous villa area, popularly known as "Heavenly Court" while Pilar

Coloma Promenade earned the nickname "Hell" due to the luxurious buildings and the late-night celebrations held here.

Currently, most of the 51 catalogued villas are private, occupied by their owners in the summer months.

Some have been converted into elegant restaurants or hotels; excluding two municipal villas: Vil·la Ana Cultural Space, home to the northern zone library by the sea, and Villa Elisa Municipal Palace, a cultural venue hosting occasional events such as the Benicàssim Belle Époque Festival and a number of different activities such as exhibitions, concerts or congresses.

**1. VILLA SOLIMAR:** Once owned by Rafael Sanchís, director of the Valencia School of Fine Arts and a famous portraitist of aristocrats and the Royal Family. When he decided to decorate his garden with classical semi-nude sculptures facing the sea, a great scandal arose in society at the time. Therefore, the owners decided to turn the images around to avoid the scandal, and from that moment, the house was popularly called "the villa of the butts".

**9. VILLA DÁVALOS:** Built in 1933, the house features typical elements of northern Spain buildings, such as rustic stone on the lower façade and red carpentry details. Nowadays, it is a restaurant and belongs to the Dávalos-Fletcher Foundation of Castellón, dedicated to promoting Arts, Literature, and Science.

**10. VILLA MARÍA JULIA:** The first villa in the area called "Hell". Frequented by painters, writers, artists, and personalities like Infanta Alicia de Borbón. The wonderful views from the two symmetrical terraces of the façade and the exterior decoration made with ceramic tiles are noteworthy.

**11. VIL-LA ANA CULTURAL SPACE:** With a sober and elegant style, it stands out for the iron railing topped with fleur-de-lys flowers. Currently owned by the Benicàssim Town Hall, which uses it as a venue for sociocultural activities and as a library with sea views.

**12. VILLA MARÍA:** Designed by the renowned architect Maristany, who also built Villa Dávalos, the Old Casino de Castellón, and the most important houses on the seafront. Of great elegance, resembling Italian Renaissance palaces. Its imposing façade is notable for the asymmetrical towers, terraces overlooking the sea, moldings, oculi and other decorative elements.

**18. VILLA DEL MAR:** Built in 1891, the villa delimits the boundary between L'Almadrava and Voramar beaches. Its facebrick façade, symmetrical and ecclesiastical structure, and large garden stand out. The garden served as the setting for the best parties of the time. The building has housed various tenants: the Oblate nuns, who resided here for a time, Civil War brigadists who used it as a dining room, and clients of the restaurant established in recent years.

**22. VILLA AMPARO:** This magnificent villa, of American colonial style, is one of the oldest, built between 1880 and 1920. But the most remarkable thing is not what is seen, but the stories hidden behind its walls. During the Civil War, this house became a contagious diseases hospital and was also the scene of the love story between writer Ernest Hemingway and war journalist Marta Gellhorn. Moreover, it housed journalists and photographers such as John Dos Passos and Henry Cartier-Bresson.

**23. VILLA VICTORIA:** Built in 1911, Villa Victoria soon became the nerve centre of the so-called "Hell" due to its wild social gatherings. The most recognized figures of high society and the entertainment world attended its parties. Later, during the Civil War, it was renamed "Villa Cultura" because it housed the library, screened Soviet films, and organized dances. In 1997, Luís García Berlanga filmed part of the Blasco Ibáñez series here.

**26. VILLA WITH TOWER:** This villa is very characteristic for its Renaissance and medieval architecture and its tower, decorated with battlements and glazed tiles, which, although

not part of the original structure, has become its identity symbol. The rear side preserves the adjoining Pilar Hermitage.

**27. VORAMAR HOTEL:** The distinguished history of Voramar Hotel dates back to 1929 when businessman Juan Pallarés conceived the construction of a bathhouse and café-restaurant. Thanks to its success, the project soon expanded with a terrace facing the sea and a hotel. During the Civil War, the establishment served as a military hospital. Writers, photographers, actors, and businessmen have chosen it over the years as a place of rest and recreation.



Villa with tower



Villa Victoria



Villa Dávalos



Vil·la Ana Cultural Space



Villa Elisa Municipal Palace



Villa Amparo

