

# SAGRANTINO

*Trail & Taste*

FOUR ITINERARIES IN A TERROIR OF EXCELLENCE



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## PRESENTATION

The Italian world of wine has consciously started an evolutionary journey that aims towards sustainability.

Over the last years, the term “sustainability” was mainly understood in its environmental dimension. Today this term encompasses the improvement of territories and the social interactions made possible by them.

The management of the Sagrantino territories is based on this wider concept of sustainability: a concept that is not limited to organic production models, but is measured by the ability of a territory and by the capacities of the companies to define a new economic model for high-quality products and quality of life: a model which preserves the values of the territory and explores the various ways in which they can be defined and interpreted.

For years now, Montefalco has undertaken a journey of promotion and protection of the productive and cultural identity of the Sagrantino territory. Sustainability in Montefalco has now a new goal: to pass on to future generations a territory that maintains the balance between human activities and the environment that makes them possible. To reach this goal, a system of common rules is needed. This system will integrate strategies and practices: this is the meaning underpinning the sustainability decalogue, a true protocol for certified sustainable production, introduced by the Grand Cru Association of Montefalco.

A permanent technological innovation, the increasing know-how and specialization of the producers, the adoption of efficient management practices that reduce the impact on the environment, the sharing of experiences, knowledge and abilities are only some aspects of the cultural and entrepreneurial vibrancy which forms the foundation for the Sagrantino popularity and fame. The constant joint efforts of so many made possible for us to celebrate in September 2017 the 25th anniversary of the Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG.

This publication intends to convey in an emotional message the beauty of a territory filled with history and culture and the Sagrantino's ability to be the symbol and the star of the terroir. At a time when products have often become disconnected from their territory of origin, Montefalco proposes a model of deep attachment to the territory in which companies, together with their wines, play the role of ambassadors of a forward-looking project to ensure the sustainability and excellence of Italian products.



Marco Caprai  
*President of the Grand Cru Association of Montefalco*

# INTRODUCTION

Inextricably linked to Montefalco for at least 800 years, the Sagrantino vine variety and the wine that it produces have become symbols of the identity of a territory and of a community. The variety marks the landscape even within the 13th century walls of Montefalco, which encompass tiny gardens where Sagrantino vines still grow. The wine has become a symbol of Montefalco and a representation of the Italian excellence around the world, just like when local officials used to offer Sagrantino to diplomatic delegations and to the great and the good.

Although the Sagrantino has been grown in Montefalco and its neighboring municipalities for centuries, by the early 1970s this autochthonous vine, unique in Italy and in the world, had almost disappeared: at that time it was grown on fewer than 10 hectares. Its rebirth is the result of the initiatives of a few inspired entrepreneurs who, by promoting the dry and sweet version of the Sagrantino wine, embarked on a journey of research, with the purpose of understanding the potential of both variety and territory. Along this journey, the Sagrantino has clarified its identity as an element of cultivation heritage (“bene culturale”) in the words I used to define it in a 2002 study for the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation. Today, the wine and the variety are the core of the identity of the territory: an identity to enhance and a starting point for the implementation of a consciously designed development model.

To fully understand this journey, it would be useful to refer to the definition of *terroir* (2005) elaborated by three organizations among which UNESCO: “Un *terroir* est un espace géographique délimité défini à partir d’une communauté humaine qui construit au cours de son histoire un ensemble de traits culturels distinctifs, de savoirs et de pratiques, fondés sur un système d’interactions entre le milieu naturel et les facteurs humains. Les savoir-faire mis en jeu révèlent une originalité, confèrent une typicité et permettent une reconnaissance pour les produits ou services originaires de cet espace et donc pour les hommes qui y vivent. Les terroirs sont des espaces vivants et innovants qui ne peuvent être assimilés à la seule tradition”. Nature and culture, knowledge and production are thus understood to be different aspects of a tangible and intangible context defined by a community rooted in time and space; these roots give the community its identity and the understanding of the value that it protects, disseminates and produces. Seen in this light, the cultural tradition that makes of the Sagrantino variety and its territory an element of cultivation heritage is a feature of the same cultural landscape.

Seen in this way the *terroir*, thanks to research, can express its identity, its historical value and its potential. Historic memory and innovation lay the foundations for a shared quality project: a quality that is no longer a tired celebration of a dusty tradition or an uncritical acceptance of an innovation that lacks vision, but that is solidly rooted in the knowledge of the territory, and therefore unique and truly sustainable.

Sabina Addamiano

*Professor of Sustainability and Cultural Awareness  
University Roma Tre*

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<sup>1</sup> « The ‘terroir’ is a defined geographical area, in which a human community has built up a collective knowledge-bank relating to the manufacture of a product, over the course of its history that is based on a system of complex interactions between a physical and biological environment, and a collection of human factors. The unique nature of these production methods bestows a product made in this geographical area with its typicity and reputation. Terroirs are living, innovative spaces that go beyond tradition.” (Source: [https://sagiter.eu/files/LaNotionDeTerroirEtLesSavoirsAgroecologi\\_bf\\_fichierjoint\\_fiche\\_terroir\\_sagiter.pdf](https://sagiter.eu/files/LaNotionDeTerroirEtLesSavoirsAgroecologi_bf_fichierjoint_fiche_terroir_sagiter.pdf).)



An aerial photograph of a vast Tuscan landscape during the golden hour of sunset. The foreground is dominated by lush green vineyards and olive groves, with rows of trees and vines clearly visible. In the middle ground, a small cluster of buildings, possibly a farm or a small village, is nestled among the fields. A hot air balloon with a colorful pattern is floating in the sky to the right. The background features rolling hills and mountains under a warm, orange-hued sky. The overall scene is peaceful and picturesque, capturing the essence of the Italian countryside.

# THE SAGRANTINO

An aerial photograph of a vast vineyard landscape during the golden hour of sunset. The foreground is dominated by a dense, dark green vineyard. Beyond it, a series of rolling hills and fields are visible, some with rows of trees and others with patches of different crops. In the distance, a town or village is nestled in a valley, with buildings and roads visible. The background features a range of mountains under a warm, orange-hued sky. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic, highlighting the beauty of a wine-growing region.

# D AND ITS TERROIR

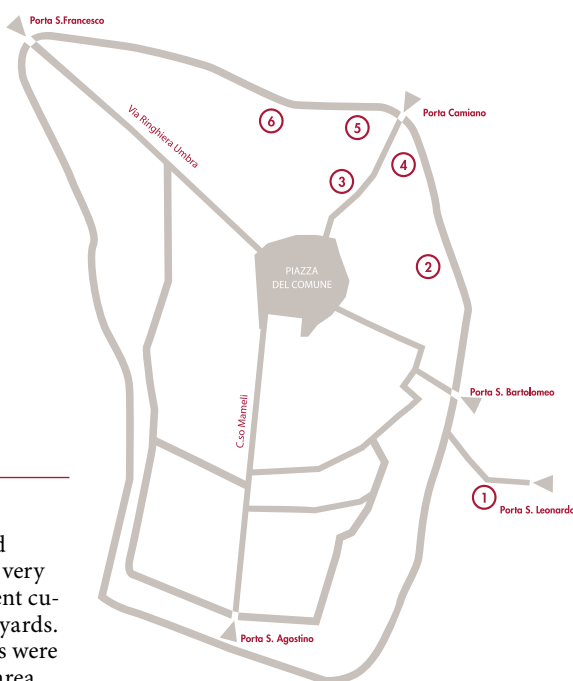
# 1 THE HISTORY OF THE SAGRANTINO: HOW AN EXCEPTIONAL WINE WAS BORN

The Montefalco Sagrantino, obtained exclusively from Sagrantino grapes and very rich in polyphenols and tannins, is a full-bodied, exceptionally long-living wine, known and appreciated around the world. Characterized by a richly tannic aftertaste, in most cases it is blended to produce dry wines. Former tradition was in favor of a sweeter wine, which was obtained by drying the grapes on wooden trays, allowing the sweet taste to cover the tannins. Even today, in the DOCG (Denomination of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin) area of the Montefalco Sagrantino a sweet version of this inimitable wine is produced.

The Montefalco Sagrantino was granted DOC (Registered Designation of Origin) on October 30th, 1979; the upgrading to DOCG (Denomination of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin) followed on November 5th, 1992.

In the historic center of Montefalco, within the city walls you can still find centuries-old Sagrantino vines; their very presence bears testimony to the ancient custom of planting small domestic vineyards. A few years ago, these venerable vines were adopted by the main wineries of the area, that conserve them as “vegetal monuments” and as an essential part of the territory’s identity (see map).

The history of this wine, however, goes back many centuries. Grapes and olives have been grown for hundreds of years on the hills surrounding the Umbrian Valley (Valle Umbra); the area of Montefalco, in particular, is exceptionally vocationed to viticulture. The grapes were also grown in small urban vineyards, some of which still survive.



*Le viti storiche nel  
centro di Montefalco*



The origins of the Sagrantino are thought to go as far back as the Roman era. In his *Naturalis Historia* (*Natural History*), Pliny the Elder talks about the Itriola variety, typical of the Bevagna territory; in 1953, the archaeologist Carlo Pietrangeli assumed that the *Itriola* variety was the same as the Sagrantino grape, based on the fact that the territory of

Montefalco was part of the municipality of Bevagna.

Some believe that the seeds of the Sagrantino variety were introduced to Umbria by Franciscan friars returning from Asia Minor. According to another theory, the variety was instead imported in the Middle Ages from Greece by Byzantine monks.

## The Middle Ages

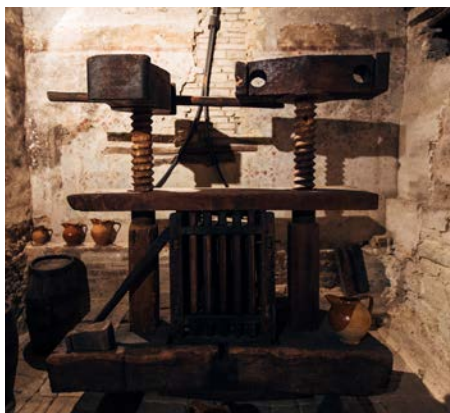
In the Middle Ages, following the increasingly important role played by wine in the countryside and in the religious communities of Dominican and Franciscan monks, the role and the importance of the variety consolidated to the point that municipal registers talk about the wine of Montefalco sent as a gift to cardinals and popes. The term "sacro" (sacred) which is part of its name is thought to have religious roots, to be referred to the fact that the wine was used during Mass or in sacristy.

The oldest document to mention the Montefalco vines dates from 1088. According to Silvestro Nesi, "a rare local document dated October 19th, 1315 describes in accurate details the various stages of planting and growing of a vine, the harvest of the grapes and ultimately the process of winemaking: 'digging up and loosening the soil, planting, growing, nurturing, hoe-

ing, tying, pruning above the bud, gathering, pollarding, digging pits, closing and protecting, harvesting, *uvam pistare* (crushing the grapes)'".

Some places in Montefalco also bear witness to the long history of the variety: the ancient wineries of the Frati Minori Conventuali (see below, p. 46), the garden of the monastery of Santa Chiara da Montefalco (see below, p. 50, which preserves the most ancient Sagrantino vines, and the church of San Bartolomeo (see below, p. 52), one of the oldest churches of Montefalco. The exterior apse wall of the church of San Bartolomeo features, among other typical medieval patterns, a half-moon window decorated with vine branches and bunches of grapes. These clues are joined by numerous documents preserved in the Archivio Storico di Montefalco (Historic Archive of Montefalco), which make particular mention of the vines and grapes.

The cellars of the Conventual Franciscans, which were built between 1400 and 1600, came to light during the recent works for the expansion of the basements of the San Francesco Museum Complex and have been open to the public since 2006. The spaces have been refurbished with materials dating back to the 18th and 19th century and are closely linked to the processing of grapes and to the production of wine. The ancient tubs used for harvesting and pressing the grapes that were used to house the wine are still in perfect condition; visitors can also see the old presses in their original location.



## The Renaissance

Wine has been a key feature of the identity of the Municipality of Montefalco, that used to present it as a gift to the great and the good: it was almost used as a metaphor for the city itself, as well as being the city's immediately recognizable trademark.

In 1451, the famous Florentine painter Benozzo Gozzoli, who had been invited by the Franciscans to decorate the apse of their church in Montefalco (now the Civic Museum) with a series of frescoes depicting *The Story of the Life of Saint Francis*, may have introduced an allusion to the Sagrantino by painting a bottle of red wine on the sumptuously laid table of the Knight of Celano.

During the Renaissance, the wine of Montefalco was already well-known and well-appreciated; in 1565 Cipriano Piccolpasso, caretaker of the fortress of Perugia, wrote in his report on the Papal States addressed to the

Pope: "Montefalco, situated on top of a hill offering magnificent views, is adorned with beautiful, good vines, fertile cultivated land, [and] produces delicate wines [...]".

From 1540 onwards, the date of the harvest was set by the municipal Council, with harsh punishments for those who did not respect it. One of the oldest mentions of the Sagrantino grapes, found in a notebook of the notary of Assisi Giovan Maria Nuti, dates back to 1598 and is currently kept at the Notarial Archive of Assisi. The notary mentions the custom, common in Foligno, of mixing Sagrantino with musts in small barrels to enrich their bouquet and taste. The *Itriola* grapes are also mentioned in the *De naturali vinorum historia*, de vinis Italiae et de convivis antiquorum (On the natural history of wines, the wines of Italy and the banquets of the ancients), a pivotal work of the Italian wine history

of the Renaissance, published in 1595 by the physician and naturalist from the Marches Andrea Bacci, that records the regular presence of the grapes in the areas of Bevagna, Narni and Amelia. The Sagrantino has some of the oldest production regulations which arrived up to us: documents dating to the 14th century mention the existence of rules established to protect and regulate the cultivation of Sagrantino vines, their harvest and the production of the grapes. In 1540,

a local ordinance set a legal date for the beginning of the harvest. The local by-laws, in their intention to regulate all aspects of city life, also contain a detailed series of prohibitions and sanctions for the defense and protection of the vines and grapes; in 1622 Cardinal Boncompagni, Pontifical Delegate in Perugia, severely tightened the sanctions established by the Law, threatening with "capital punishment anyone found to be cutting down grape vines".

## From the XIX century to nowadays

In 1829 Gabriele Calindri, in his *Saggio statistico storico del Pontificio Stato* (Historic and Statistical Essay on Pontifical

Territories) published in Perugia, rates Montefalco as being at the summit "of the State for its wines". In that period, im-

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### The Sagrantino grapes: an identity card that dates back to the 19th century

The book *Italian Ampelography* (1879) gives an interesting technical description of the Sagrantino vines:

*General notions about the variety and its character.*

The variety grows early, its vegetation is robust with diffuse branches and resistant to frost and powdery mildew. It is planted in limestone soil, with mixed cultivation, and grows next to poplars. It is pruned at the height of eight or nine nodes; it flowers in the first half of June.

It follows the seasons; hence fruiting is uncertain, although, in good years, it gives abundant fruit. It is ready for harvest in the first half of October and is used to make wine.

*Woody part.*

The branches are rough to the touch, robust, hard to cut, without any special color. The nodes are small, the internodes lie close together and the buds are cottony and protruding.

*Herbaceous parts.*

The tendrils are sparse; fully-grown leaves are of medium size and consistent. Their upper surface is light green in color, with wine-red spots, rather rough, reticulated, wavy and with few trichomes. The lower surface is light green in color and covered in velvety trichomes. It has 5 regular, long lobes, with shallow and narrow sinuses; the lateral sinuses are open towards the margin, the sinus near the base is closed. The teeth are large, sharp, distinct and hooked. The veins are scarcely prominent, and they don't turn red at the center. The petiole is a little shorter than the median vein".

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portant recognition begins to be given to the Sagrantino, a grape variety destined, at any rate, to scarce productivity. The year 1875 saw the foundation of the Ampelographic Commission of the Umbria Region, the purpose of which was to study the conditions of the cultivation of the vines in the area and to suggest ways of introducing Umbrian wines to a wider public. The ampelographic description of 1879 on the Sagrantino grapes is accurate and very detailed. A regional exhibition of wines and oils was held at Montefalco from September 13th to September 20th, 1925. Contemporary articles speak of a magnificent gallery of all Umbrian wines.

On that occasion, the Sagrantino was the main highlight and the municipal authorities of Montefalco introduced an award for the best Sagrantino presented at the exhibition. The jury ended its deliberations with the prophetic statement that "this production, which to date has been limited to a few barrels and which has not reaped the benefits of a rational technique, [can] achieve commercial success".

The Sagrantino was entered in the section of the exhibition dedicated to sweet, aromatic wines. A dry version was also presented, which is thought to have been the beginning of a transformation that, many years later, has finally borne fruit with excellent results.

In 1971, the Regional Development Authority of Umbria launched an experimental production of "Sagrantino wine"; the following year, the Cooperative Winery of Foligno started producing the dry Sagrantino wine.

The application for the recognition of the Montefalco DOC was submitted in 1973.

In 1979, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (now the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy) published the decree recognizing the DOC (Controlled Designation of Origin) for the wine Montefalco Rosso and the dry and sweet Sagrantino. Aside from the compulsory Sangiovese and the Sagrantino, the wines bearing the name "Montefalco Rosso" could also include in smaller quantities other varieties such as Barbera, Montepulciano and Merlot.

In the territory of Montefalco, red wine was typically made by using Sangiovese grapes (the most common variety in Umbria) and, in smaller quantities, by using red grape varieties like the Sagrantino, which contributed to the wine's body and intensity of color. Small quantities of white grapes (Trebiano and Trebbiano Spoletino) gave the wine its acidic notes. These characteristics are accurately described in the 1973 report of Professor Nestore Jacoponi, a document which has been the basis for the recognition of the Montefalco Rosso appellation. The rules of productions of 1979 include a photograph of the vineyards of Montefalco, made up by various percentages of Sangiovese (ranging from 60% to 75%), Sagrantino (5% to 10%), Trebbiano Toscano (15% to 20%) and other red grapes up to maximum of 15%.

Later, these regulations of production were modified to exclude all white grape varieties (see below, p. 19).





## 2 THE SAGRANTINO TODAY: PRODUCTION, TERROIR, CLIMATE

In the past 40 years the Sagrantino wine, like many other Italian DOC and DOCG wines, has undergone a profound enological, social, cultural and viticultural transformation.

Although its cultivation can be traced back to antiquity — the proof of which can be found in the centuries-old vines that grow inside the walls of Montefalco — we can thank some passionate producers for the rediscovery of the Sagrantino; they revived the ancient vines in the 1960s and set the stage for the wine's slow rebirth.

The Montefalco Sagrantino, which was awarded with the Controlled Designation of Origin (DOC) in 1979 and has since shared the production regulations of the Montefalco Rosso, has had to wait a few years before it attained its current levels of production and fame. Following the award of the Denomination of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin (DOCG) in 1992, the wine underwent a real viticultural and enological revolution, spearheaded by new production lines and new and more modern forms of cultivation of the vines. There was a constant growth of new bottling enterprises, both small- and medium sized.

The renaissance of the Sagrantino phenomenon is characterized

by cultural and entrepreneurial vibrancy, to which many factors have contributed: technological innovations, specialization and the growth in the producers' know-how, the adoption of cultivation practices with a low environmental impact, the sharing of experience, and the creation of a network of culture and skills. The Sagrantino's rise to stardom started in the late 1980s with a multi-year research and development project. The "Sagrantino project" set the foundations for the enological and viticultural rebirth of the variety: the selection of clones, the study of the vine's cultivation systems, improvements in agronomic management and the reduction of the impact on the environment were the key issues addressed.

Research and business have been working closely together for the past 30 years. The Sagrantino has become the subject of many an experimental degree thesis and of technical and scientific articles that appeared in the sector's journals. The cellars of the area have welcomed hundreds of trainee students fulfilling the requirements of their courses of study. These internships gave birth to a technological and cultural phenomenon which, in turn, led to the creation of a start-up dedicated to

sharing innovations in viticulture and to developing projects that affect the entire Umbria Region. Recognition of these projects has come in the form of awards in national and international competitions.

From a dozens hectares, the vineyards now cover more than 600 hectares, while the average production has gone from 600,000 bottles to nearly 1,300,000. Montefalco wines represent 16.7% of the wine production of Umbria.

Montefalco wines count for 16.7% of the total wine production in the Umbria region. Approximately 60% of the production is exported. The main foreign markets are the USA, Germany, China, Switzerland, the UK, Denmark, Japan, Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium, Hong Kong and other 30 or so countries.

The name "Sagrantino" has become synonymous with the Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG in its dry and passito (sweet) versions; the fame of the dry version, in particular, has spread around the world. The technical characteristics of the wine, according to its production regulations, are as follows:

- **Variety:** 100% Sagrantino
- **Versions:** dry and passito Montefalco Sagrantino
- **Maximum yield from the grapes:** 80 qL/ha
- **Maximum yield in wine:** 65% for the dry Montefalco Sagrantino; 35% for the sweet Montefalco Sagrantino
- **Minimum ageing period:** at least

33 months, starting from December, 1st of the production year. Of those 33 months - and this applies only to the dry version of the wine - at least 12 months must be in oak barrels of any dimension

■ **Minimum alcohol content:**

13.00% vol. (13.50% for the "cru") for the dry version of Montefalco Sagrantino; 18.00% vol. for the Montefalco Sagrantino passito

■ **Minimum acidity level:** 4,5 g/l

■ **Minimum dry extract content:**

26.0 g/l for the dry version of Montefalco Sagrantino;

35.0 g/l for the Montefalco Sagrantino passito

**Characteristics:** At sight, the Sagrantino has an intense ruby color, with occasional purple reflects which turn garnet in aged wine. Its fruity bouquet has notes of blackberries, plums, cherries and blueberries, while the more classic floral bouquet brings to mind the aroma of violets. After having aged in barrels for 12 months, the wine has hints of vanilla, licorice, tobacco, chocolate, cloves, cinnamon, leather, coffee, cocoa, with the balsamic traits of menthol and eucalyptus.

**Serving temperature:** 18° C

**Serving recommendations:** The dry version goes perfectly with white and red meat dishes as well as roast meats, game and ripened cheeses. The passito shines at the end of a meal and paired with traditional desserts like the Umbrian "rocciata", black-

berry and cherry tarts, the Umbrian Christmas cake “torciglione” or “tor-

colo”, chocolate desserts and all types of biscuits.

## The Sagrantino's production area

The area in which the Sagrantino is produced, the borders of which were officially determined in 1979 with the awarding of the DOC, has always been the same: the entire Montefalco area and part of the territories of the municipalities of Bevagna, Gualdo Cattaneo, Castel Ritaldi and Giano dell'Umbria.

This small hilly area is not far from Assisi, Foligno, Todi and Spoleto; its elevation ranges between 220 and 400 meters above sea level. In the recent Map of Montefalco Vi-

neyards the area appears only apparently uniform. The locations and the elevation of the vineyards create a range of microclimates and cultivation conditions; their clear definition will help with the development of the appellation of origin.

*For the specific characteristics of the lands of each Municipality of the Sagrantino production regulations area, please see the sections dedicated to the 4 itineraries, in which soil and climate characteristics of each area are shortly described.*

## The soil

The Montefalco Sagrantino is produced in the area of the deposits of the south-eastern branch of the Tiber's basin, which covers the Spoleto Valley, also known as Umbra Valley (Valleys of the Topino and of the Maroggia). The entire area where the wine is produced is characterized by heterogeneous deposits, dating back to the Pleistocene, where sand and shingles meet mono granular sands and clay-rich

mud, sometimes concentrated in lenticular bodies). In general, the area where the Sagrantino is produced is characterized by the presence of light clay with occasional rock fragments. The gentle slopes of the hills range in elevation between 220 and 400 meters above sea level.

# The climate

The climate of the Sagrantino production zone is essentially Mediterranean, with warm, dry summers and fairly cold and rainy winters. The average temperature in the summer is between 22-23°C, while in winter it ranges between 4 and 6 °C. The average annual precipitation is between 800 and 1,100 mm, with minimum levels in the summer and maximum levels in the autumn. Snowfall is rare. According to *Sergio Pinna's* classification, the area may be said to have a temperate *sub-coastal climate*, with an *internal Apennine mesoclimate* typical for the zone in a region with

a *Mediterranean microclimate*).

From the most recent observations of climatic changes a global tendency has emerged towards an increase in surface temperatures, a certain lack of homogeneity in precipitation and a greater frequency of extreme climatic events, such as late and early frosts). To that end, a regional innovation project by the name of Grape Assistance has been recently implemented in Montefalco, aiming to support in real time the producers in the management of damage caused to the plants by the weather (see below, p. 24).

## The DOCG and DOC wines of Montefalco

As we have seen, Montefalco and the Sagrantino are at the center of a culture which is specific of this terroir and has allowed its potential to turn into reality. Nowadays, the range of wines produced in the area includes two prestigious DOCGs and two DOCs:

- Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG: 100% Sagrantino grapes
- Montefalco Sagrantino Passito DOCG: 100% Sagrantino grapes
- Montefalco Rosso DOC: Sagrantino 10-25%, Sangiovese 60-80%, authorized grapes 0-30%
- Montefalco Rosso Riserva DOC: Sagrantino 10-25%, Sangiovese 60- 80%, authorized grapes 0-30%
- Montefalco Bianco DOC: min. 50% Trebbiano Spoletino, 50% authorized grapes
- Montefalco Bianco Grechetto DOC: min. 85% Grechetto, 15% authorized grapes
- Colli Martani DOC - red and white: Trebbiano, Grechetto, Grechetto di Todi, Sangiovese (also Reserve), Cabernet Sauvignon (also Reserve), Merlot (also Reserve), Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Riesling, sparkling, Vernaccia.
- Spoleto DOC - white: Trebbiano spoletino, Trebbiano spoletino passito, Trebbiano spoletino superior and Trebbiano spoletino spumante.

# The terroir

## Bevagna

The wine-growing area of Bevagna presents a hilly orography, with steep slopes in the area near Montefalco and plains with extended foothills in the southern part of the sector. The silty-clay soils are lighter on the slopes of the hills. These are the conditions that give the Sagrantino its tannic profile. The exposure of the slopes, to the northeast near Montefalco and along the ridge toward Cantalupo to the east, forms a valley that includes the vineyards of the foothills and of the Umbrian plain, where summer temperatures are high.

## Montefalco

The eastern slope of Montefalco, that quickly levels out into the Umbrian Valley, is covered with soil often rich in small stones. The vines are often interspersed by olive trees in the more inaccessible areas. The south-facing side, on the other hand, is characterized by gentler slopes and clayey or silty-clay soil that also contains a fair amount of small stones. The biggest macro-area of the appellation lies to the west of Montefalco, with an orography made up of two parallel ridges that extend from east to west. The biggest wine-growing areas are to be found to the south, with gentle hills and uniform exposures.

## Giano dell'Umbria and Castel Ritaldi

The southernmost section of the appellation border with the Martani Mountains and has the smallest concentration of vineyards. Here, as well, the soil is clay-based, with a more heterogeneous composition at higher elevations. In certain areas, the soil has a deeper brown color and sizeable quantities of pebbles. Some of the vineyards are facing the Martani Mountains, which chain are the borderline of the southern section of the appellation, with the hills of Montefalco to the northside.

## Gualdo Cattaneo

The easternmost section of the appellation has a smaller number of vineyards, spreaded over an area with contrasting orographic characteristics. The standout features are the Hill of Saragnano and the vineyards on its steep slopes at more than 400m above sea level, the area of Marceliano e Torri (the most southern area of the sector) and the vineyard-covered slopes along the valley of the river Puglia. The slopes near Gualdo Cattaneo have the highest concentration of vineyards and a soil that most resembles the soil of the Montefalco area. The vineyards with a southwestern exposure have silty-loam soil with fair amounts of lime.

# 3 THE FUTURE OF THE SAGRANTINO: INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

## The sustainability of the Sagrantino: the New Green Revolution protocol

The Sagrantino has a long history and it intends to have an even longer future: the New Green Revolution protocol was born with this clear goal. In **2008**, the Grand Cru Association of Montefalco (Associazione Grandi Cru di Montefalco), in collaboration with research bodies and specialized agronomists, decided to adopt innovative, technically impeccable production practices, with the goal of improving the quality of the product while making it environmentally sustainable and safe for both consumers and producers. Starting from the conviction that this is the best way to support the growth of both wine producing companies

and the area, the Grand Cru Association of Montefalco and its partners have identified the key points of a new green agricultural revolution, which would turn global challenges into a competitive advantage for the area. With this goal in mind, it set itself up as a point of reference for the whole production system through the codification of new regulations which incorporate and improve the current norms. The CSQA, an accredited and independent certification body, validates and creates transparency throughout the entire production process of the enterprises which adopt the quality certification.

## The Grand Cru Association of Montefalco and the partners of the New Green Revolution

Founded in 2010, the Grand Cru Association of Montefalco brings together some big-name wine producers of the area: **Adanti, Antonelli San Marco, Arnaldo Caprai, Fattoria Colle Allodole, Perticaia, Scacciadiavoli, Tabarrini.**

According to its Statute, the aim of the Association is to defend, promote and spread the culture of quality in the production of grapes and wines in the area of the Montefalco DOC and DOCG, essentially based on the authenticity of a territory

which is vocated to the production of excellent wines, and on the link between the produced wines and the historical grape varieties.

The Association also aims to boost and improve the local production of grapes and wines in harmony with the manifesto "The quality challenge for the Montefalco territory in the Third Millennium" and in accordance with the guidelines and programs of EU and of national and regional agricultural policy.

The Association also intends to contribute to technical progress,

to a rational development of the production and to the best use of different production factors by promoting and diffusing an innovative approach to vine cultivation, based on respect and protection of the territory, of the farmers and of the environment.

Another of the Association's objectives is to carry out local, regional, national and international activities to promote the high-quality wines of the Montefalco appellation territory, with particular emphasis on



the wines produced by the members of the Association, whose brands it vows to protect.

The Association carries out its own activities and initiatives, collaborates and participates in the initiatives of other public and/or private bodies with the aim of carrying out its mission.

Technology and agronomy are not sufficient to build a sustainable competitive advantage: social and economic aspects must also be taken into account. These aspects, as well as technical and agronomical innovation, guarantee the real sustainability of the companies, their employees and the territory as a whole. In an area like Montefalco that strives only for excellence, it became necessary to define and adopt a new protocol based on assiduous agronomical, economic and social study and research, the results of which would be applied to the territory. The aim of the initiative is to identify the best production conditions (not just for wine) and to implement environmental, economic and social actions, to adopt technologies and options that will lead to innovative standards of best practice.

The New Green Revolution protocol was presented at EXPO 2015, where it was welcomed enthusiastically and generated great interest. The protocol shares the vision of EXPO 2015, i.e. to be a universal event that promotes tradition, creativity and innovation in the alimentary sector and shines the spotlight on producing healthy and safe food to feed the entire planet.

New Green Revolution is therefore a decalogue of values that were developed specifically for the territory of Montefalco, but that can be applied to any similar situation. It certifies the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the companies that decide to apply for the certification. The project was born with the objective of creating a protocol for the sustainable production of grapes and wine, so to promote the wines of Montefalco on international markets.

**The 10 points of the decalogue are as follows:**

1. HIGH-QUALITY TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT OF THE VINEYARDS
2. REDUCED USE OF RESOURCES
3. CONSERVATION OF THE LANDSCAPE AND OF BIODIVERSITY
4. TRACEABILITY OF THE PRODUCT
5. RESPECT FOR LABOR AND SAFE WORKING CONDITIONS
6. WELLBEING OF USERS AND VISITORS
7. DIALOGUE WITH CUSTOMERS
8. INVOLVEMENT IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
9. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION
10. PAINSTAKING RECORDING OF ACTIVITIES



## The Grape Assistance project

Since 2015, the Montefalco territory has been heavily involved in the Grape Assistance project: an innovative model of technical assistance in the management of pesticide treatments in vineyards. The Consortium for the Protection of the Wines of Montefalco (Consorzio Tutela Vini di Montefalco) set itself the goal of limiting the yearly losses occurring during the crop, while reducing the use of pesticides. The initiative has a very clear approach: to set up agricultural practices which are sustainable today and for future generations.

A network of weather stations was installed in the area which monitor,

process and share the information necessary for the management of a given culture, disease or infestation at either local or regional level. The data is cross-checked against statistical forecasting models to create a system that is updated in real time. The results speak for themselves: in the area of the Sagrantino, during the first year of implementation of the Grape Assistance protocol the use of pesticides decreased by 5%, while the frequency rate of the vines treatments with pesticides decreased by 14%. Starting in 2018, the Grape Assistance model will gradually expand throughout the Umbria Region.

## A patent signed Arnaldo Caprai: the product recovery machine

In the past few years, the Arnaldo Caprai winery has developed and introduced the first prototype of a product recovery machine for treating vineyard in hilly areas.

Presented in September 2012 at the 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of Enologica, this prototype has reduced the use of pesticides by more than 50%, by decreasing loss, i.e. by not allowing plant protection products to exit the vineyard and fall to the ground. There were already on the market several models of product recovery machines, but they could only be

used in flat land viticulture.

The innovation – now patented and entered into production – consists in equipping a vineyard sprayer with an automatic levelling system, that makes it very suitable for use in hilly areas. Its use has drastically reduced the spread of pesticides in adjacent areas (such as in built-up zones) and in the vineyards themselves. Just a minimum quantity of product is dispersed in the air while the right amount of treatment is used only in the doses that treat the plants effectively.



## Encouraging the growth of new talents for the terroir: the College of Vocational Education in Agri-food of Umbria

For some years the *ITS* (College of Vocational Education in Agri-food of the Umbria Region) has offered the two-year course “Senior Technician in the transformation and promotion of local agri-food products, wine and gastronomy”. The course, which lasts 1,800 hours, of which 800 hours of internship in a company, trains experts in agricultural production, agricultural and industrial transformation, and in the sector of administration and preparation of alimentary products.

The professionals who have completed the course manage the processes of production and transformation of agri-food products that are typical of the area, and the documentation and the certification standards linked to the production processes of the agri-food and enogastronomic sectors; they monitor compliance with the EU, national

and regional regulations in matters of traceability and safeguarding of typical products; they suggest technological solutions which introduce innovative and competitive elements to production and processing; they have a deep knowledge of and carry out the preparation and administration of the products; they implement processes of communication, promotion and marketing for the typical productions of an area to attract tourists.

Lately, several young people who have completed the course have participated in working groups monitoring the vineyards, have been employed by the companies of the Sagrantino terroir and have triggered a virtuous circle of technical and cultural growth in the companies operating in this area.



# 4 THE ROUTE OF THE SAGRANTINO: A RED THREAD TO EXPERIENCE THE TERROIR

The creation of a Route of the Sagrantino (Strada del Sagrantino) is perfectly framed into a strategy that places Montefalco at the center of a *system of networks*, each one of which revolves around a specific subject with its own unique contribution.

In Italy, Wine Routes are regulated by law 268/99 on “Disciplines of the Wine Routes” and are meant to be instruments for the creation of integrated tourist systems with an area-based approach. According to this law, the Wine Routes are “itineraries [*italics are ours*] marked with appropriate signs, which signpost natural, cultural and environmental highlights, vineyards and cellars that are open to the public”.

The most interesting aspect of the Route of the Sagrantino is the fact that it is not an actual road, but instead an itinerary of discovery. The common thread is the identity of a territory that has been created around wine: an identity that offers opportunities for growth while opening itself to tourists and enthusiasts who can experience all its different aspects. In this way, the Sagrantino becomes the key to understanding the natural and cultural aspects of

the territory, of its heritage and of its traditions. This understanding can lead to opportunities for economic and regional growth. The founding assembly of the Committee for the promotion of the Association of the Route of the Sagrantino was held in Montefalco on 16 February 2000.

The Route of the Sagrantino encompasses the Municipalities of Montefalco, Bevagna, Massa Martana, Giano dell’ Umbria, Gualdo Cattaneo, and Castel Ritaldi with a total population of a little over 26,000. The central assumption which led to the creation of the Route is that agricultural production — including the production of the Sagrantino — has reached its limits in terms of quantity, while constantly striving to improve quality. To assist in the development of the territory other sources of income, consistent with the terroir identity, should be included in the value chain of the farms, since agriculture is the primary economic activity in the area. In this perspective, food and wine tourism is the main development opportunity. The Statute and the Regulation of the Route of the Sagrantino were discussed on 30 July 2001; they were followed by the application to the Umbria Region for recognition.

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## **The partners of the Route of the Sagrantino**

### **Public bodies and consortia**

- Municipality of Montefalco
- Municipality of Bevagna
- Municipality of Gualdo Cattaneo
- Municipality of Castel Ritaldi
- Municipality of Giano dell'Umbria
- Province of Perugia
- Mountain community of the Martani Mountains and of the Serano
- Perugia Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Manufacture and Agriculture
- Consortium for the Protection of the Wines of Montefalco

### **Professional associations and organizations**

- Federation of Owner Farmers of Perugia
- Italian Confederation of Farmers (Umbria branch)
- Assindustria
- National Association "Cities of Wine"
- Italian Confederation of Small and Medium Privately-Owned Industries (CONFAPI - Perugia branch)

### **Banks**

- Banca Popolare di Ancona - Gruppo BPU
- Cassa di Risparmio di Foligno - Gruppo Banca Intesa San Paolo
- Fondazione Cassa Risparmio Spoleto

### **Travel and transport agencies**

- Vade Feliciter - Tour Operator
  - Autonoleggi Remoli Srl
  - Umbriadrivere
  - Made in Umbria Tour
  - Centro Equitistico Cesabell'ezze
-





# 5 SAGRANTINO, A WORLD OF EVENTS TO EXPERIENCE

Today the Sagrantino is more than just a wine or a terroir: it's an entire multi-faceted world to be experienced and tasted. Having visited the cellars, demanding visitors will find other ways of satisfying their every whim: from professional enogastro-

nomy to wine tastings, from crafts to historical re-enactments, from specialized conferences to feasts and exhibitions, Montefalco offers incentives for visits throughout the year.

February

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## Preview of the Sagrantino

Two days for journalists, restaurant owners and buyers to be introduced to the new vintage of the Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG and to the vintages of the other wines of the area that will be placed on the market. Each year, during the event the Consortium for the Protection of the Wines of Montefalco (Consorzio Tutela Vini Montefalco) promotes four competitions: "The Art of Label", "Sagrantino on a dish", "Best menu with Montefalco wines", and "Grand Prix of the Sagrantino", which both aim at encouraging involvement with the arts and culture, exploiting new talents.

"The Art of the Label" is open to illustrators older than 18, from around Italy. Each year, the participants submit to the competition their interpretation of the Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG. The winning artwork

will adorn the festive label of the vintage of the year.

In 2017, on the occasion of celebrating the 25th anniversary of the award of the DOCG, a new map of the Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG was unveiled. It shows the terroir, the zones and the vineyards through the eyes and with the images of Alessandro Masnaghetti, and has been published in the collection "I Cru di Enogea".



*From Holy Saturday to Easter Monday* \_\_\_\_\_

## Lands of the Sagrantino

A three-days event with the goal of promoting the food and wines of the terroir and its local crafts. The event culminates in the cloister of Saint Augustine with the "Excellence of high-quality food, wines and crafts" fair and market, where the Slow Food objectives and the pro-

ducts of the Italian DOPs are put on show alongside the Montefalco Sagrantino.

Wine tasting and many side events are held: theater shows, art exhibitions, concerts and urban trekking itineraries in search of the flavors of the territory.

*Last Sunday in May* \_\_\_\_\_

## Open Cellars

Since 1993, on the last Sunday of May, the cellars belonging to the Wine Tourism Movement (Movimento Turismo del Vino) open their doors to the public for one of the most important enotourism events in Italy. Visitors have the opportunity not only to taste the wines and to shop in the wineries, but also to visit the cellars and discover the secrets of wine-making and ageing.

Individual cellars organize many events: art shows, concerts, cultural events and opportunities to taste typical products of each region. The "Open Cellars" event has been increasingly successful in the Montefalco terroir also thanks to the growing awareness of producers who, by the time going, have developed strong welcoming skills.

*Sundays, from June to the end of October* \_\_\_\_\_

## Sundays on the Route of Sagrantino

This initiative offers guided tastings, cooking classes, jazz concerts, open-air cinema, outings in vineyards and olive groves, and many other activities in the Sagrantino area. Summer Sundays are a perfect opportunity to celebrate the landscape, the products and the traditions of the terroir. The events

are organized by the Route of the Sagrantino Association in collaboration with the Italian Association of Sommeliers and the Italian Foundation of Sommeliers, and in cooperation with cellars, olive oil farmers and restaurants associated the Route of the Sagrantino and taking part in the initiative.



July

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## Sagrantino Italian International Balloon Challenge Cup

This unique aerial show is made possible thanks to the cooperation of the Consortium for the Protection of the Wines of Montefalco. During the event, around 100 balloons from around the world crowd the skies over the Sagrantino terroir starting from the Sagrantino airfield (GPS 42.891560, 12.535353).

Each morning at 06:30, the vineyards offer the perfect backdrop for an event that brings together tourists and balloon enthusiasts of all ages. The crews compete for a prestigious award, the *Winemaker's Trophy*.

August, 10<sup>th</sup>

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## Sagrantino under the Stars

Thanks to the efforts of the Consortium for the Protection of the Wines of Montefalco and with the sponsorship of the Municipality of Montefalco, the arts, music and flavors come together in the night of San Lorenzo. Wine lovers can follow the advice of sommeliers through

the rich tasting program in four steps that takes place in four typical taverns in the towns. The taverns suggest to food lovers exquisite combinations of food and wine and provide them with the opportunity to taste typical dishes of the cuisine of Umbria.

September

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## Enologica

An annual event for tourists and wine lovers. Organized by the Consortium for the Protection of the Wines of Montefalco, its goal is to promote, through conference meetings, art shows and cultural events,

wine production conceived as an environmentally sustainable system, with local bodies and companies taking on the role of protectors of the terroir.

**May 16th, 2017:**

**the celebration of 100 years of the Giro d' Italia  
and 25 years of the Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG**

The 100th Giro d'Italia, in 2017, coincided with an equally important anniversary: 25 years since the Montefalco Sagrantino was awarded the DOCG. The 39.2 km of the "Sagrantino Time Trial" - the 10th stage of the Giro - were the only part of the race to pass through Umbria; a very difficult itinerary, uphill through the Sagrantino vineyards.

From **Foligno** to **Montefalco**, the itinerary that took cyclists through areas with an elevation ranging from 220 to 472 m started with a flat and straight route for 12 km, followed by 4-5% gradients uphill and then downhill on winding roads. From the Piazza della Repubblica in Foligno, the route reached Viale della Vittoria in Montefalco. The first competitor left at 12:50.

In previous editions, the Giro had stopped in Foligno 7 times.

Montefalco, a newcomer to the race, was the making of the Dutch Tom Dumoulin, the king of the 100th edition of the Giro, who celebrated his second win and beat the Colombian Quintana to the Pink Jersey.



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, likely in Tuscany. The foreground is dominated by a dense, terraced olive grove on a hillside. In the middle ground, a small town with several buildings and a church is visible. The background shows a vast valley with patchwork fields and distant, hazy mountains under a clear sky. The entire image is framed by a solid red border.

# THE TOWNS OF THE





# SAGRANTINO AREA



CESENA →

PERUGIA

ASSISI

FIRENZE →



*Itinerario 3*

**GUALDO  
CATTANEO**

*Itinerario 2*

**BEVAGNA**

FOLIGNO

*Itinerario 1*

**MONTEFALCO**

TODI

**GIANO  
DELL'UMBRIA**

*Itinerario 4*

**CASTEL  
RITALDI**

*Itinerario 4*

SPOLETO

TERNI

ROMA →

# THE TOWNS OF THE SAGRANTINO AREA

The Sagrantino area is bursting with natural and cultural treasures that are well worth spending some time exploring with curiosity and attention. Each area is full of different layers of memories, laid down over time as by river floods, which are the essential element of this extraordinary terroir.

The characteristic landscape of the cultural and culinary route of the Sagrantino trail developed its main features in Roman, medieval and modern times. From the environmen-

tal, naturalistic, social, historical and artistic point of view these are the most sophisticated and interesting locations in Umbria, embedded in the memory of foreign travelers, who reached Umbria during the "Grand Tour", the trans-Italian journey starting in the northern slope of the Alps down to Rome and Naples.

Along the Strada del Sagrantino, which winds through hills planted with vineyards and olive trees, in addition to famous locations we will also discover less beaten paths of rare and enchanting beauty.

«Near or far, there is no gaze that does not touch an ancient, famous, sacred place; we see over there Spoleto, Perugia, Assisi, Foligno, Spello, Trevi, and in the middle there are hundreds of smaller places, villages, churches, courtyards, monasteries, fortresses and farmhouses: a land rich in history, Roman and pre-Roman monuments, crossed by the small Clitunno river, of which we often read when we studied Latin.»

Hermann Hesse (1877-1962)







«The place is beautiful, placed on an unflawed hill with a splendid view,  
yielding delicate fruits and wheat and wine to sell...»

Cipriano Piccolpasso  
Superintendent of the Fortress of Perugia  
*The plans and portraits of the cities and lands of Umbria submitted to the Government of Perugia,  
around 1565*

**Itinerary #1**

# MONTEFALCO

THE HEART OF THE TERROIR

2 days





**1 CHIESA DI SAN FRANCESCO**

GPS 42.8943463, 12.6529485

**2 PIAZZA DEL COMUNE**

GPS 42.8937645, 12.6528144

**3 PALAZZO DEL COMUNE**

GPS 42.8938445, 12.6529542

**4 TEATRO SAN FILIPPO NERI**

GPS 42.8935598, 12.6528030

**5 CHIESA DI SANT'AGOSTINO**

GPS 42.8935724, 12.6511085

**6 TORRE DEL VERZIERE (Porta Sant'Agostino)**

GPS 42.893266, 12.649998

**7 CHIESA DI SANTA CHIARA**

GPS 42.8924609, 12.6509359

**8 CHIESA DI SAN LEONARDO**

GPS 42.821889, 12.677639

**9 CHIESA DI SAN BARTOLOMEO**

GPS 42.885444, 12.657306

**10 CHIESA DI SANTA LUCIA**

GPS 42.893500, 12.653500

**11 PUNTO PANORAMICO**

**12 CHIESA DI SAN LEONARDO**

GPS 42.821889, 12.677639

**13 CHIESA DI S. MARIA DI TURRITA**

GPS 42.869639, 12.658806

**14 SANTUARIO MADONNA DELLA STELLA - 8 km**

GPS 42.856861, 12.681583

# MONTEFALCO

Montefalco is in the heart of the Sagraantino terroir. Walking through its streets, enjoying the Umbrian Valley from its spectacular viewpoint just outside the city walls, discovering the small gardens where old Sagraantino vines grow, one can understand why the two names, Sagraantino and Montefalco, are almost synonymous. Located on the top of a hill and protected by ancient walls, Montefalco rises at the intersection of the valleys of the Clitunno, Topino and Tevere rivers. Probably born as a rural village inhabited by Umbrian dwellers, it was populated in Roman times by patrician villas. The Civic Museum preserves interesting epigraphic and sculptural finds from these times.

First it was called Coccorone. Some suggest this was the name of the alleged founder, the Roman senator Marco Curione, others say, it comes from the Greek óros (mountain). Between 1239 and 1240 the name was changed to Montefalco, according to a local tradition, in honor of Frederick II of Swabia, an expert in the art of falconry.

Rediscovered in the 1800s thanks to the passion of romantic travelers for the Middle Ages and studies on the figure of St. Francis, Montefalco owes much of its charm to its geographical location, which in the '70s

earned it the nickname of "the balcony of Umbria". In 1903 Gabriele D'Annunzio, in a series of sonnets in his *Laudi devoted to the Cities of Silence*, celebrates Montefalco for its extraordinary synthesis of Franciscan landscape, art and spirituality, and for the resulting inimitable harmony.

*Benozzo's frescoes added to the beauty of  
your walls, Montefalco,  
his eyes those of a young man  
inebriated with his love for all living things,  
a brother to the Sun, like Saint Francis.*

*His art was as sweet as the sun-ripened apples  
and peaches that grow on the hills;  
limpid, like the Clitunno when it flows through  
the fields;  
he painted with flowers and water,  
blessed by the smile of Saint Francis.*

*Montefalco, you gave the blue and the green  
to your son Francesco Melanzio;  
the green of the twigs and the blue of the hills*

*used to decorate the altars; the same sky  
seems to shine on your soil and deep in your heart,  
where hides your spirit embellished by painters.*

On Corso Mameli you will find the splendid Complesso Museale di San Francesco (St. Francis's Museum Complex) with the extraordinary frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli and Perugino and the cellars of the Franciscan convent. Among the most beautiful places in Umbria, the church of Saint Francis is an excep-

## Montefalco through the eyes of two exceptional visitors

“I feel happy here in Montefalco. Here I can find a landscape which is still untouched just as depicted by Benozzo Gozzoli. It makes me thank the Eternal Father for being alive.”

Antonio Paolucci, former Minister for Cultural and Environmental Heritage  
and Director of the Vatican Museums

“This is home to the culture of beauty and goodness. Montefalco is the perfect synthesis of a rich and unique Italy. The time has come to replace the concept of excellence with that of uniqueness and rediscover the pride of having something extraordinary in our land. You have an important task: you have to convince the world that Montefalco is a fantastic place.”

Philippe Daverio, art historian and art critic

tional example of Italian art and of the spread of Franciscanism. Nearby we can find the central Piazza del Comune: this is the starting point for exploring the streets that branch off in various directions.

Relax in one of the restaurants or wine bars in the center, and taste the local specialties accompanied by a good glass of Sagrantino: this is the best way to prepare for an afternoon of letting time pass by and experiencing

the area dotted with small enchanting villages, vineyards, olive groves and wineries that enhance the potential of a vine with such exceptional longevity and personality as Sagrantino. The wineries of the Associazione Grandi Cru di Montefalco are worth a visit. These are strongly committed to the development of the area and its economy through innovative production practices with low environmental impact.

## Urban walking with tasting

Every first Sunday of the month a city walk is organized, starting at the Museum of San Francesco. It consists of a guided pedestrian route through medieval streets, cloisters and courtyards, palaces, churches, places and flavors of ancient times, and ends with a free tasting of Sagrantino in the Museum wine shop.

*Informazioni e prenotazioni:  
Complesso Museale San Francesco  
Via Ringhiera Umbra, 6  
Tel. +39 0742 379598  
montefalco@sistemamuseo.it  
www.museodimontefalco.it*

*Iniziativa organizzata da Montefalco Trek  
biglietto 8 euro, max 20 persone*

# WHAT TO SEE

1

Start the tour at the chiesa di **San Francesco** (San Francesco Church) on Corso Mameli, which today houses the Municipal Museum.

Built between 1335 and 1338 by the Franciscan Friars Minor, it was restored during the first half of the 15th century and housed at that time an exceptional painters' workshop. It is now part of the **Complesso Museale di San Francesco** (San Francesco Museum Complex), which after an important structural intervention has been divided into various spaces and collections since 1990, including *the church* (now devoted to museum space), *the Civic Art Gallery*, *the Archaeological Section*, *the Crypt* and *monastic wineries*.

*The church* is well-known throughout the world for the splendid frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli depicting the *Stories of Saint Francis's Life* (1452) in twelve scenes, which entirely cover the apse with scenes in vivid colors and fresh imagination. Under each scene, a caption in Latin explains the episode depicted as in the example beside in which St. Francis is preaching to birds and, going to Bevagna, stops near Montefalco and blesses the notables of the city.

The Franciscan friars had settled in



Montefalco in the first half of the 13th century and had built the church of Santa Maria della Selvetta in the district of Camiano and then the chiesa dei *Santi Filippo and Giacomo* (Church of Saints Philip and John). In 1335 they acquired a plot of land inside the city wall, and built the church dedicated to the founder of their Order.

In 1338 the church was completed thanks to a rich set of legacies and donations. In 1450, the friars asked Benozzo di Lese di Sandro, better known as Benozzo Gozzoli, to paint a fresco on the apse. In Montefalco, Benozzo had already worked in the church of San Fortunato; the popularity of this first project was probably behind the request for the great fresco in San Francesco.

In 1600 the dormitory of the monastery was enlarged, sacrificing one side of the building (the columns can

still be partially seen in the cellars). The brothers stayed in the monastery until 1861, when their properties were confiscated following the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy.

From the nineteenth century onwards, the complex has undergone several conservation measures; the restoration works carried out after the severe earthquake in 1997 brought Benoz-

zo's frescoes back to their original splendor. In the lateral chapels there are decorations created by Jacopo Vincioli, Giovanni di Corraduccio and Ascensidonio Spacca. The counter-façade, with *the Annunciation and the Eternity in glory between angels and Nativity* (1452), is decorated with frescoes by Pietro Vannucci, also known as il Perugino.

### Antoniazzo Romano: a painter for Montefalco



Antonio Aquili known as Antoniazzo Romano,  
*San Vincenzo da Saragozza, Santa Illuminata, San Nicola da Tolentino*  
(fine XV secolo)

During 2017, two magnificent altarpieces were the protagonists of the exhibition *Antoniazzo Romano and Montefalco* at the Museum Complex of San Francesco. The exhibition compared the two masterpieces by Antoniazzo Romano, the altarpiece *San Vincenzo da Saragozza, Santa Illuminata* and *San Nicola da Tolentino* from the Municipal picture gallery, and the triptych of the *Madonna col Bambino tra i Santi Paolo, Benedetto, Giustina e Pietro* from the Gallery of the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome.

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### The places of Francis of Assisi according to Benozzo

By painting the stories of Saint Francis's life, Benozzo Gozzoli – who had worked with Fra Angelico in the Vatican and in Orvieto, and who here accomplishes his first great masterpiece in Umbria – created one of the most splendid pictorial cycles of the early Renaissance. His frescoes recount the main episodes of the Saint's life, reconstructing in detail the atmospheres of the places and the paths he traveled, embedding every event into the vast, stunning backdrop of the Umbrian landscape.

Watching the valley and the surrounding mountains from Il Verziere hill, Benozzo remains enchanted, accurately reproducing curious details of the environment that inspire deeper research and study of the landscape. Episodes of the pictorial cycle that are very rich examples of this are the *Preaching to the Birds* and the *Blessing of Montefalco*. In the background the city, the valley of Foligno and Mount Subasio are depicted with such realism that the fresco becomes a real historical documentation of the places that Francesco visited.

To the left, at the foot of the mountain, we see the city of Assisi with its castle and the mighty monastic church of San Francesco, built after the Saint's death. Francesco speaks to the birds, pointing to heaven.

On the right side of the picture there is Montefalco, surrounded by its city walls to constitute a background for the group of people in the foreground. The Municipal Statutes of Montefalco from 1424 confirm the complete adherence of this painting to reality: you can see the tower of Sant'Agostino and the bell tower of the church, the belfry of the Palazzo Comunale and the gate of San Lorenzo.

Just outside the walls, deep hedges of shrubs protect the fields from wild and domestic animals; the Statutes obliged the inhabitants to keep animals tied up from August to mid-October, the period when various crops were maturing, including grapes, the city's main economic resource. Benozzo then painted the fallow fields, destined to be used for the cultivation of cereals and poultry; these details are also confirmed by the Statutes of the time. The plain of Foligno appears to be unpopulated. This is also evidenced by the regulations that refer to the remains of the Lacus Umber, a swampy land at that time not yet reclaimed between Montefalco and Foligno. In the background, Mount Subasio has slight traces of woods (according to the Statutes, the long work of deforestation due to demographic growth and the consequent need for cultivable spaces will only end at the end of the 16th century).

On the painting representing St. Francis prophesying about his own imminent death to Thomas of Celano, urging him to confess, we could suggest that Benozzo portrayed a bottle of Sagrantino on the knight's dining table. In fact, wine production already played a central role in the economy and in the image of the city at that time.

The *Pinacoteca* (Picture gallery) houses works by the local painter Francesco Melanzio (whose name was inserted by D'Annunzio in his sonnet on Montefalco quoted above), by Antoniazio Romano, by the workshop of Niccolò Alunno and Melozzo da Forlì, painted by the Umbrian school from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and a collection of minor artworks.

Some archaeological finds have been brought together in the crypt along with sculptures and stone fragments from various eras. The cellars of the Friars Minor Conventual of Montefalco have also been accessible since

2009 (they date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century); the production of wine by the friars is documented in the Municipal Statute of 1692, where these wineries are referred to as "the greatest of Montefalco". Here you can see, perfectly preserved, the old basins for picking and pressing the grapes and for the preservation of wine, as well as the recess for placing the torches.

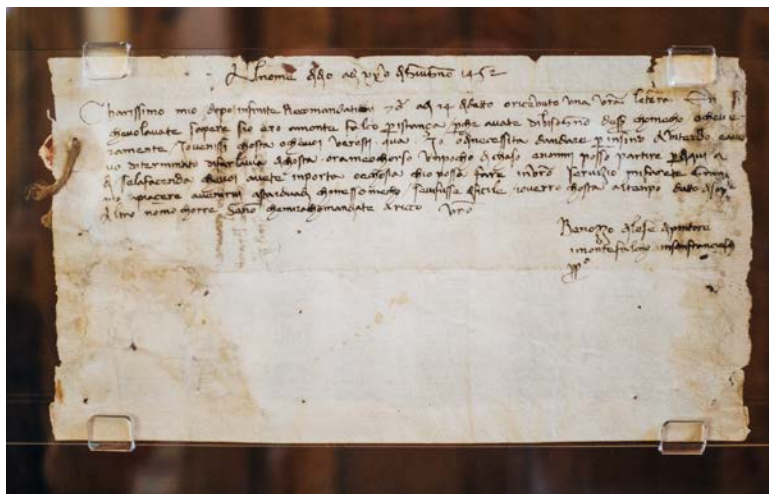
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### A handwritten letter by Benozzo comes back to Montefalco

Thanks to the project *Montefalco nel cuore* (Montefalco in our hearts) a precious handwritten letter from 1452 by the painter Benozzo Gozzoli has been brought back to Montefalco. The letter was sent to Michele Brancacci (Florence 1414-?), the son of Felice Brancacci who commissioned the Brancacci chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence; Benozzo told him he could not leave Montefalco, as he was busy completing the frescoes in the church of San Francesco.

This is one of the rarest known letters from Benozzo Gozzoli: it is 225x130 mm. The address of the recipient is written on the back. In the seven lines Benozzo says he has received a message three days before, about whether he was in Montefalco, to arrange a meeting. Benozzo replies: «[...] Io o necessita d'andare per infino a Viterbo e avevo diterminato di far la via de chosta. Ora me occhorso un pocho de chaso e non mi posso partire per di qui. Se la facenda che voi avete importa o chosa chio possa fare in vostro servizio mi farete grati.mo piacere a star dua d[ies] chon esso mecho. Se fusse difficile io verro chosta al tempo datto [...] Benozzo di Lese dipintore. Montefalcho In San Francesco». ("I need to go to Viterbo, and I had decided to go along the coast. Some things have happened to me so I cannot leave here. If what you want me to do is something I can do for you, I will be very happy to spend two days with you. If it is difficult for you to come here, I will come to you when I can [...] Benozzo di Lese, painter. In Montefalco, in the church of San Francesco").

The trip to Viterbo mentioned by Benozzo provides a better context for the pictorial cycle *Stories of Santa Rosa*, which is lost and only known from documents. This trip was probably intended to define the terms of the project.



2

From the Complesso Museale di San Francesco you will reach **Piazza del Comune** which is the core of Montefalco. The main streets of the city are all converging towards the square, where you will find residences of the 15th-16th century: the Palazzo Comunale (1270), the former church of San Filippo Neri (18th century), now a theater, and the Santa Maria di Piazza Oratory (13th century).

The S. Filippo Neri Theater, the Oratory of Santa Maria del Popolo and private buildings such as Palazzo Bontadosi, Palazzo Santi-Gentili, Palazzo Senili (now Andreani), Palazzo de Cuppis (now Camilli) and Palazzo Pieroni (now Beddini Meffetti), are all facing the square.

3

The square is dominated by the **Palazzo Comunale**, formerly called the Palazzo del Popolo. The original 1270 building was very small and all that

remains of it is an elegant mullioned window on the Corso Mameli side of the building. During the 15th century the structure was extended on the left side of the building, including a portico with octagonal pillars, finished with capitals and large acanthus leaves with above, a large terrace overlooking the square. Recent restoration work has made it possible to clearly retrace the entire construction process, from 1270 right up to the 19th century additions. The bell tower is accessible and offers a splendid view.

The **Biblioteca Comunale** (Municipal Library) is located on the first floor of the Palazzo. The treasures to be found among its many volumes include numerous 16th century texts, 76 incunabula and around 100 manuscripts. There is a fresco of the *Madonna in Maestà* attributable to Giovanni di Corraduccio in the second room of the Library. The current Council Chamber,





on the top floor of the Palazzo, was the site of the Teatro dell'Aquila theater in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which remained open until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With beautiful 19<sup>th</sup> century décor, it is furnished with table.

The **S. Maria de Platea Oratory** faces the Palazzo Comunale on the other side of the square; it is one of the oldest buildings in the area (14<sup>th</sup> century). It was used for the first public meetings of the town Council, and until the eighteenth century was the only religious building on the square. On the left side of the Palazzo Comunale we find the **former Church of**

**S. Filippo Neri**, dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, now called Teatro Comunale (Municipal Theater), recently enhanced by a beautiful curtain by the painter Luigi Frappi (see below, p. 68). In the highest part of the city, many **aristocratic residences** are concentrated, all built or renovated between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries: the palaces Pambuffetti, Langeli (attributed to Vignola and with frescoes by the school of Zuccari), Senili, Santi Gentili De Cuppis or Camilli.

Along the Corso Goffredo Mameli is the Church of **St. Augustine**, built in 1275 on the foundations of the Church

4

5

of St. John the Baptist by the Augustinian Friars. It was enlarged in 1327, during the time of Pope John XXII; in the 18th century it was modified again when it lost the right nave. The simple and austere Gothic façade is embellished by a slender pointed arch, with groups of columns and rich capitals; the rose window is very original. Inside, the large nave has a visible wooden truss roof which culminate with a polygonal apse with a ribbed vault and an altar in an elevated position. The minor nave on the right is the result of the 14th century enlargement, and unites a series of chapels. Here lie the remains of the Blessed Chiarella and Illuminata in a wooden shrine; on the same wall in another shrine, you can see the mummified body of a medieval pilgrim who is linked to the legend of the Blessed Pellegrino di Montefalco. Among the fixtures there is a wooden statue from the 15th century and, on the high altar, a Renaissance wooden Crucifix. Among the frescoes that decorate the walls there are:

- a *Madonna with Child or Nursing Madonna*; a mural fragment of a 14th-15th century attributed to the Master of Narni;
- a *Christ Redeemer* also from the Master of Narni;
- *Doctors of the Church and Saints* painted in the vault of the sacristy;
- a *Coronation of the Virgin Mary*, 14th century fresco probably by an anonymous Umbrian painter from the school of Pietro Lorenzetti;
- a 16th century fresco depicting the *Madonna with Child enthroned between St. James the Greater and*

*St. John the Evangelist*, probably by Domenico Alfani (according to others by Francesco Melanzio or an anonymous Umbrian painter of the 15th century);

- a *Madonna with Child enthroned between St. Augustine and the Blessed Angelo da Foligno*, a 15th-16th century fresco probably by Pier Antonio Mezzastris (active between 1450 and 1506);
- a fresco from the second half of the 15th century attributed to an anonymous Umbrian painter of the 5th century, showing *Doctors of the Church*;
- *Madonna with Child and Saints, The Crucifixion of Christ and Stories of the life of San Severo*, from the second half of the 15th century, attributed to an anonymous Umbrian of the 15th century;
- a fresco from the second half of the 15th century depicting *Christ fons vitae*, attributed to an anonymous Umbrian artist of the 15th century;
- *the Face of the Madonna*, 15th-16th century fresco, attributed to Francesco Melanzio (1460-1525).

The cloister close to the church, a part of the convent of the Augustinian Friars, has a harmonious square plant.

## Around the walls

6

The walls of Montefalco (13th century) are intact and perfectly preserved. You normally arrive in Montefalco by car or bus through the most beautiful of the four city gates, the crenelated **Porta Sant'Agostino** lined by the Verziere Tower (Torre del Verziere) ; but to fully understand the expression "balcony of Umbria", created to define Montefalco, the best option is to take a walk around the walls, savouring the many exceptional panoramic views.

7

At via Verdi 23, close to the Porta Federico II stands the church of Augustinian **S. Chiara da Montefalco** (1258-1309), also known as the Sanctuary of S. Chiara della Croce. Since 1281 it has been part of the Monastery built by the Blessed Giovanna, sister of Santa Chiara da Montefalco. The Saint died here on August 17, 1308. Restructured by Valentino Martelli and completed in 1430, the current church has three naves with classical forms and a golden ciborium on the high altar.

The church safeguards the body of Santa Chiara in a silver urn. In addition to the urn, two niches created in 1718 host a reliquary with the heart of the Saint and a reliquary cross with other remains.

The *Cappella della S. Croce* (Chapel of the Holy Cross), built as a presbytery, is decorated with frescoes of exceptional historical and artistic value, by the Umbrian school dating back to 1333.



The source of inspiration for the *Crucifixion* painting are the Gospels of John and Luke. At the foot of the Cross kneels the small figure of Jean d'Amiel, Rector of the Duchy of Spoleto, who financed the painting. The Crucifixion is attributed to the first

Master of Santa Chiara da Montefalco, a great and passionate talent, that combines the Romanesque tradi-

tion with Giotto's innovations coming from Assisi.

### #Caprai4love: an integrated project for sustainability

Since 2008, Arnaldo Caprai has been leading the way towards total sustainability with the aim of producing a wine in absolute harmony with nature, culture and craftsmanship. The project is called "*New Green Revolution*" (see page XXX). The #caprai4love initiative has been part of this initiative since 2013, integrating environmental, economic and social sustainability with cultural sustainability, and aiming among other things to enhance the physical heritage of Montefalco.

■ #caprai4love 2013 contributed to the coming back to Montefalco of the handwritten letter by Benozzo Gozzoli, dated June 27, 1452 (see above, page XXX)

■ #caprai4love 2014 has continued the project with the presentation of the Benozzo's letter of 1452 (see above, page XXX) and with an exceptional temporary loan from the Vatican Museums: the *Madonna col Bambino fra San Domenico e Santa Caterina d'Alessandria* by Fra Angelico, dated 1435, which has been on display at the San Francesco Museum Complex from April 4th to May 4th, 2014. The purchase of the manuscript by Gozzoli and the exhibition of the picture were financed thanks to the sale of the "Montefalco nel Cuore" bracelet made by Cruciani.

■ #caprai4love 2015 contributed to the exhibition of the splendid Benozzo Gozzoli altarpiece *La Madonna della Cintola*, celebrated by a series of cultural initiatives with the participation of Prof. Antonio Paolucci, at the time Director of the Vatican Museums, and of art critics such as Philippe Daverio and Vittorio Sgarbi (see page XXX)

■ #caprai4love 2016-17 fundraised the restoration of the fresco *I Grandi Francescani* painted by Benozzo Gozzoli in 1452, in the central apse of the church of San Francesco in Montefalco. The fresco illustrates Dante, Petrarca and Giotto in the series of frescoes on the life of Saint Francis, because they were Tertiary Franciscans; Philippe Daverio called them "historical patrons" of Montefalco. To restore the painting to its original splendor, together in partnership with the Municipality of Montefalco, the Consorzio Tutela Vini of Montefalco, the Strada del Sagrantino and the Cooperativa Sistema Museo, the Arnaldo Caprai Company created six limited edition labels for the Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG vineyard Vigna del Lago, 2012 harvest. The initiative was promoted through social networks by six influential posters (@coccodj, @DIavolo, @LiaCeli, @matteograndi, @insopportabile and @Iddio) with the hashtag #caprai4love.

As a next initiative, the small Franciscan church of S. Maria della Selvetta, now named church of S. Rocco (GPS 42.894301, 12.662702), is expected to be returned to full usability. The project, whose feasibility is currently being evaluated, highlights the connection between the Franciscan spirituality and the genius loci, and highlights - together with an episode of the pictorial cycle of Benozzo in San Francesco - the presumed passage of the saint in Montefalco.

8

On via Severini, just outside the historic center, stands the Renaissance **Chiesa di Santa Illuminata** (16th century). It was built in 1491 by the Augustinians of Lombardy, on the site of the so-called Damiano hermitage, which took this name after the man who imprisoned there the sisters Joan and Clare - the future Saint Clare.

It has a brick façade adorned with an oculus, and is fronted by a portico that protects the entrance. There is a fresco by Montefalco-born painter Francesco Melanzio (circa 1460-1519) in the lunette of the portal depicting the Madonna of Mercy, whose mantle is held open by St Clare of Montefalco and Blessed Joan; a group of devotees are shown below.

Unfortunately, the interior is currently not accessible due to the demolition of the dangerous parts of the church after recent earthquakes.

9

Next to the homonymous city gate we find **Chiesa di S. Bartolomeo**, one of the oldest parishes in the city. Renovated in 1489, it was named a collegiate in 1599 and later expanded with works completed in 1646. The apse still retains some key features of the original Romanesque construction, dating back to the 11th century. The remarkable doorway is still standing, with pedestals decorated with vine shoots and bunches of grapes, but in the 17th century the lunette wall depicting the mystic Lamb it was stripped of the lunette wall depicting the mystic Lamb. To the right of the doorway remain a mullioned window and a double mullioned win-

dow that allow light to shine into the room adjoining the church, which can be dated back to the 11th century.

The small **Chiesa di Santa Lucia** (late 12th century) is next to the Camiano gate. Founded by Benedictine monks from the abbey of S. Stefano di Manciano di Trevi, it was reliant on the prior of S. Maria di Turrita; numerous legal documents were drafted throughout the 14th century. In 1231 the bishop of Spoleto associated it with other rural churches dependent on the same monks. In 1290-91 a dispute broke out between the bishop of Spoleto and the abbot of S. Stefano di Manciano over the appointment of the rector; in 1295 the church was passed to the cathedral of Spoleto, which completely abandoned it.

In 1727 the bishop ordered the restoration of the rear section that was in danger of ruin; the Municipality of Montefalco opposed the demolition of the dangerous part facing the valley in 1793, but without success. After a further period of decline, it was restored in 1926 and again in 1977.

Nearby Porta Camiano (Camiano city gate) you can admire the spectacular Umbrian valley from the **panoramic point** of view.

10

11

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## Around Montefalco

If you want to admire the immediate surroundings of Montefalco, a short excursion by car will give you the chance to enjoy some of the precious and spiritual gems of this town.

12

On the road from Montefalco to Castello di Fabbri and Trevi stands the **convent of San Fortunato**, yobuilt in the 4th century on the remains of a Roman basilica. Here the Franciscan friars called on Benozzo Gozzoli to paint frescoes in their church, one of the most important religious places in the Spoleto diocese during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. After that they entrusted him with the great cycle of frescoes in the church of San Francesco (see above, page 43).

Up to the mid-19th century, the main altar of the monastic church — which also houses valuable frescoes by Tiberio d'Assisi — displayed the valuable painting on wood *L'Assunta che dona la cintola a San Tommaso*, donated by Montefalco to Pope Pius IX in 1848 and now hosted in the Vatican Museums (see below, page 54).

Many legends associate with Santa Chiara the figure of Fortunato (13th century), patron saint of Montefalco. Legends tells that Fortunato, priest of the existing parish church, planted a stick on the ground that became a holly oak plant. The holly oak that

San Fortunato is said to have planted is now a very tall tree, still visible in the woods next to the abbey. This tale is portrayed in the image of the Saint and the holly oak plant that appears on the left of the altarpiece representing the *Madonna della Cintola*.

Beyond the entrance gate, a wide 15th century portico precedes the various buildings. On the entrance door to the church is a lunette with a fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli depicting *Madonna and Child between San Francesco and San Bernardino da Siena*. On the inside, in a single nave on the right wall there is a fragment of Gozzoli's decoration, showing a Madonna enthroned with Child and Angel musician; a fragment of the artist's signature is also visible.

In the 15th century the Chapel of the Roses was added to the left side, with frescoes painted in 1512 by Tiberio d'Assisi (whose signature appears in a scroll on the right-hand wall). The frescoes contain episodes related to the Indulgence of the Porziuncola (see below, page 55, images of Franciscan saints, an Eternal blessing on the vault and a Christ on the sepulcher in the altar frontal.

In the convent's wood are the **Caves of San Fortunato**, probably originally

## The *Madonna della Cintola* goes back home



In 2015, Benozzo Gozzoli's precious altarpiece was defined by Antonio Paolucci "a prodigy of blue and gold" during the opening of the exhibition of this Renaissance masterpiece. The exhibition was celebrating the return to its native homeland after 167 years. The painting was brought to its original splendor after a restoration and, for the entire duration of the exhibition, it was reunited with the cycle of frescoes that Benozzo Gozzoli created in the church of San Francesco.

The fascinating colors of the work also deeply affected art historian Bernard Berenson, who at the end of the 19th century, after visiting the *Madonna della Cintola* in Montefalco wrote: "Benozzo seems to have forgotten the heavenly paradise that Fra Angelico, his teacher, had taught him, to paint instead another paradise, the strip of land between Montefalco and Assisi".

Made for the high altar of the church of San Fortunato reformed by the Observant Friars, the altarpiece painted in tempera and gold on wood was donated by Montefalco to Pope Pius IX in 1848 in exchange for the concession of the title of City; from that year it has been hosted in the Vatican Museums. The complex restoration work carried out in the laboratories of the Vatican Museums was possible thanks to the excellent collaboration between the public and private sectors, that Montefalco has been pursuing for a long time, in favor of a historical-artistic re-evaluation of the city.

a pagan Mithraeum, and some chambers dug into the clay; the central one is shaped like a cross and it was probably used as an oratory in the early

Christian era. It is a very ancient and almost unique structure; the space was possibly used by the Saint as a cell.



### The Forgiveness of the Porziuncola

It is said that one night in 1216 St. Francis was praying in the church of the Porziuncola, in Assisi, and saw Christ and the Madonna surrounded by angels and illuminated by a bright light. To the question about what he wanted for the salvation of souls, Francis replied that all those who, after having repented and confessed, went to visit the church, would also obtain complete forgiveness of their sins.

God answered that he would accept the prayer of Francis, on condition that he would ask his vicar on earth. Pope Honorius III was then visited by Francis, whom he asked: "Francis, for how many years do you want this favor?" And Francis replied: "Holy Father, I do not ask for years, but for souls". On August 2nd, 1216, Francis, together with the bishops of Umbria, happily announced to the people gathered at the Porziuncola: "O my brothers, I want to send you all to Heaven!".

13

At 2, Vocabolo Turrita, the **Church of S. Maria di Turrita** (12th century) holds some beautiful devotional paintings.

14

The **Santuario della Madonna della Stella** in Vocabolo Madonna Stella, just outside Montefalco, has a neo-classical style and a Latin cross plan. It holds paintings dating from 1867 to 1870, with the exception of a Madonna with Child from 1520, now located above the main altar. It is one of the most popular Marian temples in Umbria, famous even outside Italy for its Marian apparitions and healings.

Based on the design by architect Giovanni Santini, it has neoclassical forms and a steeple with a baroque influence. The large interior is covered with a special plaster called *marmoridea*, with the appearance of marble. The remains of a church dating back to 1525 and dedicated to San Bartolomeo Apostolo have been found in the location of the Sanctuary. In

1832, the church collapsed due to a strong earthquake; only a fresco showing a Madonna with Child by Paolo Botulli da Percanestro (pupil of Perugino) was saved.

In 1862 a five-year-old boy told his mother that he had seen the Madonna several times near the ruins of the church; it is said the Virgin was asking him to be revered again in that location. The news of the apparitions spread beyond Umbria, together with that of alleged graces and miracles; a new church was then built, dedicated to *Maria Auxilium Christianorum* (Mary Help of Christians). Struck again by an earthquake in 1878, the church was rebuilt using contributions from the devotees and inaugurated in 1884; after the 1997 earthquake which damaged it again, the building has undergone further restoration.

[www.madonnadellastella.eu](http://www.madonnadellastella.eu)  
(with virtual visit of the Santuario)



## Festivals & events

### **AGOSTO MONTEFALCHESE (August in Montefalco) AND THE FUGA DEL BOVE (flight of the ox)**

All the year long, the Sagrantino wine is the protagonist of many shows and events (see page 30ss). The Agosto Montefalchese is one of the most popular and well-known summer events in the Spoleto Valley, rich in cultural, musical and artistic events. Over the years, the main square has hosted artists such as Max Gazzé, Antonella Ruggiero, Eugenio Finardi, Ron and many others. The Sbandieratori e Musici Group organizes the "Flag-waving gathering", to which flag-wavers come from all over Italy. The Fuga del Bove e dei Quartieri Body arranges the traditional Fuga del Bove (Flight of the Ox) commemorative event.

Founded in 1972 based on historical analysis of Renaissance chronicles of Montefalco, and set when the town's splendor is at its peak, the re-enactment opens with the "Renaissance Banquet": in the Piazza del Comune the glories of the ancient banquets are re-created with flavors, music and dancing giving life to a magical atmosphere. Every year, against the marvelous backdrop of the historical center great concerts, theater and dance performances are held.

The Fuga del Bove festivity involves the four competitive districts of Mon-

tefalco — S. Agostino, S. Bartolomeo, S. Fortunato and S. Francesco — and brings the square to life in the evenings of August 12th, 13th and 14th with the colors and atmospheres of the early Renaissance. The popular Flight of the Ox comes from an old tradition in which on Christmas day an ox, pulled by a hundred arms and tied by a rope, was taken through the city streets, where the spectators could witness a violent fight against the mighty beast. The men, waving rags and puppets, mocked the angry beast, until it, exhausted, was killed, and on Christmas day the families ate its meat.

Every year the memory of this controversial popular custom is remembered in a bloodless Flight of the Ox, in which the oxen of the four districts challenge each other in an exciting race for the respect and honor of their neighborhood: each ox, led by experienced handlers, challenges the other oxen under the watchful eyes of a loud and boisterous audience, that awaits the passage of the animals to measure their strength and aggressiveness.

Throughout the month of August, inside the taverns located in the most beautiful corners of the city, you can also taste the delicious dishes of local cuisine paired by Sagrantino wine.

## Typical products and handicrafts

As well as the Sagrantino DOCG in dry and passito versions, the area also produces Montefalco Rosso. According to the production specification, this is made mainly from Sangiovese grapes and other red berried grapes, including at least 10% of Sagrantino grapes. Montefalco Rosso pairs well with dry, flavorful dishes, white and red meats, cured meats, cheeses and pork products.

In addition to the Rosso di Montefalco you can taste the Bianco di Montefalco, made mainly from Grechetto and Trebbiano grapes; it goes well with any kind of pasta or risotto dishes.

In Montefalco the **extra virgin olive oil** production is also excellent, as well as other typical products such as **honey, legumes and high quality cured meats**.

**The art of weaving** and of **embroidery**, inspired by tradition designs, is still noteworthy, with floral motifs such as the lyre and birds, typical of the multi-colored textile collection in the San Francesco Museum Complex Picture gallery: liturgical hangings, altar cloths, cushion covers, curtains, fragments of embroidered fabrics, shawls and shoes.

### **#Nonsolosagrantino: the Arnaldo Caprai Virtual Museum of textile arts**

The *Arnaldo Caprai Collection of Textile Art* was born from the love for beauty and art of the Umbrian entrepreneur and Cavaliere del Lavoro (Knight of the Order of Merit for Labour) Arnaldo Caprai. With this collection, the result of a passion cultivated throughout his life, he went in search of the anthropological and cultural roots of the textile arts, in particular lace and embroidery.

The collection, under supervision by the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural activities, covers more than five centuries, from the Renaissance to the first half of the twentieth century. It includes 4,531 artifacts (lace, embroidery and fabrics), 2,100 tools, over 10,000 magazines and 5,000 books, 16 paintings, 2,500 stamps and 75 coins. With over 25,000 cataloged and documented pieces, it is considered one of the most complete collections in the world in terms of its organicity and size. The collection can be found on Facebook and Twitter, and on the website [www.museocaprai.it](http://www.museocaprai.it). Here you can find a virtual museum that allows you to learn about the enormous cultural heritage, the splendor of textile art and the love and pride of a great collector.

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«...Umbria te notis antiqua Penatibus edit (mentior, an patriae tangitur ora tuae?)  
qua nebulosa cavo rorat Mevania campo et lacus aestivis intepet Umber aquis[...]

Properzio *Elegie IV*, 1, w. 121-4

«...l'antica Umbria ti diede i natali da famiglia di nobile stirpe (mento, o tocco il suolo della patria tua?), là dove Bevagna avvolta dalle brume stilla umidità in seno alla pianura e il Lago Umbro d'estate intiepidisce le sue acque[...]

**Itinerary #2**

# BEVAGNA

A MEDIEVAL JEWEL

2 days



# BEVAGNA

You can reach **Bevagna** from Montefalco through the evocative road from Montepennino through the vineyards. Bevagna has preserved until now the urban structure of the Roman period, and is a jewel among the small Umbrian towns, worth discovering slowly, enjoying the corners and views that make you feel like you've been transported into a miraculously vivid Middle Ages.

Archaeological evidence emerging from the territory of the old Mevania come back to the late Iron Age.

According to some, the etymology of the ancient *Mevania* has its roots in the Etruscan settlement Mefana, called after an Etruscan noble family. This settlement may have preceded the arrival of the Umbrians and the first historical information is provided by Tito Livio in the description of the Roman conquest of Umbria.

Located in a fertile area at the confluence of the Clitunno and Timia rivers, Bevagna was once an important river port; from 220 b.C. the route of the consular road via Flaminia had one of its biggest ramifications near Bevagna, and the city became a rich and thriving commercial center. It became a Roman town hall in 90-89 b.C., being attributed to the Emilia tribe.

After its decline in the late Roman

Empire, Bevagna became part of the diocese of Spoleto and then of the Lombard Duchy of Spoleto in 597, until Carlo Martello gave the Church the entire territory occupied by the Longobards in 774. Devastated by the barbarian invasions, Bevagna rose again in the communal age, but given its strategic position was strongly contested by popes and emperors for a long time and suffered repeated destruction, until receiving the title of city in 1825 from pope Leone XII.

Corso Matteotti, on the route of the ancient Roman road Decumanus Maximus, is still today the main access road to the city and leads to the amazing Piazza Filippo Silvestri, with its two Romanesque churches dedicated to *San Michele* and *San Silvestro* and the *Torti Theater*, inside the Palazzo dei Consoli.

The day after, you can admire the mosaic at the *Roman Baths* which, along with the ambulatory (walking area) of the *Roman Theater* and the *Port Building* (which once served as a commercial warehouse), is all that remains of the *Roman Mevania*.

In the afternoon, following the signs for Cannara, you can stop about 2 km (1 mile) from the center of the town, near the small *Lake Aiso* (see below, page 70). From here you can



enjoy Mount Subasio in all its rounded glory, standing in defense of the valley that gave birth to the Latin poet Properzio (1st century b.C.).

A few meters away from Lake Aiso there is another spring rich with natu-

ral and archaeological value, around which a sanctuary was discovered with Roman mosaics. The discovery evidences the veneration in this area of deities with devotees requesting *sanatio* (healing).

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### ***"Bevagnizzazione": a neologism for a very Italian art of living***

The term "*bevagnizzazione*" ("bevagation") is a neologism created in 2008: a noun derived from the place name Bevagna with the addition of a suffix to express "the elegant and at the same time genuine, harmonious and serene lifestyle of the inhabitants of Umbrian town of Bevagna". Here are two examples of use of this word:

"There is only one 'symbol of peaceful living', however: the small Umbrian town of Bevagna. The President of the Censis Foundation Giuseppe De Rita elected Bevagna as the ideal place for the simple things in life. Also coining the neologism: 'bevagnizzazione'."

*Mariolina Iossa, "Il Corriere della Sera", November 19, 2004, p. 18, Cronache*

"Professor Giuseppe De Rita, the Pope is critical of Sundays being reduced to pure entertainment. Do you agree?"

"The weekend shouldn't be demonized. It's a way to preserve our roots, especially in a land of emigrants like ours. Sundays spent in the weekend house are often the way to keep in touch with your country of origin. And it's a great idea. To express this concept, at Censis we created a neologism: 'bevagnizzazione', from the name of the Umbrian town of Bevagna. The weekend in the countryside, the mountains or the sea is not a model imported from American consumerism, but a healthy community symbol, an emblem of our 'peaceful living'."

*Giacomo Galeazzi, «La Stampa», September 10, 2007, p. 11, Cronache Italiane*

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## WHAT TO SEE

Visiting Bevagna is an easy and pleasant trip: the city is flat and has a linear urban structure that runs along the Decumanus Maximus road of the ancient Roman city, now part of Corso Matteotti and Corso Amendola after Piazza Filippo Silvestri.

The route of the Roman walls is tra-

ced by the *medieval walls* by which the city is completely surrounded, punctuated with square, polygonal and cylindrical towers. It is worth taking an evocative walk along the entire city wall and thus feeling how the town relates to its medieval countryside.

### **The bizarre names of the inhabitants of Bevagna and the book *Maledetti toscani* by Curzio Malaparte**

Bevagna is famous for the fact that its inhabitants very often have really unusual names. Beside ancient Greek names (Alcibiades, Milziades etc.) and mythological names (Vulcano, Giove, Urano etc.) there are names that are linked to historical events (like Ottobrismo and Isonzo) or simply extravagant, like Haitanga.

Curzio Malaparte wrote about this fact, with an ironic and amused attitude, in his 1956 book *Maledetti toscani* (Cursed Tuscans): «Go to Bevagna and stand on the main square. You will hear [...] Themistocles calling Cassandra, Electra calling Agamemnon, Ecuba Astianatte, and Tiresia Antigone. And one day [...] we found everyone creating a commotion because they had arrested Anaxagoras for chicken theft. As he crossed the square, handcuffed between the police, Anaxagoras called out to his friends relatives by name: “Coriolanus! Aristotle! Sophocles!”.

And a woman approached him [...] and was called Clytemnestra.».

## Bevagna in the Roman times

At least for a certain period the ancient Forum seems to have coincided with the so-called Trivium, around which were the main monuments: the theater, a temple, the baths. Later the Forum may well have been located

at the current Piazza Silvestri, near which traces of a large building in mixed construction were found, whose remains extend for a hundred meters.

We don't know to whom the 2nd

1

century A.D. **Tempio romano** (Roman temple) at the center of the settlement was dedicated; it was a pseudo-peripteral tetrastyle with a pilaster decoration instead of semi-pillars at the back. All the upper area of the city was built using the walls and vaults of the ambulatories of the ancient **Teatro Romano** (Roman Theater) from the 1st century A.D. (people from Bevagna insist on calling it an amphitheater; it apparently held up to 10,000 people). When the spectacles changed from the classical period to sacred performances, where the public moved to see the various scenes and therefore no longer needed the seats, the steps and the proscenium were demolished. Over the centuries the theater survived thanks to the maintenance of those who lived in there and worked in it: Filippo Orlando from the Compagnia delle Arti association, which now manages the magnificent site, has his workshop in one of the theater's rooms, next to the walking area that opens out onto the square.

3

In the marvelous **Terme Romane** (public baths) eof Roman Mevania built in the 2nd century a.C. the *frigidarium*



(cold bath) is perfectly preserved and still has its mosaic floor, rich in mythological representations and marine animals of rare beauty. The alternating black and white tesserae technique used to create their slender, supple bodies is evidence of expert non-local mosaicists in Bevagna.

*Information and visits:*

*Pro Loco Bevagna (see above)*

Along the Via Flaminia just outside Bevagna is the **Imbersato**, a place of historical and archaeological interest that preserves the remains of a Roman structure attributable to an amphitheater. The origin of the name *Imbersato* (or *Inversata*) could be from "*bersae, bersare or bersarii*, which refer to woods or fenced parks to keep wild beasts in for hunting and for hunters or foresters" (Francesco Ferruti). According to a tradition dating back to the 16th century and reassessed in a recent study, the term could instead derive from *Imber Sacer*, which would indicate the presence in the area of a place of worship with a sacred pool.

At the highest point of the city, at 225 m above sea level, stands the **church of San Francesco** (Chiesa di San Francesco) with adjoining convent, founded in 1275. The austere simplicity of the exterior contrasts with the interior, remodeled in 1756. It's worth seeing the *Cappella Ciccoli* with a Pietà by Ascensidonio Spacca known as the Fantino (1560-1646), and the stone where St. Francis is said to have placed his feet when preaching to the birds; the *Chapel*

4

5

of the *Madonna di Loreto*, built in the 16th century, perhaps designed by Galeazzo Alessi, featuring an exquisite vault decorated with enameled majolica tiles; a canvas with *Immaculate, Trinity and Saints*, also by Spacca.

The **Civic Museum** (Museo Civico) is located on Corso Matteotti in the 19th century Palazzo Lepri, formerly the Town Hall. Established after the unification of Italy on the second floor of the palace with works of art from churches in the city and its surroundings, it displays a large collection of art and local devotional items. Works by two major local painters stand out from the others: the painting *St. Carlo Borromeo and Filippo Neri* by Ascensidonio Spacca, and the *Cassa* with the miracles of *Blessed Giacomo* by Andrea Camassei (1602-1649).

In addition to these, there is *the Adoration of the Magi* attributed to Corrado Giaquinto da Molfetta (1699-1756), and the 1583 wooden model of the church of the *Madonna delle Grazie* created by Perugian architect Valentino Martelli. Among the ancient items are inscriptions in the Umbrian language, decorated urns and fragments of statues.

Corso Giacomo Matteotti, 72  
Tel. 0742 360031  
bevagna@sistemamuseo.it

**Open:**

April to September: Friday, Saturday, Sunday  
10:30-13:00 / 15:00-18:00  
October-March: Friday, Saturday, Sunday 10:30-  
13:00 / 14:30-17:00  
www.comune.bevagna.pg.it

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The **Chiesa dei Santi Domenico e Giacomo** (Church of St. Domenico and St. Giacomo)), built in 1291, is named after the holy founder of the Dominican Order and the friar Beato Giacomo Bianconi. The 14th century portal made of pink stone from Mount Subasio stands out on the travertine façade; the lunette is decorated with a fresco from the Fabriano school depicting the *Madonna with Child*. The interior holds frescoes from the 14th century school of Giotto, a wooden *statue of the Madonna with Child* from the early 14th century, and a wooden Crucifix from the late 13th century, as well as paintings by Spacca and Camassei. In the 17th century cloister - now a hotel - are 26 lunettes frescoed in 1640 by the painter Giovan Battista Pacetti, known as Lo Sguazzino, that retrace the life of Blessed Giacomo.

The beautiful **Piazza Filippo Silvestri** (Filippo Silvestri square), once dedicated to King of Italy Umberto I of Italy and from 1949 to Filippo Silvestri, an Entomology scholar born in Bevagna is one of the most interesting in the region. It is a fascinating aspect of Bevagna with its deliberately irregular spatial composition based on perspective, with the sloping movement of the blocks and the absence of right angles.

Its relevance as the culmination of the urban layout in which the streets of the plain converge is underlined by the architectural value of the buildings that create it: the austere and enchanting Romanesque churches of *S. Michele Arcangelo* and *S. Silvestro*

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and the imposing Gothic *Palazzo dei Consoli* (see here below), built between 1195 and 1270. The striking view is completed by the column of San Rocco from the Roman period, and a 1896 fountain.

In the square and along the route, in June, there is the Mercato delle Gaiete (see below, page 74), a distinctive and faithful reconstruction of the daily life of medieval Bevagna in the years between 1250 and 1350.

architecture, has three naves divided by sturdy columns, with a raised presbytery and crypt. The main nave is covered by a barrel vault and the side naves have rampant vaults; this is a rare architectural solution in Italy, inspired by French architecture.

More impressive and grandiose is the **Church of St. Michael Archangel** (Chiesa di San Michele Arcangelo) built in 1070 on the site of an ancient oratory by the masters Binello and Rodolfo, who are mentioned in an inscription at the entrance.

The façade was built from travertine blocks at the beginning of the 13th century, reusing material reworked from Roman buildings to decorate the portal.

The church was soon transformed into a Collegiate church, but the destructions operated in 1248 by Emperor Frederick II stopped it being used for this purpose, although it still

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The unfinished façade of the **Chiesa di San Silvestro** (Church of St. Sylvester), made of travertine and stones from Assisi, has a beautiful entrance portal with a rich embellishment of plant motifs, surmounted by a beautiful three-mullioned window of re-worked Roman marble and two mullioned windows on the sides; the façade is framed by a cornice with animal heads and hunting scenes. The austere interior, with its solemn Romanesque

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maintained a prior. In 1618 it was re-established as a collegiate church at the behest of Pope Paul V, and in 1741 it was promoted by pope Benedict XIV and the priors of Bevagna were granted permission to wear the same clothing as the archbishops of Spoleto. On this occasion, the building was completely renovated in baroque style. The interior capitals of the columns were changed and covered with stuccoes, the nave vaults were modified and the façade lost its original rose window. In the Napoleonic era the collegiate church was once again suppressed - this time permanently - and the church became one of the three parishes of Bevagna.

Between 1951 and 1957 the building was completely restored to free it from the 18th century additions and to bring it back to its medieval style; only the chapel in the right nave kept its Baroque style. Many parts of the original architecture have unfortunately been lost, and the restoration was often performed on the basis of interpretations rather than following historical documentations.

The entrance portal to the church features a decoration with cosmatesque mosaics. On the sides there are 2 three mullioned windows with a large eye in the center reopened during the 20th century restoration, unfortunately without its rose window.

On the right rises the massive cuspidate bell tower with a 14th century bell.

The interior is impressive, with three

naves divided by columns, a raised presbytery and a four-nave crypt. In the right nave there is a *silver statue of St. Vincent* (made in 1785 by Pietro Ramoser from Bolzano) and the 15th century *Chapel Spetia*, decorated in 1625 by Andrea Camassei.

The date of 1195 is written on the St. Silvestro façade, along with the name of Master Binello; the St. Michael façade features the same name of Binello and also Rodolfo and is probably a few years earlier than the other one. These are local architects or marble workers who worked in other churches in the area and certainly in Foligno and Spello.

The **Palazzo dei Consoli** built in 1270 has a solid façade with two sets of mullioned windows and an elegant loggia on the ground floor with cross vaults; a vault built in 1560 connects the building with the Chiesa di San Silvestro. A wide staircase leads to the first floor and the small and pleasant Teatro Torti (1886), with three tiers of boxes and a gallery.

**The Teatro Torti** (Torti Theater). Inside the Palazzo dei Consoli — headquarters of the Municipality until 1832 — architect Antonio Martini created in 1886 a theater dedicated to local writer and critic Francesco Torti (1763-1842). Among the smallest and most fascinating jewels of Umbrian theater architecture, it has a horseshoe plant, three sets of graceful boxes with cast-iron columns and a loggia at the top. *The ceiling*, depicting the



Dancing Muses, is the work of Mariano Piervittori. The original curtain was painted by Domenico Bruschi and shows Francesco Torti to whom Latin writer Properzio is showing the town of Bevagna. In 1994, to mark the occasion of the restoration of the original curtain, local artist Luigi Frappi painted another curtain showing the river Clitunno, a memorial stone and a small temple. Above the scene

is the emblem of Innocenzo IV dating back to 1380 with the inscription of the papal motto *OsF (Ob servatam Fidem*, or "for having preserved and observed the Faith"). The theater still has an annual program and hosts plays, concerts, conventions and conferences.

Information:  
[www.comune.bevagna.pg.it](http://www.comune.bevagna.pg.it)

### Luigi Frappi

As architect and scholar Paolo Portoghesi explains, "the luck of Bevagna, one of the best conserved and most intimate cities of art, was the community album born from the encounter between a legacy of artworks, jealousy preserved, and the critical and creative intervention of a true painter, Luigi Frappi, who gave to this legacy a 'final touch', adding flavor and quality to the original core of artworks. Frappi, like many modern painters, does not scorn the camera, and like many of his predecessors, from Seurat to Degas, he uses it very well".

Luigi Frappi, a bizarre and only apparently surly artist, is "an Umbrian first and foremost", according to the art historian and connoisseur Vittorio Sgarbi. "The signs he bears of this land are not shown in his landscapes or still lifes, but rather in the pictorial rendering of his inspiration".

Born in Foligno, he lives and works in Bevagna in an 18th century building completely covered by frescoes and near the main square. He has taken photographs, filmed and painted pictures of Bevagna, and through his art he expresses the most intimate and fascinating aspects of the places that have always inspired him and which have made him a happy prisoner, guardian and priest.

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**River park along the Clitunno** river. Nearby the gate of the city wall, called "dei Molini" there is an artificial reservoir, formed by damming the Clitunno river. The small

and picturesque pool, locally called "Accolta" or "Accorda", collects the water that drives the blades of the nearby still functioning grain mill. On the reservoir there is a long public

wash house still used until a few years ago by the women of the town. The Accorda is visible from the bridge

above, on which two small houses were built around 1880 which were used by customs officials.

## Around Bevagna

Bevagna is surrounded by an area full of historical and natural interest, rich in rural churches, shrines, ancient castles and places with a beauty and silence far removed from the bustle of the city.

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You can enjoy a spectacular view of the town from the **chiesa di Santa Maria delle Grazie** (Church of St. Maria delle Grazie) in Colpulito di Bevagna (2.5 km / 1.5 miles from the center), along the ancient route of the Via Flaminia.



According to tradition, the construction of the church is linked to miraculous events caused by the Virgin Mary in 1462 and then in 1582; it seems that a farm worker, nicknamed Bollone, was miraculously healed by the Virgin; many other extraordinary even-

ts followed. The foundation stone of the building was laid on January 16, 1583; in that period the Catholic Church was encouraging the construction of churches and shrines around sacred images to counter Lutheran reform.

The building design was entrusted to Perugian architect Valentino Martelli (1550 -1630). He chose a style he already adopted widely in designing other churches in the area (Santa Chiara in Montefalco, Crocifisso in Todi, etc.): a very tall building with three naves with domed vaults.

In keeping with a particularly widespread custom during the Renaissance, Martelli created a wooden model of the church to be presented to the owner, this can still be seen in Bevagna Civic Museum. The building has a Latin cross with an octagonal lantern that replaced the dome from the original design. The bell tower is unfinished. The brick façade is divided by twin pilasters with Doric capitals; a sandstone frieze embellishes the façade horizontally, once surmounted by a tympanum.

Inside you can see amazing works from the 16th-17th century including the 1641 main altar by Andrea Paganelli, rich in marble, which displays the miraculous image of the Madonna

delle Grazie frescoed at the time of the first miraculous event. The other altars feature works by the local painter Ascensidonio Spacca known as il Fantino (*Madonna of Constantinople with Saint Joseph and the original owner, San Carlo Borromeo in prayer, Assumption of the Virgin*). The sanctuary is a destination for pilgrims and tourists alike who can enjoy the coolness of the park and the surrounding landscape from the hill even when the church is closed.

In the plain at the foot of the hill of St. Annunziata, in Vocabolo Avelle, it is worth stopping close to three springs of water, respectively named **Lake Aiso and Aisilli**. In the maps and in official documents of the area, the lake also appears as "Abisso" (Abyss), referring to the mystery of a hidden phenomenon and the incredibly deep waters that are not easily connectable with the very small water basins.

The small lake and the surrounding area are of great environmental and archaeological interest as well as historical and cultural relevance. In fact a votive bronze statue from the Umbrian period, a warrior figure sadly now lost, was found on its banks in 1774; along with the archaeological findings in the nearby springs, the statuette was evidence of the existence of a place of worship in use between the end of the 2nd century b.C and the 4th century A.D., very similar to the better known Clitunno springs. During the excavations, in fact, two arms of a portico were found around a spa-

ce with a large circular basin in the center, where the spring waters still collect. The best preserved part has a mosaic floor consisting of a carpet of white tiles adorned with three rows of pink tesserae.

Ancient Mevania from the 4th century B.C. played a prominent role for the Umbrian people, especially in their religious life. Water played a central role in the various rural sanctuaries, as in the system of basins in the sacred part of Bevagna where the current viale Properzio is located. The design of these sanctuaries was identified in the Lacus of the Clitunnus described by Pliny the Elder (1st century A.D.) as a group of springs. The most venerated deity in the sanctuary of Aisillo is probably identified as Valetudo (Health) linked with the dimensions of *sanatio* (healing) and *victoria* (victory). This female deity must also be seen as a counterweight to the deus *Clitunnus*, a male deity to whom the river bearing the same name was dedicated.

The site was frequented until a process of Christianization began in the Umbrian area in the Constantinian age (4th century A.D.).

Another interesting feature of the Aiso lake is a legend that is well known and still told in the area, linked to the figure of St. Anne. Another legend tells that the spring originated from the sacrilegious behavior of a peasant, Chiarò, whose house sank into the abyss at the bottom; the word "abyss" is therefore said to be the origin of the name.

In general, in folk tales the origin of chasms is the result of a divine intervention or of the action of a saint pu-

nishing the violation of a prohibition, such as threshing on a feast day. In legends, lakes formed in this way are often considered bottomless or a corridor to hell: this suggests a continuity of traditions between pagan cults and Christian worship.

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The **Edicola di Piandarca** (Aedicule of Piandarca), on the road from Bevagna to Cannara, is at the center of a splendid natural oasis with cultivated fields, vineyards and olive groves. It was erected in 1926 to celebrate the 7th centenary of the death of Saint Francis. According to tradition, between 1212 and 1213 the extraordinary episode of the saint preaching to the birds took place here. The episode is depicted in Giotto's fresco cycle in the Upper Basilica of Assisi, and in the one painted by Benozzo Gozzoli in the apse of the church of S. Francesco in Montefalco (see above, page 43). A restricted area contains the aedicule, in front of which there is a small altar. At the center of the aedicule there is a fresco depicting St. Francis preaching to the birds. An inscription describes the episode as follows:

"Deeply loyal to this place and determined to its best exploitation, the citizens mobilized and obtained from the FAI - Italian Environment Fund the inclusion of the Piandarca aedicule in the Luoghi del Cuore (Places of the Heart) 2014".

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The **Parco della Scultura** (Sculpture Park) on the road to Castelbuono, is a "park-museum" that is enriched each year with new works. Founded in 2012 within the framework of the initiative "Week of Peace" held every year in Castelbuono between April 25th and May 1st, it offers a fascinating and original experience of both art and nature.

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*Information:*

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Via dell'Aiola, 2 - 06031 Bevagna (PG)  
Tel. +39 0742 361822  
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Il paesaggio di Bevagna è caratterizzato da un'opera singolare e visitabile: il **Carapace della Tenuta Castelbuono**, opera dello scultore Arnaldo Pomodoro che è sede delle cantine Lunelli. Il nome indica un guscio animale rigido, come quello della tartaruga.

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*Info and reservations:*

Tel. +39 0742 361670  
[carapace@tenutelunelli.it](mailto:carapace@tenutelunelli.it)

The journey in the ancient Bevagna continues by reaching the fortified castles dating back to the 10th century, built on the slopes of the Martani Mountains to secure the territory; Torre del Colle, Gaglioli, Limigiano, Castelbuono. The unflawed nature and the inhabited places are blending in a rare harmony, where time seems to have ceased.

*Informazioni:*

Pro Loco Bevagna (vedi sopra)



## Festivals and events

### **GOOD FRIDAY PROCESSION**

Neither rain nor water nor wind can stop this event, which takes place every year on the Friday before Easter and creates a mystical and evocative atmosphere for inhabitants and visitors alike. Certain historical facts about this tradition are from the 1950s, but almost certainly its origins date back to the 14th century.

The nocturnal procession goes through the streets of the historical center in a specific order, starting with the three crucified, crowned by thorns (Christ in red, the two thieves in black) and flanked by ten Roman soldiers. Then come Mary Magdalene, the Veronica, the statue of the dead Christ, three women dressed in mourning, the twelve apostles and the brothers

of Mercy in black tunics and purple capes. The procession closes with the singing of the Laude by Jacopone da

Todi on the steps of the Teatro Torti, in the central piazza Filippo Silvestri.

## THE RACE OF THE RISEN CHRIST

Nel 1786 lo storico Fabio Alberti scriveva: «la Confraternita della Misericordia [...] ha una bellissima statua di Cristo resuscitato che merita di essere veduta. Si estrae questa ogni anno nel Sabato Santo, trasportandosi dall'Oratorio della Compagnia alla chiesa Collegiata e all'intonarsi della Gloria e allo sciorsi (*sciogliersi*) delle campane s'introduce in chiesa, e al comparire con quella faccia ilare e celestiale

muove le lagrime per tenerezza e per divozione a tutti li spettatori. Se ne fa la solenne processione la domenica di Pasqua».

Suggestiva e commovente rappresentazione, la corsa del Cristo risorto si tiene tradizionalmente la mattina della domenica di Pasqua alle ore 11, presso la chiesa di San Michele Arcangelo. Il parroco della cattedrale apre il grande portone e la statua, sorretta ai lati, attraversa velocemente la navata tra due ali di folla festante.

### The statue of the Risen Christ

It seems that the wooden statue of the Risen Christ referred to by Fabio Alberti was made - according to scholar Giulio Urbini and others - at the end of the 16th century by French sculptor Leonardo Scaglia during his stay in Bevagna. This hypothesis is sustained by the comparison of the face of the Risen Christ of Bevagna with that of Christ on the Cross kept in the Perugian church of San Simone del Carmine. Both works show a careful attention to the representation of the nude; also the reddish brown color is identical, which gives the same coppery hue to the beards and hair.

## MEDIEVAL SPRING (April-May)

Founded as a showcase and preview of the more famous festival Mercato delle Gaites (see below), over time it has acquired its own specific features. The event includes cultural, artistic and medieval gastronomical activities linked to the intensive historical

research activities of the four 'gaites' (administrative districts) of medieval Bevagna. With **Medieval Spring**, the city prepares for the Mercato delle Gaites that takes place in June and revives traditional craftsmanship for the many tourists who, during the festive period between April and May, choose to enjoy a unique experience that takes them back in time.



### **The *Tacuinum Sanitatis***

The passion, commitment and care of Gaita St. Maria prompted the publication of a prestigious medical text from the 14th century: the *Tacuinum Sanitatis*. In the Middle Ages this name indicated the medical science manuals that described in brief guidelines the medical and curative properties of vegetables, fruit trees, spices, medicinal herbs and other food, and also the seasons, natural events and emotions of the soul, with reference to their effects on the human body.

In the Municipal Library of Bevagna a two-volume *Tacuinum Sanitatis* is conserved, which served as original to the reprinted version of its transcription and translation.

The text is the Latin translation of an original Arabic text written in Baghdad by Ab al Hasan al Mukhtar Ibn Butl, a famous doctor and scholar of the Nestorian Christian faith. This book, which dates from the 11th century, was translated from Arabic in the 13th century by Gherardo da Cremona, probably at the court of Manfredi di Sicilia, and then spread rapidly throughout Europe, often in copies embellished by splendid miniatures.

The Bevagna copy is a parchment manuscript of 40 sheets without miniatures, written on both sides; each sheet measures 21 x 31 cm (8x12 inches). The outer binding is in parchment; two sheets of paper protect the inner sheets and bear a round stamp with the words "Orphanage Francesco Torti. Bevagna". In the incipit (opening statement) of the manuscript we read: "*Tacuinum sanitatis* in medicine, useful to explain the six things necessary for man and to show both the benefits and the harmful aspects of food, drink and clothing, and therefore to make known good advice from the eminent among the ancients in order to eliminate their harmful aspects".

The Baghdad doctor has plenty of, sometimes unusual, therapeutic advice. After the ten benefits that come from drinking wine in moderation, five for the soul and five for the body, we learn that a healthy diet requires bread with just the right quantity of yeast, and which lupins and beans "encourage menstrual blood". Fresh broad beans are not recommended because "they cause swelling, softness of the flesh, and tiredness". And rice "increases sperm, while decreasing urine". As to almonds, "the more they are bitter, the more they will be effective". Finally, the doctor from Baghdad discusses the issue of sexual intercourse extensively, recommending music for the joy of body and soul, and analyzing the different states of mind.

*The Tacuinum Sanitatis is published by EFFE - Fabrizio Fabbri Editore, Perugia.*

### **THE MERCATO DELLE GAITE (June)**

The Gaite of Bevagna (from the Lombard *watha*, "guard", meaning the medieval districts of the town) challen-

ge each other every year in one of the most important and imitated national historical and cultural re-enactments.

In a rigorous reconstruction of life and the local environment of the 13th and 14th centuries, a very popular festival

takes place which is also a popular competition.

The four gaites of Santa Maria, San Pietro, San Giovanni and San Giorgio compete for the Palio – a vexillum painted by a different artist every year. The gastronomic competition includes, in the respective taverns, the presentation of a medieval dish among other specialties; in the *craft competition*, two medieval crafts are meticulously reconstructed in the rooms of each gaita; in the *market competition* scenes of daily life of the

period are recreated as faithfully as possible; finally, the *archery competition* involves archers from the four gaites in the central square of Bevagna. The competitions are judged by a panel of university professors, appointed each year, who are experts in the history and art of the Middle Ages.

*Information:*

Associazione Mercato delle Gaites

Piazza F. Silvestri, 1

06031 Bevagna (PG)

Tel 0742 361847 | 335.5977629

info@ilmercatoellegaites.it

### **The cultural circuit of medieval crafts**

In the charming medieval shops located in the historic center of the city, selling goods made from paper, wax, silk and glass, you can discover the techniques and tools of the ancient crafts of Bevagna. Workshops and guided tours organized by art masters and expert craftsmen help the audience of all ages to enjoy, learn and experience the secrets of different medieval arts.

The route is available for individuals and groups only by reserving a few days in advance before visiting.

*Information, tickets and reservations:  
Associazione Mercato delle Gaites*

### **SNAIL FESTIVAL (end of August)**

Various delicious snail recipes can be tasted in the last ten days of August in the small hamlet of Cantalupo, during their Snail festival. Some restaurants in the area also serve them at other times of year.

*Information:*

Pro Loco di Cantalupo Castelpuono

Centro Polivalente Cantalupo

Via dell'Aiolo, 2 - 06031 Bevagna (PG)

Tel e Fax + 39 0742 361822

prolococantalupocastelpuono@unplumbria.info



## Typical products and crafts

The **crafts of ropework** and **producing woven baskets** are brought to life again, especially during the Mercato delle Gaite, by skilled local women; in the past the raw material - marsh cane - was in fact present in abundance along the waterways of the town, as attested by the oldest cadaster of

Bevagna from 1682.

The **working of wrought iron**, still carried out in the historic center, is one of the oldest forms of urban crafts. *The plantation of olive trees* is widespread, as well as of vines for the production of Sagrantino and other wines.

## Porchetta from Bevagna

Bevagna is also famous for its **Porchetta**, a very tasty dish with an ancient flavor typical of central Italy; traditionally it is prepared for festivals using young, perhaps wild, animals. In the Bevagna version, the recipe

says that the pig must be kept whole, gutted and stuffed with other meat, offal, salt, pepper, garlic, rosemary and wild fennel, then slow-roasted to preserve the flavor and softness of the meat

# Activities

## CYCLING

Bevagna, located halfway along the Spoleto-Assisi cycling route, is a great place to take a break or to start the route in either direction. It goes through the heart of Umbria through the most beautiful historic towns including **Assisi, Spello, Foligno, Cannara, Bevagna, Montefalco, Trevi, Spoleto**, and offers an ideal combination of sport, nature, art and culture.

The cycle route is an almost completely flat path 51 km long (nearly 32 miles), suitable for those who want to discover Umbria by bike, including beginners and families with children. The route

can be reached easily from numerous access points, all clearly marked.

The first stretch, from **Assisi to Bevagna**, is 23 km (14 miles) long and is mostly based on secondary roads with very little traffic. The second stretch, from Bevagna to the "bicigrill" refreshment point "Le Mattonelle", just outside Spoleto, is 28 km (17 miles) long and is completely free of traffic. From "Le Mattonelle" you can easily reach the center of Spoleto in a few kilometers, or a couple of miles, and join the start of the former Spoleto-Norcia railway.

*Information:*

*Pro Loco Bevagna (see above)vedi sopra*



«Gualdo Cattaneo and annexed territories. Town hall subjected to the Government of Bevagna. Delegation and Diocese of Spoleto, 505 persons.»

*Alphabetical Index of all the places of the Papal State, Rome 1829*

**Itinerary #3**

# **GUALDO CATTANEO**

THE VILLAGE OF CASTLES

2 days



**1** GUALDO CATTANEO  
GPS 42.909639, 12.556250

**2** POZZO  
GPS 42.903611, 12.505944

**3** CASTELLO DI CISTERNA  
GPS 42.919278, 12.482250

**4** CASTELLO DI MARCELLANO  
GPS 42.873083, 12.520528

**5** CASTELLO DI SARAGANO  
GPS 42.888694, 12.483917

**6** CASTELLO DI CERALTO  
GPS 42.913500, 12.470028

**7** CASTELLO DI BARATTANO  
GPS 42.861111, 12.505917

**8** CASTELLO DI TORRI  
GPS 42.852694, 12.515278

**9** CASTELLO DI SAN TEREZIANO  
GPS 42.865167, 12.472361

**10** CASTELLO DI GRUTTI  
GPS 42.847944, 12.477083

**11** ABBAZIA DI S.MARIA DI AGELLO  
GPS 42.847472, 12.491472

**12** CASTELLO DI SPELTARA  
GPS 42.863806, 12.454444

**13** CASTELLO DI SIMIGNI  
GPS 42.873722, 12.549472

**14** CASTELLO DI FORTE SORGNANO  
GPS 42.963556, 12.493833

**15** CASTELLO DI POMONTE  
GPS 42.940472, 12.514778



# GUALDO CATTANEO

## the village of castles

The territory of **Gualdo Cattaneo**, on the slopes of the Martani Mountains in a panoramic and evocative location, deserves a visit even outside the ancient city walls. With its Fortress, its churches and its landscapes dotted with woods, it is an excellent starting point for understanding the system of castelli (castles, or fortified strongholds) and medieval buildings located in strategic points to defend the territory.

These in fact constitute a real defensive complex that can be visited like an extraordinary outdoor museum located among the olive trees that blends perfectly with the softer and more sinuous landscape of the vine-planted hills.

After visiting Gualdo and its Fortress, head to **Pozzo** which, immersed in the green of the olive trees, overlooks the valley of the Puglia river. The architectural structure of the castle offers unique glimpses into the Middle Ages. On a hill above the Puglia river the **castello di Cisterna** (13th century) is in good condition, with the medieval tower easily visible, next to which stands an inhabited center dating back to the 19th century. Between the towns of Gualdo Cattaneo and Giano dell'Umbria you will find the **castello di Marcellano**, dating back

to the 12th century. During the Christmas period there is a living Nativity scene that involves the inhabitants of the entire village every year with traditional, medieval life scenes and dozens of figures in costumes, artisan shops, taverns with mulled wine and local gastronomic delicacies. In December the representation of the Nativity starts at sunset in a unique setting.

The **castello di Saragano** (a few km from San Terenziano) is supposed to be of Lombard origins. It is thought to have been the residence of the Roman consul Lucio Lucinio Sura from which perhaps it took its name. Thanks to its unique peaceful location between oak and turkey oak, in an absolute and sacred silence, the **castello di Ceralto** is a unique fusion of architecture and nature.. Near the Castle grows one of the largest oaks in Umbria, estimated to be around 200 years old. Not far from Gualdo, the **castello di Barattano** is perhaps the most typical example of the system of Gualdese castles, with its wide city walls, narrow alleyways and tall towers.

From the top of an isolated hill, the **castello di Torri** dominates the valley below through which the St. Terenziano-Bastardo road snakes. An



arched entrance door, marked with the Tuderte eagle crest, leads inside the castle, where private houses are leaning against the perimeter circle. On the opposite side stands the **castello di San Terenziano** (14th century), built with a traditional square shape to defend the population. Inside the church of the same name is a rare example of construction made of two superimposed churches: the lower from the 11th century, the upper from the late 13th century. The itinerary of Gualdo's castles is completed by the **castello di Grutti**, halfway between Massa Martana and Todi, of whose medieval structure only a few towers remain; the **castello di Speltara**, on the road of St. Terenziano-Collazzone, an abandoned castle with a square plan and a single, high corner tower; the castello di Simigni (ca. 1103 A.D.), the **Castle of Forte Sorignano** and the **castello di Pomonte**. The latter, surrounded by a thick vegetation, has a four-sided structure with small towers at the corners.

## Gualdo Cattaneo

Located on the slopes of the Martani Mountains, between the Valle Umbra and the Valle Tiberina, Gualdo Cattaneo was strongly challenged over the centuries by the towns of Foligno and Spoleto due to its highly strategic position. The place name Gualdo, from the Saxon Wald, "forest", refers to the surrounding territory that features a considerable amount of woods.

It is well-known that this castle, formerly called *Gualdum Captaneorum*, was built in 975 by the German Count Edoardo Cattaneo. Thanks to its highly strategic geographical position, the town held considerable importance over the centuries: Foligno and Spoleto showed interest in its conquest and challenge

Information:  
[www.turismogualdocattaneo.it](http://www.turismogualdocattaneo.it)

Pro Loco Gualdo Cattaneo:  
 Piazza Umberto I  
[www.progualdocattaneo.org](http://www.progualdocattaneo.org) [in costruzione]  
 FB: @ProLocoGualdoCattaneo

# WHAT TO SEE



**The Rocca** (Fortress; [GPS 42.909639, 12.556250](#)) was built between 1494 and 1498 on a project by Francesco di Bartolomeo di Pietrasanta at the behest of the city of Foligno; a pre-existing version of the Fortress was destroyed in 1439 by Cardinal Fiorentino, Patriarch of Alessandria.

Also called “dei Borgia” in honor of Pope Alexander VI, in the second half of the 17th century it suffered gradual deterioration, so that it needed restoration in 1695 at the expense of the municipality of Foligno. In 1877 it was again in serious disrepair and part of the corbels had collapsed; they were repaired in the restoration of 1955.

The Fortress has the shape of an equilateral triangle; each vertex corresponds to a round and truncated-conical tower, connected to the others by underground walkways. The highest tower is 80 meters in circumference at its base; it is 20 meters high and dominates the whole village with its 5 floors

housing all the residential elements necessary for defense and the garrison's living arrangements.

Designed according to the most up-to-date military canons of the late 15th century, when the advent of artillery was substantially changing the appearance of defensive structures, it has not undergone significant restoration over time, and its original appearance remains almost unchanged. In 1624 Galileo Galilei stayed here.

*Information and visits:*

*Orari: 10,30-13 e 16,30-19,30*

*Lunedì chiuso*

*Tel. +39 0742 718016*

*inforocca@libero.it*

*Aperto su prenotazione*

*in qualsiasi giorno della settimana*



The church of **Sant'Antonio e Sant'Antonino** ([GPS 42.909222, 12.555833](#)), originally built in 1262 at the behest of the people, close to the central square of the city, has gone under various renovations throughout the centuries. From the original building only the crypt remains preserving the relics of the martyrs after whom the church is named; it dates back to the first half of the 13th century, as well as some bas-reliefs on the façade and the apse. In 1464 the chapel of the Sacrament was added; the bell tower dates from 1905.

Inside there is a tempera painting from the Umbrian-Sienese school dating

back to 1350, depicting a Madonna and Child. The very evocative crypt is a good example of Romanesque architecture, preserving the remains of Saints Anthony and Antoninus and those of Beato Ugolino.

The **church of Sant'Andrea** (GPS [42.908611](#), [12.555806](#)), located inside the walls of the castle and featuring a bell tower on the back, is one of the oldest in Gualdo Cattaneo; it was already paying tithes in the 13th century. It stands in a panoramic and isolated position close to the city walls, in a setting that is an excellent example of medieval urban planning.

The external sandstone structure is in good condition, while the interior 16th century stuccoes — plastered and painted — have suffered a lot of damage. The church houses significant paintings thought to be from the 17th century, many of which are attributable to Andrea Polinori and his school, as well as a baptismal font from the 17th century and a 15th century astile cross. The original high altar, like the one renovated in the 70's, is in stuccoed and painted masonry.

The **church of Sant'Agostino** (GPS [42.908417](#), [12.556694](#)), located close to the ancient walls of Gualdo Cattaneo, was built in 1136 by the architect P. Orazio da Arezzo on behalf of the western Benedictine fathers, who dedicated it to the Madonna Annunziata and to San Benedetto.

In 1258 it passed to the hermit monks of Sant'Agostino, who after restoration gave it the name of their holy founder. The prior of the community was the blessed Ugolino da Gualdo Catta-

neo. In the early fifteenth century the interior walls were frescoed, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century most of the frescoes were covered with plaster during the plague of 1620 to sanitize the rooms. The adjoining Benedictine convent was dissolved in 1652 by Pope Innocent X and demolished around 1957. After a period of deterioration that led to its abandonment, the church was restored and reopened for worship in 1926, and experienced a new restoration between 1985 and 1990; after further improvement, it was reopened in 2013. The gabled façade is in sandstone with an ogival doorway in pink and white stone. At the center of the vault of the main door is the figure of the town's patron saint, San Michele Arcangelo. A stone representing a fish, the symbol of Christianity, is in the lower part of the side wall. The large bell tower, into which the apse of the church is carved, stands on an ancient defensive tower. The single nave interior is plastered and painted; to the left of the entrance you can see remains of frescoes. Along the left hand wall, in a small side chapel, there is a fresco from 1482 showing the *Crucifixion* by the painter Nicolò di Liberatore from Foligno, known as the Alunno. In a small niche on the right hand wall is a 15th century painting showing the *Madonna and Child* between St. Peter and St. Paul. The church houses two paintings by Andrea Polinori, *Santa Caterina di Alessandria* and *Sant'Agostino*, a *Madonna del Rosario* by Pietro Paolo Sensini, a *Purgatory* by Francesco Providoni and a 14th century work by Maestro Bastiano.

# The castles of Gualdo Cattaneo

In addition to the precious monuments located within the 15th century walls, Gualdo Cattaneo, has also an interesting system of medieval fortified castles in its surroundings. The **castles circuit**, of over 50 km, is surrounded by a beautiful landscape.

*Information and visits:*  
[www.turismogualdocattaneo.it](http://www.turismogualdocattaneo.it)

2

The itinerary starts with **Pozzo**, a castle surrounded by olive trees, overlooking the valley of the Puglia river. Since ancient times the quantity of oil produced, as evidenced by the flourishing milling activity, must have been so high that it could not be contained in a well or "pozzo". This may be the origin of the name of the castle, an ancient site of battles between the factions of Bevagna and Todi. The architectural structure of the fortified village and the medieval insights are noteworthy.

3

From here you go to **Cisterna**, a castle built in the 13th century. It overlooks the river Puglia, on the top of a hill, in an almost untouched landscape where you can enjoy nature to the full and where only a few fields are cultivated. Under the governance of Perugia until 1378, it was the castle in the area with the greatest number of fires; for the feast of St. Ercolano the inhabitants had to send three pounds of wax to Peru-

gia. In 1412 it was acquired by Ugolino III Trinci from Foligno. In July 1412 Pope Gregory XII granted the castle in vicariate to the Trinci in return for the payment of an annual fee.

The castle of Cisterna remained property of the Trinci until 1441, when their dominion ended; at the time it had 118 inhabitants. In 1802 it was joined to the Municipality of Gualdo Cattaneo, and then became part of the community of San Terenziano, first associated with Collazzone and then independent since 1829; in 1861 it reverted back to being under the control of Gualdo Cattaneo.

The castle is in good condition, with a massive and imposing medieval tower; next to it there is an inhabited area dating back to the 19th century.

In between Gualdo Cattaneo and Giano dell'Umbria, on a gentle slope rises **Marcellano**, full of churches from the 14th and 16th century. According to tradition, the castle was originally owned by members of *Gens Marcella* (legion XLI of the Army of Rome), to whom the land was granted as a leave bonus; according to historical and documented sources, the settlement dates back to the 12th century.

4

5

The presumably Lombard castle of **Saragano** was a place for relaxation and



leisure, among the olive groves and vineyards, of the Roman consul Lucio Lucinio Sura, who might have given to it its name "Suragano". In 1320 the highly fortified settlement resisted the siege of the Perugians, although it later suffered temporary occupation by Todi.

6

From here you can continue towards **Ceralto**. The unique location, the architectural style, the absolute peace that

reigns here make this a happy, timeless oasis. According to some, the name refers to Cereris altus or altior and therefore to the cult of Cerere, the Roman goddess of agriculture; considering the geographical position, the natural environment of oak and turkey oak and the popular diction of "Cerralto", alternative hypotheses about the origin of the place name could be legitimate. Perugia destroyed it in 1311 during its fight against Todi.

Near the castle of Ceralto, a few hundred meters from the road grows **the biggest holly oak in Italy** (GPS 42.908816, 12.464972). The circumference of the trunk is 3.85 m at the top and 4.52 m at the bottom; its estimated age is around 200 years.

7

Continuing along the route of this extraordinary open-air museum, between Montefalco and Todi you see **Barattano**, an authentic and charming wide-walled castle with a medieval entrance, alleyways and high towers, some of which are still covered.

Built in the 13th century with the name of Villa St. Angelo in Piscina, it became later Barattano ("barterers") "after the fraudulent people who lived there". Encircled in 1452 by mighty walls with central formwork and high defense towers, it represents a fine example of military architecture for purely defensive purposes, derived from the Roman castrum (fortified encampments).

From the second half of the 14th century, the castle passed under the jurisdiction of the Trinci, lords of Foligno,

and then remained for centuries under the influence of Todi: in 1802 it was united with Gualdo Cattaneo, in 1815 with St. Terenziano, and then in 1861 it reverted back to being under the control of Gualdo Cattaneo.

In front of the entrance door of the castle is the church of St. Bartolomeo, whose thirteenth-century structure has been greatly altered over the centuries. The current entrance replaces the now closed ancient doorway. Inside there are frescoes from the 16th and 17th century and two 16th century wooden angels.

8

The itinerary continues towards **Torri**, whose first settlements date back to the Stone Age; this is evidenced by numerous findings of scrapers, knives, polished green stone axes, arrowhe-

ads, javelin and flint daggers. Returned to its former splendor by careful restoration, the medieval castle was built in 1250, and was named Cerqueto due to its proximity to a vast oak ("cerqua") forest. It took on its current name after the construction of a sturdy wall with big, tall angular towers, used both for defense purposes and as dovecotes.

Surmounted by the coat of arms of the eagle, symbol of the city of Todi, the arched entrance door leads to the interior, where houses lean against the perimeter circle. In 1500 Torri was made up of 33 families, often quarrelling between themselves, so much that several popes subjugated it alternately to Gualdo Cattaneo and Todi. After restoration it was incorporated into San Terenziano and from 1861 merged with the Municipality of Gualdo Cattaneo.

The small *medieval church* in the historic center of Torri houses a *Butterfly Museum* with a precious collection of fossils, insects and butterflies donated to the community by the Cotta family.



On the road from Gualdo Cattaneo to Todi, at 500 meters above sea level there is the castello di **San Terenziano**, built in the 14th century to defend the population. The origins of the town are very ancient (1st century AD): the Romans called it locus petrosus (stony place) because of the quarries rich in limestone and travertine. Built in a traditional style in local stone and on a square plan, it took its name from Terenziano, the first bishop of Todi, who was beheaded by Emperor Adriano

together with Flacco, high priest of the College of the Augustales. The night after the execution, some Christian women collected the remains of the martyrs and transported them to the plateau of Petroso, which from that moment on was called San Terenziano.

The castle always followed the political and military events of Todi, which established its castellans there; the front door, flanked by a majestic square tower, bears the emblem of the eagle of Tod, and a house inside the walls still bears the emblem of the Atti, a powerful family from Todi. In 1354 it was attacked by the militia of Fra Moriale d'Albarno, a Provençal leader. In 1440, after the destruction of the Castelvecchio castle by Francesco I Sforza, the priors of Todi gave the church bell to the community of San Terenziano. During the Renaissance the Cesi family resided there and built the homonymous palace, still visible today.

The castello always belonged to the municipality of Todi; in 1815 it was separated and appointed to a community headed by Collazzone with the other castles of Grutti, Torri, Barattano, Saragano, Marcellano, Pozzo, Ceralto and Cisterna. In 1829 it became a municipality in its own right; in 1861 it was associated to Gualdo.

Inside the castle is the *church of San Terenziano*, the parish of a large area of the territory dependent on the Chapter of Todi; it was ruled by some canons, an archpriest and a chamberlain. It is a rare construction with two superimposed churches: the lower one has a sarcophagus containing the remains

of the Saint from the 11th century, and the upper one was built at the end of the 13th century.

In 1715 the sepulcher of the saint was opened, and the ashes, collected in a reliquary, were moved under the altar of the upper church, later restored by the bishop of Todi.

10

Let's continue with the next **castello di Grutti**. Named Grottombra in the 11th century, in 1126 it was surrounded by solid Ghibelline walls; in 1347 it was considered a "villa" and hosted 16 families. The name "Grutti" comes from the numerous travertine caves found in the subsoil, which according to some offered shelter to the early Christians, followers of San Terenziano. Angelo Cesi, bishop of Tod, was very fond of this place and had some restoration work carried out here. Some towers remain of the original medieval structure rising up over wide stretches of walls. The houses of the old castle are used as stores and cellars.

11

On the left hand side of the road leading from Grutti to Castelvecchio, on the top of a small hill among the ruins of the 13th century abbey, stands the ancient **abbey of Santa Maria di Agello** with a Romanesque church, built before the castle. Its origins are very uncertain; the first records of its existent are provided by the book of tithes from 1276.

On the double pitched façade there is an oculus and a portal with a round lunette; on the tympanum a small bell tower from the 16th century is built on a pre-existing one. The completely re-

novated interior, with a single room, still has the apse on the back wall.

On the St.Terenziano-Collazzone road is the ancient and abandoned square planned **castello di Speltara** with a single, high corner tower, surrounded by a strong wall. The first records date back to the end of the 13th century, when Speltara was under the jurisdiction of San Terenziano. Its name derives from the cultivation of spelta, a plant belonging to the Gramineae family similar to wheat and later known as spelt.

Speltara followed the historical events of Guado Cattaneo and its neighboring territories, becoming alternately a Perugian domain, an outpost of the leader Braccio da Montone and a possession of the municipality of Todi. The tall and imposing castle contains a vast inner courtyard and faces the houses reserved for servants and the stable. The complex is unfortunately in a bad state of repair and would be worth restoration due to the magnificence of its architectural structure.

12

Located on Via Somigni near the town of Bastardo, the **castello di Simigni** was founded in 1103 by Semino, count of Collazzone, and fortified in 1322 with the construction of a tower and mighty defensive walls. In 1363 it was attacked and conquered by a small group of plunderers called "of the Cappelletto"; after having also conquered San Gemini and Simigni, they obtained 1000 florins from the town of Todi to leave. The plunderers kept their word, but first they created

13

a small fiefdom around the castle of Torreuccia, between Gualdo Cattaneo and Bastardo.

In 1389 Simigni passed under the domain of the Trinci family, in 1410 under Braccio da Montone and then again to the Trinci and then to the Atti family. In 1435 Corrado XV Trinci returned Simigni to the governor of Perugia, Monsignor Alberto Alberti. The lordship of the Atti passed the castle later under the jurisdiction of the Cistercian abbey of Chiaravalle; subsequently it became a county of Count Federico di Simigni. In 1645 it was reacquired by the Oddi di Todi; at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the prior of Todi, Benigno Degli Oddi, made important embellishments and restorations in the

city. Currently the castle belongs to the Bonadies family of Rome.

The **castello di Forte Sorignano**, now a private property transformed into a historic resort, dates back to the 8th century and was used to defend the western territories of the Duchy of Spoleto. Once the gate is entered, the imposing walls give way to the intimacy of the courtyard overlooking the valley and its ancient halls.

[www.fortesorignano.com](http://www.fortesorignano.com)

In Pomonte, above Via Case Marco stands the **castello di Pomonte**, already owned by the counts of Antignano. In 1318 the castle rose up against

14

15



### To end in style: the garden of Helga Brichet in Santa Maria in Portella

The garden of Helga Brichet is really worth a visit: it houses the most complete collection of European roses in Europe. Featuring in the *Italian Botanical Heritage*, a prestigious digital guide to Italian botanical heritage, this two hectare park is home to all kinds of roses free to grow as they wish, clinging to trees and bushes and reaching up to 10 meters tall.

Mrs. Brichet is a true rose expert. She has been the President of the World Federation of Rose Societies and her lengthy travels around the world have given her the opportunity to research, identify and introduce new or ancient and forgotten species of this marvelous flower into Italy. It is no coincidence that, among all the places she visited, she decided to bring the fruits (or better, the flowers) of her research to this enchanting natural setting of Santa Maria in Portella. See for yourself!

Tour reservations:  
Ph.: +39 0742 99288

the Guelfs refusing to pay taxes and to defend the church with weapons, proclaiming itself a follower of Count Federico I da Montefeltro who was spreading over the Umbrian territory. In 1322 it was subjugated and made a tributary of Todi. In 1421 Pomonte

passed under the vicariate of the Trinci family with Corrado XV; in 1451 it was given as a fief to the Crispolti family from Bettona who held the property until 1658, when it was returned to the Pope.



# Celebrations and events in the area of Gualdo Cattaneo

## **GENIUS LOCI MUSIC FOR FINE PALATES**

**(July)**

A fascinating combination of music and food. Under the evocative Fortress of Gualdo Cattaneo, a wandering music embracing tradition and contemporary sounds is the background to the highest expression of the genius loci of these lands: the Sagra di Montefalco.

## **PORCHETTIAMO**

**(May)**

The best producers of "porchetta" (spit-roasted pork) from the Umbria, Tuscany, Latium, Marche, Emilia Romagna Regions as well from Calabria and Sicily meet in San Terenziano every year in May. The Italian Porchetta Festival Porchettiamo is held here. One of the most tasty, ancient and popular foods of the Italian gastronomic tradition is offered in its many variations alongside selected craft beers and wines of the Strada del Sagrantino. A gastronomic journey featuring porchetta and other street food, workshops, tastings, music, walks and games.

*Information:*

*Anna Setteposte Eventi e Comunicazione  
info@porchettiamo.com  
www.porchettiamo.com*

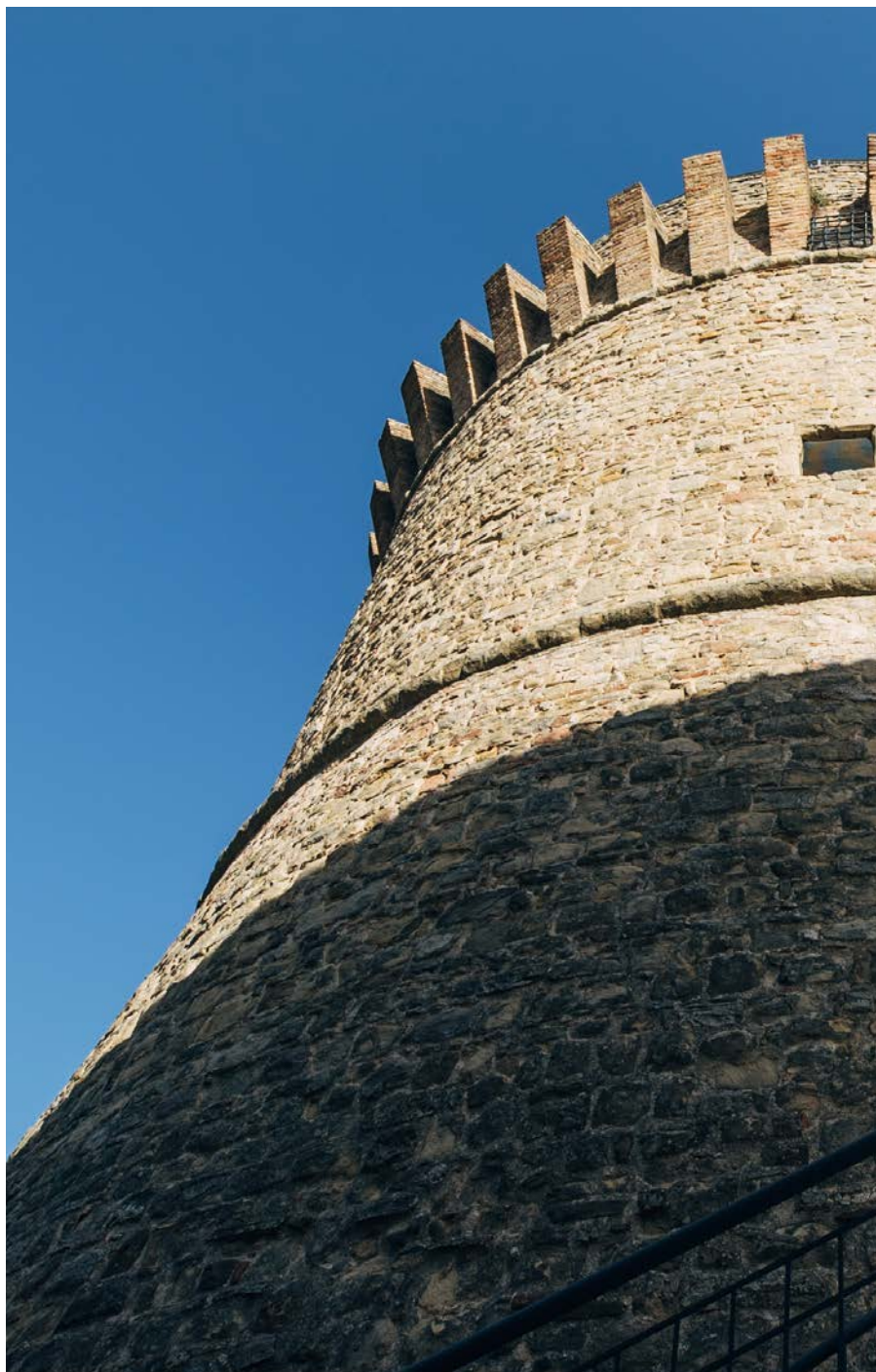
## **LIVING NATIVITY OF MARCELLANO** **(December 25th - January 6th)**

For thirty years, at Christmas time, the living Nativity scene has been recreated in Marcellano, where the Gospel story intertwines with popular imagination.

*Marcellan Living Nativity Association  
Via Matteotti, 1  
Gualdo Cattaneo  
presepeparcellano@gmail.com  
Tel.: Massimo +39 328 4506080,  
Alessandro +39 393 4727586  
www.presepeparcellano.com*







## Typical products and handicrafts

**Olive trees** and **vines** define the Gualdo area; in addition to the Sagrantino DOCG, the Rosso di Montefalco DOC and the Grechetto dei Colli Martani wines, there are eleven olive oil mills operating between October and December, producing an extra virgin olive oil of the highest quality. Pomonte di Gualdo Cattaneo is the only place to produce **charcoal obtained from plants**, an activity revived during the village festival in the

first fortnight of August.

San Terenziano is famous for the **art of stonemasons**, artisans who have been working the pink stone of Mount Subasio for generations, making architectural features used in gardens and homes all over the world.

Finally, local bees produce excellent **honey** in their ideal habitat in the flowery valleys between the fortresses and castles.

### The Cicotto from Grutti

The ultimate Slow Food, **Cicotto** is a typical Grutti dish made with all the cuts of pork cooked very slowly together with pork fat and various spices.

Another recipe based on pork is the **padellata di maiale con torta sul panàro**: pieces of pork browned and stewed in white wine and served with a cake cooked on the panàro (type of plate) instead of bread.





«Castel Ritaldi. Town hall subjected to the District, Delegation and  
Diocese of Spoleto, 715 persons.»

«Giano. Town hall subjected to the Government of Montefalco. District,  
Delegation and Diocese of Spoleto, 877 persons.»

*Alphabetical Index of all the places of the Papal State, Rome 1829*

**Itinerary #4**

# CASTEL RITALDI AND GIANO DELL'UMBRIA

THE VILLAGES OF THE  
MARTANI MOUNTAINS

2 days



# THE VILLAGES OF THE MARTANI MOUNTAINS

The Martani mountain chain is about 30 km (18.5 miles) long and divides the Spoleto Valley to the east and the Tiberina Valley to the west. Anthropization has not yet affected the complex ecosystem of these mountains, characterized by extensive wooded areas of hollyoaks, beeches and Turkey oaks, by numerous botanical and animal species and by interesting geological and karst phenomena. The Martani Mountains still safeguard the remarkable history of medieval villages, fascinating feuds and spiritual abbeys. Christianity penetrated and spread to Umbria from this natu-

ral pass thanks to those remembered in the hermitages and the abbeys of this mountainous ridge. The places of worship counterbalance, especially around Giano dell'Umbria, with castles and fortresses placed in the middle of tiny villages, which enjoy beautiful views and pure air.

The itinerary starts in **Castel Ritaldi**, where the weather conditions favor the cultivation of vines.

Inside the 12th century walls is the **chiesa di Santa Marina** (14th-15th century). Just outside the village, along the Colle del Marchese, is the Romanesque **pieve** (parish church) di **San**





**Gregorio in Nido** (1141), surrounded by olive groves with splendid bas-relief decorations on the façade and on the portal.

If you turn towards the hamlet of **Moricchia** in the direction of Giano dell'Umbria, you come to this wonderful village, famous for its excellent extra virgin olive oil, just like the town of Trevi. You will feel like you are walking through history, between circular walls and medieval alleyways, with the beautiful **Palazzo del Municipio** (Municipal Palace) and the 14th century **chiesa di San Michele**. Before climbing towards the mountain, a

small detour leads to the **abbazia** (abbey) of **San Felice** (ca. 1130 A.D.), a hidden treasure among the olive trees that housed the bones of the martyr Saint Felix at the time of Emperor Constantine.

Climb from here towards the mountains following the signs for Monte Martano; you could also start with the "Martani trekking" path, going as far as **Scoppio**, the central hub of the route with a hiking center open by appointment.

The next stop is **Giano dell'Umbria** (see below, page XXX).





- 1 CASTEL RITALDI**  
GPS 42.823179, 12.672169
- 2 CHIESA DI SANTA MARINA**  
GPS 42.823667, 12.672389
- 3 CHIESA DI SAN NICOLA**  
GPS 42.823056, 12.672056
- 4 PIEVE DI SAN GREGORIO DI NIDO**  
GPS 42.830139, 12.665806
- 5 CHIESA DI SAN QUIRICO**  
GPS 42.826806, 12.646389
- 6 MADONNA DELLA BRUNA**  
GPS 42.819583, 12.688583
- 7 CASTEL SAN GIOVANNI**  
GPS 42.835028, 12.705611

- 8 GIANO DELL'UMBRIA**  
GPS 42.833463, 12.577700
- 9 CHIESA DI SAN MICHELE ARCANGELO**  
GPS 42.833522, 12.577771
- 10 CHIESA DELLA MADONNA DELLE GRAZIE  
O SANTA MARIA**  
GPS 42.833389, 12.577611
- 11 CHIESA DI SAN FRANCESCO**  
GPS 42.834389, 12.578806
- 12 ABBAZIA SAN FELICE**  
GPS 42.843361, 12.568250
- 13 MONTECCHIO**  
GPS 42.845750, 12.540611
- 14 CASTAGNOLA**  
GPS 42.839806, 12.560944
- 15 MORCICCHIA**  
GPS 42.817556, 12.603639
- 16 VILLA RUFIONE**  
GPS 42.851389, 12.547083

# WHAT TO SEE



## Castel Ritaldi

Located in the central-southern part of Umbria, along the road that leads from Spoleto to Montefalco, Castel Ritaldi is a small village on the top of the Scigliano hill, at the foot of the Martani Mountains, from which it overlooks a largely agricultural area, characterized by woods and evocative slopes, crossed by paths for walkers, horse riders or cyclists.

At the center of a dense network of ancient routes - the concentration of which is evidenced by scattered necropoleis or tombs -, probably dating from the site of a Roman *vicus* (village) in the 6th century AD. The most notable of the numerous Roman archaeological finds is the *Lex Lucaria*, a document regulating the felling of trees in the woods sacred to Giano.

It became the capital of the territory of Normandia (from Norman or normal, i.e. subject to the will of the Church), a small administrative province that lasted for two centuries despite constant challenges by Spoleto. At the end of the 12th century it suffered extensive damage, but by 1213 it had already been completely rebuilt.

The feudal lords Ritaldi were followed by the Lombardi Cattanei, Lombard from Trevi and their relatives, who do-



nated the castle to the Duchy of Spoleto on June 19th, 1254. In the 12th century it became part of the group of Norman castles; in a document from 1180 it appears to be the home of the Cattanei Ritaldesi. The castle was destroyed during the wars between the Papacy and the Empire, to be then entirely rebuilt at the beginning of the 13th century. In the second half of the 14th century sturdy city walls were built; their towers, arrow slits and embrasures are still almost intact. Within the high ramparts the village grew over time with its narrow streets.

Throughout the 18th century Castel Ritaldi and its territory remained under the dominance of Spoleto and olive production began in this period.

Due to the administrative measures of Pope Pius VII, the village became autonomous in 1816 and in 1875 was aggregated to Castel San Giovanni di Spoleto becoming Castel Ritaldi e San Giovanni, not being given its current name until 1927.

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part of the church, a magnificent representation of the *Madonna del Soccorso*. The Virgin, wrapped in a starry mantle, is brandishing the scourge (type of lash) of the Disciplined, a Christian confraternity whose members flagellated themselves in penitence; with the scourge, the Virgin is saving a child possessed by the devil. This image is typical of the Order of the Augustinians, in whose churches it was widely represented during the 15th and 16th centuries. The dismayed mother and the child's crib are also in the painting, while the background is filled with a landscape and two hunters. The painting is usually attributed to Francesco Melanzio from Montefalco, but it is instead ascribed by scholars Gnoli and Todini to Lattanzio, son of the more famous Nicolò di Liberatore known as Alunno. The attribution is probably correct; in fact, you can still feel the influence of Nicolò di Liberatore in the painting, while the landscape is reminiscent of Pinturicchio.

Moreover it is worth observing, on the bottom wall, a fresco with the *Madonna and Child* in a mandorla from Serafini (1508). To the right of the altar is a niche with an interesting fresco, although in need of restoration, by Tiberio of Assisi (a student of Perugino): signed and dated 1512, it shows the *Eternal Father with the Virgin, the Angels and Saints*.

The second most important church in Castel Ritaldi is the **Church of San Nicola**, dating back to the 15th century and now deconsecrated.

2

The **chiesa di Santa Marina**, built between the 14th and 15th century and located within the castle walls in the center of Castel Ritaldi, between Via del Teatro and Via della Carbonara, has been widened and its main axis modified, together with several other changes throughout the centuries. On each side there are two windows, while on the side facing the square there is a clock and an ancient sundial. Its impressive red stone bell tower characterizes the entire view of Castel Ritaldi.

The interior has a wide, light nave with large niches and two chapels, and a very high trussed ceiling.

To the left of the apse, an altar is adorned with the most beautiful

3

### The worship and legend of the *Healing Virgin*

The worship of the Healing Virgin was born in Palermo in 1306, when on his deathbed Augustinian father Nicola la Bruna had an apparition of the Mother of God who miraculously healed him. The Virgin asked him to spread the word about the miracle and to be invoked as the "Healing Virgin". The Augustinians have promoted this worship ever since, placing statues of the Virgin in the churches of their monasteries.

The legend associated with this particular iconography of the Healing Virgin was reported by Umberto Gnoli as follows: «Several years ago, in the Augustinian church of St. Mary in the village of Sassoferrato I saw almost in the center of the nave a construction in wood and papier-mâché representing the Healing Virgin. There were some candles burning around the group, and an old woman kneeling with a boy said to me: "Once upon a time there was a mother who, annoyed by her son constantly crying and screaming, in a moment of anger exclaimed: 'Go to hell!'. And immediately a horrible devil appeared and grabbed the baby to take him away. The desperate mother turned to the Virgin for help, who immediately chased the devil away with a stick and gave the child back to his mother. Every year, on Easter Tuesday, mothers come to pray at the feet of this statue with their children; they've changed the story a bit and now say that the child had been naughty, so the devil came to get it, but the true story is what I've just told you". This was how I first learned about the miracle of the Healing Virgin, from a woman in the crowd. I have been interested in this iconographic theme ever since and I have found several examples, all in the Marche and Umbria regions or in the bordering areas or coming from those regions, and generally in convents and churches or brotherhoods of the order of St. Agostino».

On the façade there is a beautiful 1486 sculpted portal with seraphic heads and the inscription *Hoc opus fieri fecit Franciscus Baracti*, a small bell tower on the left hand side and a small apse. The interior, made of

squared red stone walls, holds frescoes by the school of Giovanni di Pietro, better known as Spagna; those that decorate the tambour may be by Francesco Melanzio.

## Around the walls

4

1 kilometer (half a mile) north of Castel Ritaldi, along the road that connects Castel Ritaldi and Colle del Marchese there is the **Pieve** (church) di **San Gregorio in Nido** in open countryside. It was built in the Romanesque style in about 1141 and was a parish of Castel Ritaldi until 1818.

Beautiful bas-relief decorations feature on the façade and on the portal, with a four-ringed arch. Next to the central rose-window there are two grinning devil masks. The inscription shows their names: *Pamea and Genophalus Inferus*. The two demons are faced by the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah; it was all once surmounted by the depictions of the four Evangelists, of which only John's eagle remains. The demonic figures contrasted by Prophets and Evangelists probably had an exemplary function, like the decorations in Gothic cathedrals.

A winged male figure appears on the inner ring of the portal; vines branch out from the center with small winged geniuses picking off the grapes flanked by monsters, lions, griffins, panthers and a knight riding a lion.

On the right hand wall of the interior is a fragment of a 4th-century sarcophagus depicting three male faces. Two Roman inscriptions have been used as steps to the baptismal

font and the altar table.

The **chiesa di San Quirico** is important to the very ancient worship of St. Quirico, but especially because of the discovery of a stone, built into the wall of the church, which is inscribed with a law called *Lex Luci Spoletina*.

5



This law, which forbade the felling of trees in the sacred woods of the territory of Spoleto, dates back to the second half of the 3rd century BC. This stone is now in the collections of the National Archaeological Museum of Spoleto.

The text of the law states: «No person may defile this forest nor carry away by wagon or in arms anything that belongs to the forest, nor cut it, with the exception of the day of the annual sacrifice; on that day it will be lawful to

cut it without guilt, if this is done for the purpose of the sacrifice. If anyone desecrates it, he will atone for his guilt by sacrificing an ox to Jupiter; if one desecrates it with intent, he will atone for his guilt by sacrificing an ox to Jupiter and shall pay a fine of 300 asses. The magistrate shall enforce this atonement and fine».

In the Etruscan and Roman world the sacredness of the countryside, of the woods, of the natural caves and of the mountains was often reinforced by the belief that deities lived there, with the power to protect specific places or people who frequented them. In the Roman world, the term *lucus* designated a sacred forest; consecration assured - thanks to laws that prevented the desecration of and interference with the area - protection from indiscriminate deforestation.

The *Lex Luci Spoletina* is the first attestation of a Roman law regulating the use of wooded areas. Its discovery has allowed us to deepen our knowledge of the Old Latin and the Roman law from the 3rd century B.C.

Not far from Castel Ritaldi is the locality of **Bruna**, a settlement of a few houses that saw a considerable development after the Second World War thanks to the intersection of several streets. At the bridge over the Tarena creek, which was a medieval toll point controlled by the lords of Castel Ritaldi, the Spoleto-Montefalco road crosses a narrow road that in Roman times connected the two parts of the Via Flaminia.

The town owes its name to the **santua-**

**rio** (sanctuary) della **Madonna della Bruna**. The origin of the sanctuary and of the fresco decorating it is a miracle reported in a parchment written by Don Bernardino Sperandio, rector of the church in the mid-17th century. It tells the legend that on June 6th, 1506 a group of pilgrims, on their way to Montefalco with a banner to venerate the blessed Chiara, paused in the shade of old oak trees along the creek. When the pilgrims got up to resume their journey, they could not raise the banner until they had painted the image represented on the banner on the wall of the church. According to the legend, the painter who had outlined the work returned to the church in order to complete the painting, but found it miraculously finished.

A spectacular example of Bramante-inspired Renaissance architecture, the sanctuary was built starting in 1510 and consecrated in 1576. The brick built church is very original, extremely slender and is not decorated; on the façade and around the building very high pilasters go from small stone bases up to the top of the building. On the façade there is a small bell gable, probably dating from later.

The interior has a Latin cross single nave; three arms are completed by equal sized apses, covered by a dome. The nave has a quadrangular plan covered by a cross vault; on each side wall there are two niches. The eight pillars that support the dome are placed directly on the ground and crowned with Corinthian style capi-



tals. The high altar is decorated with a large fresco showing the Madonna della Bruna, attributed to Tiberius of Assisi; the name "La Bruna" derives from the particularly dark skin of the Madonna's face. The frescoes in the apse are the work of the Spoletian painter Piermatteo Piergili.



riod of bitter dispute between Trevi and Spoleto, which only ended in 1518. The Pope returned to Spoleto in 1520; between 1580 and 1581 the fortress served as a shelter for the famous bandit Petrino di Giovanni Leoncilli, who was rampant in the area. After being freed from the jurisdiction of Spoleto and having become an autonomous municipality, Castel San Giovanni was definitively annexed to Castel Ritaldi in 1875, but the denomination "Comune di Castel Ritaldi and Castel San Giovanni" remained until 1929.

Castel S. Giovanni has a square plan; it was originally defended by a moat (visible until the Second World War) and by a palisade, later replaced by a 150 meter (500 ft) long surrounding wall with strong cylindrical towers at the four corners. On the bridge that leads to the entrance door - flanked by a tall square tower edged with Guef crenelations - you can see the remains of the ancient drawbridge. The 21.48 meter (70 ft) high door tower is the tallest of the five castle towers.

This well preserved castle is also a treasure to behold within the walls; there are noble residences from the 15th century and, raised above the level of the square, the church of San Giovanni Battista. With a beautiful 16th century door, the church holds frescoes from the Umbrian school and an altarpiece attributed to the 17th century painter Giuseppe Ghezzi.

7

4 kilometers (2.5 miles) from Castel Ritaldi, the hamlet of **Castel San Giovanni** is surrounded by a castle, built in 1376 by Cardinal Egidio Albornoz and given the name of San Giovanni della Botonta. It was the fortress of the Bitonta or Botontei family; in 1400 it was occupied by Ugolino IX Trinci.

Pope Martino V returned it to Spoleto and in the following years it remained under Spoleto's control until it passed under the jurisdiction of Trevi in 1471 with a bill issued by Pope Sixtus IV. The decision gave rise to a pe-

### **An original artist: Corrado Spaziani**

Born on 6 February 1921 in Castel Ritaldi, in 1957 he joined the group of Terni artists "La Soffitta"; in the following year he celebrated his first national exhibitions and award ceremonies.

Real success came in 1967, when he exhibited in Paris at the Vendôme Gallery. On this occasion he was noticed by Armand Nakache, exponent of Fantastic Expressionism, who became one of his greatest estimators.

French critic Robert Vrinat wrote about him at that time: "Corrado Spaziani has explored the art of his time, recognized its origins, assimilated it, dominated it, and every subject has resonated in him so to let him develop his self-knowledge." He started as a figurative painter, then he gradually synthesized his work: figures were simplified, perspective and proportions disappear in favor of a more personal and empathetic perception of the subject. He passed away in 1986.

Spaziani understood the origins of contemporary painting and reworked the topics addressed by the great paintings of the past, such as *Still Life with fruit baskets*, created with large, rapid strokes, reduced to their essential geometric nature of simple spheres or cylinders; the Bathers, a favorite subject for many paintings at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries; the realism of his painting can be seen in his *Quartered Lamb*. Spaziani painted also plenty of landscapes; they are mainly glimpses of the Valnerina and of Venice, a city to which he was profoundly attracted.

## **Festivals and events**

### **LAND OF FAIRY TALES (third weekend of September)**

The event-contest, founded in 2000 with the aim of spreading the tradition of the fairy tale as a means of expression, particularly among young people, is dedicated to the memory of Mario Tabarrini, born in Castel Ritaldi and author of fiction books, novels and stories for children.

The literary competition and its awards allow readers to enjoy the pleasure of reading and writing and to share the ability to make a story alive. Events, games, music and tasting opportunities take place in a festive atmosphere. The awards ceremony takes place on the third Sunday of September; adults and children can both take part with their fairy tales and they have to

present the story by the end of May. The final evening includes firework shows, music and tasting of typical local products.

To increase the quality of the event, in recent years the Municipality of Castel Ritaldi has established firm relationships with organizations such as the Presidency of the Italian Republic, the Ministry of Education, the Umbria Region, the Province of Perugia, the University of Perugia, and Local

Action Group "Valle Umbra". In addition to those bodies there are the Municipal Library "Corrado Spaziani", specialized in fiction for children and books on popular traditions, and the literary path "Health Route", an itinerary flanked by illustrated totems that bring visitors into a fantastic world, specially designed for children.

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## **FRANTOTIPICO (November)**

Frantotipico is an occasion to celebrate the traditional specialties of the area, in particular the extra virgin olive oil and the mills that produce it. It takes place on the occasion of the olive harvest in the small medieval village of Colle del Marche, a hamlet of Castel Ritaldi, home of three oil mills, surrounded by hectares of fruit trees. Frantotipico revives the ancient ritual of bread and oil that meet in a happy marriage of traditional flavors. Guests can taste

the new oil and watch the various stages of processing olives that take place in the mills, guided by skilled and professional experts. The days in the oil mills are enriched by musical entertainment, folk songs and dances, craft shops animation and a market of local products.

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## **Typical products and handicrafts**

Castel Ritaldi is synonymous with **oil** and **wine**; its precious land is actually part of both the Extra Virgin Olive Oil Road of Umbria and the Strada del Sagrantino (Sagrantino Trail). The **truffle** makes this land a paradise for food lovers; the prized

black truffle grows in the period from February through March, while from May onwards the less valuable, but equally fragrant and tasty white truffle grows in the summer. **Saffron** production is also becoming increasingly important.



## Giano dell' Umbria

Along the eastern slope of the Martani Mountains, the territory of Giano dell'Umbria overlooks the Valley of Spoleto from a breathtaking viewpoint. A former rural settlement built in Roman times near the *Via Flaminia Vetus*, which connected Rome with the Adriatic Sea, Giano dell'Umbria has much older origins. They go back to Umbrian, Etruscan and Roman settlements, and its name refers to the Roman deity *Janus*. The important necropolis of Montecerreto, dating back to the Roman period and later destroyed, is still remembered.

The barbarian invasions didn't spare Giano. Ruled alternately by the Church or the Emperor, at the end of the 12th century it passed into the hands of a local feudal family that was under the castles of Montecchio and Castagnola. Granted to Spoleto in 1247, it became a rural commune and remained under the Spoleto governance, with ups and downs, until the beginning of the 19th century, when it became a free municipality with jurisdiction over Montecchio, Castagnola, Morcicchia, Moriano and Colle del Marchese. The municipal honor, with the exclusion of the area of Colle del Marchese, was recognized even after the unification of Italy. The center still has a typical medieval



appearance, with two surrounding walls and a northward extension dating back to the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

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9

The **chiesa di San Michele Arcangelo**, at the top of the hill on which the settlement stands, shows evidence of a pre-existing church built between the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century. Inside, there are visible fragmentary traces in the apse of frescoes dating 1501, which can be traced back to the Spoleto artistic culture between the 15th and 16th centuries. On the left hand wall of the nave there is a valuable wooden Crucifix from the 16th century.

10

On the main square there is also **the chiesa della Madonna delle Grazie** or Church of Santa Maria, with the municipal coat of arms above the entrance. The church was built in the 14th century and completely transformed during the 18th century. In the two side arms above the altars there are two valuable paintings: on the right hand side is St. Antonio Abate by Antonio Cavallucci, and on the left the Madonna with the Child by Andrea Polinori, from 1620.

The church holds two important examples of the original 14th century decoration: a Madonna with Child above the high altar, and a *Crucifix* frescoed on the right wall, enclosed in a niche by the 18th century work. A recent, partial restoration has allowed the stone corbels of the apse to be recovered and attributed to the sculptor Paolo da Gualdo Cattaneo.

11

At one of the gateways to Giano dell'Umbria is the particularly interesting **chiesa di San Francesco** with an adjoining convent dating back to the

second half of the 13th century. The complex - damaged during the 1997 earthquake and returned to the citizens in 2009 after a long restoration work - can be considered as one of the first Umbrian-Franciscan buildings, and it can't be excluded that it was actually commissioned by the Saint himself.

The pink stone exterior, with a two-pitched roof, has a façade raised over the original one, with a buffered oculus in the middle and a recessed arch portal. The dominant feature is simplicity, typical of the Franciscan architectural ideal. On the right there is the former convent, including the refectory, well preserved and now used for events. The interior of the single-nave church has been modified in the 16th and 17th century; in the counter-façade wall is an 18th century wooden organ.

The walls are enriched with six wooden altars from the 18th century, decorated with scagliola (see below) by skilled workers of the Tuscan school, painted with floral motifs and surmounted by precious paintings. The imposing high altar, a grandiose wooden curtain in the Baroque style, hides the view of the original apse of the church decorated with precious 14th century frescoes. In the chapel of the Crucifix is a cycle of frescoes attributed to the famous painter from Foligno, Giovanni di Corraduccio (14th century).

### The altar frontals made of scagliola

The cladding that decorates the front of the altar in churches is often richly painted, inlaid, sculpted or covered with embroidered fabric. Altar frontals can also be made of scagliola, a special mixture obtained from a mineral - selenite - which in its pure state presents itself in the form of "scaglie" or flakes (hence the name scagliola). Scagliola altar frontals are very rare in Umbria.

Also known as the "marble of the poor", selenite was used to simulate marble inlays, resulting in great scenic effect: the variety and combination of colors, as well as the blaze of details (arabesques, flowers, birds of all kinds) helped to embellish Christian places of worship at much lower costs than other materials. There are many creative ideas in these works, as evidenced by the altar frontal in the chiesa di San Francesco in Giano dell'Umbria.

12

Not far from Giano stands the **abbazia** (abbey) di **San Felice**, the martyr bishop whose body, according to legend, was honorably buried here. The first establishment of a monastic community at the church was determined to be in 950 A.D. circa by Ludovico Jacobilli, a scholar from Foligno. However, the basis of this dating is uncertain, so research is still being carried out into the origins of the abbey. Materials from a pre-existent oratory were used in the construction of the 12th century church; the activity of the church is also evidenced by the Benedictine monastic community, noted in the 13th and 14th centuries.

On July 20, 1481 Pope Sixtus IV ordered the abbot of San Pietro di Bovara and the parish priest of Sant'Angelo di Giano to place the Augustinians in full possession of the Abbey, but the Augustinians only took formal possession of San Felice in 1496. The construction of the current cloister on the right side of the church seems to be

attributable to this period.

In the 16th century, due to quarrels within the order and disputes over the vast possessions of the Abbey, the building underwent significant structural changes: a cloister was created, the side naves of the church were elevated, the building was equipped with a semicircular loggia above the central nave and a with new façade, the bell tower was raised and the refectory constructed. Local sources report that at the end of the 16th century there were 28 friars and 14 novices living in the abbey.

The accusations of immorality and tax evasion which tarnished the Augustinians contributed to their removal, which occurred in 1798, following continuous conflicts with the municipality of Giano. The assets of the Abbey were confiscated and the monastery stripped of all movable goods. The assets were donated by Pope Pius VI to schools in the Municipality of Spoleto. The monastery was taken over for a

short time by the Passionists Fathers, who stayed there until 1803. From 1815 the convent was the cradle of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, founded by San Gaspare del Bufalo. The Missionaries today run San Felice as a center of spiritual retreat, a place of peace, prayer and silence, but also of hospitality.



The church is a typical example of Spoleto Romanesque architecture with Lombard influences, built during a period of extraordinary church building activity. The façade, in red blocks from the ground of San Terenziano, was enlarged and raised in the 16th century, assuming its current gabled style. Above the three-paneled, carved architrave portal is an elegant three-mullioned window, radiating light from the central nave. The simple and solemn interior has three naves: the central one has a lowered barrel vault and the two side naves have cross vaults. A steep, modern travertine staircase leads to the presbytery

and to the three bowl shaped apses.

Built thanks to many reused materials, the austere Romanesque character of the building has been brought to light by a 1957 restoration that has revealed, among other things, the original Romanesque altar hidden by the baroque one, embellished by a splendid dossal showing the *Martyrdom of San Felice*, now hosted in the National Gallery of Umbria. One Crucifix on top of the left aisle is all that remains of the frescoes that once covered the church walls.

The crypt below, dating back to the 9th century, holds the ark containing the relics of the Saint. The arches of the rectangular cloister with a cistern in the center are supported by strong quadrangular pillars with brightly colored bricks; over each pillar are frescoes of busts of saints and blessed ones. The frescoes on the walls show stories from the life of San Felice. Other frescoes showing the life of San Felice can be seen in the ancient sacristy on the first floor of the loggia. On the second floor of the loggia there is a painting of *the Healing Virgin* from 1494 by Francesco Melanzio.

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### The autochthonous San Felice olive

Da San Felice prende il nome una varietà di olivo autoctona della zona. The variety of olive indigenous to the Martani mountains takes its name from San Felice. In fact, it was the monks who selected and preserved it until today in the Abbey estates. Today the agricultural estate of San Felice is managed by the local Mountain Community: this estate has a plaque that shows the name of the painter of the frescoes of the life of San Felice, preserved in the cloister of the abbey.

## The castles of Giano

Like Castel Ritaldi, the area around Giano dell'Umbria also hosts some castles, from where unusual glimpses of the landscape can be admired and the area can be explored.

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The itinerary starts at the village of **Montecchio**, located west of Giano dell'Umbria in a dominant position along the *Via Flaminia Vetus* that went from Massa Martana to Foligno. Part of the castle walls are almost unchanged; they were built in the 12th century and then rebuilt in the 14th century. As evidence of its autonomy, in 1500 Montecchio was equipped with a Charter; the document, written in medieval Latin, was transcribed in 1838 and is now preserved in the State Archives of Spoleto.

Entering Montecchio the 16th century *Palazzo del Comune* and the medieval church of *San Bartolomeo* in white and pink stone blocks overlook the lovely little square. The interior of the church displays numerous fragments of frescoes from

various periods which witness the value of the church over the centuries; a valuable stone altar frontal from 1430 on the high altar represents the archangel Gabriel killing the dragon, St. Peter and St. Paul. Around the square there is a network of medieval buildings and alleyways with a characteristic stone structure.

Continuing South East we reach the tiny hamlet of **Castagnola**, immersed in an unspoiled landscape not far from the splendid abbey of San Felice. In the settlements history, is linked to the events of Giano, with which it often had a non-peaceful relation. The etymology of the name probably refers to the structure of the village, which resembles a chestnut (*castagna* in Italian). A Charter, written in Latin in 1486 and translated into the vernacular in 1600, governed the life of the city in the Middle Ages.

The tiny alleyways and medieval houses inside the ancient walls take us back in time. The only sacred building within the castle is the church

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of Santa Croce, probably of ancient origin but remodeled in the 1700s. Along the walls, you can enjoy a stunning view of the surrounding hills alongside the Martani Mountains and you can also see the imposing and austere Abbey of San Felice among the olive trees, ancient oaks and cypresses

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South East of Giano stands the evocative **castello di Morcicchia**, isolated from the other villages and only reachable by a dirt road. The ancient castle, perhaps once a fiefdom of the Litaldi or Ritaldi families from Spoleto, still has some of its towers, several houses and significant remains of the surrounding walls.

Almost always immersed in silence and an atmosphere of times gone by, visitors to the village can see structures in local white and pink stone, tiny alleyways and the *church of San Silvestro* from the 14th century, with a bell gable.

Along the *Via Flaminia Vetus*, between the villages of Montecchio and Bastardo, in hamlet Toccioli one can

find the archaeological excavation of the **Villa di Rufione**, a grand Roman villa from the Late Republican period, which was at its peak splendor in the early imperial period and was used continuously until the 4th century AD.

The villa was attributed to Gaius Iulius Rufio, son of a freedman of Caesar. This is a large structure that would have been around 7000 m<sup>2</sup>. The extremely fine frescoes and wall tiles indicate a wealthy client; the valuable finds from the villa (fragments of multi-colored frescoes and stuccoes, glass balsam containers, nails and artifacts in iron, coins, ornaments in terracotta and amphorae) are now visible in the Antiquarium Archaeological Museum of Montecchio.

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*www.visitgiano Umbria.it*

In a well-marked position along the road which from Giano lies the hamlet of Macciano, the ancient olive tree of Macciano is a real arboreal monument. Its trunk is of 6 meters (19.5 ft) in circumference and it is over one thousand years old



GPS 42.8459, 12.587749

# Festivals and events

## **MANGIAUNTA (first weekend of November)**

This event, whose name literally means “eat oily”, allows you to take a real tour of the mills and villages of Giano. You can taste the new oil and

the products of the best Umbrian rural tradition, from the black celery of Trevi to locally produced chickpeas, lentils and beans, along with with the excellent DOC and DOCG wines from local wineries.

## **LE VIE DELL’OLIO (THE OIL ROUTES) FESTA DELLA FRASCA RE-ENACTMENT (last weekend of November)**

There are many activities in Giano for the “bonfinita”, a closing party that sees the end of the olive harvest: trekking through the woods in search of wild herbs and mushrooms, guided tours to discover the architectural treasures of the area, fun

games for children, tasting sessions and folk music. The most outstanding of all is the Festa della Frasca, a re-enactment with a spectacular parade of floats, the center point of which is the reference to the history of the area. The event begins in Piazza San Francesco and continues in the Town Hall Square with dances and folk songs and free tastings, in a musical and joyful at LE VIE DELL’OLIO.

## **ARTE NEI CASTELLI (ART IN THE CASTLES) (August 1st-31st)**

The main musical and cultural summer festival, ranging from folk to jazz and classical music, is organized on the medieval squares of the villages and the historic churches scattered throughout the territory that serve as a natural stage. Good music, the charm of the locations and the showcasing

of typical produce all blend happily thanks to the cooperation with the main farms in the area, which at the end of the shows offer a tasting of their products.

Informazioni:  
[www.visitgiano Umbria.it](http://www.visitgiano Umbria.it)

# Typical products and handicrafts

The **extra virgin olive oil** (protected designation of origin since 1998, sub-area "Colli Martani") is the main product of the Giano agriculture, which with its 700 hectares of olive groves, seven active mills and numerous age-old plants expresses a strong, well- rooted oil culture. Thanks to the particular soil and climatological conditions of the area, a local

olive named "San Felice" (see box p. XXX) has been selected, endowed with organoleptic qualities that enhance the oil's balanced fruitiness. Besides oil and wine, this land is a valuable source of many local products such as **vegetables, grains, pecorino cheese, honey, and also black truffles, wild asparagus and saffron.**

## Activities

The area between Cesi and Giano dell'Umbria offers over 100 kilometers (62 miles) of hiking trails, which can be enjoyed on foot or by bike.

Information:

[www.visitgianoumbria.it](http://www.visitgianoumbria.it)

Altri itinerari:

[www.montagneaperte.it/itinerarieluoghi/martani-trekking/](http://www.montagneaperte.it/itinerarieluoghi/martani-trekking/)



### 1. Tra ulivi millenary e abbazie benedettine (Among the ancient olive trees and Benedictine abbeys)

10.5 km (6.5 miles) one way, 190 meters (623 feet) elevation | Travel by car, on foot or by mountain bike  
Trekking: Level E (take water with you)

The route starts from the historic

center of Giano, with its Franciscan complex and the Abbey of San Felice; along the way it is possible to see and stop at the thousand year old olive tree at Macciano, its ancient history has made it one of the landmarks of the area.

### 2. Passeggiata per i castelli tra storia e leggenda (Walking through the castles between history and legend)



7.8 km (6.5 miles) one way, 200 meters (623 feet) elevation | Travel by car, on foot or by mountain bike  
Trekking: Level E (take water with you)

The route is centered around Giano dell'Umbria with its fortified structure and churches, and goes on towards the castles of Montecchio

and Castagnola. Their history, curiosities and ancient city Charters are narrated during the trip.



### **3. Il paesaggio in un assaggio: dalla terra alla tavola (The landscape in one bite: from the land to the table)**

*13 km (8 miles), 300 meters (984 feet) uphill elevation | Travel by car or bike (all asphalt)*

The itinerary winds through traditions and food and wine delights. The first stop is the centuries old olive tree at Macciano, and then one moves on to visit the Abbey of San Felice and discover the many uses of wine and oil in the Benedictine monastic tradition. The route ends with the Antiquarium of Montecchio where, in addition to the extraordinary history of the Villa di Rufione, you can learn about culinary traditions in Roman times.



### **4. Martani trekking**

*Whole route: about 120 km (74.5 miles) between Giano and Cesi. The section in Giano is 25.5 km (16 miles), 900 meters (half a mile) uphill elevation*

*Can also be done on horseback or mountain bike.*

*Difficulty level EE (take water with you)*

Created by the Mountain Community of the Monti Martani, Serano and Subasio, it allows you to cross an impressive part of the Martani Mountains through the Municipalities of Massa Martana, Giano dell'Umbria and Spoleto. The various routes that make up the Martani trek are marked and signposted.

### **5. Erbe aromatiche (Aromatic Herbs)**

*2 itineraries: A) 5.2 km (3 miles); B) 2.75 km (1.7 miles), 200 meters (656 feet) elevation | Just trekking  
Difficulty level EE (take water with you)*

Wild herbs used in the kitchen tell of a farming culture materially poor but rich in its contact with the natural world, now almost forgotten. Foraging for herbs is a healthy and relaxing pastime that leads to the discovery, or rediscovery, of traditional dishes. The itinerary follows the route of the Martani Trekking.







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