

SAN MARCELLO PITEGLIO, PISTOIA MOUNTAINS

KNOW



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The murals of memories

The Parco delle Stelle

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The Mysteries of Lolle

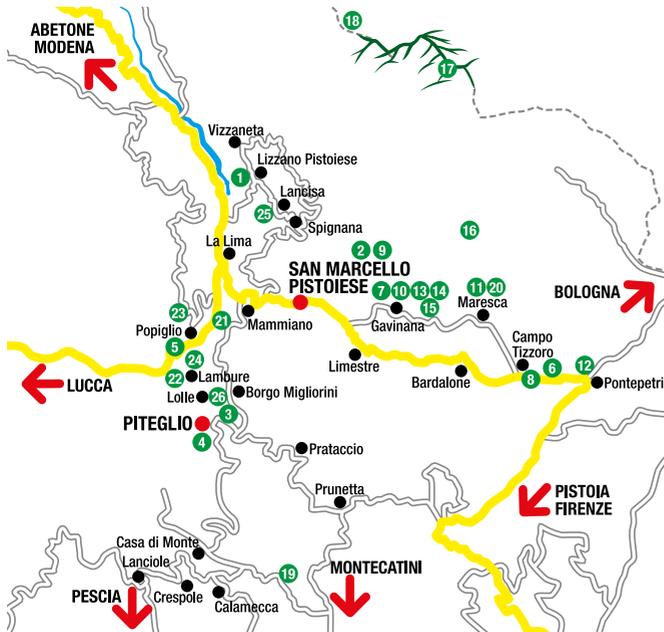
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Presentation

The territory of the Pistoia Mountains is exciting and offers you unique and different experiences. The Municipality of San Marcello Piteglio, whose territory covers over 40% of the area, has created three presentation brochures of some of the opportunities you can enjoy, with the clear aim of helping you plan your holiday and

enliven your stay. “Discovering”, “Knowing” and “Walking” are the titles of the brochures that contain relevant suggestions for experiences: here you will find curiosities about our villages and in reading them you will find many common threads connecting history and humanity; you will discover opportunities for leisure and learning, from the largest, still existing underground anti-aircraft shelters to the chance to observe



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Tourist information:

Municipality of San Marcello Piteglio - tel. +39 0573 621289/90
 Eco-museum of the Pistoia Mountains - toll-free number 800 974102 (Italy)

planets in the solar system, you will be able to traverse centuries of sacred history and immerse yourself in the culture of the area; you can plan your favourite sporting activity in a fabulous setting and walk from the valley, 342 meters above sea level, up to 1875 meters above sea level on the Apennine ridge. You are welcome to our territory. The Municipal Administration trusts that your stay and the emotions you will

experience will live up to expectations. This brochure together with the other two that make up our presentation package are available at the tourist information point of the Municipality in the chief town of San Marcello Pistoiese. They are distributed and can be consulted in all hospitality accommodation in the area. Enjoy your stay – full of emotions and discovery!

The Lizzano murals The murals of memories

When we talk about murals very often we think of simple acts of vandalism, written on walls without any value or art. But nothing could be further from the truth! Murals can have great artistic value and the town of Lizzano is an example. The murals in Lizzano began thanks to an American sergeant.

In 1945 Sergeant Murphy found shelter with his fellow soldiers in the Church of Lizzano. There he was struck by the beauty of the church and of the crucifix by Baccio di Montelupo.



Forty years later, the same officer, now a priest, started an initiative of remembrance and the celebration of peace. Artists from the “Donatello Group” in Florence painted the first murals, focused on topics of fraternity and spirituality.



The Parco delle Stelle

The Parco delle Stelle is located next to the Astronomical Observatory of the Pistoia Mountains. It offers a journey into the universe through reproductions of planets and sculptures. It is an authentic “planetary trekking” that reproduces our solar system, with a brief informative description.

From the fantastic “garden of the sun”, work of sculptor Andrea Dami, it is possible to observe the “Portatrici di Stelle”, work by Silvio Viola dedicated to the Milky Way. The wonderful Parco delle Stelle hosts open air concerts and cinema.



rather, it makes visible”. (Paul Klee)



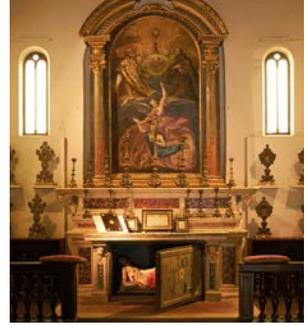
The Pieve of Santa Maria Assunta and the Pieve Vecchia of Piteglio

In Piteglio, still today, legend, art and faith mingle in a small ampoule: sacred relic containing the Virgin Mary's milk.

The story tells of a knight who reached Piteglio with the precious relic: an ampoule, containing drops of milk; the people, thrilled, begged him to leave it in the village, but he did not want to and tried



to escape during the night. He was stopped by the unexpected and miraculous sound of the bells that made everyone aware of his escape; in the commotion the vial fell to the ground, spilling its sacred content, which the people of Piteglio quickly collected, together with grass and little stones. Piteglio thus is guardian of a heartfelt veneration, deriving from cults connected with Mother Earth, who nourishes her children with the Holy Milk. Once the ritual blessing of the valley was carried out from the external pulpit of the Pieve Vecchia, with the legendary ampoule. Today the ampoule is conserved at the top of the village, in the Pieve Castellana dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta.



The Pieve of Santa Maria Assunta and the Diocesan Sacred Art Museum of Popiglio

The ancient village of Popiglio with its monumental parish church dedicated to Saint Maria Assunta is a place of encounter between sacred art and popular culture, conferring an artistic heritage that is unique. An extraordinary treasure divided between the Romanesque parish church, the sixteenth-century sacristy and the Oratory of the SS. Sacramento, that make up the Diocesan Museum of Sacred Art, managed by the Eco-museum of the Pistoia Mountains. Inside, precious Roman baroque art works, an organ made in the 17th century by papal organ-builder Giuseppe Testa, precious sacred vestments, silver and liturgical furnishings.

*“Day of arrivals, your day, Saint Benedict: here is a first swallow in flight.
And it finds the poplars in the solitary valley, the big parish church, the tiny nest”.*
(Giovanni Pascoli- La Pieve)



The Church of Campo Tizzoro Art and culture Places of faith

Between 1910 and 1911 the SMI (*Società Metallurgica Italiana* - an Italian metalworking company) built an industrial complex in the valley bottom, at the confluence of the Maresca and Bardalone torrents - site, according to some authors, of the battle between Catiline and Petreius (67 B.C.). Around the factory the village of Campo Tizzoro grew up, with the church of the same name. Covered by two-tone marble slabs in horizontal bands, the church has a splendid rose window and two imposing corner pilasters with two marble statues in the lower part. The charming porch connects the church with the very tall, striking bell tower.



The Pieve of Santa Maria Assunta of Gavinana: the organ of wonders

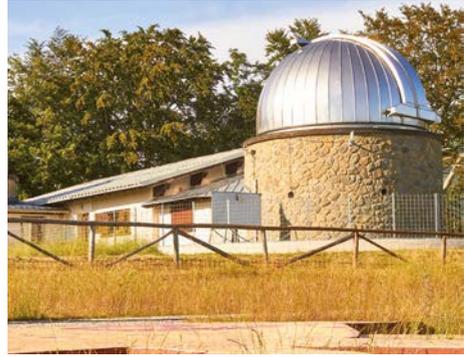
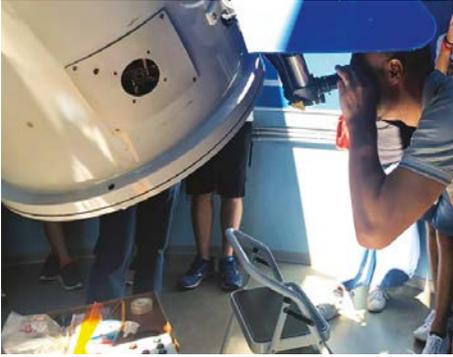
Do you hear the sound of these bells?

And this sweet twittering of birds?

They come from the extraordinary organ of the Pieve of Gavinana! 2063 canes, 57 stops, 3 manuals and 2 pedalboards in one monumental instrument, considered one of largest historical organs in Italy. This is only one of the

precious treasures conserved in the Pieve of Gavinana: the wooden statues of the Announcing Angel and the Annunciation Madonna, the two reredos in glazed polychrome terracotta: the Crucifixion and the Adoration of the Holy Sacrament, (attributed to the artist Santi Buglioni) are part of the Pieve, a place absolutely worth a visit.





Astronomical Observatory of Pian dei Termini, Gavinana: a step away from the stars

The astronomical observatory consists of a conference room and two domes that rotate at 360 degrees, used for educational purposes. Research carried out here puts the Astronomical Observatory among the top-ranking places for discoveries of new asteroids,

in a survey by the international Minor Planet Center of the United States.

The Observatory is managed by members of GAMP (astrology society of the Pistoia Mountains), who are always available for information.

For info and reservations: municipal library
0573621289



SMI Museum and Shelters

Finding the words to convey what the SMI meant for the Pistoia Mountains is almost impossible.

So to tell this story of nearly 100 years, in 2012 the SMI Museo Rifugi was inaugurated, result of a long commitment to recovering objects, materials and documents that narrate the history of the factory, in six themed rooms that study the various aspects of its life.

But the museum has much more to show: from the anti-aircraft shelters, considered the largest in Europe, to the underground tunnels that offer visitors an exciting trail.





Eco-museum of the Pistoia Mountains.

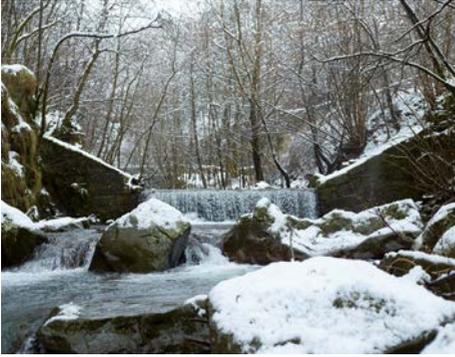
A journey to discover the memory of the territory

Discovering the Pistoia Mountains is possible, through the history, popular traditions and ancient crafts documented by the Eco-museum.

The Eco-museum lets you learn and discover popular art forms and oral traditions through numerous trails: the Ice Trail with the Ghiacciaia della Madonnina (Le Piastre); the Daily Life Trail, with the Folk Museum (Rivoreta) and the Chestnut and Charcoal route (Orsigna); the Iron Trail, with its Museum, the Garden of Renewable Energy (Pontepetri) and the ancient Ironworks (Maresca); the Stone Trail with the mediaeval settlement of Acquerino (Sambuca P.se); the Nature Trail with the Orto Botanico Forestale (Abetone) and MuNAP (Gavinana); the Sacred Art Trail with the Diocesan Museum (Popiglio).

For info: toll-free number 800 974102 (Italy)
www.ecomuseopt.it







The Antica Ferriera Papini of Maresca

[In] 1388: the history of the oldest still-existing ironworks in Tuscany began. This treasure of industrial archaeology is a valuable testimony of the steel industry. The building with its machinery has been recognised as an asset of significant cultural interest.

Visiting the Ironworks, you can see the machinery, watch the art of iron beating live, and try for yourselves forging techniques.



The Iron Museum and the Garden of Renewable Energy in Pontepetri

You can retrace the history of the iron and steel industry in Tuscany in the Iron Museum in Pontepetri, which is part of the Iron Trail of the Eco-museum of the Pistoia Mountains. In the Garden of Renewable Energy, two life size water wheels have been rebuilt, together with a real miniature hydroelectric power station, with its message on renewable and clean energy sources.



The area is also ideal for a pleasant walk in the countryside, with a walking trail that winds along the course of the Maresca torrent.

Palazzo Achilli

The small mediaeval village of Gavinana is dominated by the historic Achilli Palace, which hosts ever changing temporary exhibitions: history, nature, crafts and traditions. For children, a touch of magic: a room in the woods that recreates the experience of a day amongst the trees and animals of the forest. During the visit do not forget to look out of the windows of the top floor: Palazzo Achilli gives us a fabulous view over the red roofs of Gavinana and the gentle outlines of the Apennine mountains.



experience.”. (Leonardo da Vinci)



At MuNAP, biodiversity and history of our Apennines

When you are walking in the mountains, do you ever ask yourself: “What animals could I meet today? What bird was just singing?” If the answer is yes, then the MuNAP (natural history and archaeology museum of the Pistoia Mountains) in Gavinana is the place for you. The museum exhibits finds that narrate the natural history and human presence, found over the years. An evocative journey to learn more about our world, entering the “Grotta dell'Orso”, an environmental reconstruction that allows the visitors to travel back in time, with the skeleton of the cave bear, a species that became extinct during the Last Glacial Maximum and a specimen of native wolf, found not far from the museum.



Ferrucci Museum in Gavinana



The Museum reopened to the public in 2025, completely restored and redesigned, with a new exhibition itinerary capable of presenting the figure of the hero Francesco Ferrucci and his time in a clear, engaging, and contemporary way.

The exhibition is divided into 6 rooms and 3 thematic corridors, designed to accompany the visitor on a historical and symbolic journey; In addition to historical artifacts, animated videos - which use AI technology - and a digital game, you will also be welcomed by a three-dimensional model of 13,000 toy soldiers. A renovated Museum that combines historical rigor and narrative, restoring to the community and visitors a place of identity, memory, and beauty.

*And everything in the evening,
crickets, bells, fountains,
create concert and prayer,
trembles in the clear air.*

*But how it shines,
in the hour that has no other light,
the mantle of your wide flanks, Apennines.
(Vincenzo Cardarelli - Sera di Gavinana)*

The Teso Forest

With its tall trees, mostly beech, chestnut and fir, this magical forest is crossed by the Maresca torrent and is a hunting preserve. The fauna includes countless animal species: from red to fallow deer, from badgers to foxes, from wolves to many other species.

The Casetta dei Pulledrari, starting point of the walking trails in the Teso Forest, is also the starting point for hiking itineraries on the ridges.





The Tuscan-Emilian ridge

The ridge can be considered a real natural border, very often insurmountable - possible crossing points are very limited.

Only a few passes can be travelled: that of the Croce Arcana or, higher up, the passes of the Calanca or the Tre Termini.

The entire borderline was marked on the ground by cylindrical posts, numbered and placed at a short distance from each other. These “boundary stones” (*cippi confinar*), made of stone and firmly buried, are still traceable and visible.

The Scaffaiolo Lake, between nature and mystery

It can suddenly emerge from the fog that often surrounds this ridge, leaving you





speechless with its crystalline waters and shimmering glows.

The Scaffaiolo Lake is a real jewel, set at over 1700 meters above sea level between the peaks that divide Tuscany from Emilia-Romagna.

In summer the wild blueberry plants brightly paint the ridges in violet-blue, while in autumn the panorama is suffused with the beautiful bright red of the leaves.

Over the centuries, the lake has created many stories and legends - it is mentioned by Boccaccio in his *Dizionario geografico* (original title: *De montibus, silvis, fontibus, lacubus, fluminibus, stagnis seu paludibus, et de nominibus maris*).

The Macchia Antonini

Arriving on foot through the woods to the Macchia Antonini, immersed in lush and fresh vegetation, is undoubtedly magnificent and regenerating for the lungs and the mind. It stimulates us to remember and understand our past.

The Gothic Line, in fact, passed through here and along the way you will find three "casemates", used by the Germans as shelters and stores. Each year, on the Sunday nearest to August 20th, there is a big fair at the Macchia, one of the oldest in Tuscany, with shows, period costume parades, food stands and markets.

interesting piece of the world". (Goethe)



The Piscina delle Ginestre in Maresca

The fantastic pools of Ginestre allow you to enjoy a wonderful panorama while stretched out on your sunbed.

The pools are set at the foot of the Teso Forest, where bustle gives way to calm and tranquillity.

Having fun while being in contact with nature is possible thanks to the proximity of the pool to the beautiful forest.

Open until 7.00pm, they allow you to enjoy the sunset, poolside.





The Ponte Sospeso

The Ponte Sospeso is a pedestrian walkway that gives a breathtaking view, connecting the two sides of the Lima torrent between Mammiano Basso and Popiglio in the Municipality of San Marcello Piteglio. It is made with structures that rest on four steel cables kept under tension. Inaugurated in June 1923, it allowed workers from Popiglio to cross and go to work in the factories situated on the opposite side. In 1990 it entered the Guinness Book of Records as “the longest pedestrian suspension bridge in the world”.

The Ponte di Castruccio and the Dogane

Marking the ancient border between the mountains of Pistoia and Lucca is a bridge built of stone and river pebbles: the Castruccio Bridge.

On the left bank of the river there are two buildings called ‘the two custom buildings’, which when the bridge was built controlled the traffic of goods and people between Lucca and Pistoia. As soon as you see the bridge from afar, the desire to cross it arises, and you become curious to see all the views offered by the ‘two custom buildings’, the bridge and the landscape. From here you can practice sports such as hiking, fishing, skiing or mountain biking, or relax visiting the many villages and towns of the area.



The mediaeval archaeological site of the Torri di Popiglio

The Towers of Popiglio rise on the western side. There are two: the highest is the so-called Sycurana tower, while the second is located at a lower altitude.

They are surrounded by a very wide and

irregular wall, a wall that used the rocky escarpment to increase its defensive function. The archaeological site is easily reached by car and on foot, for a short distance, in a lovely beech forest.





Valle Lune Trails, archaeology and nature

Built in the 13th century, it was the site of repeated battles between Pistoia, Lucca and Florence.

An important strategic location, Machiavelli

describes it as follows: “Not a bird passes across the high mountains that cannot be seen from Castel di Mura”. In this site, the remains of the greatest fortress of the high mountain are clearly visible, at the centre of a crossroads of routes from Florence and Pistoia, from Lucca and Modena.

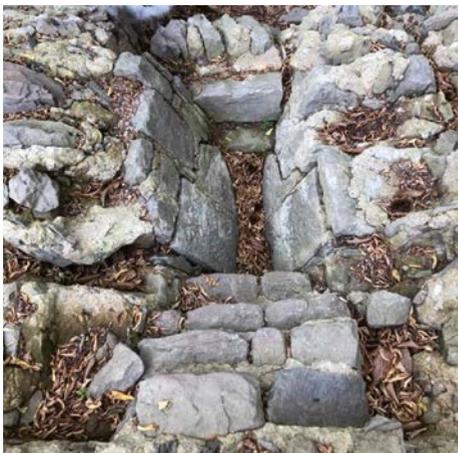


The mediaeval archaeological site of Castel di Mura

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The Mysteries of Lolle

Lolle is a little place, a bridge between past and present. Yet here there are the greatest mysteries of the mountain, such as the "Sasso che Fuma", a large monolith that many say they have seen smoking in various circumstances, giving life to numerous legends.

But the most mysterious place is the "Recinto Sacro", also called "I Tumuli" by the locals, where ten rectangular and circular structures made of rocks and surrounded by walls have been discovered.

Other unusual mysterious local structures are the "Masso della Pescaia", a large rock covered with rock carvings and the "Sasso Castellano", a presumed solar calendar.







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Municipality
of San Marcello Piteglio



ART
MUSEUM
NATURE
HISTORY
IN SAN MARCELLO PITEGLIO



MONTAGNA
PISTOIESE
IN TUSCANY, NATURALLY

