Itineraries of the

MUSEUM GRANDTOUR

ENG

VOLUME 2

New routes exploring places and landscapes of the Museum System of the Castelli Romani and Prenestini



After a first successful experiment, the Museum System of the Castelli Romani and Prenestini is back to offer a new and useful tool to discover the territory.

The appreciation shown for the first volume of "Itineraries of the MUSEUM GRANDTOUR" - which later turned into an event where participants got a chance to experience these places firsthand - has now led to the publication of a brand new volume full of places to experience.

Once again, the rich archeological, historical, artistic and environmental heritage typical of the wide area that extends from the Castelli Romani and the Prenestini Mountains, all the way to the upper Valley del Sacco, is presented in charming and unusual ways, to encourage visitors to walk these paths and see them through a different lens.

From discovering small and surprising museum hamlets, to experiencing landscapes that have inspired artists from the Grand Tour until now, to retracing the steps of all the changes that over the last century have made our towns into what they are today. From rediscovering our mythical origins full of cyclops, gods and Virgilian heroes to getting to know our noble families or the many varieties of wines, from ancient times until today.

Every place recommended has, at its core, one or more museums that are part of the Museum System, because it's from our museums that we can start (re)discovering the countless marvels that await just outside of Rome.

Serena Gara

Commissioner of the XI Comunità Montana of Lazio - Castelli Romani and Prenestini

THE GODDESS AND THE SNAKE

A historical and archeological walk through the hamlet of Lanuvio

If ancient and medieval archeology are the focus of our traveler, then this urban itinerary through the town of Lanuvio is the place for them. According to the myths, the ancient town of Lanuvium was founded around the XII century b.C. with theories on its birth being based on two different figures: a Greek-Argonaut theory that attributes it to Diomede, son of Tideo and another that sees the Trojan Fabio Pittore, who landed in Italy after the Trojan War, as the protagonist.

Lanuvio was well known in ancient times for the presence of a big **Shrine** built in the first half of the VII century b.C. dedicated to **Giunone Sospita**; the shrine was regarded as the most famous in the region for the worship of the goddess. The shrine's archeological site can be found in Villa Sforza Cesarini park - an interesting Liberty style villa from the first half of the XX century now home of the Municipal Library - and is the reason for the presence of three cylindrical blocks made out of peperino which present scale incisions, most likely linked to

the cult of the snake, widespread in ancient times and worshiped by the people of Lanuvium as mentioned by Eliano and Properzio. This cult included a ritual celebrated during Spring, where a group of young blindfolded virgins would offer flat bread to a giant snake that lived in a cave in order to insure its blessing for fertile soil: according to this hypothesis, the not so distant Pantanacci archeological site - currently found between the towns of Lanuvio and Genzano di Roma - is none other than the famous cave where the sacred snake resided. In support of this theory is the fact that hundreds of ex voto were found in the Pantanacci cave as an offer to the cave deity from its believers: they range from crockery to anatomical votive offerings, among which a previously unknown type of oral cavity, unique in the national landscape and displayed in the dedicated room at the Museo Diffuso, definitely stands out.

In the afternoon, our traveler can explore the streets of Lanuvio's medieval hamlet, to discover the aforementioned

Museum Diffuso (→ 3, 4, 5, 6). The end of the old Lanuvium was marked by the decree of Tessalonica (380 b.C.) which declared Christianity as the Empire's official religion, thus prohibiting the worship of pagan deities and shutting down their temples, including the one dedicated to Giunone Sospita. This is how we move onto the medieval history of Civita Lavinia, founded mid-X century a.C. by Benedictine monks, who built five towers, all still standing in their entirety. Among these towers stands out the picturesque Torre Maschia, part of the city walls in Via della Libertà and made up of a thick cylindrical body with an external crenelated walkway. Also known as the Tower of Porta Romana, it's adorned with the emblem of Pope Vittore III. who was probably responsible for rebuilding the town. The tower belonged to the heirs of Collonna of Palestrina until the XV century; it was then passed onto the Cesarini family and it was used as a prison in the XVII century. Today, visitors can see the narrow prison cell and, right under it, the remains of a roman water tank that's missing the traditional coverage in cocciopesto (lime mortar with crushed pottery/bricks) and which appears because of it, all the more evocative. Barely 100mt from the medieval tower, our archeo-traveler's path inside Lanuvio continues in Via Sforza Cesarini, with the spectacular Fontana Degli Scogli (fountain of the rocks). Erected in 1675 by the Architect Carlo Fontana and commissioned by Filippo Cesarini, it is thought to be a homage to Bernini's Fontana dei Quat-

tro Fiumi in Navona Square in Rome. Initially, the fountain was adorned with two giant snakes on both sides of the cliff, linking it back to the worship of Giunone Sospita, and thus making the history of Lanuvio come full circle for our tourists. Our traveler's day comes to an end near the dungeon of Palazzo Colonna where they will find, in the so-called Cantinone, "1884-1892. The excavation of Lord Savile Linley at the Giunone Sospita shrine", an exhibition dedicated to the precious sculptures of Licino Murena's donary, discovered at the end of the 1800's by the British ambassador Lord Lumley, and now back where they were first found after 130 years. It's an impressive marble sculptural group depicting horsemen and warriors, carved in the I century



b.C. at the behest of Licinio Murena, to celebrate the victory against Mitritade VI, king of the Ponto.

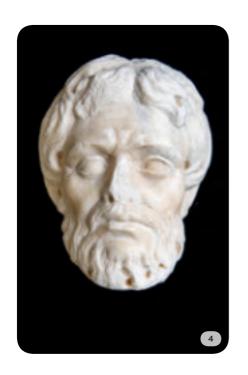
Recommendations and fun facts

You can't visit Lanuvio without trying "maza", a salted flat bread connected to the ancient cult of the Snake of Giunone Sospita: on sanctioned days, sanctified virgins crossed the woods with their eyes covered, carrying flat bread to offer the snake. According to tradition, the snake would only accept the offerings if the young women were truly virgins.

- → www.museumgrandtour.com
- → www.comune.lanuvio.rm.it











VINALIA TUSCOLANE

Wine from ancient times to present day

Visitors who are passionate about archeology and wine tourism can set off to explore the area between Frascati and Monte Porzio Catone, where wine has been celebrated since ancient times and where, to this day, a strong bond between local identity and wine-making culture remains. The common theme of this itinerary is, in fact, the secular history of the beverage sacred to the god Dionysus.

From the moment tourists reach G.Marconi Square, the beating heart of Frascati, they are surrounded by historical buildings. At the very center stands the spectacular Monumento ai Caduti della Grande Guerra (a monument to the victims of WW1), and a short distance away is the majestic Villa Aldobrandini, a luxurious aristocratic residence designed by the renowned architects Della Porta, Maderno and Fontana, for Pope Clemente VIII's nephew. Overlooking the square are the Aldobrandini Stables, a service facility to the villa of the same name, already visible in an engraving by Matheus Greuter from 1620. The structure has been modernized by the world famous architect Massimiliano Fuksas and is now home to the Museum Tuscolano (→ 7), a multifunctional space designed to host archeological collections, temporary art exhibitions, educational workshops, multimedia spaces and an auditorium. The focal point of the collection are the archeological finds from the Tusculum site. Among these stands out a pentelikon marble female statue, originally from the thermal baths of Adriano and brought to light in 2023, which could be interpreted as a maenad. This figure was linked to the worship of Dionysus, god of wine, and was said to accompany him dancing in an inebriated state, caused by the consumption of the intoxicating beverage and psychoactive plants.

Following the dionysian parade led by the maenad in the Museo Tuscolano, visitors can reach the **Tuscolo Archeological** and **Cultural Park** (\rightarrow 8) to explore the remains of the ancient town of *Tusculum*. The roman agronomist and scholar Marco

Terenzio Varrone recounts that, on the city gates, was a sign that reminded and encouraged all roman winemakers not to bring wine into the city before the celebration of the Vinalia, festivals dedicated to grape harvest and wine. This very wine was also used by Ortensio, according to Macrobio, to water the famous sycamore trees he had planted on the Tuscolane slopes, so that the trees could flourish and thrive.

Visitors will explore the remains of the ancient settlement, starting from the evocative theater, and then diving into the unique history and atmosphere of the location, which offers a series of scenic routes that cross the surrounding park.

According to the myth. Tusculum was founded by Telegonus, son of Ulysses and the enchantress Circe. Archeological data confirms that the area of the acropolis has been populated since the Iron Age. In contrast, the territory below the monumental area has only been occupied starting from VII-VI century b.C. Thanks to its strategic position. Tusculum has always had a dominant role on the surrounding territories, both in Roman and medieval times, becoming a privileged place of residence for the Roman nobility and then for the Conti of Tuscolo clan. During the conflicts between the Papacy and the Empire, the city became a dangerous rival to Rome and was therefore completely destroyed on April 17th 1191.

From Tuscolo, visitors can enjoy a special view of the Vulcano Laziale. It's these fertile vulcanian soils that give the wines harvested in this region the distinctive

traits, appreciated by wine lovers everywhere. From Tuscolo's Archeological and Cultural Park, still within the territory of Monte Porzio Catone. our travelers can reach the heart of town to relax and enjoy the last stop in their ecological itinerary: the Museo del Vino (→ 9). Launched in 2024 to celebrate the history and culture of this thousand year old product, the Wine Museum of Monte Porzio Catone preserves numerous instruments and tools for the harvest of grapes and the production, preservation, and distribution of the beverage sacred to Baccus. Among these objects are fullers, vats for filtering, wine presses, plows, barrels, pitchers and decanters of different sizes, shears, compasses, knives, scissors and more.



It will be interesting for visitors to discover the different phases that mark the work done in a vineyard and the numerous procedures necessary for pruning grapes, producing and distributing wine.

The itinerary recommended offers visitors the opportunity to reflect on the close relationship between wine and territory over the centuries and the profound transformation it underwent in recent years. Traditional inns are a thing of the past: the consumption of wine nowadays, used also as a means to socialize, is reserved for city wine bars and local wineries, where manufacturers often open the doors of their cantinas to tourists and aficionados. At the same time, wine tasting associations are promoting the study of this millennial

beverage. Wine represents, therefore, the protagonist of the "wine drinking culture" phenomenon, through training courses, themed tastings, guided tours and teaching activities in vineyards.

Recommendations and fun facts

To better enjoy the atmosphere of the itinerary, we recommend reaching the Tuscolo Archeological and Cultural Park from Frascati or Monte Porzio Catone, using one of the many trekking paths marked by the Castelli Romani Park.

We suggest trekking these particular routes from the end of April to the start of July, to take part in the events Vinalia Priora and Vinalia Tuscolane, held at the Aldobrandini Stables and the Tuscolo Archae-



ological and Cultural Park respectively. These events are dedicated to the union of archeology and wine, with the goal to support and promote local wineries through tastings and historical accounts.

By walking these paths mid-April, visitors can also take part in the event "Orchids of the World" held every year by the town of Monte Porzio Catone: a floricultural and horticultural international event enriched by musical, artistic and cultural events.

- → www.museumgrandtour.com
- → www.tuscolo.ora
- → www.mu-sa.it
- → www.museodelvinompc.it



MYTHOLOGICAL TRACES

Virgilian heroes between Albano Laziale and Pomezia

The towns of Albano Laziale and Pomezia. just a short 30 minute car ride away from one another, have a rich archeological history that binds them together, starting with the myth of their founding, attributed to the Trojan hero Aeneas. According to the legend of Albalonga, Albano Laziale was founded by Ascanius in the place indicated by a sow which appeared to his father Aeneas in a dream: a metaphor to highlight the maternal role that the city from which Albano takes its name - had for Latin people. Pomezia, known in ancient times as Lavinium, is indeed the city founded by none other than the Virgilian hero, who landed on these shores after the fall of Trov.

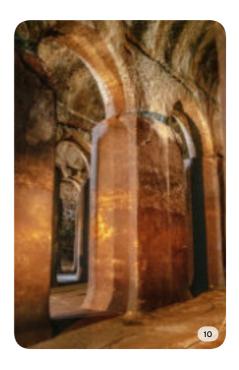
Our curious traveler, passionate about archeology, will find, in these two towns, the itinerary that's most suited to them.

Our traveler's itinerary will start in the heart of Albano Laziale, where they will be able to observe how the topographic layout of the city is largely tied to the structure of the *castrum*, a fortified rectangular

encampment surrounded by a strong wall built in opus quadratum (squared work). It was commissioned by Settimio Severo between the end of the II and the start of the III century a.C. to house the Second Partica Legion, just a few miles shy of Rome, and to ensure its safety. The 6000 legionnaires housed in the castrum and their respective families, stationed just outside the walls, ended up creating, along with artisans and merchants, a solid urban center. As of today, visitors can still observe the outer walls and the ruins of the impressive Porta Pretoria (on Via Corso G. Matteotti) main access to the Castra Albana made up of three arches, overlooking the ancient Via Appia (now Via del Rinascimento). Along the Via Appia was the monumental Tomb of the "Orazi and Curiazi". a funeral building from the late Republican age distinguished by a peculiar volumetric articulation, perhaps inspired by Arunte's tomb. The traditional name, all but verified, is inspired by the famous duel between two of the most prominent families Romans and Albans, which actually took place along the fifth mile of the Via Appia.

The Castrum also incorporated several ancient buildings like the Cisternoni (→ 10). an impressive water reserve with a trapezoidal base, divided in five aisles covered by a barrel vault and thirty-six pillars which, fueled by water mains and springs, ensured a steady water supply to the surrounding area. Another building that dates back to the same time as the Castrum is the Amphitheater Severiano: located beyond the north-eastern side of the Castrum it had an original height of 22 mt and an oval shape. The arena is still easy to see, with its Northern side carved into the surfaced tuff, the triumphant entrances, the ground floor and the first floor on the Southern side, supported by arches which in turn held up the steps and part of the triumphant entrances. The legionnaires could also enjoy the massive thermal establishment, whose ruins were turned, in medieval times, in the Cellomaio district Below the thermal baths is the Museum of the Second Partica Legion, entirely dedicated to this military force, with life-sized figures of the soldiers of the Legion and archeological finds retrieved at the Castrum site itself. Our trip to Albano Laziale ends, almost like a tangible chronicle, at the Civic Museum of Villa Ferrajoli (→ 11), situated in a neoclassical villa from the first half of the 1800's it hosts a permanent exhibition organized on three different floors with more than two thousand archeological finds that tell the tale of Albano from the Lower Paleolithic to the Renaissance.

Our traveler's itinerary through the mythical Virgilian cities of Lazio leaves again for Pomezia, to visit the Lavinium Archeological Museum (→ 13) in Via Pratica di Mare, where they will have a chance to see numerous votive materials from the Sanctuary of the XIII Altars (→ 12) that reconnect with the mythical trojan hero. The ancient Lavinium is represented not only by male heroes but by female deities too, as evidenced by the statue of the goddess Minerva Tritonia who welcomes visitors in the museum and to whom a very important sanctuary and several terracotta sculptures dating back to the V and III cen-



tury b.C. were dedicated. The life sized, polychrome terracotta sculptures displayed in the first room, originated between the V and III century b.C. which stand out for their beauty, quality of execution and attention to detail, all belong to the votive storage tied to the cult of Minerva, guardian goddess of marriages and births. As do the votive heads displayed in the Mundus Muliebris room: jewels and hairdos were faithfully reproduced as a testament to the luxury and prestige of the richest and most noble classes that visited the goddess' shrine. The museum's itinerary continues with a room dedicated to Aeneas: the ancient city was called civitas religiosa for the presence of its numerous and important sanctuaries. The

most important of all can be found in the sacred area of the Thirteen Altarsi, located right outside the city, going south. Many votive materials were found in this sacred place: one of the most interesting will be the ritual vases with black figures, imported from Greece. like the famous Dioscuri cup from the VI century b.C. Our visit to the museum ends with an evocative room dedicated to the so-called Heroon of Aeneas. The tomb was originally covered by a mound and probably belonged to an influential person from the VII century b.C., who was buried along with their precious personal belongings. At the end of the IV century b.C. the tomb, which was at that point frequently associated with Aeneas and used to hold rituals, was made into a





monument. The funerary monument became a sort of shrine, with the construction of a closed off cellar, closed with a fake tuff door and two door knockers. The monument can be found near the sacred area of the XIII Altars, both accessible through guided tours that start at the Lavinium Civic Archeological Museum, Our traveler's archeological journey ends with a time jump to present day at Largo Catone, where they're drawn to the Municipal Library Ugo Tognazzi: in fact, along the outer walls, the street artist Agostino lacurci painted a lively mural called the Antiporta, depicting stories and symbols from the Aeneid that merge the founding of the mythical city, its history and modern art

Recommendations and fun facts

We recommend visiting Albano and Pomezia during the second week of September, to take part in the merry atmosphere of the **Bajocco Festival** in Albano and to enjoy the last few sunsets by the sea: supposing that travelers will decide to stay overnight, they'll be able to split these cultural outings over the course of two days, and enjoy a recreational activity in the evening with the street artists festival, which always captivates young and old audiences alike.

- → www.museumgrandtour.com
- → www.museolavinium.it



BETWEEN NATURE AND THE HAMLETS OF THE PRENESTINI MOUNTAINS

Taking a stroll between Capranica Prenestina and Rocca di Cave

Our "grand tourist's" journey to discover the boundless landscape that extends around the Prenestini Mountains starts from the small town of Capranica Prenestina, 44 km away from Rome. Counting only 309 residents, the small town stands out against the Prenestini Mountain's ridge, reaching a peak of over 1200 mt with Mount Guadagnolo and Mount Cerella as the highest summits in the territory.

The itinerary begins in the scientific beating heart of town, with the **Naturalistic** Civic Museum of the Prenestini Mountains (+) 14, 15, 16); located in the

old Palazzo Barberini, built between the XIV and XV century, which still preserves its sixteenth-century structure, the museum's objective is for visitors to acquire a naturalistic awareness of the Prenestini Mountains area, encouraging their interest in the diversity of its natural and non natural environments through an interactive tour. The rooms offer dioramas, faithful reconstructions of the most distinctive environments in the Prenestini Mountains like pastures.

meadows, mixed woods and others, paired with explanatory panels on themes like biodiversity, geology, and paleontology of the territory, as well as progressive equipment to observe and study nature like microscopes and multimedia stations.

The first room in the museum addresses the topic of biodiversity, describing the native flora and fauna of its different ecosystems; the second room is dedicated to the origin of the Prenestini Mountains, examining the topics of geology and paleontology in more depth.

After this scientific and naturalistic immersion, our traveler can continue their path towards the small but precious village of Capranica and the **Chiesa della Maddalena**, a church tied to the Capranica family whose origin dates back to the XII century. Of its original structure, only the bell tower remains today, with some restructuring done in the 1300's; on its head stands the rather elegant and original sixteenth-century "cupolino", attributed by academics to the school of Bramante.

To discover the biodiversity of the Prenestini Mountains, our traveler can't miss a visit to the "Natural Monument" Castagneto Prenestino (chestnut grove): expanding for 166 hectares on the territories of Capranica and San Vito Romano, it consists of a vast chestnut forest (Castaneda sativa Miller) filled with monumental centuries-old trees whose naturalistic and environmental worth was maintained thanks to a delicate balance between natural dynamics and anthropic management by the relevant local entities.

This is how our traveler will move from the vastness of the landscape Capranica overlooks, to Rocca di Cave, the smallest town in the Prenestini Mountains, with only 354 residents. Focused on identifying the landscape and geodiversity of the region, in an unparalleled view that extends for over 100 km from the coast to the middle of the Appennini, our visitor clambers through the alleys of Rocca di Cave's old town center, all the way to the medieval stronghold, house of the GeoMuseum of Rocca di Cave (→ 17. 18). The museum occupies several rooms and is dedicated to the exploration of the main geological events in the history of Lazio as well as the rocks and fossils of its territory, through a series of findings, threedimensional models and sound stations. After visiting the museum, visitors can walk the geo-paleontologic path, declared a Natural Monument in 2016, to enjoy the 100 million years old fossil cliff; the abundance of fossil outcrop in this site is so impressive it is considered a "museum under the open sky", a visit you absolutely won't want to miss. "Beyond the earth and the sky" is the motto of the Geomuseum of Rocca di Cave, which boasts, among other things, a Planetarium with the sixth biggest dome in all of Italy. In the Planetarium, visitors can take part in shows and interesting lectures about space and stars thanks to interactive and innovative projections, and most of all, meet Tito, the duplicate of a big sauropod whose bones were found in the hamlet of Rocca di Cave in 2012. Six meters tall and 600 kg heavy, Tito immediately became one of the symbols of the Prenestini Mountains: from the three fossilized bones discovered, researchers were able to deduce that it was a medium-large sized dinosaur still in its developmental stage.



Recommendations and fun facts

To better enjoy the natural atmosphere of the two towns, we recommend spending the night in one of the neighboring holiday farms, to get a chance to try one of the trekking paths that cross the adjacent woods and to completely immerse themselves in nature and recharge with a nice picnic along the way.

- → www.museumgrandtour.com
- → www.museonaturalisticomontiprenestini.com
- → www.geomuseoroccadicave.it









TWO MUSEUM HAMLETS

At the discovery of Castel San Pietro Romano and Poli

Our "grand tourist"s journey to discover two of the most beautiful museum hamlets in the Prenestini Mountains area has to include the towns of Castel San Pietro Romano and Poli. If our traveler is fond of walking through alleys and woods, observing frescoes and discovering interesting facts on the history of art and contemporary film in the area, this itinerary is perfect for them!

The journey starts in **Castel San Pietro**Romano, founded in the late Bronze Age which later became the old *acropoli* prenestina where rites like the *augurium* and the *auspicium* were held. It's surrounded by a strong polygonal wall that dates back to the VI century b.C., which can still be observed during one of the main paths of the **MuDi - Diffused Museum of Castel**San Pietro Romano. Established in 2016, the MuDi's main purpose is to illustrate the history of the prenestini territory and to welcome visitors and plunge them in a glorious past made of history, archeology, art and traditions. With a set up renewed

in 2024, the MuDi finds its home in the exhibition space of Palazzo Mocci (→ 19), a building constructed in '700 by the family of the same name, during one of the many urban transformations the city underwent since the Barberini started ruling. The museum's three rooms tell the story of the Natural Landscape of the area and its transformations from Protohistory to the 1800's through the use of findings, photographs, videos and digital installations, with a focus on the figure of Adolfo Perry Pastorel, the father of italian photojournalism, who was also mayor of Castel San Pietro Romano from 1952 to 1960. A significant part of the exhibition is reserved to the film history of the town, protagonist of many movies in the Italian Neorealism movement, among which the famous Pane, amore e fantasia. The itinerary ends with a fourth room dedicated to the project MuDi Reality+, which, thanks to the use of augmented reality, takes visitors on a real journey through time, giving them an immersive experience to discover the Rocca dei Colonna, one of the town's most striking scenic views, where many cultural and astronomical initiatives take place and from which the entire prenestino territory can be observed.

After visiting the museum, travelers can move onto discovering the many scenic views and alleys and the beauty of the hamlet which boasts this prestigious history. From the Early Middle-Ages, the site became the home of a Benedictine monastery that even pope Gregorio Magno stayed at. In the XII century, the territory became an estate of the Colonna family, who had a castrum built, for strategic and military purposes: the stronghold was destroved a first time by pope Bonifacio VIII and then by pope Eugenio IV during the many disputes between the Colonna family and the papacy, only to be rebuilt in 1482 by Stefano Colonna, this time for civil use. Castel San Pietro Romano isn't just ancient and contemporary history because, just a few km from the residential zone, is the **Cannuccete Valley**, a 20 acres wide protected natural area, declared a Natural Monument in 1995. Here our traveler can choose between many trekking routes to explore the flora and fauna of Lazio's sub-mountainous region and catch a sight of the old pre-roman aqueduct dating back to the VI century b.C., which was responsible for Palestrina's water supply until the middle of the last century. After an energizing break, our traveler's journey to discover these small museum hamlets can start back up again with Poli.

A small town of only 2200 residents, situated 40 km east of Rome, between Tivoli and Palestrina, it's well known for its historical ties to the Conti family. First time visitors will be blown away by the sight of its extraordinary medieval settlement, similar to that of a painting: the town is, in fact, long and narrow, huddled up on a sharp rock peninsula giving it the appearance of a vessel. A treasure of a town that reveals, if explored without haste, a small timeless world: narrow alleys, panoramic views, numerous prestigious churches and the imposing baronial building. Our curious traveler's stroll starts at Piazza Conti, Poli's main square that is immediately visible after entering the old part of town once called "Piazza della Corte": built



around the middle of the XVI century, it's overlooked by the magnificent Palazzo Ducale and stands right in front of Via Maestra, from which all the alleys that distinguish the hamlet, branch out, following a herringbone pattern.

Better known as Palazzo Conti (→ 20). from the family of the same name that inherited and inhabited it for a long time, the Palazzo Ducale's oldest part dates back to the X century, but currently stands in its sixteenth-century appearance, completely renovated by the Arezzo architect Lombardo. With a quadrangular build, the Palazzo was erected on the same big tuff rock as the rest of the town and stands out against it: inside the Palazzo, entirely adorned with frescoes, are an entrance hall decorated with grottesche, a courtyard embellished with paintings, a wonderful fountain in baroque style, Torquato's apartment - now headquarters of the current Town Hall and Lotario II's chambers on the noble floor, where pope Innocenzo XIII was born. The entirety of the frescoes in the main hall of the noble floor and the adjacent one were, according to Pelliccioni, painted by Bernardo Cesari and based on drawings by his brother, Cavalier D'Arpino. To the latter belonged the Affresco di San Francesco, displayed in the small Chapel on the right wall of the hall, while some paintings from the apartment on the ground floor, once known as Torquato I's, are attributed to Giulio Romano, a wellknown pupil of Raffaello and regarded as one of the most famous painters in the Renaissance. From Via Umberto, the main road that separates the town in two from Piazza Conti to the opposite side, many passages and typical alleys branch out towards the main buildings, especially religious ones. Among these buildings, some stand out for their artistic value: the seventeenth-century Church of San Pietro Apostolo, symbol of the town with its imposing bell tower, eight side chapels adorned with outstanding stucco, many frescoes blackened by time and interesting paintings like the one in the first chapel to the left, named after Sant'Andrea Apostolo, depicting a martyrdom made by the french Borgognone: the fifteenth-century Church of Sant'Antonio **Abate** built in the lower half of the town in the XIV century, with a rectangular base, a final apse and a gabled roof, it offers three small chapels from the XV century adorned with frescoes; the former Church of San Giovanni, building from the 1300's that fell to ruin a few centuries later. whose frescoes, of umbro-tuscan craftsmanship and now preserved in the podium and apse, are worthy of note. After being modernized quite recently, the church was turned into a multi-purpose room intended for the community in 2022. with the intent to restore the cultural and social realities by merging the protection of the historical and urban contexts with the need to build spaces where residents could dwell and live in a consistent and cohesive way.

Recommendations and fun facts

We recommend visiting Castel San Pietro Romano both in summer and around Christmas, when, in the imaginative background of the Rocca dei Colonna, a life sized Artistic Nativity comes to life.

Poli also had its cinematographic moment in the 60's when, director Dino De Laurentis, bought Villa Catena, a majestic villa situated only 4 km away from the town center, to use it as a movie set. Built at the behest of Torquato Conti in 1563 most likely by the architect Giovanni Antonio Dosio, introduced to him by the famous writer Annibal Caro, it was originally designed to look like a stronghold with side turrets, acute angled avant-corps and guard posts all around but went through

several alterations after 1820 by the new owners, the Torlonia, who mainly focused on the inner frescoes. The name seems to come from the land the villa overlooks, known as "Catena", which was already under the control of the Conti family in the XII century. The villa is built on a gentle slope 84 acres wide, with a marvelous view of the Roman countryside and its Castles.

- → www.museumgrandtour.com
- → www.mudicastello.it



THE HISTORY OF A NOBLE FAMILY

Commissions of the Colonna family between Cave and Genazzano

If our traveler is passionate about stories involving noble families, then the itinerary that ties Cave and Genazzano through the history and settlements of the Colonna clan should be right up their alley. The Colonna were an old roman family whose origin dates to nine centuries ago: the first documented member was Pietro, who lived between 1078 and 1108 in the south-Roman countryside, in the town of Colonna which gave the family its name. Since then, well over thirty-one generations have followed, with the main branch settling in Rome at the start of 1200, on the slopes of the Quirinale. Amongst its heirs, Odoardo Colonna benefitted, along with his brothers Antonio and Prospero, from the nepotistic policies of pope Oddone Colonna of Genazzano, Martino V, who in 1425 granted his three nephews a permanent feud in the Prenestini Mountains territory. On June 1st 1427, the pope decided to split the family's assets thus giving Cave, Genazzano and several other villages, to the Colonna brothers

Our traveler's journey begins in Cave and its medieval hamlet littered with churches connected to the Colonna family: in the X century, at a distance of approximately a mile to reach Praeneste from the old town of Castrum Trebarum where the pozzolana and tuff mines were located, a new residential area called "Cavarum Terra" (origin of its current name) was starting to grow. Around that same time, a seal from the Bishop of Palestrina, Stefano II, certified that the bishop, with the favour of Pietro Colonna, recognized the Church of San Lorenzo Martire and transformed its appearance, gifting it with a new facade e two small aisles which turned the parish into a small roman cathedral with frescoes. A historically relevant date for Cave was 1462, when Odoardo Colonna decided to write in his will that he would be buried in the **Church** of Santo Stefano inside the Augustinian monastery, erected in 1428 at the behest of pope Martino V. In 1768, after a growth in population size, the architect Nicola Fagiolo, pupil of Vanvitelli, was commissioned with building a new upper church, visible from the lower church through a porthole on the ceiling of the latter. The San Carlo Borromeo monastery and Church were erected back in 1567 in a place called "la villa" because of the presence of an ancient roman villa, at the behest of the wealthy Biscia di Cave family. A commission from Lombardia, just like the one of Filippo I Colonna who, son of Anna Borromeo and thus nephew of San Carlo, ended up dedicating the church and monastery to the Milanese patron saint.

In a perfect journey in time towards the future, our traveler will find a link between the religious environment and local artistic culture in the figure of Lorenzo Ferri (1902-1975): sculptor, painter, restorer and sindonologist, he frequented the roman clerical spaces because of his studies on the Holy Shroud where he struck up a friendship with Monsignor Lorenzo Castellani, vicar of Cave, who introduced the artist to the small town. His first project for the town was a painting of the Veronica depicting Jesus' face crowned with thorns, made for the "Comitato Pro-Venerdì Santo" (of which Monsignor Castellani was the director) and now displayed in the church of Santa Maria Assunta. Later on he created two more pieces as a testament to his emotional connection to Cave: a bronze door for the Church of Saint Maria Assunta and the Shrouded Crucifix, displayed in the San Bartolomeo district. Lorenzo Ferri is who the artistic section of the **Civic Museum**, in the former Mattei Hospital (last stop in our traveler's journey through the city of Cave), is dedicated to and named after. The museum's exhibition is divided in three sections that retrace the most important stages of the artist's life: the first room hosts a plaster cast gallery of original pieces in plaster, highly representative of the different phases in his career. The hypogeal rooms of Palazzo Comunale, former home of the Augustinian monastery, hold the sindonic section and the Monumental Nativity instead. (\rightarrow 21).

Our traveler can now move onto Genazzano, making a first stop at the **Castello Colonna** (\rightarrow 22), on an imaginary trip that follows the family's steps: located on



a tuff spur, it offers an amazing view on the immense landscape that extends from the Valley of Sacco to the eastern mountains. The story of the Castle, as evidenced by its name, is tied to the Colonna family who, from the XI century, took a simple defensive stronghold and turned it into a manor of great artistic and architectural worth. It's in 1639 that cardinal Girolamo Colonna commissions the internal frescoes: among these frescoes, the ones displayed in the chapel situated on the first floor's eastern wing are particularly worthy of note, depicting glimpses of landscapes as they appeared back in the day, together with sacred scenes. The artistic history of the Castello Colonna comes back to life in present day in 1979, when, after being bought by the town, it was renovated and turned into a focal point for theater initiatives and contemporary art: with the most notable being Le Stanze (1979), first artistic event curated by the critic Achille Bonito Oliva, attended by some of the biggest representatives of the Transavantgarde movement. At present, Castello Colonna is home to the Atelier Museum Castello Colonna, which contains five different sections: Quadreria (art gallery). Museum of the Infiorata, the Museum of Arts and Popular Traditions, Archeological Museum and the Living Museum.

Only a few minute's walk away from Castello Colonna, our "grand tourist" will run into the Sanctuary of the Madre del Buon Consiglio, another commission by the Colonnas: already existing as an old

church dedicated to Virgin Mary from the XI century, the church was entrusted in 1356 to Augustinian friars who lived in a small monastery outside the city walls. The small church was originally rebuilt in 1476 at the behest of the augustinian tertiary Petruccia di lenci and it's around this time that it became the destination of pilgrimage, as, according to tradition, a painting depicting the Madonna with Baby Jesus miraculously came off the wall of the Saint Stefano Cathedral in Scutari, Albania, during a siege by the Ottoman Turks, to now reside in the sanctuary in Genazzano. The only part remaining from the original church is the white marble carved gate, with its gate depicting the Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus being carried over the clouds by angels. The current sanctuary was built. without touching the Madonna chapel, from 1621nto 1629, at the interest of father Felice Leoncelli and carried out by architect Domenico D'ottavio of Anticoli, who combined the original church and the one of the Beata Petruccia.

This concludes our traveler's itinerary in the footsteps of the Colonna family, giving a nod to the future by visiting Cave Liberty and one to the past by making a stop at the Ninfeo bramantesco in Genazzano.

Recommendations and fun facts

When one visits Cave and its old town center, they can't miss the chance to take a walk through its **Villini Liberty**. The historical moment that coincided with the biggest growth of the contemporary town

as a residential vacation spot was, in fact, the decade of 1900 when "villeggiatura" meant "staying in villa", aka staying in the countryside or outside the city.

Not too distant from the center of town Genazzano stuns with a view of modern ruins: it's the remains of the Ninfeo di Bramante, an architectural complex from the beginning of the XVI century, attributed from the Frommel to the great renaissance architect Donato Bramante probably on commission by cardinal Pompeo Colonna. The splendor and grandeur of this majestic work that combines the echo of roman classicism with the ambition of renaissance classicism is designed to create an evocative and magical place, set on the shore of a remote river and surroun-

ded by greenery, where tourists can integrate with nature, recalling Arcadian impressions of the past.

- → www.museumgrandtour.com
- → www.museolorenzoferricave.eu
- → www.madredelbuonconsiglio.it



TRACES OF MEMORIES: FROM THE LAND TO THE FACTORY

Valle del Sacco: territory and identity

The thing that ties Colleferro and Gavignano together, two medium-small towns located in the Valley del Sacco, east of the urban province is a strong peasant and archeologica tradition, gradually turned into an industrial tradition. This itinerary will take our traveler on a journey to discover the local history and traditions of two towns located just at the edge of the province of Frosinone, to poke around its anecdotes and the myths surrounding their foundation.

The itinerary starts in the town of **Colleferro**, which, despite not taking its name from metal - it seems to refer to the transformation of the phonetic value of the letter F to V - boasts, in the Colle Pantanaccio area, an impressive fossil site with remains of local fauna. These remains are preserved in the **Archeological Museum of the "Toleriense" Territory** (→ 23, 24) which happens to be the first stop on this itinerary. Located in the building that used to house the former BPD factory, the museum is organized in five different main thematic sections, each

dedicated to a specific time period: paleontology, stone age and protohistory, archaic period, roman period, high middle ages and middle ages.

The paleontologic section will move even adult visitors, as it offers not only fossilized remains of animals from the Pleistocene but also an impressive life-size replica of a giant straight-tusked elephant (*Palaeodoxodon antiquus*).

In the medieval section are preserved the remains found in the area surrounding the territory's many castles, among which the ones from the excavation site at Castello di Piombinara (XII-XVII century): and it's precisely towards the remains of the church of **S. Maria di Piombinara** that our traveler now makes their way. First reports of the church that belonged to the castle of the same name date back to the XII century. Demolished after the war to make space for the via Casilina along which it stands, the only thing remaining today are the bell tower, with its squared nase made of irregular blocks of tuff, and an archeological site

excavated and valorized by the Archeological Museum in collaboration with the relevant authorities. It will be interesting for out traveler to discover how the archeological history of Colleferro is intrinsically tied to its subsequent industrial transformation in the Archeological Museum itself: the BPD. which stands for Bombrini Parodi-Delfino. was an italian company that operated in different sectors, mainly chemical, founded in 1912 by Giovanni Bombrini and Leopoldo Parodi-Delfino with the aim to manufacture gunpowder and explosives. It's in the surrounding area BPD that Colleferro's residential district first developed, as the company's main factory attracted a lot of people from the countryside. The Edificio Direzionale (office building) to represent the company, built along the Nuova Strada Carpineatana which connects the upper part of town and the factory, was designed between 1935 and 1938 by the great engineer and architect Riccardo Morandi, famous for his prestressed reinforced concrete buildings and the restoration of quality buildings in typical Rationalist style. Morandi also designed the BPD's Centro Studi, right next to the office building which symbolized the industrial identity of colleferro. Both buildings appear as closed geometric volumes made of concrete and glass, perfectly aligned with the functional needs of the company and the Italian Rationalist style typical of that time.

An important monument from its war period are the **Rifugi Antiaerei** (air raid shelters): a total of six km of tunnels were dug under the town's hills. They were, originally, excavation sites to extract pozzolana in order to build homes for the new BPD workers. The shelters were split in "Villaggio Vecchio" (old town) and "Villaggio Nuovo" (new town) aligned to the external part of Colleferro: the old town coincided with the Santa Barbara district while the new town was in the Colle Sant'Antonino and S. Anna area.

In search of the artisanal and peasant nature from which every village gets its essence, our traveler finally moves to **Gavignano**, a small town with less than 2000 residents, sitting atop the Lepini Mountains, at the junction of the Rio and Sacco rivers. Its romans origins are corroborated by the presence of numerous archeological remains in the Rossilli area - among which a



mosaic of Alexandrian origins - and the well documented presence of various patrician villas along the consular streets.

The town's maximum development happened during the middle ages when numerous churches and abbeys were built, among which the famous, still intact, Abbazzia Rossilli. Many castles and strongholds were also built, so many that Gavignano too, started looking like a castrum, with its outer walls and fortified towers. The tour starts right at Porta Napoletana: where our traveler can immerse themselves in the small alleys of a breathtaking medieval urban center made of local stone, and enjoy seeing the many manor houses and buildings. Some time later, Palazzo Baronale was built around the keep: with

its impressive size, it was remodeled many times over the centuries, so much so that the story of its construction goes hand in hand with the story of who lived in it; over the years its residents varied from Amato Conti (1044), to Innocenzo III (1161) and to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (1621). Walking along the old town center, tourists can immediately catch the juxtaposition between the cluster of small medieval houses with 2 or 3 floors at most and the large size of Palazzo Baiocchi and Palazzo Traietto respectively on the western and south-eastern side of town. In the heart of Gavignano, housed in Palazzo di Corte, is the Museo della civiltà contadina (the museum of peasant civilization) (→ 25); born with the internet to piece together the history of



the peasant and artisan civilization in the early '900s, instead of being just a space where objects are displayed, the museum aims to be a place where people can feel a close connection with a way to live that nowadays feels very far and disconnected from us. Inside the museum are different exhibitions with alimpses of life dedicated to work, home and parental care of the first dwellers of Gavignano and the surrounding towns which gained independence after the unification of Italy. The objects chosen as representative of peasant reality of the early '900s are the plough, the clock and the bell; they're followed by nooks dedicated to common jobs of the time and a second room for the recreation of a humble domestic peasant environment and the traditional labour of housewives.

The final space is intended for choir and music as art forms.

Recommendations and fun facts

In addition to its archeological history, Colleferro also boasts a strong twentieth-century history, as proven by the città Morandiana (the part of town designed by architect Morandi) and the "rifugi antiaerei" which travel for over 6 km under the town.

- → www.museumgrandtour.com
- → www.museoatt.it
- → www.cittamorandiana.it
- → www.museogavignano.it



THE "CITY OF CYCLOPS"

Alatri between history and archeology

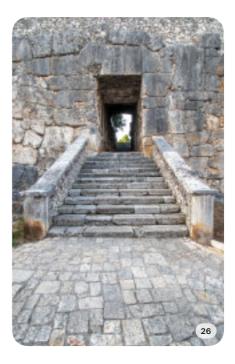
Nestled in the Lazio mountains. Altari is the village of the Sistema Museale MuseumGrandTour situated furthest east already in the province of Frosinone. This itinerary will take our traveler on a journey to discover the archeological and medieval history of one of the most fascinating spots in Ciociaria, giving them a chance to poke around the stories and myths surrounding its foundation. Considered one of the noblest art cities in Southern Lazio, whose charm is amplified by the amazing coexistence of archaic monumental elements with the ones from subsequent time periods - especially from the Middle Ages - Alatri is also one of the most beautiful villages in Italy.

The path through this urban itinerary starts at the majestic **Mura Poligonali** (polygonal walls) (→ 26, 27) surrounding the Acropoli di Civita, emblem of the megalithic Lazio cities that inspired countless mysteries and legends and which gave it the name of "City of Cyclops". Located at the top of a hill, Alatri's acropolis is

particularly interesting because of its polygonal walls made up of various layers with megaliths of different shapes and sizes, often taller than 3 mt, which fit together perfectly without the use of cement or concrete. The city walls cover a perimeter of 400 mt and, preceded by a set of steps, is the acropolis, opened by two doors: the Porta Maggiore and the Porta Minore. Beyond the first ring of walls there's a second polygonal wall, wider but still concentric to the acropolis (measuring almost 2 km), with five door openings topped by a monolithic architrave, of which only the Porta di San **Bernardo** remains

Right in the middle of the acropolis clearing is the Duomo di San Paolo, built on the remains of an ancient heroic altar called "ierone" and a temple dedicated to Saturn. The first news of an ancient cathedral date back to a time before the year 1000, as evidenced by archival documents that mentioned a cathedral back in 930. During the papacy of Innocenzo II

(1130-1143) the remains of the martyr pope Sisto I were moved to Alatri and on this occasion the old cathedral was renovated for the first time. Reworked several more times over the centuries, the church acquired its current look in the 1600/1700s: among its original parts, still intact to this day, is the statue of Saint Sisto, of recent craftsmanship but with its 1584 silver face. Another finding from the Acropoli di Civita, now preserved on the first floor of the Civic Museum of Alatri (→ 28, 29, 30), is the remarkable section dedicated to ancient Aletrium with inscriptions and archeological findings. In the Civic Museum, ancient and medieval history of the town merge together: housed in the medieval Palazzo Gottifredo. in the heart of Alatri's old town center the Civic Museum is organized in several sections that spread over the different floors of the tower-house: in addition to the aforementioned section on ancient times on the first floor, the ground floor i offers a section on "Viaggiatori di scoperta" (travelers of discovery) with an interesting multicolored mosaic floor with geometric decorations from 80-90 b.C.; in the mezzanine is a section dedicated to Etruscan art and, on the third floor, a demo-ethno-anthropological collection of tools and instruments of local rural and artisanal life that tell the story of the town's traditions, old and new. One of Alatri's buildings most representative of its medieval period is the gothic Church of San Francesco (XIII-XIV century), located in the "Le Piagge" neighborhood, between Santa Maria Maggiore Square and Porta San Francesco. Constructed at the end of the XIII century, and internally remodeled in baroque style during the XVIII century, it boasts a large single gate and a finely decorated rose window, in addition to some quality pieces like the Deposizione from the seventeenthcentury neapolitan school. The church was annexed to a convent from 1359 whose spaces, now used as exhibition halls, host in a narrow gap between walls, a fresco from an unknown author, discovered in 1997, depicting Christ Pantocrator at the center of a labyrinth with eleven spirals (so twelve circles with a diameter of 140 mt): regarded as an iconographical unicum, it is thought to be a nod to the Templar presence inside the fortified walls of the town



Particularly interesting and fascinating is the fact that, the path depicted in the labyrinth, is the exact same that's illustrated on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France

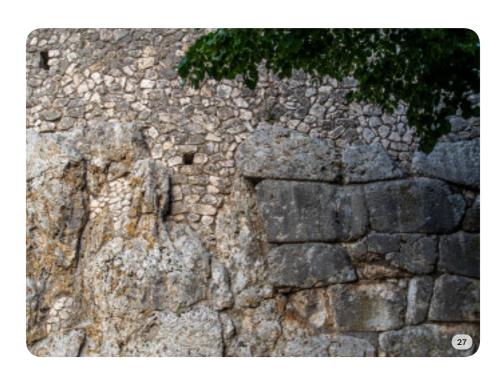
To close this urban itinerary, we invite travelers to step into the medieval Church of San Silvestro, to immerse themselves even more in the anecdotal atmosphere that has characterized this itinerary from its origin: dating back to 1180 thanks to the presence of important byzantine frescoes which represent the term post-quem, the church preserves pieces of great artistic values and details of many historical testimonies. The symbols seem to allude to the famous Knights Templar, though many scholars are not of the same mind. The

"Triplice Cinta" carved on the architrave of the main gate, the frescoes and some crosses and emblematic characters are counted among the works of dubious interpretations and are thus labeled as mysterious

Recommendations and fun facts

We suggest staying in Alatri around Ferragosto (mid-August), to take part in the traditional Folklore Festival, dedicated to the integration of art and local culture.

- → www.museumgrandtour.com
- → www.alatriturismo.it









VISIONS OF LANDSCAPES BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL AND THE CONTEMPORARY

Valmontone and Olevano Romano

Curious to put themselves in the shoes of a real "grand tourist", our traveler will find in Valmontone and Olevano Romano, the itinerary most suitable for them. Connected by a strong scenic tradition and by a long history of commissions both modern and contemporary, the two towns look over the Valley where the river Sacco flows, promising extraordinary sights on a panorama without limits.

Our itinerary starts at **Valmontone**, inside the **Museum of Palazzo Doria Pamphilj** (→ 31, 32) divided in two sections: the first, on the ground floor, dedicated to archeological finds rediscovered in the surrounded territory, and a second historical-artistic section consisting of the wonderful series of frescoes commissioned by Prince Camillo Pamfilj between 1658 and 1659. The decorations, spread over the eleven rooms of the noble floor of the Palazzo, offer an iconographic project focused on the depiction of allegories of the Four Elements and the Four Continents, made by Fransceso Cozza, Pierfrancesco

Mola, Giambattista Tassi and the great Mattia Preti who, in 1661, was called to decorate the vault dedicated to Air To conclude the itinerary is the marvelous panoramic troupe l'oeil, painted by Gaspare Dughet and Guglielmo cortese, the Borgognone, in the Salone del Principe: it is by seeing the frescoes displayed in this narrow and long hall that our visitor will finally be able to feel like a real traveler of the Grand Tour, to admire with their own eyes the expansive panoramic view people would observe from the windows of Palazzo Doria at the time. Right next to Palazzo Doria Pamphilj our traveler will find the Collegiata di Santa Maria Maggiore: built between 1685 and 1689 by the architect Mattia De Rossi - Bernini's favourite pupil - the majestic Collegiata consecrated to the Assumption of Mary in the sky was commissioned by Prince Giovanni Battista Pamphij, in order to carry on the project of creating the ultimate "panfilia city" started by his father with the construction of the palazzo. De Rossi demolished the old gothic church and rebuilt a church inspired by Borromini's Sant'Agnese in Agone church in Rome, with an oval plan and a facade blocked by two twin bell towers

It is however in **Olevano Romano**, last stop in our itinerary through the roman countryside at the edge of the Frosinone province, that our traveler will find a contemporary trace of the landscaping tradition typical of the *Grand Tour*. At the **Civic Museum of Art of Olevano Romano** (→ 33), located in the historical Villa de Pisa, visitors have the chance to admire a vast collection of works that bear witness to the deep cultural tradition that, from the early '800s, has placed this small town at the center of the attention of numerous

european artists, fascinated by the beauty of the landscape and the authenticity of the costumes and local traditions. Among the many pieces displayed, are the works of twentieth-century and contemporary artists that have kept the tradition of the Grand Tour alive, a cultural phenomenon that's never been interrupted here. To better understand the sense of astonishment and wonder that ancient travelers must have felt looking at Olevano Romano, our tourist will also set off towards the medieval hamlet (+ 34) to discover it: perched on a tuff rock spur, the village stuns for its cluster of houses built with local stone nearly stacked on top of each other, overlooked by the tower of a castle built by the Colonna family in the XIII century after



buying the castrum from pope Gregorio IX. Climbing on top of the hamlet is worth it to enjoy a 360 panoramic view of the Valley del Sacco below and of the wild nature of the Bosco della Serpentara (Serpentara woods), last stop in this itinerary. Managed by the Academia Tedesca of Villa Massimo in Rome, the Serpentara was a big source of inspiration for a large number of Romantic european artists who found in its uncontaminated nature, the nourishment needed for their creations: among the many artists, we recall Gustavo Dorè whose inspiration to illustrate the Divine Comedy came from these very woods.

Recommendations and fun facts

When visiting Olevano Romano - from 2007 Strada del Vino Terra del Cesanese (Wine Street in the Cesanese Land) - our tourist can't miss a lunch stop in one of the numerous renowned local restaurants, to taste a good chalice of red Cesanese wine from Olevano Romano, long beloved by popes and noble families that resided in the area.

- → www.museumgrandtour.com
- → www.palazzodoriapamphilivalmontone.it
- → www.collegiatavalmontone.it
- → www.villamassimo.de









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