



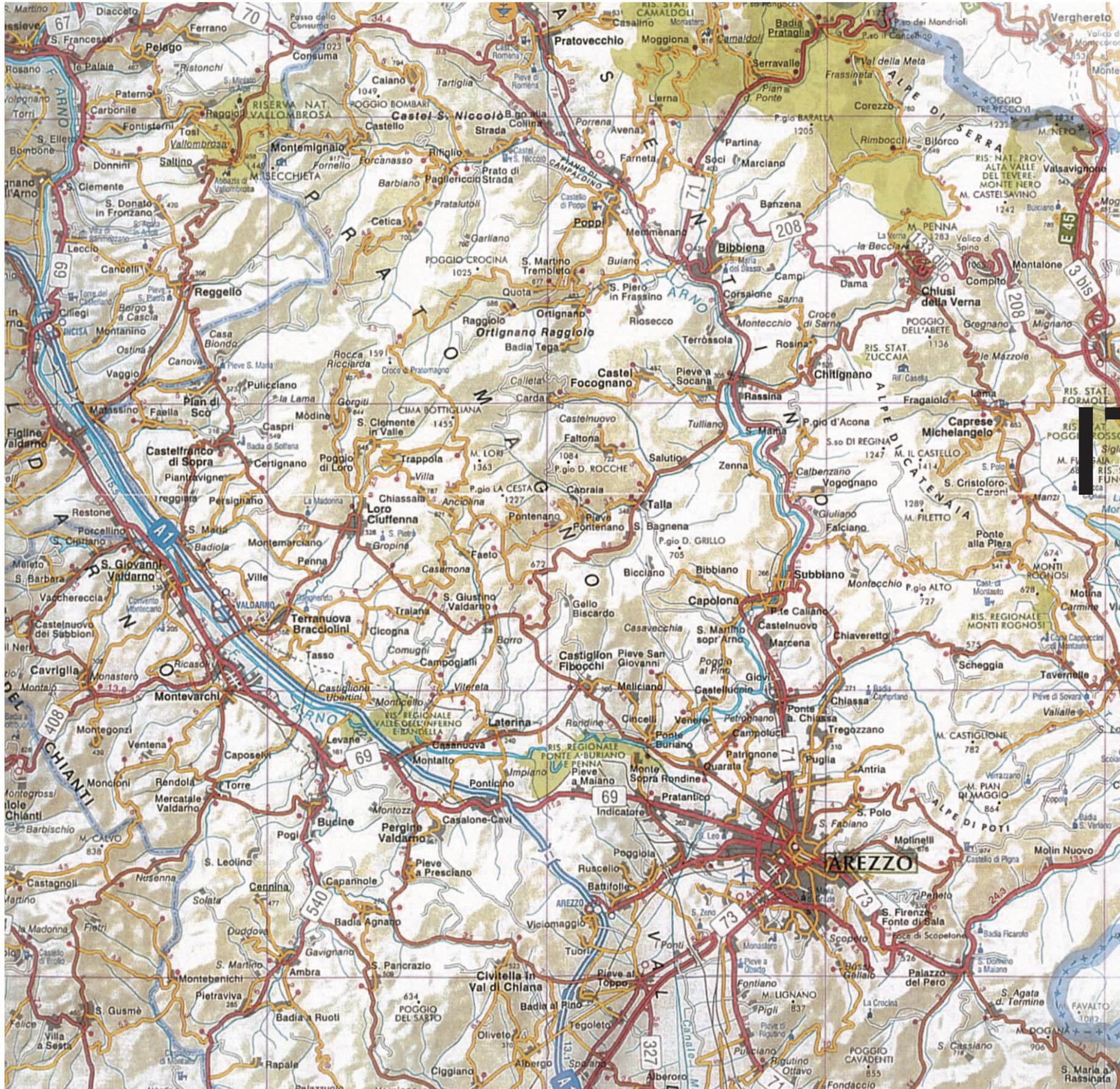
# TUSCANY

LAND OF ART  
AND MOTORS

*The itineraries of "Travelling in Tuscany"*



ITINERARIES ON TWO WHEELS



Arezzo / Loro Ciuffenna / Vallombrosa /  
Stia / Poppi / Arezzo

# FIRST ITINERARY

*Our motorbike itinerary starts from Arezzo, one of the most beautiful cities in Tuscany and of the whole of Italy. On our two wheels we will ride through streets of rare beauty. Our itineraries can obviously be modified to meet individual needs and desires. Every angle you will see and explore features views and landscapes that are hard to forget and will tempt you to make frequent stops to take photos to recall your trip. Loro Ciuffenna, Stia, Poppi are names that will linger long in the mind thanks to the unique moments they will gift you.*



## AREZZO

Arezzo perches on top of a hill rising at the meeting of four valleys, the Tiberina, Casentino (known as “the valley of the soul” because of the many holy places – Camaldoli, Vallombrosa, and La Verna where Saint Francis received the stigmata), Arno, and Chiana. The name of the city is linked to many illustrious personalities and was the birthplace of: **Giorgio Vasari, Piero della Francesca, Guido Monaco, Francesco Redi, Petrarch...**

Ancient origins. The oldest known mentions of ancient **Arretium** date to the 9th century BC, and eventually it won a prestigious role thanks to its position on the **Via Cassia** which made it a player in ancient Roman commerce assuring it economic prosperity and a strong position that only hit a crisis when the Romans prolonged the road as far as Florence which would come to supplant it in wealth and importance. The city regained importance in the Middle Ages, an era to which the numerous towers date, but all of this came to a halt with Arezzo's decision to declare war against

Florence which ended with the former's surrender after the battle of Campaldino (1289), fought, among others, by Dante Alighieri and Cecco Angiolieri. Cosimo I built the **Medicean Fortress** from Roman ruins, thereby contributing to their dismantling. Over time, however, the town managed to win back a place in the territory and to reaffirm its role by becoming an important cultural centre. The atmosphere that we breathe today is lively, with outdoor venues, bars, and restaurants specializing in the dishes of local culinary tradition scattered along the **delightful cobbled streets of the centre** or nestling invitingly under the **Loggia del Vasari** in **Piazza Grande** universally known thanks to the **cinema masterpiece** by **Roberto Benigni** *Life is Beautiful*.

The **classic dishes**: Tuscan appetizers with cold meats and croutons, homemade pasta with meat sauce, mixed roast meats, everything washed down by excellent wines from the hills of **Arezzo**. The area boasts an ancient wine tradition, as far back as 1550 its **Trebbiano**, a delightful fruity white, was known

and appreciated all over Europe. Today the wide selection of red, white and also sparkling wines enjoys prestigious recognition. An excellent opportunity to find out more are the **Giorni del Vino** – the “**Wine Days**”: From April to October every Wednesday and Sunday winemakers' premises open the doors of their cellars scattered across the stunning landscape of the Colli Aretini to all those who are interested in tasting their wines.

Arezzo itself can be visited in a single day. The **Pietri** parking area, in **Via Giuseppe Pietri**, is easily accessible and reachable and offers a fine view of the city walls that surround Arezzo and, most importantly, it has a **lift** up to the historic centre.

Despite heavy destruction of its medieval heart during WWII, the centre preserves splendid mansions, churches, monuments, and museums.

The **Duomo** (Cathedral), dominating the city and the surrounding countryside, features a small square, medieval towers, and white marble statuary. It was built in the early 1300s but not finished until the mid-1500s. Many changes were made over the course of centuries such as the bell tower with its unmistakable 19th-century spire. The interior has three naves, Gothically held aloft with the zeal of pillars, arches and ogival vaults, it preserves among other precious items **La Maddalena**, a wonderful **fresco** by **Piero della Francesca** and beautiful **stained-glass windows** by **Guillaume de Marcillat**.



What to see:

**The Medicean Fortress**, an important example of 16th-century architecture, in the characteristic shape of a five-pointed star. It was desired by Cosimo I Medici to strengthen Florentine dominion over the city.

**The House of Petrarch**, the “father of Humanism”. In **Via dell'Orto**, just beyond the **Tofano Well** mentioned by Boccaccio in a story in his *Decameron*, is the seat of the Petrarch Academy of Literature, Arts and Sciences.

**Palazzo Pretorio**, its façade covered by the colourful coats of arms of the families who governed here.

**Palazzo delle Logge** designed by **Vasari** and featuring splendid arches and ancient doors. Here today artisan shops, restaurants and bars enjoy a privileged view of **Piazza Grande**.

**Piazza Grande** is easily the most beautiful square in Arezzo, and among the most characteristic in Italy. Wide, irregular, and steeply sloping, it hosts an antiques market, and twice a year, in June and September, is the scene of the famous “**Giostra del Saracino**”.

**The Parish Church of Santa Maria** is a notable example of the Romanesque style. It has a singular façade, the lower order consisting of five blind arches and the upper part a triple order of loggias. Of note in the barrel vault of

the central portal is the depiction of the months.

The interior is simple and austere.



**THE REMAINS OF THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE WHICH COULD CONTAIN AROUND 13,000 PEOPLE AT THE PEAK OF ITS SPLENDOUR.**



The **Archaeological Museum** behind the Roman amphitheatre. Its rooms house Etruscan and Roman material and precious **coral vases** decorated in relief. A visit will help to better understand the city's ancient past.

The **Parish Church of San Francesco**, one of the icons of Arezzo's urban landscape. Inside, in the Cappella Maggiore, it accommodates the **Legend of the True Cross**, a famous cycle of frescoes by **Piero della Francesca**, a Renaissance masterpiece of inestimable value for whose execution the artist was inspired by the **Golden Legend** of **Jacobus de Varagine**.

The **Museum of Modern and Medieval Art** exhibits the works of artists who worked in the triangle between Florence – Siena – Perugia, moving between the main cities of the time, sharing and

exchanging ideas and experience in the fields of colour and perspective.

**San Domenico** a Gothic church in whose simple and linear interior is located a great wooden **crucifix**, a youthful work by **Cimabue**

## LORO CIUFFENNA (AR)

This is one of the most characteristic villages of the Upper Valdarno and is listed among the “**Most Beautiful Villages in Italy**”.

The name refers respectively to the laurel plant and the river that divides it in two, the **Ciuffenna**, whose waters have always supplied energy to the mills and presses of the village and its surroundings.

Sitting 320 meters a.s.l. it can be reached with the **SP1**, the **Setteponti** road, the ancient **Cassia Vetus Romana**, a panoramic road that starts from Arezzo and seems to have been designed specifically for the joy of motorcyclists.

After parking at the foot of the village, take the stairs and walk through the delightful typical streets and narrow alleyways to reach the old town.

What to see:

**Il Mulino**: a still functioning water mill which is among the oldest in Tuscany.

**The Romanesque arched bridge**: one of the bridges on the “road of the seven bridges” (*Setteponti*).

**The Church of Santa Maria Assunta**

Nearby:

**The Parish Church of Gropina**: A fascinating Romanesque complex whose simple and austere interior invites prayer, reflection, and meditation.

**Le Balze**: known as the **Dolomites of Sand**, have been declared a “*Natural Protected Area of Local Interest*”. Nestling in one of the most charming landscapes of the Valdarno.

## VALLOMBROSA (FI)

In the heart of Tuscany between Florence, Arezzo and Siena, about 1,000



eters a.s.l., is Vallombrosa. Lying in the thick of a secular fir wood, this is one of the mountain places above the hills of Valdarno that definitely deserve a visit. What to see: **The Abbey of Vallombrosa:** Founded in the 11th century by San Giovanni Gualberto, and its **Museum** which preserves ancient manuscripts and an **Altarpiece** by Ghirlandaio. **The Circuit of Chapels:** An itinerary of chapels and shrines dedicated to Saint John Gualbert, which winds for about 5km around the Abbey. **The panorama from the Paradisino education centre:** not far from the Abbey, on the road that leads to Mount Secchietta. **The Experimental Arboretums:** A collection of about 1,800 varieties of plants on an area of 9 hectares.

**POPPI (AR)**

Special features of this characteristic centre of the Casentino area is the elliptical development of the village surrounded by walls protected by towers. It is dominated by the **Castle of the Guidi Counts**, the local lords, erected in the 13th century, today the Town Hall. The centre of its mullion-windowed façade comprises a tall tower. In the courtyard decorated with coats of arms, the main stone stairway leads to an architraved doorway with the coat of arms of the Guidi. Inside the **Chapel** with its 14th-century frescoes is a **salon** with paintings and more fres-

coes, the **Rilli-Vettori Library** custodian of precious medieval manuscripts and incunabula. Not far from the castle, following the porticoes of Via Cavour, is the **Abbey of San Fedele** built in the 11th century. Among the works of art in its interior are a **Giottesque crucifix** and a precious **Madonna with Child**, fourteenth-century panel by the Maestro della Maddalena.

Nearby:

**Camaldoli:** this monastery was founded by Saint Romuald in the 11th century and has guest quarters, an old-style pharmacy, and a Baroque church containing works by Vasari. A few kilometres away is the hermitage with the cell of Saint Romuald.

**STIA (AR)**

The old centre of Stia, in the Casentino area, gathers around the main square, Piazza Tanucci, completely surrounded by porticoes. The homonymous street is overlooked by the **Parish Church of Santa Maria Assunta**, a Romanesque treasure chest of the 12th century with an 18th-century façade, which preserves inside such treasures as the **Madonna with Child** of the school of Cimabue, a **ciborium** in glazed poly-

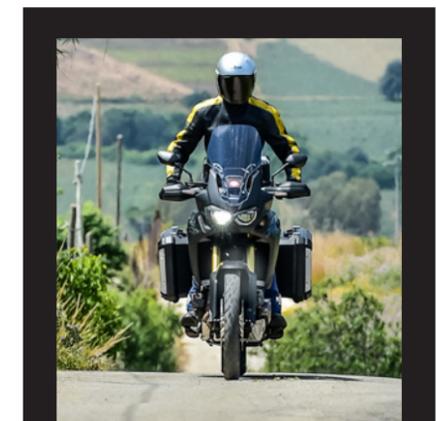


chrome terracotta by the Della Robbia workshop, a **Painted wooden Crucifix**, the **Madonna with Child** in white glazed terracotta by **Andrea della Robbia**, a **Christ at Supper in the House of the Pharisee** by Simone Ferri, **The Assumption of the Virgin** by the Maestro of Borgo alla Collina, **The Preaching of John the Baptist**, an oil on canvas by Giandomenico Ferretti. In the chapel of the Baptistry, an **Annunciation** by Bicci di Lorenzo (1414). The **Palagio Fiorentino**, the heir of the ancient residence of the Guidi Counts, rebuilt at the beginning of the 20th century at the behest of Carlo Well following the neo-Gothic taste of the era, hosts an interesting collection of contemporary art and is home to exhibitions and conventions.

●  
STIA ALSO HOSTS THE  
EUROPEAN BIENNIAL OF THE  
BLACKSMITH DEDICATED TO THE  
FORGING OF WROUGHT IRON.

○  
Not far from the village is the **Castle of Porciano**, a significant example of

a tower-castle, which dominates the entire valley. It is said that **Dante** was held prisoner here after the battle of Campaldino. Four kilometres away is the **Sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie**, completely surrounded by woods, built in 1428 on the site where, according to tradition, the **Madonna** appeared to a farmer. The church conserves its fifteenth century layout, embellished by terracotta works of **Andrea della Robbia**. Adjoining the church, the **cloister** of the old monastery, which bears witness to the function performed by this complex as a branch of the Vallombrosa Abbey.



LAND OF ART AND MOTORS  
Apart from art history and culture, Tuscany has always been one of the regions where motors have made history in Italy. On its streets are written some of the most glorious pages of the "Mille Miglia" where the greatest drivers from all over the world have done battle on occasionally implausible routes over roads that are insidious but with a unique charm. The same roads are now sought out and appreciated by motorcyclists from all over the world who come to experience these curves and tarmacs first hand, to feel a part of their history.



Arezzo / Anghiari / Sansepolcro /  
Chiusi Della Verna / Arezzo

# SECOND ITINERARY

*The outline of ancient Volterra, the Etruscan Velathri, looms into view perched strategically on a hill that rises at the confluence of the Val di Cecina and the Val d'Era.*

*What you are about to begin is one of the most captivating routes you can find in Italy, with its continuous ups and downs, never-ending curves and the traversing of some of the most beautiful villages to be found anywhere. To reach the Hermitage of La Verna means passing through the Casentine Forest, a rarely visited landscape. Tall trees, like huge columns erected by nature, with such dense foliage that the sky is obscured; the ribbon of tarmac full of curves that crosses it seems an intruder in this landscape. At each curve or small clearing encountered the desire comes to stop and capture this or that passage.*



**H**eavily frequented by motorbike fans, it is easy to come across riders and club members who meet and greet one another on the road, regardless of what country they are from. Once you have arrived there are ample parking spaces and refreshment points. Naturally, the most important section is the group of stone houses that constituted the Hermitage of Saint Francis, and the cave where he slept, where everything exudes mysticism. It is pleasant to turn off the engine for a while and listen to the silence of this place, you will end up charmed. No less fascinating is Anghiari, which already appeals from afar with its houses perched among the rocks and its narrow streets that take us back in time. Here too, once you have parked your bike it is recommended to walk through the streets of the old town and stop to enjoy a good drink (a soft drink since you will be riding again) in one of the many characteristic bars you will come across. These are just two examples of what can be encountered on this itinerary, but there are many angles to see and ride through. And now back in the saddle and prepare yourselves for a truly unforgettable ride!

### ANGHIARI (AR)

Listed among the “Most beautiful villages of Italy”, Anghiari has an *Orange Flag* and is a *Slow City*... here life has different rhythms, colours, and perfumes, it runs in empathy with our inner being and in harmony with the universe. The walls of this village, like so many splendid medieval villages, seem to succeed in their heroic undertaking of defending the narrow streets, the alleyways, the glimpses, the small squares, antique shops, and restoration workshops from the impetuous assault of our frenetic and whirlwind lives. This alone is more than enough reason to include it in our travel destinations, to which can be added the churches with their treasures (including



Santa Maria delle Grazie, the Church of Badia, Sant'Agostino...), the mansions and museums (such as the Renaissance Palazzo Taglieschi home to an art museum which preserves Della Robbia terracotta works, paintings, and frescoes, or the Museo della Misericordia, the Torre dell'Orologio (here known as “Il Campano”), the Vicario Gardens... And much more besides. There is the evocative power of places that have been sites of major historical events in the past. In this corner of the Tuscan Val Tiberina (it seems that until the mid-1200s the Tiber flowed down below, across the plain beneath the village) on 29 June 1440 the famous **Battle of Anghiari** took place, which saw the Florentine troops beat the invading Milanese. This epochal clash, which reaffirmed the hegemony of Florence, was immortalized in the equally famous fresco by **Leonardo da Vinci** in Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. A work, as we know, that has been lost. There are some reproductions by other artists, including **Rubens**, who had the privilege of being able to admire it before it was covered over by Vasari's successive redecorations of the Salone dei Cinquecento. Anghiari has repeatedly been chosen as a setting for films. Two films in particu-

lar can be mentioned: *La ragazza di Bube* (1963), directed by Luigi Comencini, based on the novel by Carlo Cassola and *Una Moglie Bellissima* (2007) by Leonardo Pieraccioni.

### SAN SEPOLCRO (AR)

Defined the “Gate to Tuscany”, the town dominates the upper valley of the Tiber. Its medieval heart closed behind the circle of walls is abounding in mansions with priceless architecture, characteristic towers, and churches that conserve precious frescoes. San Sepolcro was the birthplace of **Piero della Francesca**, its most illustrious son, a painter and mathematician, and among the leading players of the Renaissance, which he immortalized in his works. Unmissable is the **Civic Museum** housed in the ancient mansion of the *Residenza* or *Conservatori*, a true treasure chest of inestimable treasures such as the *Resurrection* and the *Polptych of Mercy* by **Piero della Francesca** or *San Quintino* by **Pontormo**. Another must-see is the **Aboca Museum** in the ancient and charming Palazzo Bourbon del Monte dedicated to the ancient tradition of the use of herbs, the **Museum of Ancient Stained Glass**, housed in the Church of San Giovanni



Battista, the Cathedral of San Giovanni Evangelista with the *Holy Face*, a wooden statue of the *Crucified Christ* from the Carolingian era, the **Medicean Fortress** of **Giuliano da Sangallo** and the **House of Piero della Francesca**.

September is a month full of unmissable appointments in San Sepolcro: the **Palio della Balestra** in Piazza Torre di Berta, on the second Sunday of September the **Biennial of the Goldsmiths**, the **Biennial of Lace**, the **Convivio Rinascimentale** a dinner with Renaissance dishes in the splendid cloister of Santa Chiara.

The reconstructions of the Renaissance are supervised by the association **Rinascimento nel Borgo**.

### CHIUSI DELLA VERNA (AR)

This small village is perched on a hill. The territory of its municipality lies between Casentino and Valtiberina, in what is almost a *trait d'union* between the slopes of Romagna and Tuscany. In the centre of the territory is Mount Penna, which dominates the whole Casentino area, with the **Convent of Verna** and the **monumental forest of La Verna** as part of the Casentino forest. Verna, the sacred mountain of Casentino, was donated to San Francesco in 1213 by Count

Orlando Cattani. It became one of the places where the saint loved to retire, and it was here, on 17 September 1224, that he received the stigmata. The first nucleus of what would be developed into the **Sanctuary of La Verna** was **Santa Maria degli Angeli**, the “little church” dedicated by the saint to the Virgin of the Angels who had indicated its location and size to him in an apparition. Entry to the complex with its basilica, begun in 1384, is through a Renaissance portico. The Latin Cross interior is embellished by masterpieces in terracotta by the **Della Robbia** family. In the **chapel of the relics** are

preserved the saint's habit and a container with his blood. In the **Chapel of the Stigmata**, the real sacred and devotional heart, the most emotionally intense moment for the faithful, the central wall is dominated by a *Crucifixion* of **Andrea della Robbia**.

Chiusi della Verna vies with Caprese in Valtiberina as the birthplace of an out-and-out genius, **Michelangelo Buonarroti**, whom Vasari defined “the Divine” in his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, a spirit sent to Earth by God to show the perfection of art in all its aspects.





  
**TUSCANY**  
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