HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Since the Republican age of ancient Rome, the lush nature and the scenic charm of the **Alban Hills** were favored by illustrious and wealthy nobles, who wanted to show off their wealth and power by building lavish residences here. Later, in particular during the 16th and 17th centuries, thetowns which had now become known as "**Castelli Romani**", were again chosen, mainly by representatives of the clergy belonging to aristocratic families, as the preferred locations near Rome for the construction of luxurious palaces and summer residences. Despite the damage caused by the passing of centuries and armed conflicts, many of these historic villas have survived and some can be visited.

TUSCULUM VILLAS

Built initially as "country houses" for the Roman aristocracy, and primarily meant for summer vacation, the villas that are now called the **Tusculum villas** soon became a true status symbol for the nobility and members of the papal court. Many resources were used in their embellishment and enrichment. Especially during the 16th and 17th centuries – the most respected artists and architects of the time were hired to turn them into beautiful estates. A characteristic that is common to all the Tusculum villas is the presence of elegant gardens, which surround them and lend themselves to both meetings and quiet meditation, as in the great Roman villas of the Imperial era.
Currently the twelve **Tusculum villas** – located in the towns of Frascati, Monte Porzio Catone and Grottaferrata - are in good condition, though in many cases were damaged during the Second World War. Some of them have been re-purposed as hotels, schools and other institutions.

Villa Aldobrandini (Via Cardinale G. Massaia 18 - only the gardens and the Theatre of the Waters are open to the public - INFORMATION +39 06 94 20 331 Frascati Point) also known as **Villa Belvedere**, Villa Aldobrandini is one of the most important historic residences in FRASCATI. Due to both its high, privileged position that offers a complete panorama of the town, and the splendor of the carefully designed exterior and interior. Built between 1598 and 1602, the residence, designed by *Giacomo Della Porta*, has four floors divided into state rooms and service rooms. *Carlo Maderno* and *Giovanni Fontana* designed the outdoor **Theater of the Waters**, the **terraces** and the complex hydraulic systems within the **gardens**. To the right of the Theatre of the Waters, one of the oldest among the various nymphea featured in the Tusculum villas, we find the **Parnassus Room**, with frescoes by *Domenichino* and *Passignano*, a splendid room with a water organ built by *Giovanni Guglielmi*, *Giovanni Anguilla*, and *Jacques Sarrazin*.

FRASCATI is also the home to **Villa Torlonia** (Via Annibale Caro - City Park - ALWAYS OPEN), located a short walk from the historic city center, immersed in the current Municipal Park. Wartime bombing completely destroyed the original residence, but the **fountain** in the upper part and the **Theatre of the Waters**, characterized by a long wall with niches and pillars decorated with statues and vases, still remain an attraction that recalls the splendor and wealth of the families who left them to us.

In MONTE PORZIO CATONE we find **Villa Mondragone** (Via Frascati 51 - BY APPOINTMENT - INFORMATION +39 06 94 01 941), which owes its name to the dragon represented in the *Pope Gregory XIII's* coat of arms, the first illustrious resident of the Villa. Begun in 1567, the villa was enlarged between 1616 and 1618 by the Flemish architect Jan van Santen, the brilliant creator of the "**Retirata**", the **Great Garden**, the **Theatre of the Waters** with the **Fountain of the Dragons** and the **large square courtyard** inspired by "cour d'honneur" found in the royal residences of France. The internal decoration of the Retirata, the two chapels, the Hall of the Cariatids and the Red Room are still visible today.

In GROTTAFERRATA, **Villa Grazioli** (Via Umberto Pavoni 19 - BY APPOINTMENT - FOR GROUPS - INFORMATION +39 06 94 54 00 Park Hotel Villa Grazioli), dating back to 1580, now used as a hotel and restaurant, is a beautiful villa where you can admire precious pictorial cycles that illustrate its history, built between the 16th and the 18th century. Among the names of the artists, we mention *Ciampelli*, *Caracci* and *Pannini*. The villa's elegant Italian garden is a striking component that has been well preserved over time.

Other villas in the area worthy of mention generally not open to the public: **Villa Falconieri** (Road to Tusculum - INFORMATION - visitecomitatovillafalconieri@gmail.com), **Villa Tuscolana** (1,5 km Via of Tusculum), **Villa Lancellotti** (Viale Catone), **Villa Sora** (Via Tuscolana 5), **Villa Sciarra** (Via Fontana Vecchia 2) in Frascati; **Villa Vecchia** (Via Frascati 49), **Villa Parisi** (Via Consalvi - INFORMATION - prenotareilvolo@castelliromani.it. + +39 06 93 956 063 int-72/19 - only groups - 20 min) in Monte Porzio Catone.

NOBILE RESIDENCES

In addition to the beautiful Ville Tuscolane, typically built outside of urban centers, starting in the 16th century the Castelli Romani towns underwent extensive urban development in the construction of monumental towns, so that now various historical palaces enrich the Alban hill towns.

An example of this period of architectural splendor is undoubtedly the town of **Ariccia** with its ancient Court Square (Piazza di Corte), which overlooks the splendid **Palazzo Chigi** (Piazza di Corte 14 - www.palazzochigiariccia.it). Its construction began in the second half of the 16th century with the Savelli family, then on commission of the *Chigi* family it was transformed into a sumptuous Baroque residence between 1664 and 1672, designed by the famous *Gian Lorenzo Bernini*, with the assistance of his young pupil *Carlo Fontana*. The palazzo has an important collection of paintings, sculptures and furniture, dating mainly from the seventeenth century. Adjacent to the building is a vast 28-hectare **park**, which dates back to the 16th century, a rich mixture of lush vegetation, archaeological finds, fountains and 17th century works: **Piazzale del Mascherone**, the **Snow Cave** and the **complex of "Mascherone"** (large mask) fountains designed by *Bernini*.

In **Frascati** the **Bishop's Palace** (entrance-Piazza Paolo III 10, and Piazza San Rocco - partially open to the public - INFORMATION +39 06 94 20 467 is well worth a visit. The palace of the Tusculum Diocese was originally a fortress, around which the residential buildings developed. The massive rectangular palace, built in local stone, was built starting in 1458 and completed at the end of the 15th century. It is characterized by two square towers and a circular tower within a portico supported by pillars, delimiting a central courtyard.

At **Castel Gandolfo** you cannot miss the tour of the summer **Papal Palace** (Piazza della Libertà - open - INFORMATION + www.museivaticani.va - email tours.musei@scv.va), built between 1624 and 1626 by Pope Urban VIII based on drawings by *Carlo Maderno*. *Gian Lorenzo Bernini* also took part by designing a portal in the gardens (which no longer exists) and collaborating on a wing.
Inside the Chapel of *Urban VIII*, we find frescoes by *Simone Cagi* and *Zuccari*, while Bernini's gallery was painted by *Pier Leone Ghezzi*. We must also mention the Dining Room of Clement XIV, the Throne Room furnished with tapestries, and the Sala dello Scalco with paintings by *Salvator Rosa*. Another highlight is certainly the **Pontifical Villa Park**, a beautiful and well-kept green area where the Vatican Observatory and the Astronomical Observatory are located, as well as the ruins of the Villa of the Roman Emperor Domitian, of which a large cryptoportico has survived, along with the ruins of a theater and several exedras, and some stretch of road covered by the original Roman paving.

Among these prestigious historic homes, some have become museums or event halls. For example, the the **Civic Museum** of **Albano Laziale** is located inside **Palazzo Ferraioli** (Viale Risorgimento 3 - INFORMATION +3906 93 23 490) and we find the Scuderie Aldobrandini in Frascati (Piazza Marconi 6 - INFORMATION +39 06 94 17 195), a 17th century building which was restored by the architect *Massimiliano Fuksas*, who transformed the stables into an exhibition space, respecting the historical significance of the building and leaving the original wall materials and the main load-bearing structures exposed. Today the stables are home to a permanent archaeological exhibit and an important multifunctional cultural center, where various cultural events such as theater and dance performances are held. On the ground floor we find **the archaeological collection**, which boasts Republican era relics and Etruscan and Roman objects in the Middle Ages: epigraphs, inscriptions, urns, sculptures and bas-reliefs. In the art-historical section we find Tusculum scale models and a niche at the back of the room contains sculptures that celebrate the myth of Dionysus-Bacchus. The first floor houses an auditorium where there are concerts, theatrical performances and various artistic and cultural events.

The historic **Locanda Martorelli** in **Ariccia** (Piazza di Corte 4 - OPEN - INFORMATION +39 388 3636 502 Archeoclub of Italy headquarters Comprensoriale Aricino-Nemorense) is a very noteworthy building. Facing Piazza di Corte, it was transformed by *Antonio Martorelli* into an inn in 1820 and functioned as such until 1880. It was frequented by many painters and writers of the time, who were attracted by the scenic beauty of the town and the Chigi Park. It soon became a sort of Academy "*en plein air*", as renowned artists such as Turner, Corot, and Ivanov stayed there. The interiors are decorated with a mural cycle by the Polish painter *Thaddeus Kuntze*, which illustrates the mythological history of the area: *the temptation of Hippolytus*, *the Death of Hippolytus*, *Diana's hunt*, *the sacrifice to Diana*, the conspiracy against *Turno Erdonio*, *the Death of Turno Erdonio*, *the battle of Lake Regillo*, *the Egerian Nymph and Numa Pompilius*

In **Genzano di Rom Palazzo Sforza Cesarini**, is worth a visit. It is located between the medieval village and the external part of the city, close to the "Olmate", straight tree-lined avenues in the shape of the trident. The adjacent **Historic Park** is of particular interest, a 19th century garden built under the dukedom of *Lorenzo Sforza Cesarini*, in honor of his English wife *Caroline Shirley*. The plans, drawn up by the architect *Augusto Lanciani*, fully represent the romantic style. This charming park that overlooks Lake Nemi, full of oaks, redwoods and cedars, was portrayed by many artists of the *Grand Tour* in numerous works. In the park there are caves containing large tank s used to collect rainwater, and some fake ruins, such as the mullioned windows used as a bench, typical of romantic 19th century parks (Via Scaloni - VISITED the Palace and the Park - INFORMATION +39 06 93 711 243 / 281).

Other **Castelli Romani** palaces were later reused as municipal office buildings. This was the case with **Palazzo Borghese** (Piazza del Mercato 1) in **Monte Compatri**, which has been the town hall since 1982. It was built at the behest of Mark Altemps on the ruins of a castle built by the *Colonna* family in 1423. The construction lasted approximately thirty years, from 1582 to 1613 and was completed by *Cardinal Scipione Borghese*; **Palazzo Savelli** (Piazza Umberto I 1) in **Rocca Priora**,rebuilt in 15th century style by order of the municipal administration in 1880, on plans by architect *Francesco Vespignani*; on the ruins of a Savelli baronial building, which was built reusing the medieval Annibaldi castle. Also **Colonna Palace** (Largo Palazzo Colonna) in **Marino**, built on a pre-existing fortress commissioned by the Orsini family and converted in 1489 into a palace on commission of *Agnes of Montefeltro*, wife of *Fabrizio Colonna*. Other palaces are now home to the Municipal Library Association, such as **Palazzo Borghese** (Via Garibaldi 1) in **Monte Porzio Catone** and **Palazzo Annibaldeschi** (Via degli Annibaldeschi) in Monte Porzio Catone.

ARCHEOLOGY IN CASTELLI ROMANI

The first signs of human life in the territory of the Alban Hills date back to the lower Paleolithic period (200.000 – 200.000 years ago). Flint tools, other chopping tools as well as the "amigdale", a double sided hand axe – were discovered in the area and date back to Neanderthal man.
The first populations to permanently settle in the area of Castelli Romani were the Latins, an Indo-European populations that had settled in ancient Latium (the Latium Vetus of Pliny the Elder which extended south of the Tiber up to Cape Circeo) in 2000 BC. The Latins had already established their towns here – **Albalonga, Tusculum, Ariccia, Lanuvium and Velitrae** to name only the most important – which later were firmly allied in a confederation, the *Lega Latina* against Rome. For centuries, the Latins fought against Romans who wanted to dominate them. Despite the destruction of their capital city Albalonga in the 7th century BC, the Latin League was defeated only three centuries later – and therefore dissolved – in 338 BC. From this time onwards, Castelli Romani were under Roman rule. In 193 AD Septimius Severus ordered the construction of the Castra Albana (the Roman soldier camps that then developed into the current town of Albano) for the *Second Parthian Legion*, who had the role of emperor's bodyguards.
The barbaric invasions that terrorized the Italic peninsula and brought about the fall of the western Roman Empire in 476 AD also brought about the phenomenon of the so-called "incastellamento" in the Alban Hills: The populations took refuge in the hills to shelter from the barbaric invasions. Several noble families built their fortresses here and it was around these that small villages developed throughout the centuries and later became the Castelli Romani. Moreover, this territory with a highly evocative landscape was chosen for building shrines and temples dedicated to the worship of the Latin gods first and then the Roman ones. They are the sites of pagan religion, whose testimonies have been handed down to us through the ages. For those who wish to visit the archaeological sites of the area, below are the main sites worthy of mention.

In **ALBANO LAZIALE**, which in the third century A.D. was the site of the *Second Parthian Severian Legion*, the Roman ruins from the *Castra Albana* period are numerous and well preserved: the **Porta Pretoria** (Via Alcide de Gasperi - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC), **the Cisternoni** (Via Aurelio Saffi – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC), **the Amphitheatre** (Via Anfiteatro 40 – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC), **the Baths** (Via Cellomaio 86). The life of the legionaries is also recounted through several exhibits in **the Museum of the Second Parthian Legion** (Via Volontari del Sangue – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC). For details on all the above archaeological sites and to arrange visits, contact the Civic Museum of Albano +39 06 93 23 490 - www.museicivicialbano.it). In **Albano**, there are also other archaeological remains: the **Imperial Villa** (Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini - within municipal park , ALWAYS OPEN) was built circa 60 BC by *Pompeius the Great*, and then passed to *Augustus*, *Tiberius*, *Caligula* and *Nero*; **the Tomb of the Orazi and Curiazi** (Via della Stella - CLOSED VISIBLE FROM Via della Stella and the Via Appia), reminder of the legendary duel to which tradition attributes the fall of *Albalonga*; **the catacombs of San Senatore** (Via Appia Antica - OPEN - INFORMATION tel. +39 333 9999 883 - www.museodiocesanoadlabano.it), used from the 4th to the 9th century A.D., containing precious frescoes. We also recommend a visit to **the Civic Museum of Palazzo Ferraioli** (Viale Risorgimento,3. - +39 06 93 23 490 - www.museicivicialbano.it), which preserves artifacts ranging from the Paleolithic to the Middle ages, plus artwork and artifacts from various eras, up to the twentieth century.

In **CASTEL GANDOLFO**, inside the **Antiquarium at Villa Barberini** (Pontifical Villas - Via C. Rosselli - INFORMATION www.museivaticani.va) visit the beautiful **gardens of the Papal Palace** and the remains of **Domitian's Villa** (1st century AD) , the sumptuous imperial residence whose estate extended along the shores of Lake Albano,. At the lake it is also possible to visit the remains of the **Doric Nymphaeum** (Via Gramsci) and the **Bergantine Nymphaeum** (Via dei Pescatori 21 - both open to the public by appointment - INFORMATION Castelli Romani Regional Park: +39 06 94 799 308): both locations predate the time of Domitian, and were then embedded in the imperial residence. Still in Castel Gandolfo, one can visit the **Emissary of Lake Albano** (Via dei Pescatori - still in use - INFORMATION Castelli Romani Regional Park +39 06 94 799 308), which is an extraordinary work of Roman hydraulic engineering. On the northern shore of Lake Albano there is a dwelling settlement from the Bronze age, **Villaggio delle Macine** (visible near the road tunnel - not open to visitors). Artifacts found during excavation are kept at the **Civic Museum of Palazzo Ferraioli** in Albano Laziale.

In **FRASCATI** the **Permanent Archaeological Exhibition of Scuderie Aldobrandini** (Piazza Marconi 6. INFORMATION +39 06 94 17 195 Tusculum Civic Museum) has an interesting collection of Roman finds from the Republican and Imperial periods. Frascati also shares with Monte Porzio Catone, Grottaferrata, Monte Compatri the ruins of the important **ancient town of Tusculum** (Via dell Tuscolo - INFORMATION tel. 06 94 70 820 or 06 94 70 944 - www.tuscolopantanoarcheologico.it/turaldi.htl). The ruins of the **Tusculum Amphitheatre** from the 2nd century AD, the **Roman theater** dating back to 75 BC, and a paved stretch of the Street of Tombs are certainly worth a visit. From there you can admire the perimeter of the Latium volcano, Latina Valley, and several villages of Castelli Romani.

In **GROTTAFERRATA** the **Ad Decimum Catacombs** are indeed worth visiting (Via Anagnina 4 – INFORMATION +39 348 4066 708 Gruppo Archeologico Latino Colli Albani) and are excellently preserved.

In **LANUVIO**, you can visit the ruins of the **Temple Of Juno Sospita** (Via Sforza Cesarini - ALWAYS OPEN - guided tours can be booked at Lanuvio Civic Museum), which was built on the acropolis of ancient *Lanuvium*, and formed the heart and wealth of the area. There are well-preserved Polygonal walls, the so-called Latin walls, dating from the late fifth early 4th century BC, and in the nearby countryside the **Loreto Bridge**, dated between the 2nd and 1st century BC, both along the Via Astura (whose proper name is *Via Antiatina*). Recently, in the locality of Pantanacci, in the lush forests of the *ancient ager lanuvinus*, a votive deposit was found in a natural cave. Some of the votive material found is on display in the town rooms (INFORMATION Lanuvino Civic Museum). In Lanuvio one cannot miss a visit to the **Lanuvio Civic Museum** (Piazza Della Maddalena 16 – INFORMATION +39 06 93 789 237 - www.comune.lanuvio.rm.it/pagina/museo) which is organized into three sections: pre-Roman, epigraphy, and medieval.

In **MARINO** a **frescoed Roman Mithraeum** was found in very good condition, one of the three existing in Italy, containing a fresco showing a bullfighting scene. The **Umberto Mastroianni Civic Museum** (Largo de Jacoba 'Settesoli – INFORMATION +39 06 93 85 681) houses artifacts dating back to the proto-historic, Roman and medieval eras.

In **MONTE PORZIO CATONE**, besides the already mentioned ruins of Tusculum (see Frascati), one can visit the vast **Archaeological complex of Barco Borghese** (Via Frascati 62 - GUIDED TOURS - INFORMATION +39 320 7871 831 Manacubba Assn.) . The tour includes a visit to the remains of 16th century structures built on Roman ruins and includes a walk along an underground route with amazing epigraphic remains.

In **NEMI**, on the shores of lake, one may first visit the **Museum of Roman Ships** (Via Diana 15 – INFORMATION +39 06 93 980 40) with the remains of the two ships that the *Emperor Caligula*. The ceremonial ships were kept anchored in the lake and can be considered more floating palaces than real boats. In the museum there is also a pre-historic and proto-historic section with materials from settlements and cemeteries in Castelli Romani area, and artifacts from the Republican and Imperial ages. But the highlight of the museum are finds from excavations of the ancient **Temple of Diana Nemorense**, which was first a Latin League sanctuary, then a Roman temple (near the Museum - Via del Tempio di Diana - INFORMATION - Nemi ProLoco +39 06 93 68 059). Also by the lake are ruins of the **Villa of Caligula** and the Roman-era **emissary**.

In **ROCCA DI PAPA**, in the **Campi D'Annibale area**, there is a path that in the Latin era led to the ancient **Via Sacra** (Sacred Way) from the Old Appian Way leading up to the Temple of Jupiter on Monte Cavo (of which there are only a few traces). There is still a large section of the original paving stones which both were used to go up to a viewpoint known as "Orchiatone", from which you can admire both volcano lakes. Also in Rocca di Papa, the **Medieval Fortress** was opened to the public in 2011 (Via dell' Osservatorio - INFORMATION +39 06 94 98 432 GAL), and stands on the site of a sanctuary which was first Latin and then Roman.

In **VELLETRI** a visit to the **Civic Museum** is highly recommended (Via Goffredo Mameli 4/6 - activities for children available - INFORMATION +39 06 96 158 268 - www.vellletrimuse.it). The museum consists of two separate exhibition sections: the **Oreste Nardini Archaeological Museum** which displays all the archaeological finds from the territory of Velletri, among them the monumental sarcophagus depicting the "**Labors of Hercules**" dating from the second century. A.D., and the **Museum of Prehistory and Geo-paleontology of the Alban Hills** where you can learn about the main events that characterized the early history of the Alban Hills area.

visit CASTELLIROMANI.it

TOURIST MAP

TRAILS AND PATHWAYS OF CASTELLI ROMANI

Thematic itineraries

visitlazio.com **Lazio** ETERNA SEMPRETA

visit CASTELLIROMANI.it

DMO CASTELLI ROMANI

Coordinator DMO: Giovanni Biallo
Editorial staff DMO - Text edited by Stefania Guadagnoli e Cecilia Minghi
Orographic and topographic base: Parco Regionale Castelli Romani
Photo credits: Sergio Bufalini (HISTORICA RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS): Villa Aldobrandini, Frascati), Ass.ne Amici di Palazzo Chigi (HISTORICA RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS): Palazzo Chigi e Collegiata dell'Assunta, Ariccia), Giovanni Biallo (THE SACRED PATHWAYS): Emma Cannalibridi, Monte Porzio Catone), Claudio Viviani (ARCHEOLOGY IN CASTELLI ROMAN: anfiteatro dell'Tuscolo, Monte Porzio Catone), Valerio Marino (VIA FRANCIGENA OF CASTELLI ROMAN: veduta dei due laghi "l'Lucchiaiore", Monte Porzio Catone), Valerio Marino (TYPICAL PRODUCTS)
Graphic design and cover: Cristiana Suriano
Graphic-mapping project: Valerio Marino

Publisher
Consorzio per il Sistema Bibliotecario Castelli Romani
Viale Mazzini, 12 - 00045 Genzano di Roma RM

Print
Pentro Stampa e Riproduzioni s.r.l.
Via Pietralata, 1157 - 00158 Roma RM

Realized with the contribution of the Lazio Region L.R. 19/2006

REGIONE LAZIO

INFO
www.visitcastelliromani.it

17 TOWNS OF THE CASTELLI ROMANI

Allegato alla rivista VIVIVOCE

THE SACRED PATHWAYS

The sacred, the religious, and the extraordinary are themes closely connected to the ancient and modern history of Castelli Romani. Starting in ancient times, this territory of breathtaking landscapes was chosen to build sanctuaries and temples dedicated to the cult of Latin gods first, and later Roman. They are the places of pagan worship and evidence of such has survived to this day. In this area so close to Rome, the presence of the Church has been strongly felt since the beginning: popes throughout history– also important clergymen of all kinds – were regular visitors and chose to have their summer residences here, which in turn favored the construction of numerous beautiful churches. To visit them we suggest some **itineraries to discover sacred art**. Among the numerous places of worship in this area, there are some which are particularly venerated by the locals as well as non-locals, as they are tied to miraculous episodes. This serves as a reminder of the religiousness of the people, which has continued to be passed on through generations. These are the **places of extraordinary events**, where religious sentiment is revealed and constantly renewed.

SACRED ART ITINERARIES

Our journey to discover sacred art in the Castelli Romani includes three itineraries, which bring you to the most important churches found in the area from a historical-artistic point of view. The first itinerary covers the towns north of **Via Anagnina and Via Tuscolana roads** (SS 511 e 215); the second covers the towns south of these roads up to **Via dei Laghi road** (SS 217); the third itinerary takes us to visit the towns along **the Appian Way**.

ITINERARY - A
Frascati, Monte Porzio Catone, Monte Compatri, Colonna, Rocca Priora

In FRASCATI one must first visit the **Church of St. Peter Apostle** (Piazza San Pietro - INFORMATION +39 06 94 20 238) Cathedral of the Diocese of Frascati, with Greek cross plan divided into three naves and containing eight altars, it houses a wooden crucifix from the 11th -12th century, and nearby is the Baroque **Church of Jesus** (Via del Gesù 15) built in the late 1600s by enlarging a previous church, with a facade inspired by the Church of Gesù in Rome (normally closed to the public – tours can be requested at St. Peter Apostle Church - INFORMATION +39 06 94 20 238) Piazza San Rocco we find the **Church of Santa Maria in Vivario** (Via L. Cadorna 73 - normally closed – tours may be requested at St. Peter Apostle Church - INFORMATION +39 06 94 20 238) the former cathedral, also known by the name **San Rocco**. It was built on the ruins of the nursery (vivarium) of an ancient Roman villa, and has a noteworthy bell tower decorated with polychrome majolica.

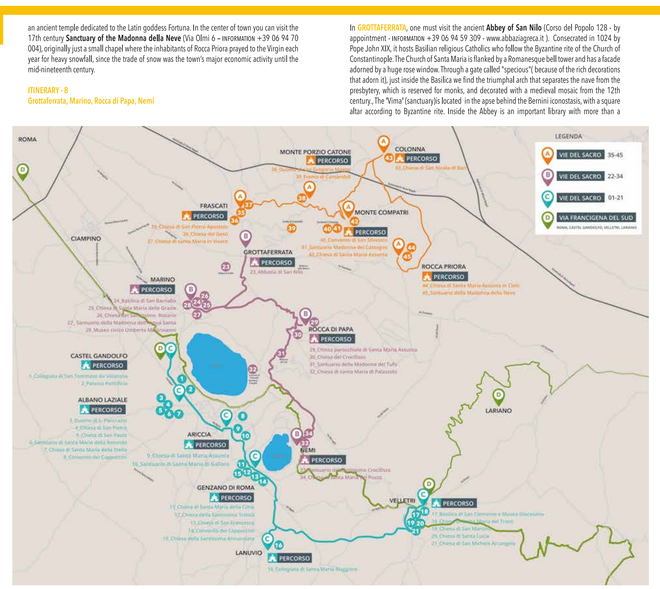
In MONTE PORZIO CATONE you may visit the massive **Cathedral of St. Gregory the Great** (Piazza del Duomo - INFORMATION +39 06 94 49 049) built in 1666 and consecrated on 1 June 1766 by *Cardinal Henry Duke of York*, and the charming **hermitage of Camaldoli** (Via del Tuscolo 45 - the monastery is off- limits to women, men can visit it only partially on the occasion of meetings or retreats - INFORMATION +39 06 94 47 360), set against the slopes of Mount Tusculum 550 meters above sea level, surrounded by forests of oak and chestnut trees and inhabited by cloistered monks.

In MONTE COMPATRI a visit to the **Monastery and Pinacoteca** (Painting gallery) **San Silvestro** is recommended (Via di San Silvestro - you can visit the art gallery by reservation only - INFORMATION +39 06 94 85 023) located outside of the town. It is an ideal place to retreat to the tranquility of nature and the silence that surrounds it. Inside the monastery a small art gallery contains a collection of almost entirely 17th century works from the Caravaggio and Mannerist schools. The Convent is situated outside the town, in a panoramic position, while next to it is the tiny **Sanctuary of the Madonna del Castagno** (Via di San Silvestro - the church is only open on special occasions) inside which is a chestnut tree trunk bearing the image of the Virgin Mary, which is highly venerated by worshippers for the miracles received. Finally, in the upper part of the town, the **Church of Santa Maria Assunta** is to be visited (Via Campo Gallino - information +39 06 94 85 038). A 17th century construction which was restored several times, it contains valuable paintings such as The Death of St. Francis, and Virgin and Child with Saints, attributed to painters Vanni and Passignano.

In COLONNA you can visit the Baroque **Church of St. Nicholas of Bari** (Via San Nicola di Bari 2 - INFORMATION +39 06 94 38 160 - www.sannicoladibari.it), which houses paintings of considerable interest such as the 1759 work by *Carlo Cappini* in the apse, depicting the Virgin and Child, supported by angels; to its right St. Nicholas of Bari depicted as a shepherd points to it; to the left St. Philip Benizi embraces a crucifix.

In ROCCA PRIORA the **Church of Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo** (Piazza Umberto I - INFORMATION +39 06 94 70100 - www.santamariaassuntaarcciprora.it), built in the 15th century in the place of an ancient temple dedicated to the Latin goddess Fortuna. In the center of town you can visit the 17th century **Sanctuary of the Madonna della Neve** (Via Olmi 6 - INFORMATION +39 06 94 70 004), originally just a small chapel where the inhabitants of Rocca Priora prayed to the Virgin each year for heavy snowfall, since the trade of snow was the town's major economic activity until the mid-nineteenth century.

ITINERARY - B
Grottaferrata, Marino, Rocca di Papa, Nemi



In GROTTAFERRATA, one must visit the ancient **Abbey of San Nilo** (Corso del Popolo 128 - by appointment - INFORMATION +39 06 94 59 309 - www.abbaziagrecа.it). Consecrated in 1024 by Pope John XIX, it hosts Basilian religious Catholics who follow the Byzantine rite of the Church of Constantinople. The Church of Santa Maria is flanked by a Romanesque bell tower and has a facade adorned by a huge rose window. Through a gate called "speciosus", because of the rich decorations that adorn it), just inside the Basilica we find the triumphal arch that separates the nave from the presbytery, which is reserved for monks, and decorated with a medieval mosaic from the 12th century,. The "Vima" (sanctuary)is located in the apse behind the Bernini iconostasis, with a square altar according to Byzantine rite. Inside the Abbey is an important library with more than a thousand ancient manuscripts and about 50,000 volumes of great value, some dating back to the foundation of the abbey and belonging to *Saint Nilus* himself. In addition to the Library, since 1931 the Abbey has had a famous Ancient Book Restoration Laboratory, which counts among its most important works the restoration of the famous "Atlantic Codex" by *Leonardo da Vinci*.

In MARINO, the itinerary starts at the 17th century **Basilica of St. Barnabas**, dedicated to the city's patron saint (Piazza San Barnaba - INFORMATION +39 06 93 87 049), built between 1652 and 1653 with an elegant baroque facade. Then, **Saint Mary of Grace** (Via Garibaldi 18 - info tel. 06 9387187), one of the oldest churches in the city that houses a fresco depicting the Virgin of Grace attributed to the Florentine painter *Benozzo Gozzoli*, a wooden sculpture of the Neapolitan school depicting St. Nicholas of Tolentino, and a painting of St. Roch attributed to famous Domenichino (1581-1641). Also worth a visit is the **Church of the Most Holy Rosary** (Piazza Garibaldi - by appointment - INFORMATION +39 06 93 87 059), a fine example of Roman Rococo. Finally, along the road that goes down to the Ferentano woods, lies the small **Sanctuary of the Madonna of Holy Water** (Via Cesare Battisti 47 - by appointment - INFORMATION +39 06 93 85 553). Carved into the rock, it is accessed by a thirty-step staircase and below the altar there is a freshwater spring which is believed to be miraculous. Also worth visiting is the **Umberto Mastroianni Museum** (Piazza Matteotti, 13 - INFORMATION +39 06 93 85 681) located in the former church of Santa Lucia, built near the ancient *Frangipane* fortress built on a Roman cistern dating between the 1st and 2nd century AD.

In the center of ROCCA DI PAPA, there is the Renaissance parish **church of Santa Maria Assunta** (Via Duomo, 3 - INFORMATION +39 06 94 98 687). Heavily damaged by bombings during World War II, it was restored similarly to its original appearance, in the neoclassical style. Inside you can admire the depiction of the Madonna della Pietà by *Pietro Labruzzi*, an image to which the locals are very devout, a painting of San Carlo Borromeo by *Domenico Tojetti*, and a sculpture depicting the Pietà by Theodor Wilhelm Achtermann, as well as the beautiful image of the Assumption of the Virgin by *Corrado Giaquinto* (1703-1766). Next to the parish church, we find the small **Church of the Crucifix** (Piazza del Crocefisso), 17th century. On your way out of town, visit the **Sanctuary of the Madonna del Tufo** (Via Ariccia, 1 - INFORMATION +39 06 94 98 432), a pilgrimage site built in the early 16th century to commemorate a miracle which occurred in the Middle ages, with a characteristic wooden ceiling and the Madonna carved in a block of the volcanic tuff stone (tufo). Away from the center of town, on the slopes of the crater of Lake Albano, the **Church of Santa Maria Palazzolo** is certainly worth a stop (Via dei Laghi indication Palazzola - not open to visitors). From the square in front of the Convent you can enjoy one of the most beautiful views of Castelli Romani, overlooking the below lake.

In **NEMI**, facing the square at the entrance of the village, we find the revered **Shrine of the Holy Cross** (Piazza Crocefisso 1 - INFORMATION +39 06 93 68 013 - www.confraternitadinemi.org) built in 1637 by *Mario Frangipane*, together with the annexed convent. The beautiful **Church of Santa Maria del Pozzo** (Via Santa Chiara - INFORMATION +39 06 93 68 650) built in the 17th century. It, is one of the largest and most beautiful churches in Castelli Romani area and preserves a precious wooden triptych by *Antonio Aquili*, better known as *Antoniazzo Romano* (dating from the late 15th century - early 16th century): Christ is at the center and St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist on either side.

ITINERARY - C
Castel Gandolfo, Albano Laziale, Ariccia, Genzano di Roma, Lanuvio, Velletri

In CASTEL GANDOLFO one can visit the **Pontifical Collegiate Parish of St. Thomas of Villanova** (Piazza Della Libertà 12 - INFORMATION +39 06 93 59 191); Designed by *Bernini*, it houses paintings by the artist known as Borgognone and works by *Pietro da Cortona* (the main altarpiece depicting the Crucifixion with Mary, Mary Magdalene and Saint John), as well as a stucco by *Antonio Raggi*. At Castel Gandolfo you cannot miss of course a visit to the **Papal Palace** - a suburban papal residence (Piazza della Libertà - open to public - INFORMATION www.museivaticani.va - email: tours.musei@scv.va).

In ALBANO, start your visit with the **Cathedral of San Pancrazio** (Piazza Pia - crypt open by appointment - INFORMATION +39 06 93 24 113), dedicated to the patron saint of the city. Here you can admire an early Christian marble sarcophagus bearing a depiction of a praying person. Next visit the ancient **Church of Saint Peter** (Piazza San Pietro - INFORMATION +39 06 93 21 841 - www.parrocchiadisanpietroapostolo.org site), along the main street where the left altar rests on a sarcophagus from the middle of the 3rd century and the altar on the right is dominated by the Holy Conversation by Gherardo delle Notti (16th century). We cannot overlook the value of frescoes, like the Virgin of the Sign from the Byzantine period (13th -14th century), located in a small niche, and one depicting St. Margaret and St. Onofrio (13th -14th century) and the large altarpiece, attributed to Titian, depicting the delivery of the keys to St. Peter, and the banners (16th century). Continue to the **Church of Saint Paul** (Via S. Paolo 6 - INFORMATION +39 06 93 20 175), dating back to the 13th century but significantly reworked in the 18th century, and it is definitely worth visiting the interesting **Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Rotonda** (Via della Rotonda 2 - INFORMATION +39 06 93 24 113) built on an ancient nymphaeum of the Domitian's villa, an interesting architectural precedent to the Pantheon in Rome. Leaving the center of town, visit the **Church of Santa Maria della Stella** (Via della Stella 5 - INFORMATION +39 06 93 20 819), at the southern end of the town, and the **Church of the Capuchins** (Via San Francesco d' Assisi - INFORMATION +39 06 93 21 086), to the northeast of the town, characterized by a wide staircase, surrounded by large oak trees, leading to the church and introducing one to the simplicity of Franciscan convent architecture. A Nativity by *Andrea Bolgi* and *Stefano Speranza*, Bernini school artists, is housed inside.

In ARICCIA one must definitely visit the **Church of Santa Maria Assunta** (Via Ippolito, 4 - INFORMATION +39 06 93 30 637 - www.assunta.it) *Gian Lorenzo Bernini's* final masterpiece. The great baroque master designed every detail including the furnishings. Construction of the church began in 1662 and it was consecrated on 16 May, 1665. Inside the circular church, above the entrance, we can admire a choir with an organ and the frescoed apse, a masterpiece by *Borgognone*, depicting the Assumption into heaven of the Virgin Mary: the Virgin is supported by angels, and below them the apostles. The **Sanctuary of Santa Maria di Galloro** (Via Appia Nuova 54 - INFORMATION +39 06 93 30 704 - www.santamariadigalloro.it), situated along the Via Appia towards Genzano, was renovated by Bernini.

In GENZANO DI ROMA first of all visit the **Church of Santa Maria della Cima** (Piazza G. Marconi - INFORMATION +39 06 93 99 746), the highest point of the town and from where the famous Infiorata (Flower Festival) begins; then the so-called "new cathedral", the Church of the Holy Trinity (Corso Don Minzoni 2 - INFORMATION +39 06 93 96 078) with its facade that recalls the 16th century Roman style and the Church of St. Francis (Piazza San Francesco d' Assisi - INFORMATION +39 06 93 96 041), and the adjacent Capuchin Convent, the node of the trident of roads called "Olmate". Finally, at the southern end of town we find the 18th century Church of the Santissima Annunziata (Piazza Annunziata), unfortunately not open to the public.

In LANUVIO you may visit the 17th century **Collegiate Church of Santa