

Nature excursions



THE TYPICAL TUSCAN LANDSCAPE IS THE HARMONY OF NATURE AND CULTURE, THE ENVIRONMENT IS MODELLED BY THE SECULAR LABOUR OF MAN. EVERY SEASON ONE CAN WALK IN THE WOODS OF THE VALDAMBRA AND THE PRATOMAGNO MOUNTAIN, VISIT GARDENS AND NATURE RESERVES, DISCOVER THE EROSIONS OF THE BALZE, PAINTED BY LEONARDO DA VINCI.



The Balze. It is a protected area of 2000 ha with fascinating erosions of sand and clay. There are many trails for excursions.
www.areeprotette.provincia.arezzo.it



The Valdambra is between Bucine and Pergine, near Siena, a countryside amongst woods, olive groves and historical centres. *www.collidambra.it*



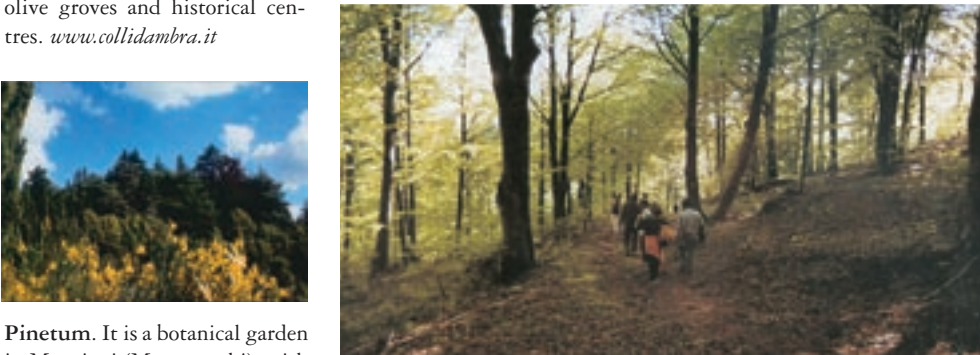
Pinetum. It is a botanical garden in Moncioni (Montevarchi), with giant conifer and exotic trees.
Comune Montevarchi 055 9108247



Valle dell'Inferno. It is a nature reserve of 500 ha on the river Arno, with flora and fauna typical of damp areas.
Visitor's Centre 393 8353089

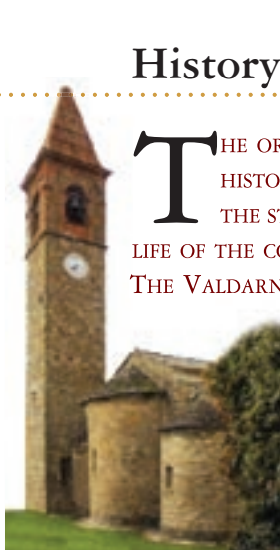


Pratomagno. It is a mountain between Arezzo and Firenze; there are woods and villages, chestnuts and beeches and, on the ridge, large pastures.
Comunità Montana 055 9172277

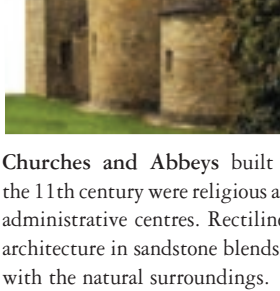


From the Balze to the Pratomagno and the Valdambra there are many trails for people who are fond of walking and hiking.

History and art excursions



THE ORIGINS OF THE VALDARNO ARE LINKED TO ETRUSCAN AND ROMAN HISTORY, LATER WITH THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE, WITH THE STRUGGLES FOR POWER BETWEEN AREZZO AND FLORENCE, WITH THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITIES AND WITH THE FEUDAL SYSTEM OF THE COUNTRYSIDE. THE VALDARNO IS A REGION WITH A GREAT HERITAGE OF ART, FROM MASACCIO TO VENTURINO VENTURI, FROM THE ANONYMOUS FRESCOS TO THE ANNUNCIATION BY BEATO ANGELICO.



Churches and Abbeys built in the 11th century were religious and administrative centres. Rectilinear architecture in sandstone blends in with the natural surroundings.



Venturino Venturi. In Loro Ciuffenna is the museum and the atelier of the famous 20th century painter and sculptor.
Pro Loco 055 9170146



Annunciation by Beato Angelico is a Renaissance masterpiece in the Museum of the Basilica.
Pro Loco 055 943748



Cennina. is a small village, a masterpiece of medieval urban planning with a harmonious combination of brick and stone in its 15th century square.
Information point 055 992796



Industrial monuments. Glass manufacturing factory, now a university (San Giovanni Valdarno), furthermore factories for hat making, spinning, brick and tobacco production...

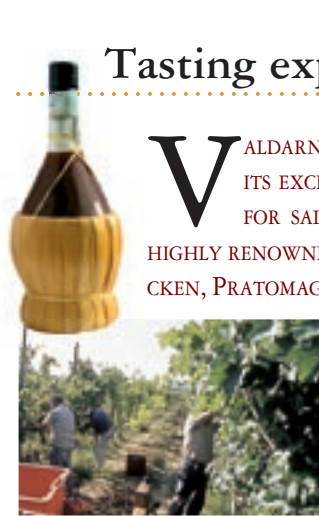


Museum of Paleontology of Montevarchi. A tour in the past, when the Valdarno was a lake: fossils and exhibits of sequoias, elephants and hippopotamus...
055 981227



The masterpieces by Della Robbia. The splendour of the sculptures and glazed earthenware: the lunette in San Giovanni, the monumental temple in Montevarchi, the baptismal fountain in the church of Galtrona.

Tasting experiences



VALDARNO HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE LAND OF WINE, ITS CHIANTI, AND LIKEWISE ITS EXCEPTIONAL EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL. THESE PRODUCTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR SALE ON FARMS AND IN WINE CELLARS AND YOU CAN ALSO FIND THE HIGHLY RENOWNED ZOLFINO BEANS, VALDARNO CHICKEN, PRATOMAGNO CHESTNUTS, SHEEP'S MILK CHEESE AND HIGH QUALITY LOCAL SALAMIS AND CURED MEATS.

Wine. The terroir of Valdarno is characterised by Sangiovese. In this area the Chianti wine is fresh and fruity, sapid and ruby red.
www.stradadelvino.arezzo.it



Extra virgin olive oil. It is one of the finest olive oil in the world, with a very low level of acidity and full fruitiness.
www.provincia.arezzo.it/agricoltura



The chestnuts of Pratomagno and of the mountains of the Chianti are used to produce a sweet and fragrant flour.
Consorzio: 335 373280



Valdarno chicken. is a real free range chicken; its claws are yellow and the meat is firm and very tasty.
Consorzio 320 6758632



Pecorino cheese, sheep's cheese, is fresh or seasoned, tasty, with delicate flavour.
www.provincia.arezzo.it/agricoltura



Pratomagno Zolfino Beans are round with thin skins, tasty and creamy. *www.ilfagiolozolfino.it*



Tuscan bread is saltless, often made with stone milled flour and baked in wood fired ovens.

THE GREAT TUSCAN GASTRONOMICAL TRADITION IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING INGREDIENTS: RIBOLLITA (SOUP WITH BLACK CABBAGE, BEANS AND BREAD), PAPPARDELLE (WIDE FRESH PASTA STRIPS) WITH RABBIT OR DUCK SAUCE, PAPPAL POMODORO (SIMPLE AND SIMMERED TASTY FRESH TOMATOES WITH BREAD), PORCHETTA (SPIT ROAST WHOLE PORK WITH STUFFING OF HERBS, FENNEL AND GARLIC), SPIT ROASTED MEAT (ONE OF THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF OUR CUISINE) THE STEWS, PANZANELLA AND CASSEROLES...

Fairs, from tradition to modern times

Folk culture and tradition are the origin of the many fairs held in every town whether small or large in the Valdarno: the revival of the costume festivals and of old, typical handicrafts, village festivals based on the gastronomical produce of the area. There is the Festa del Perdono - the fair of forgiveness (the largest is in Terranuova Bracciolini at the end of September) where religious aspects, food, goods and livestock are interwoven. In each season of the year Valdarno offers a rich calendar of events for tourists and visitors in the squares, in the old town centres and in the countryside.

• **Europlà.** San Giovanni, at the end of August. International comical theatre. Notte Bianca - shops open until late at night.

• **August beneath the stars.**

Throughout the month, wine tasting sessions are held in the villages of the Valdarno to sample the best local wines: Campogialli, Moncioni, Rapale, Cennina, Laterina...

• **Village festivals.** There are numerous gastronomical festivals: Festival of the crostino, S. Leolino; the frog festival, Pietraviva; the steak festival, Mercatale; the snail festival, Ambra e Cavriglia; the chestnut festival, Mercatale; the trout festival, Loro Ciuffenna; the pulenda festival, Poggio di Loro; the ribollita soup festival, San Clemente; the homemade bastoncello festival, Casanova di Laterina; the panello con l'uva festival, Neri di Cavriglia...

• **The Antique fair.** Every second Sunday of the month in Terranuova over a hundred stalls with furniture, ceramics, wrought iron and odds and ends.

• **Il Mercatale.** Every second Saturday of the month a market of local produce takes place in the main square in Montevarchi.

• **Orientoccidente.** Music festival - sounds from all over the world.

• **Utopia del buongusto.** Theatre dinners held in the village squares of the Valdarno.



• **Valdarno Jazz.** Jazz music festival.

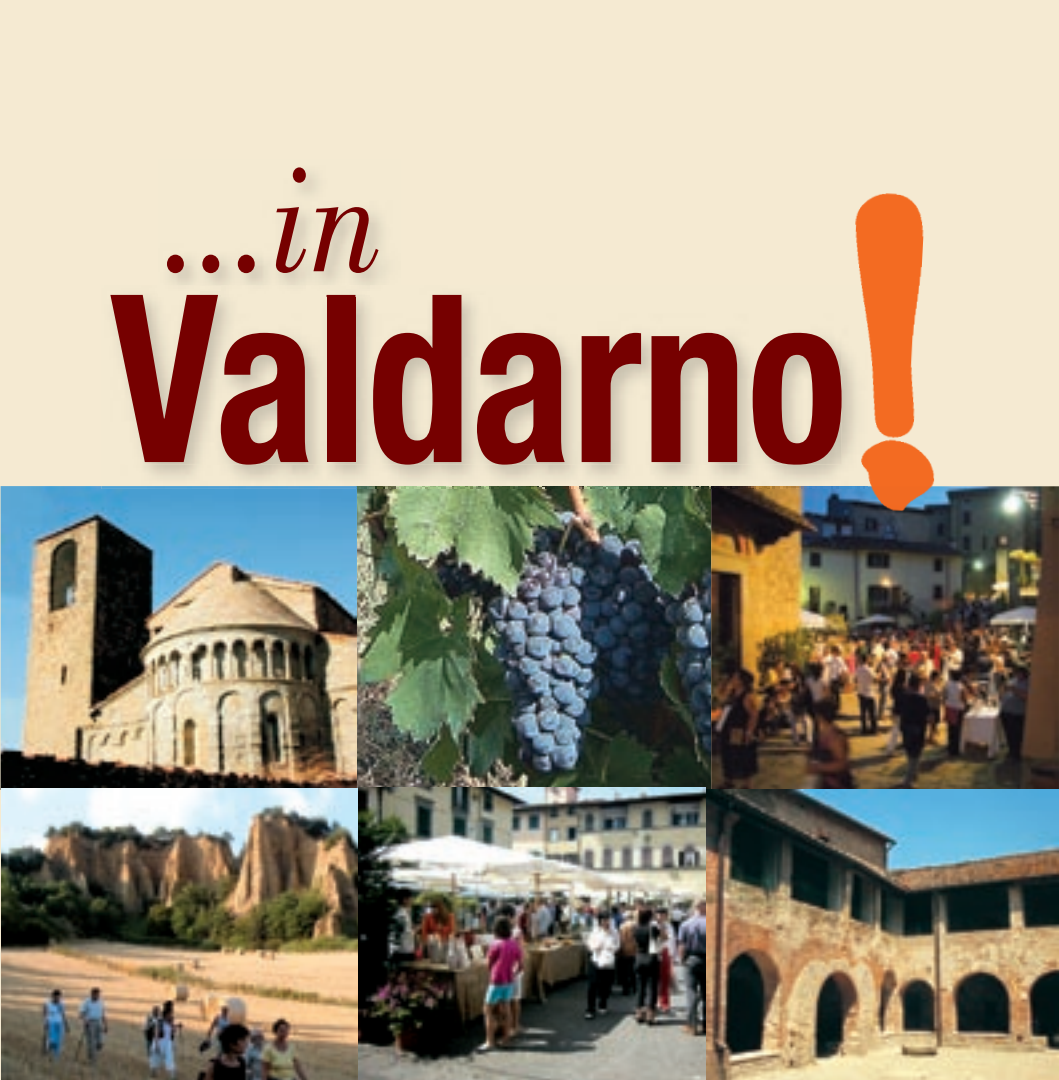
• **Cinema e socialità.** Film showings and meetings with producers and actors in the main square of Pergine Valdarno.

• **Discovering nature.** Throughout the Summer guided tours to the nature reserves (Balze, Pinetum, Valle dell'Inferno, Ponte Buriano).

• **Theater seasons** in San Giovanni Valdarno, Bucine, Castelfranco, Terranuova, Cavriglia



SAN GIOVANNI: The Uffizi lunch with «stufato» - braised spiced beef; Valdarno Cinema Fedic, short film festival; the Rificolona festival (7th Sept) theatre season. • **BUCINE:** flower festival, a festival of the Italian regions (May and August); medieval banquet at Ambra (August); concerts at Cennina and in the Valdambra castles, (Summer) • **LORO CIUFFENNA:** little marathon of the parish churches, (1st May), Loro Summer exhibition; midsummer festival (15th August); quartetto d'archi festival, Gropina (July and August) • **CASTELFRANCO:** Castelfranco vivi-amo summer festival - theatre and prose; collector's market and exhibition (25th April); Corpus Domini procession and flower covering in the town centre: the live nativity. • **LATERINA:** the frog race, Ponticino in June; Medieval festival (July), Nativity crib competition in Laterina in December; • **PERGINE:** cinema and sociality festival (August); grape harvest blessing, Pieve a Presciano (August); festival of the new oil, (November); • **PIAN DI SCÒ:** Art and Music (June); archaeological nights, Poggio alla Regina (July); Faella Summer, shows and gastronomy; the Valdarno horse race (July); festival of decoy birds, (October); the new oil festival (November) • **TERRANUOVA:** Zolfino bean festival, (May); «In Strada», street festival, art and food (September): national bird fair (September); summer together; improvviso poems; theatre and music season, Auditorium. • **MONTEVARCHI:** Carnival, classical music concerts, opera in the town square; market on the road of the museums... • **CAVRIGLIA:** the Arezzo countryside and from villa to villa, classical music (Summer); the fair of forgiveness in the villages; the fair of the new oil (December).



BETWEEN AREZZO AND FLORENCE, THE CHIANTI AND THE PRATOMAGNO

a completely different holiday...

A publication by Municipalities of Valdarno and the Comunità Montana Pratomagno



A trip to the Valdarno: *a completely different holiday...*

The Valdarno is the valley through which the river Arno flows, one of the most typical Tuscan landscapes, between Arezzo, Florence and Siena. It borders on the Chianti hills to the west and the Pratomagno mountains to the east. It was completely submersed by a Pliocene lake, then traversed by old roads (such as the Clodia and the Cassia Vetus) which connected Etruscan and Roman towns, later conquered by the Florentine Republic which built a series of walled towns such as San Giovanni Valdarno, Terranuova, Castelfranco. These towns were built according to plans attributed to Arnolfo di Cambio. In the Valdarno visitors have an wide choice of very impressive excursions in a «minor Tuscany» no matter which season of the year.

1 TO THE EAST OF THE ARNO RIVER art and landscape characterize the ancient meandering of the Setteponti road. We set off from Ponte Buriano, where the nature reserve and the Romanesque bridge which spans over the river were most probably the background of Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa. The road continues northbound through vineyards, olive groves and the mountain terraces of the Pratomagno. To the west we find Laterina castle and in the surrounding countryside the typical «Leopoldine» type farmhouses, which date back to the 18th-19th centuries with their porches, pillared terraces and pigeon towers. Close by is the Borro, an elegant historical hamlet and important tourist spot. The countryside around

Terranuova is a hilly territory with farms alternating with small medieval villages - all important for agricultural produce (wine, oil, cheese, zolfino beans) and for tourism (restaurants, luxury farm stays and residences). Located between Terranuova and Laterina is a wetland nature reserve called Valle dell'Inferno - Hell's Valley which boasts flora and fauna typical of such an area.

Roman parish church of Gropina, a simple and austere Romanesque monument near Loro Ciuffenna - an old town built on the rocks which the river has sculpted over the span of time. There are medieval houses grouped on both sides of a Romanesque bridge of notable span. The Venturino Venturi Museum (adjacent to the council buildings) is a must to visit (paintings, sketches and sculptures by the Artist from Loro) as well as the ancient watermill.

Loro Ciuffenna is the gateway to the mountains: the Pratomagno is covered with vineyards and olive groves at its base, as you go further up by great oaks, chestnuts and lastly by beeches right at the top. There are many little villages and hamlets on the slopes up to about 1000 metres above sea level; their names recall origins of olden days (Rocca Ricciarda, Modine, Gorgiti, Poggio di Loro, Chiassaia, Anciolina) and the scent of mushrooms, chestnuts and bread baked in wood fired ovens. Further along the Setteponti we find ourselves in the world of the Balze, a protected landscape of particular geological interest, interspersed with villas, farms and small towns and villages: Montemarciano, Poggitazzi, Persignano, Piantravigne. Bordering

on this area between terraced olive groves and iris fields is Castelfranco di Sopra, one of the Florentine «new towns»; just outside its walls is Soffena Abbey, which was rebuilt by the Vallombrosa monks in the 14th century. The last stop in the Valdarno of the province of Arezzo is Piandiscò with its 12th century Roman parish church, Santa Maria di Scò, and the archaeological site of Poggio alla Regina.

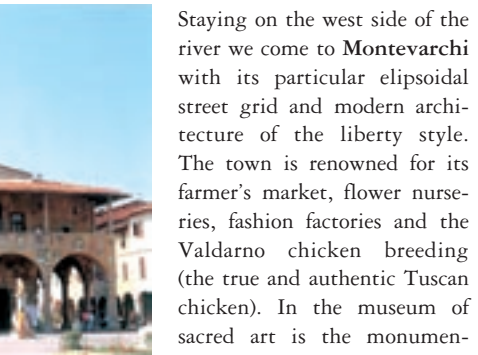
A few kilometres further on are Masaccio's paintings in Pieve di Cascia in the Vallombrosa forest, with its thousand year old abbey and the biogenetic nature reserve.

2 THE TRIP CONTINUES ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE ARNO RIVER, where the valley floor has always been the most vital area of the province of Arezzo, and subjected over time to great demographical and economical growth, in which modern infrastructure and the fabric of historical road networks live side by side as well as evidence of industrial technology and typical farmhouses



Pergine Valdarno, the town square

restored for tourism. In this context, from the traditional artisan professions were born many «outlets» of very important firms. San Giovanni Valdarno is famous for its art heritage; the birthplace of Masaccio and the Podestà palace built on plans by Arnolfo di Cambio, the basilica with a masterpiece of Beato Angelico in its museum of the Annunciation. The industrial tradition of San Giovanni is connected with the history of the mines in Cavriglia, where the activity of lignite extraction involved entire communities. Along the Chianti road there is a botanical rose garden with thousands of varieties of roses and a vast park with woods open to the public.



Palazzo d'Arnolfo in San Giovanni

Museum with its fossils dating back to the Pliocene lake in Valdarno. After Levane (where in the 16th century Montaigne praised the local Osteria as being the best in the whole of Tuscany) going towards Siena the Ambra valley opens out in front of us with one of the best rural landscapes. Archeological findings are a testimony to Etruscan/Roman settlements in Pergine Valdarno; the town hall square and the alleys of the walled town dominate an large hill with terraced olive groves which produce one of the best extra virgin olive oils in the area. Finally we come to Bucine from which reflects the path of history with its Romanesque parish churches, castles, artistic and historic testimonials, little hamlets such as Cennina (with its 14th century square), Montebenichi, San Leolino, Duddova, Badia a Ruoti (11th century Camaldolese abbey), Galatrona (Parish church and baptismal fountain of Giovanni della Robbia). The Chianti region starts here and the influence of Siena is easy to perceive.



The tower of Galatrona, Bucine

Info



TOURIST INFORMATION POINTS

San Giovanni (Ufficio Apt), piazza Cavour
055 943748 info@prolocosangioannivaldarno.it
Loro Ciuffenna, c/o Municipio, 055 9170146
info.turismo@comune.loro-ciuffenna.ar.it
Terranuova B.ni, casello autostradale Valdarno,
055 9738828 infoturismovaldarno@gmail.com
Bucine, via del Castello, 055 992796
infobucine@alice.it

Ambra, Vicolo della Luna, 055 996701
infoprolocoambra@alice.it
Cavriglia, Via Chiantigiana, 055 966421-966114
turismo@comune.cavriglia.ar.it
Castelfranco di Sopra
c/o Biblioteca Comunale, 055 9149392
Montevarchi
Ufficio incomune 055 9108247



TOWN COUNCIL

Montevarchi 055 91081
www.comune.montevarchi.ar.it
Loro Ciuffenna 055 917011
www.comune.loro-ciuffenna.ar.it
Terranuova Bracciolini 055 919471
www.comune.terranuova-bracciolini.ar.it
www.terraospitale.it
Pian di Scò 055 9631200
www.comune.pian-di-sco.ar.it
Castelfranco di Sopra 055 9147711
www.comune.castelfranco-di-sopra.ar.it
Laterina 0575 88011 www.comune.laterina.ar.it

San Giovanni Valdarno 055 91261
www.comune.san-giovanni-valdarno.ar.it
Cavriglia 055 966971
www.comune.cavriglia.ar.it
Bucine 055 991271
www.comune.bucine.ar.it
Pergine Valdarno 0575 896571
www.perginevaldarno.net
Comunità Montana Pratomagno
Loro Ciuffenna, 055 9172277
www.cm-pratomagno.toscana.it

USEFUL INFORMATION

Apt Arezzo (Agenzia per il turismo)
0575 23952/3 www.apr.aretzo.it
Strada del Vino «Terre di Arezzo»
0575 294066
www.stradadelvino.aretzo.it
CAI Valdarno 055 900682
Associazione Guide «il Viottolo» 329 4173039

Centro Guide Arezzo e Provincia
Prenotazioni: 334 3340608
www.centroguidearetzo.it
Associazione Guide Alcedo 328 1520911
Ospitalità agrituristica
www.agriturismo.regione.toscana.it

OPEN-AIR MARKETS

Monday morning, Loro Ciuffenna
and Laterina (loc. Ponticino)
Thursday afternoon, Cavriglia
Wednesday morning, Bucine
Thursday morning, Montevarchi

Friday morning, Castelfranco di Sopra,
Terranuova Bracciolini and Pergine Valdarno
Saturday morning, San Giovanni Valdarno
Saturday afternoon, Pian di Scò

GETTING THERE:

- By train: Montevarchi and San Giovanni Valdarno railway stations. (www.trenitalia.it)
- By car: A1 Florence-Rome motorway, entrance/exit Valdarno: main road no. 69 which goes from Florence to Arezzo.
- By plane: The nearest airport is Florence Peretola.
- From Valdarno it's easy to reach Arezzo (20 mins), Florence (30 mins), Siena (40 mins).

LEGENDA

- Main roads
- Side roads
- Churches and oratorio
- Castles and historical town centres
- Farmhouses and rural architecture
- Parish churches and monasteries
- Excavation sites and archaeological finds
- Panoramic view
- Balze (crag area)



The antique water mill in Loro Ciuffenna



The Campana gate in Castelfranco



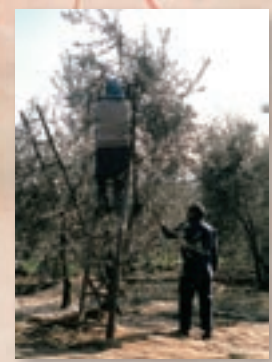
The hamlet of Laterina



The villages on the mountain slopes



From the Pratomagno to the Chianti



The olive tree, passion and labour



A walk in the forests and hills of the Valdambra



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