



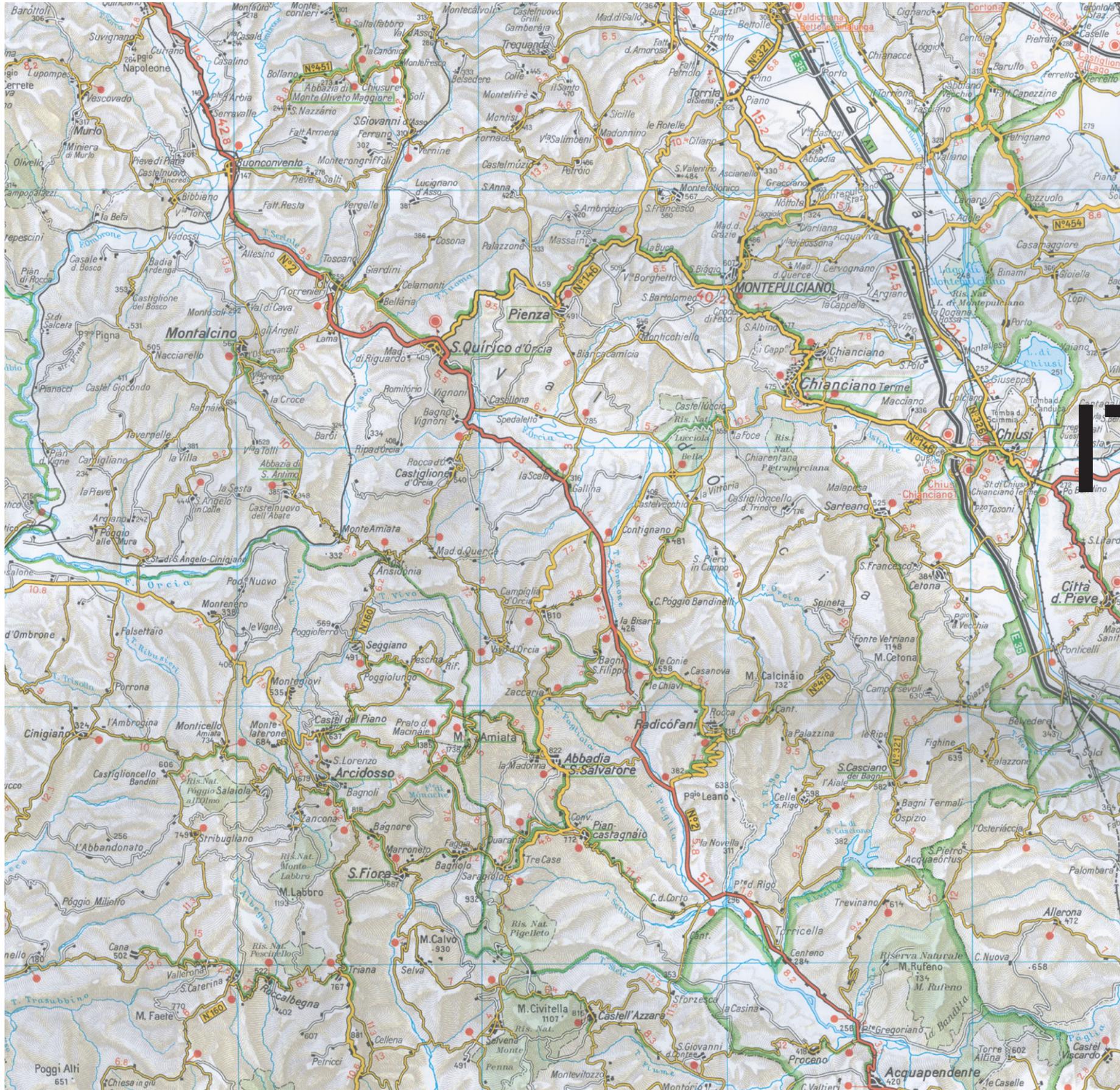
# TUSCANY

LAND OF ART  
AND MOTORS

*The itineraries of "Travelling in Tuscany"*



ITINERARIES ON TWO WHEELS



Castiglione d'Orcia / Radicofani / Sarteano /  
 Chianciano / Montepulciano / Pienza / San  
 Quirico d'Orcia / Castiglione d'Orcia

# FIRST ITINERARY

*A ring that will take you through several towns and villages but above all to ride among a maze of unique streets that will enable you to give free rein to your passion for two wheels.*

*This is one of the best-loved routes on which various motorbike clubs from all over Europe gather. It is quite normal to come across columns of bikers riding along these roads in single file who appreciate the continuous ups and downs and curves that characterize them.*

*There are many strips at the side of the road to take a break and immortalize the landscape as you gradually discover it.*

**CASTIGLIONE D'ORCIA (SI)**

Perched on a spur of the slopes of Monte Amiata, a stone's throw from the Cassia main road, the town is located at the centre of the **Val d'Orcia**, since 2004 part of the **UNESCO World Heritage**, whose unmistakable landscape was celebrated with unparalleled works by painters of the Sienese School.

The first records date back to 714 when it was a possession of the Aldobrandeschi family and was called **Petra**.

A stroll through its fascinating contradas reveals its treasures:

- **Piazza il Vecchietta**, the heart of the old town, with its unusual triangular shape. It is dedicated to the local 15th-century painter Lorenzo di Pietro nicknamed "Il Vecchietta". Lying on a slope and paved with rough stone cobblestones, its centre features a well in travertine. The square is overlooked by the Palazzo del Comune – the Town Hall – which preserves inside a fresco of the Sienese School *Madonna and Child with Two Saints*.
  - **The San Giovanni "Art Room"** in the former church of the homonymous confraternity keeps precious paintings by some of the most important exponents of the Sienese school: Pietro Lorenzetti, Simone Martini, "Il Vecchietta", Giovanni di Paolo...
  - The **Parish Church of Santo Stefano e Santa Degna** conserves a painting by Piero Lorenzetti.
  - The **Church of Santa Maria Maddalena** is located outside the old town. Of a medieval layout with a single space, a semicircular apse, and a characteristic bell-gable.
  - The **Aldobrandesca Fortress** overshadows the town with its medieval form-work.
- The best-known monument of the territory of Castiglione d'Orcia is the **Tower of the Tentennano Fortress** which dominates the small medieval village of Rocca d'Orcia.

**RADICOFANI (SI)**

It is the imposing **fortress** that dominates this small town and is its emblem. The building owes its fame to **Ghino di Tacco** the "Gentleman Bandit" who lived in the 1200s and was mentioned by both Dante and Boccaccio. Inside the **Cassero Museum** are archaeological finds from the Etruscan age to the 1500s. Any stopover in Radicofani cannot ignore:

- The **Church of Sant'Agata** whose origins lie in the 1300s. Inside, adorning the reredos of the main altar is a Della Robbia masterpiece in glazed terracotta *Madonna with Child and Saints*.
- The **Church of San Pietro** from the 10th century is another treasure chest of artworks.
- The **Palazzo Pretorio**, now the Town Hall. For centuries, this was the seat of the Captains of Justice whose coat of arms hang on the façade.
- The **Medici "Osteria Grossa"** is located along the road called **Francigena** or **Romea**. This imposing 16th-century building featuring a double loggia with

six arches was used as a **post station** and to **change horses** up until the late 19th century. In its heyday, it welcomed Popes, Grand Dukes, Emperors and illustrious personages such as Casanova, the Marquis De Sade, Stendhal, Chateaubriand, Dickens and many others.

- The **Medicean Fountain** from the 1600s.
- The **"Bosco Isabella" Romantic Garden** exists thanks to the great passion for "English" gardens of the Garibaldian Odoardo Luchini, and his wife Isabella. Their daughter Matilde continued the



realization. The result is a place in harmony with nature within which an initiatory-esoteric path develops, a throw-back to Luchini's Masonic background.

**SARTEANO (SI)**

Once again it is the **Castle** that dominates the landscape and captures the gaze at the place that gave birth to Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini, the future Pope Pius III. The town dates back to 1038 but in the second half of the 15th century it underwent a total makeover according to the dictates of the Renaissance and to which "Il Vecchietta" also contributed. A spiral staircase with 134 steps in travertine stone spans the whole building connecting the top floor to the ground floor. Today it is a venue for cultural initiatives and events.

The **Piazza Bassa** (Bargagli) and the **Piazza Alta** (XXIV Giugno) are connected by the **Mezzo gate**, and a short ramp incorporated in the **Palazzo del Comune**, which contains a real architectural gem, the **Teatro degli Arrischianti**. Also the **Church of San Martino** preserves a real gem, from 1546, the work of the Sienese Mannerist **Beccafumi**. Not far from the road that leads to Radicofani lie the remains of the **village of Moiane** which is tied to the legend of the *"Strascico della Regina"* [a strip of land where nothing grows].

**CHIANCIANO (SI)**

The **clock tower with its Medici coat of arms** is the symbol of this town of an innate elegance which is also one of the most famous spa resorts in Italy. The wide-ranging benefits of its waters were already appreciated by the Etruscans and Romans. In the local **Archaeological Museum** are numerous discoveries exhibited as testimony to the ancient presences. In the **Parco delle Terme**, the two **Acquasanta springs – Fonte Acqua Santa and Fonte Acqua Fucoli**, are the best known. Be sure to try the **Sensory Spa**. The old town unfolds in a typical medieval layout. Well worth a visit is the **Church of the Immacolata**, with its fresco of the *Madonna della Pace*, **Palazzo De Vegni**, and the **Collegiate Church** with its precious **Crucifix** by the school of **Duccio di Boninsegna**, and the **Art Museum**.

**MONTEPULCIANO (SI)**

The **Corso**, the main street, leads to the real heart of the monumental old town: **Piazza Grande**. Here on the last Sunday of August, representatives of the town's eight contradas challenge one another by rolling barrels up a slope. The square is overlooked by the **Palazzo Comunale**, clad in travertine, from whose tower you can admire a breath-taking panorama, the **Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo**

with its Renaissance-era well decorated with Griffins and Lions, other noble residences, and the **Duomo** (Cathedral).

The late-Renaissance **Duomo** has an unclad façade. The interior features three naves, and on the main altar is a grandiose triptych of the *Assumption* by Taddeo di Bartolo. To the left of the entrance portal is a recumbent statue of **Bartolomeo Aragazzi** by Michelozzo.

At number 10 Via Ricci, in **Palazzo Neri Orselli**, is the **Civic Museum and the Crociani Art Gallery**.

**The Medicean Fortress**: erected in 1261, it was destroyed and rebuilt several times, the last reconstruction being attributed to Antonio da Sangallo the Elder.

Outside the walls of the old town sits the **Church of San Biagio**, a masterpiece with a Greek cross plan by Antonio da Sangallo the Elder.

On a gastronomic note: the **Vino Nobile di Montepulciano** is one of the three most renowned Italian wines in the world, along with Chianti and Brunello di Montalcino. It is a supreme accompaniment for the typical local cuisine: dry-cured ham, *crostini*, *bruschetta*, *pici*, and *pappardelle* with hare sauce (*sugo di lepre*).

Five kilometres away from Chianciano are some spa baths – the **Terme di Montepulciano**.

**The Natural Reserve of the Lake of Montepulciano** is one of the most important wetlands of Central Italy covering an area of around 300 hectares.

**PIENZA (SI)**

This was the city of Pius II, born Enea Silvio Piccolomini, a cultured and refined humanist who conceived it philosophically and stylistically as a programmatic manifesto of the Renaissance. In three and a half years, from 1459 to 1462, Bernardo Rossellino and other famous artists transformed the ancient village of **Corsignano** into a refined city, an **Ideal City**, a **Utopian City**.



The centre and fulcrum is **Piazza Pio II**, overlooked by all the main monuments:

- The **Duomo** preserves in its interior Gothic-style paintings on wood by some of the greatest artists of the time: Giovanni di Paolo, Matteo di Giovanni, “Il Vecchietta”, and others. Gothic windows along the walls and around the apse confer an evocative

illumination inside.

- The **Episcopal Palace (Palazzo Borgia)** in which there is the Museum of the Diocese with its treasures.
- **Palazzo Piccolomini**, the papal residence, with its beautiful loggia overlooking a hanging garden.
- The **Palazzo Civico** designed by Rossellino, with its large airy porch on the ground floor bestowing lightness. On Corso Rossellino is located the **Church of San Francesco**. From Via del Castello there is a splendid view over the Val d’Orcia. Near Pienza, nestling in a fascinating landscape, can be found the splendid Romanesque **Parish Church of Corsignano**.

**SAN QUIRICO D’ORCIA (SI)**

Some have defined this “the real capital” of the Val d’Orcia. And to be honest, it is immersed in the centre of a pic-

ture-postcard landscape.

Here encamped Frederick Barbarossa in 1154, and in 1228 Frederick II held court here.

In its ancient heart is the **Collegiate Church of Santi Quirico e Giulitta** a beautiful example of Romanesque art.

Next to it rises **Palazzo Chigi**, designed in the 17th century by Carlo Fontana, currently the Town Hall.

Again in the old town, the **Horti Leonini** are a fine example of an Italian garden, built towards the end of the 1500s by Diomedede Leoni.

From here we can reach the **Rose Garden** adjacent to the Romanesque church of **Santa Maria Assunta**.

The **Church of San Francesco** on the main square, known popularly as the Church of the Madonna, preserves a beautiful *Madonna* by Andrea della Robbia.



Castiglione d'Orcia / Bagni S. Filippo /  
Abbadia S. Salvatore / Santa Fiora / Castiglione  
d'Orcia

# SECOND ITINERARY

*This itinerary takes us through one of the many areas abounding in thermal waters, and to the highest point of Tuscany.*

*The particular limestone content has meant that these waters formed natural “constructions” of incredible beauty, almost like stalactites under the open sky. A small detour takes us to Mount Amiata, the highest mountain of this territory, over 1,700m in height, with amenities for both summer and winter. A break at one of the refuges at the top is a must to taste some of the best dishes in Tuscany. Another place that is strikingly beautiful is Santa Fiora, defined one of the most beautiful hamlets in Italy. But the whole route is destined to arouse great emotions and sensations.*



**BAGNI SAN FILIPPO (SI)**

Located between the Val d'Orcia and Monte Amiata, this village, a hamlet of Castiglione d'Orcia, has been famous since ancient times for its hot thermal waters that have given rise to a unique, fairy-tale landscape made up of waterfalls, white limestone formations, and small ponds in which to enjoy a bathe among the greenery. An inviting path buried in the woods leads to the **Balena Bianca** (White Whale) waterfall, so named for this limestone formation's similarity to the mouth of the great cetacean. Here flow the hottest waters which gush from the nearby spring at 48°C. This is the most attractive limestone formation of the **Fosso Bianco**, a torrent within the woods filled by various warm water springs in a pattern of ponds in which it is possible to swim and make the most of the mud that is deposited there throughout the year.

The **San Filippo Thermal Baths** with their hotel, restaurant, swimming pool, spa, and wellness centre are a favourite destination for relaxing and regenerative stays.

**ABBADIA SAN SALVATORE (SI)**

At about 800 meters a.s.l. on the Siense slopes of Mount Amiata, this is one of the most important and best-equipped local resorts for both winter and summer stays. It takes its name from the **Benedictine Abbey of San Salvatore** founded in 743 by the Lombard King Rachis, according to tradition, of which remain the church, rebuilt in Romanesque style in 1036, portions of the walls, and the crypt, the latter of considerable interest with its 36 columns remarkable for their form, decoration, and variety of capitals.

The **door of the Badia** gives access to the small **medieval town** with its Gothic and medieval houses, its churches, and the former 15th-century Town Hall.

From Abbadia San Salvatore leaves a circular route of 64km that **circumnavigates Amiata** in a landscape and natural

surroundings of exalting beauty.

With an excursion of around 12 kilometres you can reach the **summit of Mount Amiata** along a sinuous path between woods of chestnut and pine trees, and holm oaks. At the end of the road, at an altitude of 1,651 metres, where you can find hotels and restaurants, you can continue on foot to reach the summit of Mount at 1,738 meters, with its monumental iron latticework cross.

**SANTA FIORA (GR)**

Considered one of the most beautiful villages in Italy. An ideal place to stay. Perched at around 700 metres on a cliff of trachyte near Mount Amiata, it dominates the source of the Fiora River. The waters of the river feed the **Peschiera** (fish farm) inside a wooded park among ancient buildings. The village is divided into various quarters (*terzieri*) all worth discovering on a stroll through the lanes and characteristic streets. The **Terziere del Castello** is the oldest part: in the centre is the Piazza, and a **Clock Tower** from the 1600s, the medieval **Rocca Aldobrandesca**, and the **Palazzo Comitale Cesarini Sforza** which on the ground floor houses the **Mercury Mine Museum**.

The most important monument is the **Parish Church of Sante Flora e Lucilla**, the two patron saints. Conceivably built before the year One Thousand, it underwent renovation in the 13th century and at the end of the 18th century was enlarged. Inside are kept beautiful terracotta sculptures attributed to Andrea della Robbia.

The **Porticciola** gives access to the **Terziere Borgo** with the **Convent of the Poor Clares**, and the **Church of Santa Chiara**, the **Augustinian Convent of San Michele Arcangelo** the **Church of Sant'Agostino** and the **Jewish Ghetto**. Finally, from **Porta San Michele** we enter the **Terziere Montecatino** characterized by the presence of the **Peschiera**, which collects water from the springs of the Fiora River. Originally, it may have been a nursery for trout of the Aldobrandeschi family, and then became part of the Renaissance park-garden desired by the Sforza family.

Recessed into the wall of the **Peschiera** is the **Church of the Madonna delle Nevi** built above the source of the Fiora river, visible under the building's glass floor.





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