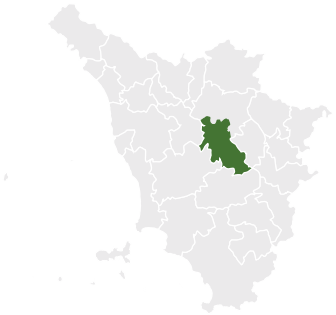
Tuscany



Chianti

History, sustainability and tastes.
Welcome to the most famous hills in the world.

Six municipalities lie at the centre of the countryside between Florence and Siena. The geography of Chianti is distinguished by the **Chianti Hills**, a short mountain range that gives way to valleys and small hills dotted with small towns and hamlets. In a land that has always played a key role in history, with a landscape shaped over hundreds of years by the synergy between man and nature, the culture of Chianti has given birth to a thousand traditions still very much alive and all to be discovered. The land boasts fertile soil characterised by a great biodiversity, where a sustainable and innovative lifestyle is a brand.

Chianti - Ambito Turistico Regionale, consists of the Municipalities of Barberino Tavarnelle, Castellina in Chianti, Castelnuovo Berardenga, Greve in Chianti, Radda in Chianti, San Casciano in Val di Pesa.

Share your adventures **#visitchianti #visittuscany**

visit**chianti**.net

Barberino Tavarnelle | Castellina in Chianti | Castelnuovo Berardenga | Greve in Chianti | Radda in Chianti | San Casciano in Val di Pesa

Sponsored by:

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Chianti

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History, sustainability and tastes.
Welcome to the most famous hills in the world.

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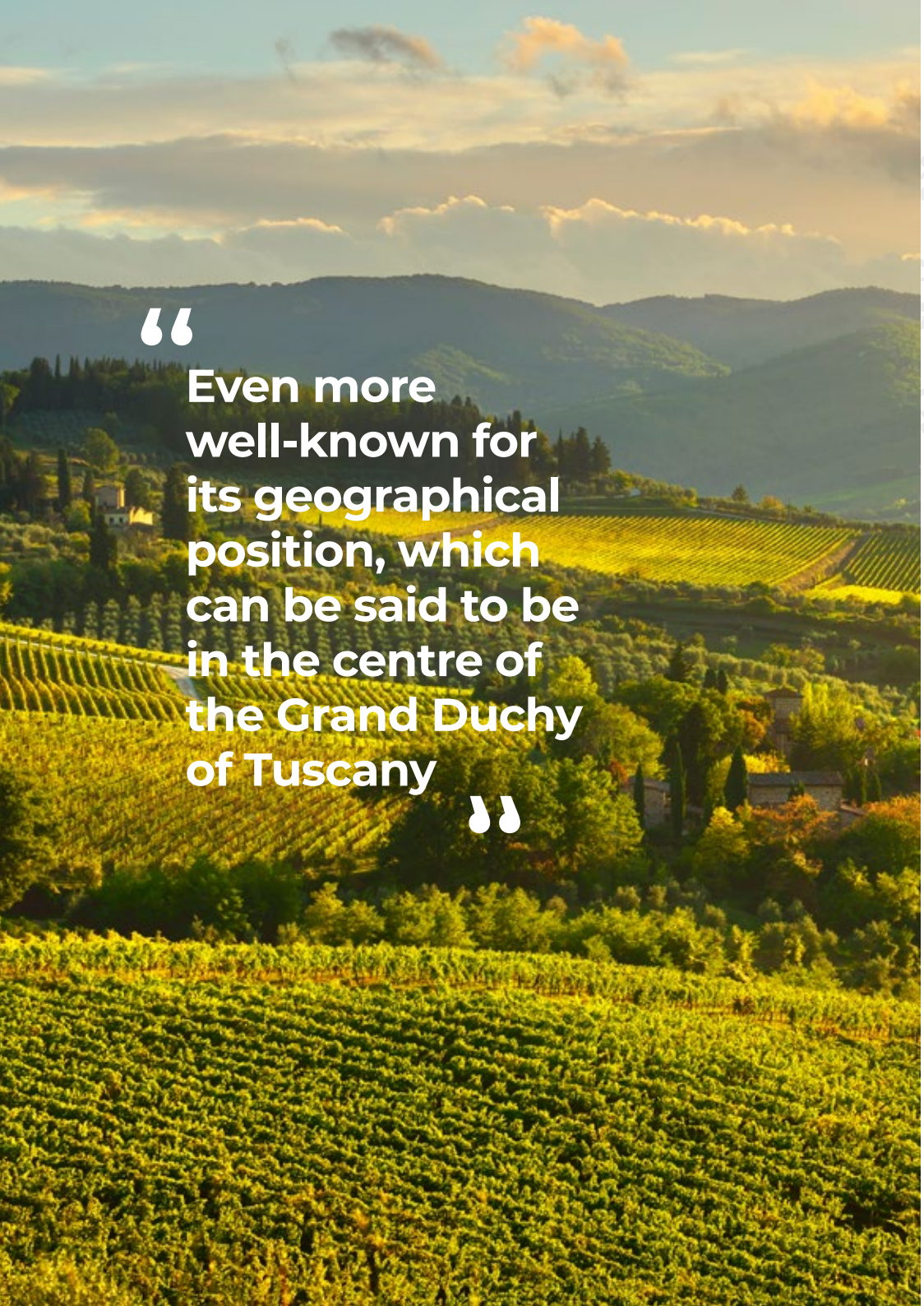

Naturally **Chianti**

“Chianti is a vast, mountainous, woody and agricultural land, famous for its wines, for the highly salubrious climate and even more well-known for its geographical position, which can be said to be in the centre of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.” So did Emanuele Repetti describe it in the early mid-19th century. Emanuele Repetti, *Physical Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Tuscany.*

Except for the eastern side, where the Chianti Mountains separate it from the Valdarno, this territory, with its proud yet deeply human character, has always made life difficult for every historian engaged in describing its geography, since it hardly bears clear definitions of its indeterminate borders. These borders have been argued about, as always happens, over the centuries and have been indissolubly linked to the wine that is produced in the many vineyards of the municipalities in the Chianti Classico territory.

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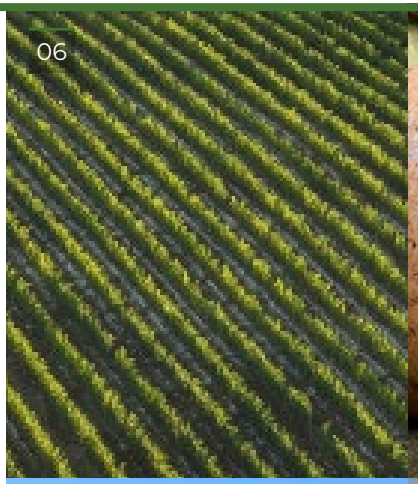

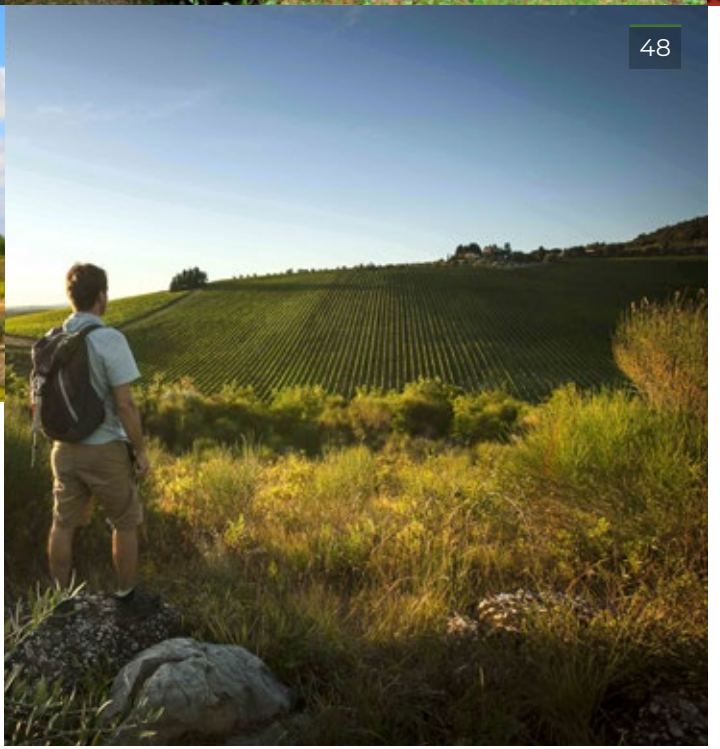

Credits

Guidebook of **Ambito Turistico del Chianti**. *Project edited by* **Terre di Siena Lab** *and* **CICLICA Srl** *with the support of Daniele Barbucci.*

Photo credits
Archives of the municipalities of the Ambito Turistico;
Martino Balestreri;
Mario Llorca.

Chianti

Transport in Chianti is possible not only by private car, which you can drive on the SR222, the famous **Via Chiantigiana** that goes across the territory, but also thanks to the **bus lines** that connect Siena and Florence with the main cities of Chianti every day.
The railway line Florence-Empoli-Siena, very useful for carrying your bike on the train, runs along the border of Chianti and stops at Barberino Val d'Elsa (in a place 8 km away from the historic centre), Poggibonsi, and Castellina Scalo (12 km away from Castellina in Chianti).

Share your adventures
#visitchianti #visittuscany

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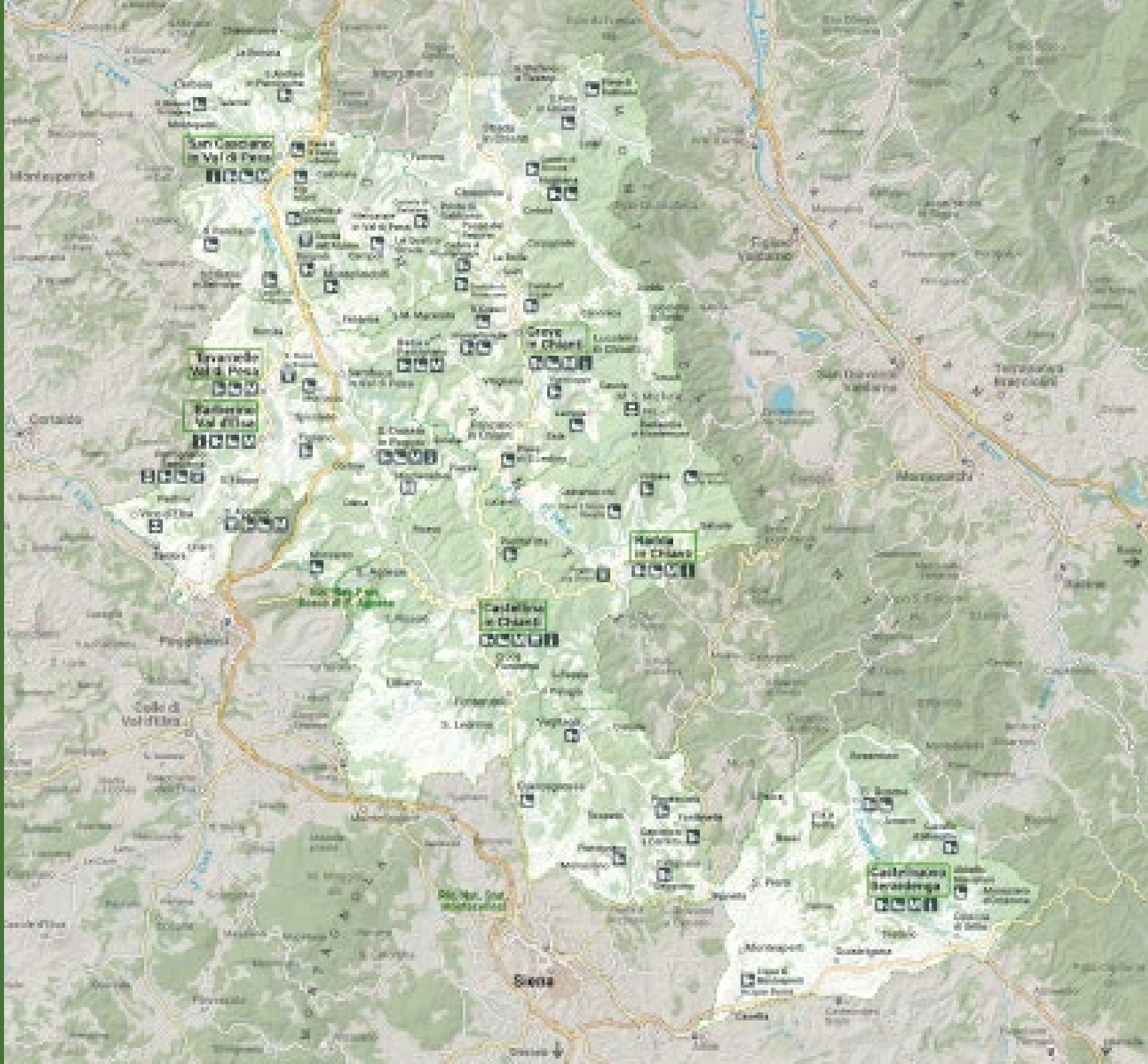
Key to symbols

- Monuments
- Places of Faith
- Museums
- Archaeological Sites
- Naturalistic Sites
- Tourist Offices
- Tourist railway station



Six ideas to discover Chianti

TRAVELLING TIPS

1

The art of good living

Chianti is a land of harmony, made of countryside that offers genuine tastes and small towns that hold on to ancient traditions: unpretentious places for in-depth experiences, between tranquillity and exuberance, for those who are looking for a truly authentic lifestyle.

2

Celebrating the grape harvest

With its many hues of colours and tastes, the grape harvest in Chianti marks the beginning of another year in the name of wine tradition: wine growers and wineries get ready to welcome the new vintage year, and the towns are bustling with excitement waiting for the *novello*, the new wine.

3

On foot and by bike on the 'white roads'

The Chianti skyline is marked by rolling hills dotted with vineyards, olive groves, and green meadows, that invite you to long excursions on foot or by bike, following the '*white roads*' (characteristic white-gravel roads), ideal to immerse yourself in nature and breathe in all its perfumes.

4

Spending time in nature

The rural houses, holiday farms, and ancient farmers' houses that dot the hills offer the magic nights of Chianti: spending time in the quiet countryside is a unique and priceless experience, surrounded by the sweet lights of the fireflies and the starry sky.

5

Art and history among cypresses

The harmony of nature envelops the ancient parish churches that gently rise up from the hills, evidence of centuries spent in the company of tall cypresses. In these places of spirituality, the soul breathes: in the immensity of the countryside, how can you choose one only place of the heart?

6

Flavours both simple and strong

Synonymous with tradition and excellence, the flavours of Chianti surprise you with their refined simplicity, which you can find on a slice of Tuscan bread dressed with genuine olive oil, while the butcher's skills bring forth those strong flavours that evoke the idea of a farmer's life spent in the country.

Barberino Tavarnelle

A charming part of Chianti, two steps from Florence

Barberino Tavarnelle is a municipality consisting of two main small towns: Barberino Val D'Elsa and Tavarnelle Val di Pesa, joined to form one metropolitan city in 2019. Separated by barely 2 km, the two small towns are located in the area of Chianti Classico. The wonderful land of Val d'Elsa and Val di Pesa offers a vista of verdant nature, of vineyards and olive trees stretching as far as the horizon. On foot or by bike, there are many routes to explore in these places immersed in nature and history, which in ancient times were crossed by pilgrims' routes. Among these winding hilly skylines, small towns and treasures of absolute excellence stand out, ready to be explored.

Numbers

ALTITUDE
389 m.a.s.l

SURFACE
123 km²

PATRON SAINT
San Pietro
29 June

POPULATION
12,076

DENSITY
98.1 p./km²

Tourist Office

Via Cassia 51, Barberino Val d'Elsa, FI
ufficioturistico@barberinotavarnelle.it
www.barberinotavarnelle.it

Barberino Tavarnelle

THE TOWN

A journey in the two small towns in the green heart of the Val d'Elsa and Val di Pesa

You can enter Barberino Val d'Elsa through either of the two access gates, **Porta Fiorentina** and **Porta Senese**, which together with the wall surround the historic centre. Barberino is connected with the history of Semifonte, an ancient city completely destroyed by the Florentines, that in the Middle Ages played a very important economic role thanks to its strategic position. This is why the city was seen by Florence as a threat, to the extent that the Florentines razed it to the ground after a siege lasting four years. Legend has it that the ruins of the buildings were used to found the new town: Barberino Val d'Elsa. Thanks to its position, Barberino gained a prestigious commercial and military status, besides becoming a reference point for pilgrims and wayfarers. In the centre in fact, is still visible the **Ospedale dei Pellegrini** (Pilgrims' Hospital), built around the mid-14th century, which today holds a library with a modern structure. Not far is the **Church of San Bartolomeo**, restructured in neo-Gothic style, which serves to frame the panorama of the rolling Tuscan hills. Continuing through the town, you can see **Palazzo Pretorio**, with its facade full of coats of arms, and **Palazzo del Cardinale**, with the coat of arms of the family of Pope Urban VIII at the entrance door.

Top View of Barberino Val d'Elsa
Above Church of San Bartolomeo
Next page The battlements of Badia a Passignano; the church of Sant'Appiano

Walking towards Porta Senese, you will be able to admire interesting palaces and towers made of stone and a small alleyway where there is the Oratorio of San Bartolo Sulle Mura, which holds the most ancient coats of arms of the Barberini family, still coloured in part, and bearing important inscriptions.
Tavarnelle Val di Pesa boasts, both within the town and just outside it, many large and small churches of great artistic merit. Strolling in the centre, you will find the church of **Santa Lucia al Borghetto**, an ancient Franciscan convent, while just outside the town, there is the church of **Santa Maria del Carmine** and the **Romanesque parish church of San Pietro in Bossolo**, as well as the Diocesan museum of sacred art and traditional embroidery of Tavarnelle. Wandering around Barberino and Tavarnelle on foot, by bike, or even on horse-back along the **Via Regia Romana** enables you to discover small hamlets among the hills and ancient churches rich in works of art.

Barberino Tavarnelle

THE TERRITORY

Legendary towns, walled cities, icons of art and spirituality

The land around Barberino Tavarnelle presents truly enviable features of historical-artistic and naturalistic excellence. Top of the list is **Badia a Passignano**, a monumental monastery of the 11th century; the crenelated walls make it look like a castle; inside there are many frescoes of important painters among which stands out the **Last Supper** by **Ghirlandaio**. A few kilometres from the historic centre of Barberino you can explore the ancient city of **Semifonte**, the thriving city that was razed to the ground by the Florentines in the Middle Ages and that was the foundation of Barberino Val d'Elsa: today, if you pay due attention, you can see a few ruins sticking out of the vegetation. Not far from it, exploring the incredible grounds of this place, you come across the **Chapel of San Michele Arcangelo**, built at the end of the 16th century by Santi di Tito. You will spot it immediately since it is inspired by and is a replica of Brunelleschi's dome for the Duomo in Florence at a scale of 1:8. Another place you cannot miss, not far from Barberino, is the **Church of Sant'Appiano**, known as one of the most ancient churches of Chianti. Constructed on a settlement that dates back to the Etruscan era, it is one of the most picturesque and perfectly preserved churches, very attractive thanks to the remains of the pillars of the baptistry framed by the cypresses and a green lawn. On the top of an isolated hill, you will be able to venture to the **Castle of Tignano**, that was built in a walled city that has kept its medieval structure. The castle has the original round plan, and in the internal square there are a church, a cistern, and a well. Another identity-related place is the medieval town of **San Donato in Poggio**, with its **Palazzo Malaspina** in the main square, the Gothic church of **Santa Maria della Neve** and the **Palazzo Pretorio**. When walking through the roads of this town, you can just imagine the pilgrims and wayfarers who in ancient times travelled to Rome. Also interesting is a visit to the **Museum Emilio Ferrari**, devoted to farming culture. Just outside the ancient city walls there is the Romanesque parish church of San Donato in Poggio, which has a baptismal font from the Della Robbia school and a crucifix from the Giotto school. Continuing along the road leading to Castellina, the Sanctuary devoted to St. Mary of Pietracupa is of remarkable interest.

Not to be missed

Semifonte

The legendary town destroyed by the Republic of Florence. At its place the Chapel of San Michele Arcangelo was built and can still be visited; its shape was inspired by the Duomo of Florence by Brunelleschi.

Badia a Passignano

Dating back to the year 1000, it is one of the iconic churches of Tuscany. This monastery which looks like a castle is a centre for spirituality enhanced by the cypresses and the splendid valley around it.

San Donato in Poggio

A splendid medieval town with its walls perfectly preserved, the impressive watchtower "Torrino" and its monumental entrances: Porta Fiorentina and Porta Senese.

Pieve di Sant'Appiano

It has ancient Etruscan origins, later superseded by the Romanesque style. It definitely deserves a visit for its state of preservation, its works of art, and the stunning pillars in the front lawn.

FLAVOURS

The legend of the Black Rooster

A medieval challenge and a clever ploy.
How a little black rooster became the icon of a territory and of one of the best-known wines in the world.

The **Chianti** area is indissolubly linked to the symbols that most distinguish it, from the world-famous towns and squares to the hills covered by vineyards, and the image of the **Black Rooster** which stands out for its appeal and iconography.
The events that led this animal to become one of the most well-known territorial emblems in the world were handed down in a **legend** with an ancient flavour, set in the time when the medieval *Communes* of Siena and Florence were contending for supremacy over the territory, in an endless succession of clashes and battles.
To bring an end to the dispute, the two towns decided to take an unusual and decisive diplomatic step. The task of defining the respective territorial borders was given to a solitary knight representing each faction, who would leave his own town at the crowing of the rooster and walk toward the rival's walls: wherever the two would meet, that would become the border. The luck of each town, therefore, would not depend on the choice of the knight but rather on the choice of the rooster that woke him up.
The strategies of Siena and Florence could not have been more different. The former chose a docile white rooster, and the night before the challenge, they stuffed it with food so that in the morning it would have a lot of energy; the latter, on the contrary,

> Two towns, two knights, two roosters, between history and legend

Photo *Hues of the colour red, from the symbol to the vineyards in the autumn*

In 1716 the history of the territory was linked once and for all to its wine production

Photo *The fruit from the harvest and pressing is tasted in every wine bar*

Photo The ripe grapes in the vineyards, the wine resting in the cellars

The symbol of their roots still very much alive in the culture of the people of Chianti

trusted a free-range black rooster that was left starving for a long time. What happened was that as soon as the chicken coop was opened, the Florentine black rooster hopped out and started crowing from hunger long before sunrise, so the knight promptly set off with a clear advantage over his rival from Siena. When at dawn the latter left for Florence, he walked only 12 miles before catching sight of his counterpart. The exact spot of the meeting was just outside the inhabited centre of Castellina in Chianti, which today still bears the name of Croce Fiorentina (Florentine Cross): others say that it was nearby Fonterutoli, not very far away. That is how, the legend goes, the Black Rooster became the symbol of the Chianti area. Beyond the legend, however, there are some solid historical references that tell a slightly different story. What is certain is that, in ancient times, the black rooster was the symbol of the Lega del Chianti, one of the 89 leagues in which the territory of the Republic of Florence was divided starting from the early years of the 14th century. The choice of the emblem, just as in the legend, perhaps was intended to evoke an idea of surveillance and control of the borders. It has certainly always been a symbol of identity: it is, in fact, found in the *Allegory of Chianti*, painted by Giorgio Vasari, on the ceiling of the Salone dei Cinquecento in Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.
In 1716, the history of the territory was linked once and for all to its wine production when the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III De' Medici, established, for the first time in the world, a geographic area of production of a wine with the same name, by issuing his own decree.
Since then, the fame and appeal of this land and its produce have increasingly grown, and today, it is almost impossible to mention Chianti without thinking of an excellent glass of wine. The brand is protected by the **Consortium of Vino Chianti Classico** established in 1924. At that time, the Black Rooster was chosen as a symbol that, once again, is ensconced as a charming emblem of excellence.
Today, the area of vine cultivation that produces Chianti Classico is still the same that was established by state decrees in 1932. There are many wineries that offer **wine tastings** where you can try wines from the production area of Chianti Classico, their excellence produced exclusively in this selected territory. To fully understand how pervasive this icon is, it is worth stressing that a Black Rooster surrounded by eight towers, the symbols of the main towns in Chianti, has also been chosen as a territorial trademark of the Ambito Turistico del Chianti.
The whole area is the ideal destination to immerse oneself in a landscape which is unique in the world, where every corner and every detail is the result of the centuries-old work that has shaped this land, from which it has drawn its straightforward and genuine character. Among the hills, heights, and vineyard rows, it is possible to witness the grape and olive harvests. The ancient alleyways invite you to stroll among authentic scents and centuries-old traditions interwoven with the infinite shades of red of the wine that the Black Rooster protects.

Castellina in Chianti

In the footsteps of the Etruscans in an area rich in nature, history, and food and wine traditions

Riding along the road that takes you to Castellina in Chianti is a spectacular experience, in which wheat fields, vineyards, and cypresses alternate between attractive bends and country smells. Once you arrive in this small town, hidden between green hills, the Chianti area unfolds its typical landscape, as you walk along the stony lanes of the historic centre. Strolling in the town means seeing its ancient history, discovering Etruscan ruins and noble palaces of families from Siena and Florence, and appreciating the art of salami making in Chianti, with its production of pork meat, and the full-bodied taste of Chianti Classico wine.

Numbers

ALTITUDE
578 m.a.s.l

SURFACE
99.8 km²

PATRON SAINT
San Fausto
18 September

POPULATION
2,859

DENSITY
28.6 p./km²

Tourist Office

Via Ferruccio, 40 - Castellina in Chianti SI
0577 741392
ufficioturistico@comune.castellina.si.it
www.comune.castellina.si.it

Castellina in Chianti

THE TOWN

A walk in ancient history between medieval atmospheres and panoramic views

Evocative streets, ancient patrician palaces, and medieval landmarks allow visitors to breathe in ancient atmospheres. Castellina in Chianti was the stage for numerous battles because of its strategic position between Florence and Siena. That is why the walls that surround the town were repeatedly built stronger over time by architects such as Giuliano da Sangallo and Filippo Brunelleschi. The latter built the **Via delle Volte**, the stunning walkway which was able to protect the town from newly-invented firearms. The historic centre is dominated by the ancient **Rocca (15th century)**, an imposing tower with the keep that offers a breath-taking view between the roofs of the town. Inside it there is the **Archeological Museum of Chianti**, an ideal stop to go through the history of the identity of this land thanks to evidence left by its earliest inhabitants. When you walk through Via Ferruccio, you reach the **Church of San Salvatore**, dating back to the 15th century and restructured in neo-Romanesque style after the damage caused by the Second World War. Inside you can see the Madonna del Latte, an important fresco attributed to Bicci di Lorenzo, a Florentine painter of the 15th century. The historic centre of the town is very picturesque and has a medieval atmosphere thanks to the already mentioned Via delle Volte, a covered walkway where you can find craft shops and restaurants.

Among secret passages and small loopholes looking over the Tuscan hills, this walkway has undergone many changes over the years, but the everlasting charm remains unchanged, the result of the ingenuity of **Filippo Brunelleschi**. The Renaissance **palaces Ugolini-Squarcialupi** and **Bianciardi**, impressive historic dwellings, overlook the main square, both symbols of a glorious past.

Top *View of the town of Castellina in Chianti*
Above *The ancient Rocca, where the Archeological Museum is located*
Next page *Via delle Volte at Castellina; the town of Fonterutoli*

Castellina in Chianti

THE TERRITORY

Etruscan necropolis and ancient country churches

Arriving in Castellina in Chianti means smelling the all-embracing scents, blown by the wind, of olive trees and vineyards and seeing the subtle skyline of the hills on the horizon changing colour from season to season. In this landscape, in the area around Castellina in Chianti, you can find evidence of an ancient and rich history. On the road that leads to the town there are two important archeological sites: the Necropolis of Poggino and the **Burial Mound of Montecalvario**. The latter dates back to the 6th century B.C. and has four sepulchral rooms of about 50 m in diameter. The remains of an Etruscan "chariot" were found here, which can be seen in the Archeological Museum of Chianti Senese in the historic centre of the town. The **Necropolis of Poggino**, on the other hand, is near Fonterutoli, in a forest where you can see five tombs dating back to the 6th century B.C..

Not far from Fonterutoli, in the direction of Siena, there is a place called Monsanese, where there is a cross near which the Florentine troops heading for Montaperti stopped.

This town is known today for the production of wine and the admirable panoramic terraces. The landscape accompanies the visitor in the discovery of other jewels of Romanesque art and rural architecture. In the hamlet of Rencine you can find the ruins of a castle that stood opposite the castle of Monteriggioni, not far from it, and the ancient Canonica di San Michele, a Romanesque church which is distinctive for its facade that has three decorative arches. Among the historic-artistic treasures of the area we can also mention the small churches of Santa Cristina a Lilliano, of Sant'Agnese in Chianti, and of San Leonino in Conio. We should also mention the hamlets of Tregole, Pietrafitta, and Piazza, where once upon a time there was an estate belonging to **Michelangelo Buonarroti**. They are rural villages where you can find evidence of the region's history, such as wine cellars, holiday farms, and restaurants in the silence of the countryside.

Not to be missed

Via delle Volte

The partially covered walkway which runs through the centre of Castellina, ingeniously designed by Filippo Brunelleschi to protect the city from the firearms of its enemies. Its loopholes offer beautiful views, and within its walls you have restaurants serving traditional dishes.

The butcher's craft

The salami of 'cinta senese' (local pork meat) is only one of the products of the area's great tradition of the butcher's craft. It is also worth trying the Marzolino cheese from Chianti and the traditional dishes served in restaurants, cooked with excellent olive oil and accompanied by Chianti Classico wine.

The cypress grove of Sant'Agnese

A walk in the Nature Reserve of Sant'Agnese can give you the unique experience of entering into the largest cypress grove in Europe, playing with the light and shade. Here you will find the Romanesque church of the same name.

HISTORY

Medieval Chianti
at the core of Tuscan history

As a borderland, Chianti has been witness to the harsh disputes between the cities of Florence and Siena, has heard the clang of pikes and swords between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, and has seen alliances and betrayals deciding the outcomes of bloody battles.

The presence of human beings and human communities in Chianti dates back to the ancient past. A great deal of evidence of the **Etruscan era** dots the area. The place names in the area remind us also of the presence of the Romans and, with reference to the Early Middle Ages, of the strong influence of the Longobards in naming the various religious buildings in San Michele, such as the abbey of Passignano, or the monastic complex which was built in ancient times on the mountain bearing the same name.
Medieval Chianti was always, almost entirely, a mainly Florentine land; in fact, there are ample records of the important role played by several families from Chianti, such as the Da Verrazzanos, Da Panzanos and Da Uzzanos, in Florentine political life. Chianti has also been a large borderland. Its position,

which is distant but lying between Florence and Siena, gives this area its main characteristic: the fact of being a borderland, always poised between the growing ambitions of the two emerging powers, both committed to imposing their own rule on the region. With the battles came the treaties, the agreements, and the attempts to reach peace, such as the *Lodo di Poggibonsi* in 1203, where perhaps the legend of the Black Rooster mentioned earlier originated. And with the treaties came also their betrayals, as in the case of the **battle of Montaperti**, for which the excuse was that Siena did not comply with an agreement of non-hospitality to refugees from the rival city. This was an excuse that actually hid the real reasons for the political choices and for the mutual will of dominating and imposing power over each other. After a number of skirmishes, having crossed Chianti, as soon as they crossed the border into the territory of Siena, the Florentine troops reached the plain of Montaperti, today part of the municipality of Castelnuovo Berardenga, where they clashed with troops from Siena in

> Strolling in the Chianti countryside, among villages and castles, it seems you can still hear the echo of the clang of swords and the cries of those who fought for so long

Previous page *View of Siena from Senese Chianti*
Below *The inscription from the Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri, Inferno XXXII, 80-81*

> “the massacre and the butchery that stained the water of the Arbia red”
>
> **Dante**, La Divina Commedia, Inferno, Canto X

Next The battle of Montaperti in the miniature by Pacino di Bonaguida
Right The commemoration pyramid at Montaperti in the municipality of Castelnuovo Berardenga

the open field. After various reversals during the day, the battle was won by the Senesi, due to the betrayal of **Bocca degli Abat**i, who, by neatly cutting off the hand of the Florentine standard-bearer, **Jacopo de’ Pazzi**, caused the army to disband. This was the cause of the massacre recalled by Dante in the Comedia which, in the dialogue with **Farinata degli Uberti**, was described as *lo strazio e ‘l grande scempio / che fece l’Arbia colorata in rosso* (Inferno, Canto X, 85-86), [The massacre and butchery that stained the waters of the Arbia red].
Other military campaigns marked the life of these lands, such as the invasion of the Aragonese during the second half of the 15th century, which led to the siege and conquest of many castles in Chianti, among them Radda and Castellina. It was just after these battles that the Palace of the Potestà in Radda, returned to Florentine hands, was rebuilt with the current architectural features. Strolling in the Chianti countryside, among villages and castles, it seems you can still hear the echo of the clang of swords and the cries of those who fought for so long, feeding a rivalry that never completely faded between the two Tuscan “queens”. With the final annexation of Siena to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, around the mid-16th century, Chianti opened up to a long period of peace and hence of development. Many castles were turned into farmhouses or into exclusive country dwellings for the aristocracy, mainly Florentine, with the frequent and particular transfer of residential architectural styles from the city to the new rural context.
With peace came the opportunity to pay full attention to refining the production of the excellence of this land: **wine.** Walking in any of the main roads or the secondary roads, looking at a view of the Chianti landscape, gives you the privilege and opportunity to observe a land that is like a script, where nothing is random, but rather everything is the result of the centuries-old work of human hands. Those hands that have continuously scratched and supported nature in a wonderful land, proud but never completely tamed, where also the woodland has never been felt as a wild forest, but rather as a place to be *cultivated* and as a part of that landscape that has been shaped by humankind and by which the people, in turn, have been shaped, in a relationship between humans and nature that is unique in the world.

Castelnuovo Berardenga

A town to discover slowly, the city of good living in the southernmost part of Chianti

Overlooking Siena in the distance, Castelnuovo Berardenga is the ideal city to discover the most classical Tuscan landscapes, the most renowned wines of Chianti, the ancient art, and the richly decorated gardens scattered in the country between museums and villas. A romantic and serene walk of a few kilometres from the centre of Castelnuovo takes us among vineyards and olive trees. Castelnuovo, known as a “Slow City”, that is, as a “city of good living”, has an identity based on well-being and quality of life, with all the excellent products that this land can offer.

Numbers

ALTITUDE
351 m.a.s.l

SURFACE
177.1 km²

PATRON SAINT
Santi Giusto and Clemente
5 June

POPULATION
9,112

DENSITY
51.1 p./km²

Tourist Office

Via Chianti, 61 - Castelnuovo Berardenga SI
0577 351337
ufficio.turistico@comune.castelnuovo.si.it
www.comune.castelnuovo.si.it

Top Piazza Petrilli, in the centre of the town
Above The Landscape Museum
Next page The internal courtyard and view from above of the Certosa di Pontignano

Castelnuovo Berardenga

THE TOWN

Authentic village atmosphere and the landscape as the main player in the 'Slow City'

Surrounded by the typical panorama of southern Chianti, this town has an atmosphere that reminds one of ancient times. It is named after **Berardo**, a nobleman of Frankish origin, descendant of one of the Counts of Siena. The villas and Romanesque churches that you see in the area around Castelnuovo (the church of San Pietro a Cerreto, the Certosa di Pontignano, the Monastery of San Salvatore a Fontebona) bear witness to the economic and demographic development from 1300/1400. Castelnuovo Berardenga was designated a **Slow City**, a town devoted to well-being and an authentic lifestyle; it is also called the City of Wine, like the majority of towns in the Chianti area that offer precious collections of Chianti Classico wine. Strolling through the streets of the town, you come across the unusual **Museo del Paesaggio** (Landscape Museum), dedicated to representative landscapes of the area around Siena and the rest of Italy; an exhibition that, through films, images, documents and graphic reconstructions, offers a picture of the beauty of the territory and landscape that has inspired art, cinema, and literature. A few steps away, you can find the **Municipal Theatre Vittorio Alfieri**, an elegant restored theatre that is larger than the old one, with modern shapes and neo-classical references.
In the central **Piazza del Castellare** you can feel a village atmosphere and see the high tower and the characteristic **'vicolo dell'Arco'** (alleyway of the Arch) which can be recognised by its steep stone staircase topped by an arch. Finally, do not miss **Villa Chigi Saracini**, a 19th century building constructed on the ruins of what was once an ancient castle, next to a large English park and an Italian garden. Still in the historic centre, attention is drawn by the neo-classical style of the **Propositura dei Santi Giusto e Clemente**, a church devoted to the local patron saints. In a picturesque secondary road, just outside the town, you can find the **Pieve di Santa Maria a Pacina**, a church which can be spotted by its round bell tower: its current style has the look of the 18th century restoration, but you can still perceive its Romanesque origin and archaic style. An unconventional way to get to know these streets and places is to take part in the **Ecomarathon of Chianti Classico**, a running trail of 42 km that crosses these territories, as well as in various related events.

Castelnuovo Berardenga

THE TERRITORY

Towns out of time, an art that enhances the landscape

The origins of Castelnuovo Berardenga are linked to the foundation of the Monastery of San Salvatore a Fontebona in the 9th century, today known as **Badia a Monastero**. In this area there are also the Castle of Montalto and the village of Monastero d'Ombrone.
San Gusmè is just 5 km from the centre of Castelnuovo Berardenga: it was not initially fortified, but walls were built thanks to the help from Siena at the end of the 14th century; they are still wonderfully preserved, marking the boundaries of the centre of the town. Amidst the quiet and the song of crickets stands the **Certosa di Pontignano**, an ancient monastery in which the heart of Chianti beats strongly, offering refreshment, art, and history in the midst of nature. Not far are the villas of Geggiano and Monaciano, with their pretty gardens and elegant buildings that tell about the past. A custom of these enchanted places is to match history with the pleasures of the palate: among the streets and villages kissed by the sun, you can taste the traditional red wines, which are still produced with the ancient wine-making techniques of Chianti Classico. Along the road of the castles you will find **Villa a Sesta**, the town where *Dit'Unto*, the festival of finger food, is celebrated, and which is also admired for its famous Michelin-starred restaurants. At the far northwest you will see **Vagliagli**, a characteristic village of the 13th century, surrounded by splendid and precious vineyards. The territory of Castelnuovo is famous also for the Battle of Montaperti, mentioned by Dante Alighieri in the Divine Comedy, fought on the 4th of September 1260 between the forces of Siena and Florence; near the inscribed pillar (Cippo) in memory of the battle, there are the **free spas** of Acqua Borra. A few kilometers from Castelnuovo Berardenga there is **Pievasciata**, a small Contemporary Art Town: in the town and its immediate surroundings there are art installations between cypress branches and picturesque views. Nearby you can visit the **Sculpture Park of Chianti**, a permanent exhibition of contemporary sculptures made by 27 artists from all over the world, wonderfully integrated with the environment.

Not to be missed

Piazza del Castellare

Feeling like a citizen of Castelnuovo in the main square, with the high tower that since 19th century has been used as a clock tower and with the picturesque Vicolo dell'Arco.

Certosa di Pontignano

A universally recognised jewel, the monumental Carthusian monastery was rebuilt in the 16th century after a fire destroyed it.

Pievasciata

The small Contemporary Art Town where you can come across contemporary art works that interact with the environment. The artistic walk continues in symbiosis with nature in the Sculpture Park of Chianti.

San Gusmè

The hamlet whose fortifications, perfectly preserved, mark the boundaries between the houses and the surrounding natural world.

Events

Greve in Chianti

SEPTEMBER

EXPO of Chianti Classico

All the towns of Chianti together in the square

Among all the events that distinguish Chianti, the Expo is the main opportunity to see all the municipalities represented together with producers from the whole area. Preceded by *Mostra Mercato*, first, then *Rassegna del Chianti*, starting in the 1970s, the current *EXPO of Chianti Classico* is the most important annual appointment to get to know the world of Chianti Classico wine and its producers from all around the territory of the municipalities in Chianti. Every year, on the second weekend of September (from Thursday to Sunday), the square in Greve in Chianti gets lively with meetings with wine producers and events connected with the rural world. It is an event that, together with the municipalities, also engages the Consortium of Chianti Classico, an integral force in the protection of the high quality of its territory and its main product.
This event is accompanied by others, also linked to the world of wine, in the whole area of Chianti Classico.

MARCH

Medieval Carnival
San Casciano in Val di Pesa

The Medieval Carnival in San Casciano is held on the last Sunday of March or the first Sunday of April. Horse, Rooster, Lily, Lion and Tower are the 5 contrade (districts) that are the stars of stories, challenges and rich pageantry through the streets of the historic centre.

APRIL

Market of Things from the Past
Greve in Chianti

An event born in the 1970s that is usually held on Easter Monday. On this occasion, the antique merchants crowd the main square and streets of the town, each time attracting antique lovers, tourists, and casual browsers.

> Every Easter Monday

New vintage collection
Mercatale in Val di Pesa

A day dedicated to the world of Retro items in all its aspects: from the street market to the exhibition of old cars and motorbikes and a '60s-'70s fashion show with a swing music performance.

MAY

Barberino in Fiore
Barberino Val d'Elsa

An exhibition-market of flowering plants that enrich the streets of the historic centre together with artisanal products. There is no lack of good food and wine from the area.

Festa del Giaggiolo
San Polo in Chianti

The iris is a splendid flower that blooms during this month, colouring the fields purple. Once, it was also an important economic resource, because its rhizome was dried then sold and exported to France for the perfume industry. San Polo dedicates a festival to this flower, its uses, and cultivation.

> First weekend of May

The Showcase of Slow Cities
Greve in Chianti

The international network of Slow Cities was established in Greve in 1999. Every year, in the main square of the town, this event gathers a great deal of stalls with traditional products and examples of the many sectors which form parts of the network, constituting a real stronghold for the protection and celebration of the various local cultures.

> Second weekend of May

The Wines of the Castle
Montefioralle

An appointment aiming at celebrating the wine-growing productions of the hills around Greve. The streets of the ancient village of Montefioralle, one of the "most beautiful towns in Italy", serve as a frame to this festival and many other musical and cultural events that complement it.

> Third weekend of the month

Terre di maggio
San Casciano in Val di Pesa

San Casciano Val di Pesa becomes an open-air garden: exhibition and market of nurseries in the historic centre, exhibition of the local craftsmen and much more.

JUNE

Festa del Bruscello Palio dei ciuchi
San Donato in Poggio

Full immersion in the popular tradition and history of San Donato. A rich schedule of theatre shows, pageants and historic-folk commemorations, games for kids, art performances, flag tossing performances, and tasting of traditional products.

Bruscello Storico
San Gusmè

At San Gusmè, an appointment between the tradition of folk theatre and the Bruscello Storico (historic branch) is renewed every year. Piazza Castelli is enlivened with the show performed by the Compagnia del Bruscello from Castelnuovo Berardenga.

www.cantierebruscello.it

The Scents of Lamole
Lamole

It started in 2002 to show wine lovers one of the most special features of the Chianti Classico area, distinguished by highland cultivation and a historical-cultural landscape known all over the world.

> First weekend of the month

Greve Opera Academy
Greve in Chianti

It offers master classes for young musicians and opera singers with the final performance of an opera in the main square of Greve in Chianti, besides many other concerts in churches in the area.

> Opera Season of Greve

Radda in Music
Radda in Chianti

A rich music programme inviting the audience to listen to various musical genres with a program that ranges from the classical music of a large orchestra to choir singing and the most politically aware rock music.

Radda in a Glass
Radda in Chianti

Radda in a Glass is an initiative of the Proloco of Radda in Chianti through which the entire town offers its visitors and wine tourists the opportunity to discover and celebrate the wines of this splendid Chianti town.

www.raddanelbicchiere.net

Chianti Classico Marathon
Mercatale in Val di Pesa

This event dedicated to fans of running, but also to lovers of outdoor activities, is held mainly on dirt roads, among vineyards and woodlands, in one of the most beautiful landscapes of Italy: the area of the Florentine Chianti Classico among the municipalities of San Casciano in Val di Pesa, Barberino Tavarnelle, and Greve in Chianti.

Steak Championship
Mercatale in Val di Pesa

For meat fans and in particular those who love Florentine steak, a two-day event in Piazza Vittorio Veneto. A huge outdoor barbecue where the "Mastri Braciaoli" artfully cook cuts of meat from the butchers of the town.

JULY

Radda 1527
Radda in Chianti

For a weekend you can experience the exciting atmosphere of the early 16th century. In the castle you will find peasants, members of the bourgeoisie, ancient crafts, music, Renaissance dance, and various performances.

Festival for the Environment
Tignano

Conferences and meetings with public personalities and experts guiding an in-depth debate and reflection on various issues such as peace, the environment, and spirituality.

Chianti Festival
Castellina in Chianti and Castelnuovo Berardenga

During the summer, the festival includes events for all ages in different places within the municipalities of Castellina in Chianti, Castelnuovo Berardenga, and Gaiole in Chianti, including music, dance, theatre and children shows.

Daniel Ferro Vocal Program
Greve in Chianti

A festival that for over 25 years has offered courses and master classes in opera singing that have brought young opera talents and international artists to our public squares, churches, and castles. For Greve in Chianti it has become a tradition that has gathered an audience of Italian and foreign opera lovers.

> Opera Season of Greve

Summer... on a Tuesday... at Tavarnelle
Tavarnelle Val di Pesa

Every Tuesday evening, in the historic centre of the town, open shops, performances, and colourful markets under the stars. Florentine steak and huge barbecues on the streets, as well as amusements for the youngest ones.

AUGUST

Terra Incantata Festival
Barberino Val d'Elsa

A festival of art music to spend a night between Italian tradition and Asian sounds. Concerts are mainly held in the historic and stunning Piazza Barberini.

Calici di stelle
Tavarnelle Val di Pesa

Music, markets, and of course the best wines in the area. This event, held in collaboration with local companies, merchants, and Pro Loco, presents an opportunity for tasting wine in the streets of the town, offering pleasant moments to get familiar with wine and fine foods.

Calici di stelle
Castellina in Chianti

A rich programme with walks on the Via Romea Sanese, wine and street food, travelling music, markets with local craft items and agriculture produce, and the unmissable appointment with guided star-gazing.

Watermelon Trade Fair
Castellina in Chianti

An appointment to celebrate the best-loved red fruit of the summer. The fair will enliven the town with events and initiatives to pay homage to one of the town's most traditional celebrations, whose origin is a farmers' fair that used to take place in Castellina in Chianti after the Second World War.

Past and Present
Montaperti

To commemorate the historic battle fought on the 4th of September 1260 between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, the hamlet of Castelnuovo holds a rich programme of events. Music, sports, dance, and a lot of good food are the ingredients for this traditional summer event.

Festa del Perdono
Radda in Chianti

Formerly a strongly felt religious festival, today it is a popular event at the end of the summer with a rich programme of art, music, entertainment, and good food.

Belcanto in Tuscany
Greve in Chianti

Master classes for opera singers from all over the world, with the performance of concerts in different places in Greve in Chianti, closing with a concert or an opera accompanied by a live orchestra in the main square.

> Opera Season of Greve

Festa di San Cassiano
San Casciano in Val di Pesa

A festival based on the religious soul, with Holy Mass and a procession, and local traditions, with the market in the gardens and a final fireworks display.

> Every year on the 13th of August

SEPTEMBER

Medieval Festival
Barberino Val d'Elsa

Musicians, dancers, fire eaters, story-tellers, flag-tossers, cooks, merchants, and seamstresses give life to the year 1000 through the streets in and around the castle of Barberino Val d'Elsa The initiative is inspired by the thousand-year-old roots of the castle in Barberino and its deep connection with the lost city of Semifonte.

Celebrations in Honour of San Fausto
Castellina in Chianti

A rich programme of celebrations dedicated to San Fausto allowing you to discover traditions, music, and events in honour of the patron saint of the town.

Festa del Luca
San Gusmè

A celebration with a rich programme of events and performances in the name of tradition and in memory of Luca Cava, a bizarre character of the Tuscan and Castelnuovo folk panorama commemorated at the entry of the town with an odd statue.

Grape Festival
Vagliagli

The town comes to life with many musical events and traditional flavours of the area to re-experience the tradition of grape picking and prepare for the grand finale with a procession of carriages pulled by oxen and tractors, to the sound of the Philharmonic orchestra of Castellina in Chianti.

Expo of Chianti Classico
Greve in Chianti

Expo has become one of the most important events dedicated to the world of wine. Every year it hosts wine producers coming from all over the municipalities of Chianti Classico in the main square of Greve in Chianti. It is a perfect and unique opportunity to get to know the whole area and its main product.

> Second weekend of the month

Granfondo Gallo Nero
Radda in Chianti

A cycling event whose route goes through many municipalities of the Chianti area and gives visitors the chance to admire the territory in one of the most beautiful times of the year, that of the grape harvest and the beginning of autumn with its charming and stunning colours.

www.granfondodelgallonero.it

OCTOBER

Ecomarathon of Chianti Classico
Castelnuovo Berardenga

The "white roads", the cellars of wineries, the clouds, the sun and hills well-known all over the world, the cypresses, the footpaths, the hard climbs and the sweet descents.... This and much else is what the Ecomarathon of Chianti Classico is about.

ecomaratonadelchianticlassico.it

Autumn in Music
Castellina in Chianti

An autumnal music festival that schedules a selection of concerts of classical and choir music against the backdrop of Castellina in Chianti.

Dit'Unto - Finger Food Festival
Villa a Sesta

Street food is the main attraction offered by the numerous stalls erected in the streets of the town. The festival programme celebrates the many traditional Italian snacks, with a special focus on Tuscan products. All duly accompanied by good local wine. *www.ditunto.it*

Autumnal Chianti
Castellina, Radda, Castelnuovo Berardenga

An autumnal festival of cultural, wine, and food events, such as tastings, conferences, exhibitions, performances, and markets, that invites visitors to learn about the local history and traditions, taste the region's typical products, and enjoy the beauties of a charming territory celebrated all over the world.

Not Only Wine
Greve in Chianti

A festival organised in Piazza Matteotti dedicated to discovering the flavours and expertise of the territory in addition to Chianti Classico wine. All day long, craftsmen are at work and the market displays traditional products, with tastings of the finest products of Italian "Slow Cities".

> First weekend of October

DECEMBER

Rally Day of Fettunta
Barberino Val d'Elsa

The spectacle of the Rally of Fettunta (Olive oil bruschetta), the car race that celebrates the new extra-virgin olive oil.

valdelsacorse.it

Christmas Markets
Tavarnelle Val di Pesa and San Casciano in Val di Pesa

The historic centres of the two municipalities get lively with a festive atmosphere to make the period of waiting for Christmas even more special. Street markets with ornaments, typical products, and workshops for kids.

Greve in Chianti

A living painting. Vineyards, art, and authenticity

Greve in Chianti, characterised by the famous vineyards that make its panoramas so poetic and dreamy, can be considered a big outdoor museum, where every part of its territory is a picture that triggers beautiful emotions in the beholder.
A thousand colours that, season by season, succeed one another on the leaves of the vineyards, the green of the olive trees, and the beauty of the flourishing irises, are the absolute stars of a symphony that seems to embrace every corner and creates a backdrop for the many medieval small towns, true jewels of this land.
The main city, with a lively and characteristic atmosphere, is thriving with restaurants and shops with typical flavours, culture, and traditional festivals. You can have an authentic experience by walking through the alleyways of the town.

Numbers

ALTITUDE
236 m.a.s.l

SURFACE
169.4 km²

PATRON SAINT
Beata Vergine Maria
8 September

POPULATION
13,819

DENSITY
81.2 p./km²

Tourist Office

Piazza G. Matteotti 10, Greve in Chianti FI
055 854 6299
info@turismo.greveinchianti.eu
www.comune.greve-in-chianti.fi.it

Greve in Chianti

THE TOWN

Soul of tradition and dynamic spirit

Greve in Chianti is a pretty and lively town in the Florentine countryside whose beating heart lies in the main square. Born at the end of the 12th century, the 'market' of Greve enjoyed a strategic position with respect to the important communication routes of the period. It is closely linked to the older **Castle of Montefioralle** that stands over it. **Piazza Matteotti**, in its triangular form, framed by stone arcades under which sellers once exhibited their goods, retains the ancient commercial vocation of the town. Today it is enlivened by restaurants, butcher shops, wine bars, and artisans' shops where the traditional atmosphere is found unchanged. In the centre of the square you will see the statue portraying **Giovanni da Verrazzano**, the 16th century navigator born in the castle of the same name not far from Greve, who became famous for exploring the coast of North America and being the first European to enter New York Bay. In the same square you will see the **Palazzo Comunale**, which was built in the 16th century, and the **Propositura di Santa Croce** (the Basilica of the Holy Cross). The latter, built in 1833 in the neoclassical style by the architect Luigi Cambray Digny, houses important works: a 15th century crucifix, a *ciborium* (a freestanding canopy supported by columns) decorated with angels and festoons in glazed terracotta. This is attributed to the workshop of Santi di Michele Baglioni, the last heir of the famous technique.
It also has the triptych *Virgin Mary Enthroned with Saints Nicholas, John the Baptist, Thomas, and Martin*, commissioned by Niccolò da Uzzano to Bicci di Lorenzo. From the pleasant walk under the arcades, you can continue along via Roma to browse in the classic traditional shops and then walk towards the **Museo Comunale di Arte Sacra** (the Municipal Museum of Sacred Art), located in the former Hospice of Saint Francis, already mentioned in 1492 and a stopping point for the Franciscans walking from Florence to Siena. Today, it has a collection of works of sacred art and precious paintings, together with a section dedicated to archeology with findings from the local area. The terrace of the museum is often used for cultural events and from its top you can enjoy a stunning view over Greve.

Top Piazza Matteotti, the heart of the "mercatale" of Greve in Chianti
Above The town seen from the surrounding hills
Next page A view of Montefioralle and the terraces at Lamole

Greve in Chianti

THE TERRITORY

Historic castles, a nice medieval town, valleys kissed by the sun

Following the via Chiantigiana, from the south of Florence to Greve, is a wonderful journey in a natural setting where vineyards, villas, and castles are the real stars. Examples of these include the **Castles of Vicchiomaggio** and **Verrazzano** that rise above woods and vineyards with their 13th century towers. Not far from the centre of Greve in Chianti lies the very beautiful fortified town of **Montefioralle**, included on the list of the most beautiful towns in Italy, which still retains its medieval origins in its structure. Little more than a kilometre from Montefioralle you can visit a small jewel, the **pieve (parish church) of San Cresci**, built in Romanesque style, then restored with elements in the Gothic and Baroque styles. If you then turn towards Siena, you will arrive at the junction for **Lamole**, a place known for its breath-taking panoramas and for its tradition of growing grapes "bush style" on terraces built starting in the Middle Ages to adapt agriculture to the steep hillsides. The centuries-old attention to protecting the territory has earned Lamole the recognition of "historic rural landscape of Italy". South of Greve is **Panzano in Chianti**, where it is possible to admire the ancient town dominated by the castle, once owned by the Firidolfis, that still retains its ancient grandeur with the style of the 13th century and additions in the 14th century. The remaining wall is interrupted where there is the church of S. Maria Assunta, whose bell tower is none other than one of the corner towers of the castle itself. Not far you will find the parish church of S. Leolino, situated on a hill looking over the wide valley of forests, olive groves, and vineyards. This is one of the oldest churches in Chianti and has some Romanesque architectural details which date from the first half of the 12th century, together with a harmonious facade preceded by an arcade dating back to 1500. The artistic heritage inside it is very rich, among which we should mention the dossal (an ornamental cloth hung behind an altar) with the *Virgin with child between St. Peter and Paul* and the polyptych by Mariotto di Nardo.

Not to be missed

Greve in Chianti

Piazza Matteotti, of medieval origin, is the heart of the historic centre. Today it looks as it did in the past, enlivened by many commercial activities and accommodation facilities, surrounded by its characteristic arcades and the terraces looking over the square.

Montefioralle

One of the most beautiful towns in Italy in the heart of nature in Chianti. Its walls, small streets and stone houses embrace the Castle in an atmosphere between the Middle Ages and enchantment.

Panzano in Chianti

A medieval town famous for its historic centre and the beautiful valley that, thanks to its position, can be admired from various viewpoints.

Expo Chianti

September is the time for the grape picking and for Expo Chianti Classico, which gathers all the wine producers from the municipalities of the Chianti area in the large square of Greve. Not to be missed are other events such as Vino al Vino in Panzano in Chianti, I Profumi di Lamole in Lamole and Vini del Castello in Montefioralle.

CULTURE

Where to see contemporary art

In addition to the most classical part of Chianti, let's set off to discover contemporary art located in small towns and hills.

Tuscany, especially known for the beauty of its landscape and the vast historical and artistic heritage, which tells about the Etruscan people and medieval times, also reveals a contemporary spirit. Travelling between small towns and hills in the Chianti area, it is not difficult to come across sculptures that attract curiosity and leave one pleasantly surprised. A lot of **contemporary art projects,** in fact, have given birth to works and installations made by artists from all over the world. The first time an interest was shown in contemporary art in the Chianti area was in 1959, when Count Guido Chigi Saracini wanted the park of his villa at Castelnuovo Berardenga to show works of art and sculptures which were, indeed, contemporary. The task was entrusted to Vico Consorti, and since then this artistic trend has grown in the area in terms of quantity and prestige. Numerous **artists of national and international renown** have left traces of their passage, among whom we can mention George d'Almeida, Maro Gorki, and the versatile **Leo Lionni** at Radda in Chianti. Here, where he lived and worked until his death, you will find sculptures which represent the stunning and dream-like plants described in the *Botanica Parallela*, a book in which Lionni narrates a detailed imaginary vegetable ecosystem that is *parallel* to the real one. You can see his bronze *Giraluna* under the loggia of the Municipal Palace of Radda. This feeling for contemporary art, spread throughout the Chianti area, allows us to admire artwork by, for instance, Igor Mitoray, Fuad, Marcello Guasti and Valentino Moradei at Greve in Chianti. One of the major contemporary art projects, which involved all of the Chianti municipalities, is **Tus-**

nationally and internationally renowned artists have left traces of their passage

Previous page *One of the many works of the Sculpture Park of Chianti*
Below *The Stag, one of the works by Mario Merz, on the walls of San Casciano*

A park of contemporary works of art that commune with the landscape

Previous page One of the 30 installations in the art town of Pievasciata
Above A detail of the work by Mario Staccioli at Torre Luciana
Right The Giraluna by Leo Lionni at Radda in Chianti

ciaelecta, created in 1996 at Greve in Chianti with the aim of integrating heterogenous art works in the landscape and social fabric, in terms of type and aesthetic, which have in common a design in tune with the surrounding territory (www.tusciaelecta.org). Wandering around hamlets and small towns it is not difficult to create routes and itineraries that make you discover works such as the *Stollo* by Mauro Staccioli in Piazza Vassallo at Greve in Chianti, which reinterprets the farming tradition in a modern language focusing on the community life. The visitor walking on the art trail of San Casciano in Val di Pesa, is greeted by two monumental works by Mauro Staccioli. One is placed at the entrance of the town on the Via Cassia and the other underscores the stunning view that you can enjoy from the observatory of the Torre Luciana. The journey 'on the hills' continues to meet the contemporary "signs" of the Farm La Loggia. In the historic centre, on the ancient walls, you can see the *Stag* and the *Progression of Numbers of Fibonacci* by Mario Merz. Not far, there stands the Chianti Tower, 34 m. high, lit up from the inside by the Bulk Project, an artwork by Patrizio Travagli. A rich collection of contemporary art celebrates a section of the Giuliano Ghelli art museum. Also worth mentioning is the masterpiece by Silvio Loffredo in the Garden of the Sunset at La Romola. A kind of treasure hunt is the artwork by Cesare Pietroiusti, whose *7 Plates* invite the visitor to explore other small towns in Chianti searching for each piece of this "spread out artwork". But if you wish to find the contemporary spirit without sacrificing a walk in nature, the options are: the **Parco Sculture del Chianti** at Pievasciata, a hamlet of Castelnuovo Berardenga, where the forest has a permanent exhibition of 26 installations built in harmony with the natural world, among which you can walk in wonder and amazement; and the loop route **Slow Road** that joins Greve, San Cresci and Montefioralle, where you can admire the perfect fusion between the landscape and artistic installations, in what can be defined as a natural amphitheatre.

Photos Works of art spread around the art town of Pievasciata and, just outside the historic centre, in the Sculpture Park of Chianti

Chianti

visitchianti.net

Radda in Chianti

Where every stone promises civilization and the landscape gives space to the soul

The first certain information on Radda dates back to 1002, when the emperor Ottone III confirmed his ownership of some of his assets, among which the *curtis*, or castle, of Radda, at the Badia Fiorentina. During the 11th and 12th centuries, Radda's castle acquired status and became the *curia*, that is the headquarters of a civic constituency. It has always been within the orbit of Florence, and thus became the main city of the League of Chianti, with the new administrative system that Florence imposed on its local people at the onset of the 14th century, and so it remained until the reform of the Lorenas in 1774. Walking through the alleyways and historical buildings of the town, one can breathe in an impressive atmosphere around the ancient walls where the view stretches out over the wonderful landscape of Chianti.

Radda in Chianti

Numbers

ALTITUDE
532 m.a.s.l

SURFACE
80.4 km²

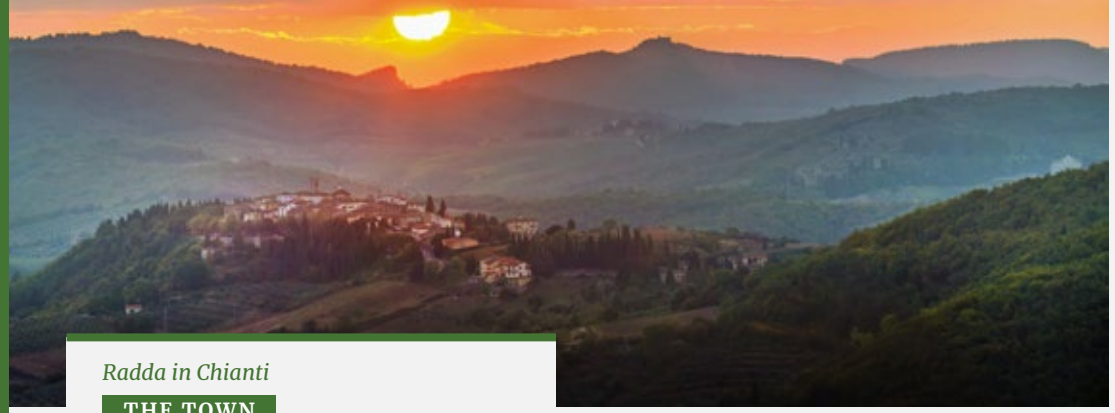
PATRON SAINT
San Nicolò
6 December

POPULATION
1,557

DENSITY
19.6 p./km²

Tourist Office

Proloco - Piazza del Castello, 6, 53017 Radda in Chianti SI
0577 738494
proradda@chiantinet.it
www.comune.radda-in-chianti.si.it



Radda in Chianti

THE TOWN

Along the rocky crest, on the pathway of history

Radda, risen from the depths of the Middle Ages, sits on the rocky ridge of the **Chianti Mountains**, which divide the watersheds of the Arno and Ombrone Rivers. Its oldest square, called **Del Castello**, located in the highest part of the town and surrounded by its streets, lost its importance over the years. It was replaced by the one dedicated to the most illustrious *podestà* that Radda has ever had, Francesco Ferrucci, and is overlooked by the beautiful **Palazzo del Potestà**, studded with the coats of arms of the families of the previous rulers. Its architectural structure was defined after the Aragonese wars (1478) which saw Siena and Florence once again on opposing fronts. On the higher part of the square is the church of San Niccolò, which hosts the 15th century **Crocifisso Ligneo** (wooden Crucifix). The facade, designed by Carlo Coppedè in 1926, features a large arch with two pairs of lions at its base and is a clear example of eclectic architecture. Besides planning the semicircular fountain, Coppedè's work extended to the redesign of the **Gardens** of Piazza IV Novembre and the **War Memorial to the soldiers** of the Great War.
From the central square you can walk along some stunning streets from where you can have a look at memorable sights of vineyards and enclosed orchards. You can enter the town from two entryways, **Porta Valdarnese** on the east and **Porta Fiorentina** on the west, where you can spot the remains of the medieval walls, whilst the longer wall circle dating back to the 18th century surrounds the inhabited centre creating avenues that offer views over the surrounding landscape. At the edge of town is the Romanesque church of **Santa Maria al Prato**, inside which is preserved an altarpiece by the Florentine painter Neri Di Bicci (15th century) depicting the Virgin and Child among the Saints Niccolò, John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene and Antonio Abate, set in a beautiful Renaissance altar. Next to the church, the former convent from the 18th century houses the headquarters of the **Foundation for the Protection of the Chianti Classico Territory.**

Top *The town of Radda with the Chianti mountains skyline*
Above *The Church of Santa Maria al Prato*
Next page *The town of Volpaia and a view of the Albola Castle*

Radda in Chianti

THE TERRITORY

An inner journey in search of the genius loci

Over the years, the traditional mixed crops have given way to extensive vineyards and olive groves, and the landscape has kept the centuries-old structure based on the farmhouse system. Today, all the area is still dotted with rural houses and isolated villa-farms showing evidence of architectural features dating back to the 15-16th century and sometimes even earlier. The fortification of the 11th and 12th centuries led to the building of other castles around Radda. There are only a few ruins left of some of them, but there is evidence of the ancient structures of other castles. Among these traces of the past, **Volpaia** is today a lovely town built on an elliptical urban plan and retaining many of its defensive walls, along which rise towers for defence, the largest of which served as a keep. On the opposite hill, on the other hand, we find what remains of **Monterinaldi** Castle, from 1010 A.D., which played a major role in the history of this territory. Towards the north is the **Castle of Albola**, dating from the 11th century, whose ruins can still be seen today, towering above the woods surrounding the mighty keep. **Badia Montemuro** was not a castle, but was surrounded by defensive walls, so much so that it looked like a small fortress. It is a monastic settlement of the Camaldolite order, placed in the higher area of the whole municipality of Radda, halfway between the valleys of the Pesa and Greve Rivers. In the Early Middle Ages, communities, i popoli (the common people), were organised not only around castles but also according to where the churches and abbeys were built. Not far from the main city you can find the **Pieve di Santa Maria Novella**, also called Pieve di Chianti (Parish church of Chianti) for its importance. It was built in 900 A.D., and with its three-nave layout is one of the greatest examples of Romanesque architecture in Chianti. An almost unique example in Chianti architecture, its pillars end with sculpted capitals in which you can perceive a Longobard influence. The church holds an altarpiece from the **Della Robbia** workshop, as well as a hexagonal baptismal font embellished with Della Robbia tiles.

Not to be missed

Radda's walls

The castle and fortifications of the town have been partly destroyed by battles and invasions, but parts of the walls and sighting towers are still there to offer a striking atmosphere.

The House of Chianti

A part of the former Convent of Santa Maria al Prato hosts the headquarters of the Foundation of the Protection of the Territory of Chianti Classico, within which the museum exhibits reveal the secrets of Chianti Classico wine.

The town of Volpaia

The ancient castle offers visitors the opportunity to walk carefree through its alleyways and stop to taste traditional dishes and wonderful wines.

Visiting wine cellars

The hilly landscape houses wineries where wine is born, takes shape, ages and is stored waiting to enrich one's life with unique experiences.

OUTDOOR

Walking through Chianti

Step by step, immersed in the beauty of nature and on the trail of history, discovering rural traditions, archeological sites, and typical flavours at each milestone.

The Chianti landscape is a natural invitation to walk and immerse yourself in nature. The features of the most famous hills in the worlds are in fact ideal both for a simple stroll and for challenging excursions lasting more than one day: the altitudes range from a few hundred metres above sea level for some of its towns up to the almost 900 metres of **St. Michael Mountain**. Within these alternating heights and small valleys there is a network of pathways and rural roads that cross the woods and cultivated fields, where you can come across small churches, castles, and typical rural houses in an enchanting countryside. Step by step, you can discover the treasure of the **Chianti Hills** and its ancient byways, some of which reconnect with the history of spiritual, archeological, and rural traditions of this land. The **Passo dei Pecorai**, for instance, in the Municipality of Greve in Chianti, is proof that all of the Chianti area was a land of passage: some routes are the same ones that for centuries served as routes for transhumance (seasonal movement of livestock), where shepherds led their herds and flocks depending on the season, moving stage after stage from the mild winter climate of the Maremma to the green spring pastures of Casentino.
You can also venture on foot to Castellina in Chianti into the **Nature Reserve Bosco di Sant'Agnese**, the splendid naturalised cypress grove that for over ten centuries has been a real natural

Routes are the same ones that for centuries served as routes for transhumance

Previous page The vineyards and the natural area around Badia a Passignano
Below A typical white road of Chianti between the rows of cypresses

Left Walking along the ancient Via Romea Sanese

The whole route of the Via Romea Sanese is 80 km long and is divided in six stages

monument to the most iconic tree of Tuscany, imported in remote times, probably by the Etruscans: the cypress.
In few places in the world does the natural landscape become one with thousands of years of history the way it does in Chianti. There are quite a few footpaths that lead along the trail of the Middle Ages, which left deep and still well-preserved traces among these hills. Walking between the hills of Castellina in Chianti and Radda in Chianti allows you to discover the small towns that in the Middle Ages belonged, together with Gaiole, to the **Lega del Chianti**, the political-military division decided by the Republic of Florence to administer its territories.

Simply spectacular, in the municipality of Castelnuovo Berardenga, is the territory included between the beautiful hamlets of San Gusmè and Badia a Monastero: here the Abbey d'Ombrone, dating back to the 9th century, just like the cypress avenues of incredible beauty at Arceno, are examples of the splendour that distinguishes the area.
Between Barberino Tavarnelle and Greve in Chianti, on the other hand, footpaths connect three extraordinary medieval towns. **Montefioralle** is listed among the most beautiful small towns in Italy; its small centre is enclosed by a wall that holds the ancient houses and the castle that dominates the hill from where you can enjoy a wonderful view. In the countryside below, the footpaths run through the vineyards and olive groves, among woods on the top of the hills and peasant houses scattered in the estates. After a few kilometres walk you can have a glimpse of the profile of the crenelated walls of an abbey of great beauty: **Badia a Passignano**, dating back to 1000 A.D. and restored to its state in Renaissance times, surrounded by a natural area of forests and wide green spaces that enhance its spiritual appeal. From this monastic estate named after Saint Michael the Archangel, the footpaths take you to **San Donato in Poggio**, another Medieval town splendidly kept with its fortifications and the amazing "Torrino", a watchtower built inside the walls. The location of the town in ancient times has always been strategic in relation to the routes of the Vie Romee , which led pilgrims, wayfarers, and merchants towards Rome. In fact, from the Florentine Gate and the Senese Gate, the two monumental entrances that cut across San Donato in Poggio, the ancient path can still be used today. The Via Romea Sanese connects the historical centres of Florence and Siena, where it links to the Via Francigena, going through small towns and hills in Chianti with a route often touching hillcrests and offering unforgettable views and very ancient findings, dating as far back as the Etruscan civilization, such as the imposing sepulchres of Montecalvario at Castellina in Chianti and of Poggino at Fonterutoli. Along this road you can find places of cultural interest such as the Albergaccio where Machiavelli lived at Sant'Andrea in Percussina, and the many villas that you meet, not far from Florence, in the municipality of San Casciano. The whole route of the Via Romea Sanese is 80 km long and is divided into six stages; it is certainly one of the most beautiful and moving treks you can make, from a historical and natural point of view, one to enjoy step by step.

San Casciano in Val di Pesa

A walled town and its thousand architectural treasures

Immersed in greenery, at the top of a hill of olive trees and vineyards, is San Casciano in Val di Pesa: its bell tower stands out above the town, surrounded by lightly coloured houses, and the ancient walls hold the town in a protective and ancient embrace. It is the first municipality in Chianti you see when you arrive from the north, combining beautiful landscapes and admirable architectural sights; with four small churches, all in Romanesque style, five castles and numerous historical villas, it is not difficult to be charmed by the striking atmosphere that recalls ancient eras, among artistic harmonies and breath-taking views.

Numbers

ALTITUDE
310 m.a.s.l

SURFACE
107.8 km²

PATRON SAINT
San Cassiano
13 August

POPULATION
17,159

DENSITY
159.1 p./km²

Tourist Office

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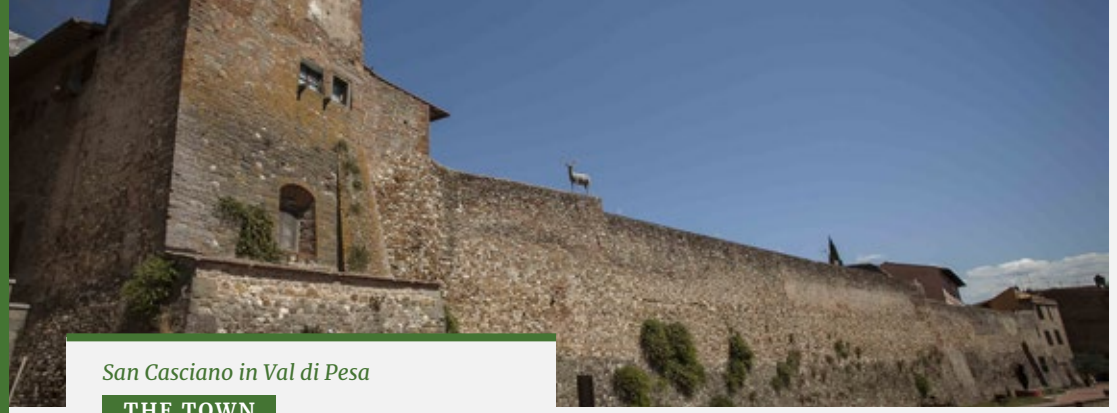

San Casciano in Val di Pesa

THE TOWN

"The Paris of Chianti", where tradition and the avantgarde marry the landscape

Already settled in the time of the Etruscans, during the Roman era San Casciano in Val di Pesa was a communication outpost located at the 10th mile from Florence. In 1200 A.D., considered a strategic location, it became a military outpost to protect the Tuscan capital from dangers coming from Siena, and subsequently, imposing **city walls** were built, which are still visible today for over a kilometre.
Among the streets of the town you can find the **Museo Giuliano Ghelli** inside the church of Santa Maria del Gesù o del Suffragio, in which you can admire a rich display of sacred artworks. The visit to the museum is a way to fully discover the history of San Casciano through Etruscan and Roman items found in the area, scale models of buildings and works of the Masters from the area between the 13th century and the 16th, such as Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Lippo di Benivieni and Neri di Bicci. A few minutes away is the church of **Santa Maria del Prato**, also known as "Santa Maria della Misericordia". It is an example of the art and architecture easily found in the many churches scattered across the region, and it displays the recently restored **Crucifix of Simone Martini**.

Above The imposing city walls
Next page The statue of Niccolò Machiavelli; the work of Mario Staccioli at Torre Luciana

San Casciano offers interesting artistic experiences even if you are simply strolling through the streets of the town centre: on the top of the walls the **Cervo** (the Stag) by **Mario Merz** stands proudly, followed by a neon numerical progression inspired by Fibonacci's mathematical sequence. Contemporary art lives on in the works of Tusciaelecta scattered about the territory, and in the sculptures of **Mauro Staccioli**, one of which can be seen at the foot of the Torre Luciana. In addition, the Tower of Chianti, an old aqueduct that houses an installation on reflective materials, can be visited as an extraordinary vantage point over the area. A strategic place to go for a picnic or just relax is the **Parco La Botte** next to the River Pesa, near the capital; it is ideal for those who want to cool off alongside the rushing waters of the Pesa or those who want to take a bike ride in nature or hike to various archeological sites in the area.

San Casciano in Val di Pesa

THE TERRITORY

Archeology and villas, nature and fine flavours, welcome to the north of Chianti

San Casciano in Val di Pesa is surrounded by winding roads that invite you to explore the wonders of the area. A paradise for archeology lovers, here you can find various excavations and the famous **Tomb of the Archer**. The panoramic trail through olive groves and vineyards, in the hamlet La Collina, is the right separation between reality and the ancient magic of this place, where you can see this Etruscan tomb dating back to the 7th century B.C. that is not to be missed. It is easy to imagine worlds and stories never experienced before when you are surrounded by enchanted and timeless landscapes. In this scenery there are examples such as the **Castle of Bibbione**, today used as a holiday farm resort, that of **Gabbiano**, a noble dwelling, or **Il Palagio** in Mercatale, restructured at the beginning of the 20th century in neomedieval style. Also the numerous villas scattered among the various hills recall evocative images of noble families intent on swirling around in Renaissance dances in majestic halls: **Villa Tattoli** in the valley of the Sugana river, **Villa Mangiacane**, probably designed by Michelangelo Buonarroti and Giorgio Vasari, **Villa Montepaldi**, owned by the University of Florence, and the building known as the **Albergaccio**, home of **Niccolò Machiavelli** during his exile. Located in the delightful and picturesque village of **Sant'Andrea in Percussina**, the latter villa witnessed the writing of *De Principatibus*: "The Prince", the best-known work by this writer. In many of these dwellings and estates, just like in the holiday farms of the area, you can undertake another type of journey, to explore the tastes of Chianti Classico. Every glass of wine tells a different story, every vineyard, every grape smells of something incomparable. Tasting the roundness of these wines enables one to know the secrets of the land that produces them, especially if paired with the local specialties such as wild boar and the traditional 'pappa al pomodoro' (tomato bread soup). It is a journey that tells a thousand stories while at the same time leaves one speechless.

Not to be missed

Churches on the hills

The multitude of churches of the San Casciano countryside are so numerous they are difficult to list. Many are examples of Romanesque architecture, with later additions. We can mention the Pieve di San Pancrazio, that of Santo Stefano a Campòli, of Santa Cecilia a Decimo and the small church of San Giovanni in Sugana.

The home of *The Prince*

In the estate of Albergaccio, in the countryside of San Casciano in Val di Pesa, Niccolò Machiavelli spent his period of exile. It was here that the famous historian, politician, philosopher and "universal man" wrote The Prince, one of the most read texts in the world.

Torre Luciana

This medieval tower of Longobard origin, dating back to the 9th century, belongs today to the University of Siena, which uses it as an Astronomical and Naturalist Observatory. Its panoramic section also hosts the scultpture "Propensione verso l'infinito" by the artist Mauro Staccioli.

Useful facts

Tourist Offices

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How to get here

By car

Chianti is easily reachable from the Highway A1-E35 and in particular from the Raccordo Autostradale Firenze-Siena, that runs along the border of the whole area. To go further south the link road of Raccordo Autostradale Siena-Bettolle is also useful. The SR222 road, known as the Via Chiantigiana, is the regional road that crosses the whole territory from north to south and from which secondary roads branch out.

By train

The railway line Florence-Empoli-Siena, very useful for carrying your bike on the train, runs along the border of Chianti and stops at Barberino Val d'Elsa (in a place 8 km away from the historic centre), Poggibonsi and Castellina Scalo (12 km away from Castellina in Chianti). Please refer to the website: *www.trenitalia.com*

By bus

From the bus stations of Florence and Siena, regularly scheduled buses connect the municipalities of the Chianti area. Please refer to the website: *www.acvbus.it*

By air

Tuscany is mainly served by national and international airlines in the airports of Florence and Pisa.
Please refer to the website: *www.toscana-aeroporti*

Chianti

visitchianti.net