

The territory: art and culture

The town is a prosperous agricultural center. The watercourses of the Castel Ritaldi territory are geographically tributaries of Topino River. Along Ruicciano River, there are erosion phenomena and also initial forms of badlands in the clay. Along Ruicciano there are mills, which were used to exploit the watercourse.

The cultivation of the olive tree started on these hills. The main olive varieties cultivated in this area are the **Moraiolo**, the **Leccino**, the **Frantoiano**, the **S. Felice**, reported according to the percentage of cultivation.

The chemical-physical characteristics allow the production of high quality olive oil and the acidity percentage is less than 0.2%. All companies respect the Community legislation (protection of organic production), thus it allows the production of a biologically organic olive oil.

The cultivated area is about 300 hectares.

The companies are small and the cultivated areas, called "le chiuse", are widespread around the territory. The processing and transformation of the olive tree use methods that do not alter the quality of the oil. The production belongs to **Monti Martani DOP**.

The historic center of Castel Ritaldi is surrounded by the walls of the castle of 13th century, where there is the parish church of Santa Marina, built between 14th and 15th centuries, with the Madonna and Child surrounded by Serafini (1508), the Madonna del Soccorso attributed to Lattanzio di Nicolò di Liberatore called the Alunno and an interesting fresco by Tiberio d'Assisi. In the square there is the Church of San Nicola, with a beautiful portal of 1486.

Outside the town along the road to Colle del Marchese there is the Parish Church of San Gregorio in Nido, a Romanesque building built around 1141, with beautiful decorations in bas-relief on the façade and on the portal with recessed arches, with a ring with vegetable motifs and fantastic figures. In the locality of San Quirico the Lex Spoletina (or Lex Luci) has been found, which forbade the cutting of trees in a sacred wood dedicated to Jupiter, a Roman relic of 3rd century BC, now kept in the Archaeological Museum of Spoleto. In Colle del Marchese the ancient and noble Spoleto Parenzi family had vast estates. It still preserves today some remains of walls and the main bastion is turned into a bell tower.

Castel Ritaldi

Located in the central-southern part of Umbria, Castel Ritaldi is a small village on top of the Scigliano hill, at the foot of Martani Mountains.

Located along the road that leads from Spoleto to Montefalco, it dominates a largely agricultural territory with woods and evocative hill slopes covered with olive groves and vineyards and crossed by a network of streets that can be traveled on foot, horseback or bicycle.

Castel Ritaldi - Castle of 1360 with towers and walls

Probably founded as a Roman "pagus", along the path that leads from Spoleto to Montefalco, Castel Ritaldi takes its name from its splendid Ritaldi castle. During the XI century a viscount used to live in this castle with administrative powers on the territory that included numerous castles, some of which are still inhabited and others partially in ruins. Together with Colle del Marchese it was part of a territory called "Normandia", a small autonomous province within the territories of the Church.

Towards the end of the twelfth century the Castle was destroyed because of the wars between imperial and papal power, but at the beginning of the thirteenth century it was entirely rebuilt. In the second half of the fourteenth century, the castle was built with strong walls, those that still remain almost intact, with external towers, loopholes and bombards.

After the fourteenth century, the village with its narrow streets was consolidated inside the high bastions. Until the eighteenth century Castel Ritaldi and its territory gravitate in the orbit of Spoleto hegemony. The impulse to the cultivation of the olive tree dates back to this period. In 1816 it reaches its own autonomy thanks to Pius VII, Colle del Marchese is integrated and Castel San Giovanni is enfeoffed until the annexation to the Kingdom of Italy. In 1929 the Municipality assumes the current territorial configuration.

Church of Santa Marina

The parish church of S. Marina with frescoes by Lattanzio di Niccolò Alunno and Tiberio di Assisi.

The historic center of Castel Ritaldi is surrounded by the walls of the XIII century Castle where stands the parish church of Santa Marina, built between the fourteenth and fifteenth century, with inside the Madonna and Child surrounded by Serafini (1508), the Madonna del Soccorso attributed to Lattanzio di Niccolò di Liberatore known as the Alunno and an interesting fresco by Tiberio d'Assisi.

Church of San Nicola

The Church of San Nicola with frescoes attributed to Spagna and Melanzio.

San Giovanni castle

The mighty 14th century Castle almost totally intact with four corner towers and the main entrance tower.

The ancient village is all within the walls. Only after the Second World War there was a reckless opening on the east side. The sturdy, angular-cylindrical towers are well preserved. The Castle dates back to the 13th century and is the best preserved part of the Spoletina plain. In the XIV and XI centuries it was the fortitude of the Bitonta or Botontei family. On the large arched door there is a XVI century papal coat of arms (keys and papal tiara), with the following inscription: "DOM SPOL." (Dominion Spoletino). Until the Second World War the castle was surrounded by a moat. On the door there are evident traces of the ancient drawbridge. Next to the door there are a very tall tower with arches and Guelph merlons. Inside, on an upper level, there is the XIII century church dedicated to the Saint, remodeled several times, with a beautiful sixteenth-century door and with frescoes of the Umbrian school. The castle belonged to the territory of Normannia. In 1400 it was occupied by Ugolino IX Trinci. Until 1474 it belonged to Trevi. Spoleto, taking advantage of the vacant seat for the death of Alexander VI, took the castle on September 15, 1503, since the castle had voluntarily subdued the previous year. Giulio II Breve gave it back to Trevi, to which he had donated it in 1474, when he was linked to Spoleto. When the Pope died, Spoleto ran to resume San Giovanni. There was a battle under Trevi, the Tower of the Molini was destroyed, but the castle was kept by Trevi. In 1520 Leo X gave autonomy to the castle.

House of the Municipality Restoration of the Mural depicting Madonna with the Child and Saints.

The mural is located in a wall of the rooms of the municipal house of Castel San Giovanni. It is bordered by a rectangular frame in fake marble in yellow and orange colors. The Madonna with a large halo similar to a sun that occupies the entire upper part of the background of the painting is depicted at the centre of the composition. The Madonna is represented in the act of supporting the Child standing upright, holding his right hand raised in blessing. There is a cherub under them and a landscape with a castle, perhaps the same castle of St. John. On the left the full figure of St. John the Baptist, depicted dressed in part with fur and the cane in the shape of a cross. On the opposite side a Saint holding a banner supported by a cane. At the bottom of the frame, after the cleaning, the date "1653" written in black in Arabic characters has returned to light. At the top, visible even before the cleaning, there is a black writing with capital letters in the center of the frame, which is difficult to understand due to the numerous drops of pictorial film. Perhaps this writing contained the true dating of the painting while the other can be attributed to a subsequent intervention.

The image was painted with the fresco technique with dry finishing interventions of which unfortunately few traces remained. The pictorial surface showed a diffused and homogeneous white patina due to the presence of a light layer of saline efflorescence that prevented a good reading of the image. Furthermore, the real chromatic nature of the painting had changed due to the presence of a light layer of hardened powder. The edges of the painting, beyond the frame, were not well defined and a large lesion opened in the lower left side. Staining sketches were visible at various points on the surface and even more evident were the drops of dry color. The integrity of the painting was threatened by the cohesion of the constitutive material and by the adhesion of the support preparatory layers that in various areas were completely detached, especially in correspondence with the cracking pattern.

Colle del Marchese

The Castle and the historic Cooperative Oil Mill Agricultural Producers

Colle del Marchese was subject to Spoleto several times under the dominion of Spoleto and Foligno at the end of the fifteenth century. Here the ancient and noble Spoleto family Parenzi had vast estates. In the ancient castle built in the territory called once "Normandia", there are few remains of walls, the entrance door and the quadrangular tower, later transformed into a bell tower. From that tower several times, pots of boiling oil were thrown against the enemy traps.

In fact, the castle was able to resist with indomitable tenacity thanks to an impromptu armed garrison, formed by peasants, who at the first signs of battles armed with tridents and sticks, throwing on the attack also the shepherds' dogs. Inside the castle there is the church of S. Pancrazio of the XIII century, with the addition of a pentagonal apse of the XV century. Just outside the town there are the remains of the Church of Stelletta, guardian of early medieval finds and in the open countryside stands the Church of S. Maria della Selva Mattutina showing traces of 12th-13th century construction in the walls and in the outer wall there is a portal with the date 1692 containing a fragment of Romanesque sculpture (shoots and bunches of grapes).

Church of San Pancrazio

It rises inside the village of Colle del Marchese where the ancient and noble Spoleto Parenzi family had vast estates. The castle, built in 1300 in the heart of "Normandia", has a circular plan with medieval buildings and still preserves

notable remains of walls and the main bastion turned into a bell tower. Inside there is the ancient Church of San Pancrazio with the fifteenth-century pentagonal apse. On the back wall, a praying Virgin, crowned by two angels, a 16th century fresco of the Melanzio. On an external wall there is a niche with a marble bust of San Pancrazio of the XV century.

Madonna Stelletta

At Colle del Marchese, slightly far from the castle, there is the Church of the Madonna della Stelletta, inside which there is an altar dating back to the VIII - IX century. Its position is peculiar, at the height of a high bank on the side of the road, to which it is connected by a steep and suggestive staircase.

“Pieve” of San Gregorio

Outside the town along the road to Colle del Marchese there is the Pieve of San Gregorio in Nido, a Romanesque building built around 1141, with beautiful decorations in bas-relief on the façade and on the portal with recessed arches, with a ring with intertwined vegetable motifs and fantastic figures.

“Pieve” is the denomination with which the ancient churches that arose around the year 1000 are generally indicated. The Pieve of Castel Ritaldi, dedicated to S. Gregorio, rises just outside the inhabited center in the open countryside. Its façade is very interesting. In the upper part of the portal there was the rose window, which is currently in the bell tower. At the center of the rose window there was the “Agnus Dei” and around the following writing: *Animalia sanctorum quattuor hunc agnum clangunt* (The animals of these four saints acclaim this lamb). On the sides of the rose window there are the symbols of the four evangelists: the ox symbol of St. Luke, the lion symbol of St. Mark, the eagle symbol of St. John and the angel of St. Matthew. Within lunettes there are two demonic masks: on the left Pamea, on the right GenofalusInferus and on the respective sides two prophets: Geremias and Jezechiel. The portal consists of four rings. On the inside ring there is a winged male figure. Geniuses that bite the grapes, moreover monsters, lions, griffins, panthers and the figure of a knight on a lion depart from the centre. Inside the Pieve there is a small sculptural fragment walled on the right wall with three virile faces, a fragment of a 4th century sarcophagus and two Roman epigraphs: one is a step from the baptismal font; the other is a table at the altar. The Pieve was until 1818 the Pieve of Castel Ritaldi.

La Bruna

Shrine of Our Lady of Bramante inspiration with fresco attributed to Tiberius of Assisi.

In La Bruna there is the Sanctuary of the Madonna della Bruna at the intersection of the main communication routes of the territory, a Renaissance jewel built on the bank of Tatarena torrent, with a single nave with a central plan crowned by three apses. Above the main altar there is an image of the Madonna della Bruna, so called for her incarnation of the face, a fresco attributed to Tiberius Diotallevi of Assisi. On the sides of the altar there are two carved crests of the Municipality and that of the Medici.

History

The Municipality of Castel Ritaldi was born from the fusion of three medieval villages, Colle del Marchese, Castel S.Giovanni and the same Castel Ritaldi, where in the XI century there was usually a viscount who exercised

administrative powers over a territory called "Normandia" and which included other numerous castles, some of which are still inhabited, others partly damaged. Many finds, the most famous of which is the "Lex Lucaria" that regulated the cutting of the sacred woods to the god Giano, testify that even in Roman times the territory was inhabited. Many fragments of amphorae or other relics still emerge today from the workings of the fields and others are inserted into the walls of the buildings and numerous churches scattered across the hills. Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries all the castles were involved in the events that saw the opposition between the imperial and religious power, until they remained permanently subject to the latter. In 1499 Castel Ritaldi saw the visit of Lucrezia Borgia, then governor of Spoleto, who wanted to emphasize the loyalty of the castle. At the beginning of 1600 the agricultural life took hold with the cultivation of the olive tree. Numerous farmhouses, all connected by a network of streets, sprang up during this period and still bear the stamp with the date in some element of the building. Castel Ritaldi is about 10 km far from Spoleto and just as many far from Montefalco, Foligno, Bevagna and Trevi and is ideally in the center of an area where with a journey of about 30 minutes you can connect to other cities of art, such as Assisi, Todi, Norcia. It rises on top of the hill of Scigliano, at the foot of Martani Mountains, at an altitude of 350 mt and dominates a territory still largely agricultural with woods and evocative hill slopes crossed by a network of roads that can be walked on foot, on horseback or by bicycle.

Famous people

- **Leopoldo Eleuteri** Castel Ritaldi boasts among its most illustrious sons the "Tenth War Ace" of the 70th squadron: Eng. Leopoldo Cap. Eleuteri.
- **Mario Tabarrini** Mario Tabarrini was born in Colle del Marchese of Castel Ritaldi on December 17, 1916.
- **Gregorio Maltzeff** In Castel Ritaldi there is a tomb that holds the remains of Gregorio Maltzeff. With this name he is registered with this name in Italy and the Russian painter Grigorij Pavlovic Mal'cev signed his own works
- **Armando Rossi** Armando Rossi is not to forget amongst Castel Ritaldi famous people
- **Corrado Spaziani** Since the early seventies, Corrado Spaziani contributed to foster a renewal of the language of local art and beyond with his original experimentation

Municipal library

The municipal library of Castel Ritaldi, dedicated to the artist Corrado Spaziani, is located in via Scigliano on the ground floor of the town hall and next to the main square of the town. The literary path is the natural walk that leads to La Bruna. The renovation of the space has characterized the structure making it versatile, in fact the custom wooden furniture are characterized by open shelves for bibliographic material and hanging tables useful for the consultation and research during exhibitions and conferences, thanks also to specially prepared audio and video systems. The library, where all the spaces revolve around the reference, has two rooms, the main one is dedicated to consultation, to non-fiction and to narrative with the shelf material available to the user and the other one to the local section. A special area is dedicated to children and teenagers, from the first months of life with tactile books to news for teenagers. There are also totems showing editorial innovations and constantly updated reading proposals and "the second hand books market".

Food & Wine

Castel Ritaldi is synonymous with olive oil and wine. Its precious territory, in fact, is part of both the P.D.O. Extra Virgin Olive Oil Route and the famous Strada del Sagrantino. An ideal place to combine Art, Culture, Nature and ... Good living.

Sagrantino Wine

The territory of Castel Ritaldi boasts membership in the Docg (Controlled and Guaranteed Designation of Origin) area of Sagrantino which has now achieved great success and is today one of the most appreciated red wines in the world. The Sagrantino di Montefalco, which is the most cultivated grape quality, is thirty months aged, of which at least twelve in wooden barrels, before being put on the market. There is also the Trebbiano Spoletino wine, which is a typical wine of plain area. In fact, in the soft slopes and in the plains of Castel Ritaldi, the sweet golden clusters of Trebbiano Spoletino have been shining again, a white wine that is gaining important recognition for its uniqueness. Vin Santo is a very delicious sweet wine, which is obtained by crushing the dried grapes during Christmas holidays.

Discover the local cellars www.stradadelsagrantino.it

The olive oil

The olive oil is definitely the most prized product of our hills. Castel Ritaldi is located in the center of the protected area. Even before the Etruscans it was the most important agricultural product in the region. Throughout the centuries man, with his work, has created an environment suitable for the life of the olive tree. The olive gathering, in order to preserve the high quality of the product, is normally anticipated in October. The cultivation methods and the climatic conditions allow to obtain an authentic and natural olive oil. It is practically a biological crop, given the low winter temperatures that kill natural enemies. It's really worth visiting the numerous oil mills that extract oil according the respect and the traditional knowledge of those who cultivate it.

Typical products

"Strangozzi" are a traditional dish, a very ancient pasta made with only flour, water and salt. The dough should be spread in a rather thick sheet. Sprinkled with flour, the dough is rolled, cut into strips not too thin and quickly cooked. They are seasoned with a fresh chopped tomato sauce cooked with garlic and olive oil, finally enriched with finely chopped parsley. The truffle is the other product that makes this territory a paradise for gourmets. The black one, the high quality one, is found in February and March. Then one can find the less prized but equally fragrant and tasty Summer truffle. Saffron production is also having a great importance. The "attorta", once prepared during the main festivities of the year, has become the typical dessert of Christmas. According to the original recipe, flour, eggs, sugar and alchermes are processed to obtain a soft and homogeneous dough which will then be spread out until obtaining a thin and elongated sheet. In the meantime the sliced apples are cooked over low heat together with sugar, chocolate, lemon peel and alchermes. Cooled down, finely chopped walnuts and raisins are added to it. The mixture should be distributed on the rolled dough and placed in a spiral on a buttered dish and baked until it has assumed a beautiful golden color. In the same period another traditional dessert is made, the "Christmas gnocchi" made with water, flour,

salt, breadcrumbs, alchermes, walnuts, pine nuts, amaretti (or mostaccioli), sugar, cocoa, nutmeg and cinnamon. Another typical sweet is the "crescionda" which is made up of three distinct layers: one of the base, composed of amaretti and flour, a central layer of milk and eggs and a dark brown surface consisting almost exclusively of chocolate.

Events

The Land of Fairy Tales

The event, promoted by the local administration, was founded in 2000 by an idea of the Department of Culture, with the aim to spread the culture of the fairy tale especially among young people, as a means of expression, and is dedicated to the memory of Mario Tabarrini, born in Castel Ritaldi and author of several books of fiction, short stories and stories for children. It is a simple idea involving young and adult people in reading, writing and in sharing the great richness of humanity: the narration, the imagination of life as a story. Castel Ritaldi, characteristic and charming town nestled on the gentle hills of Umbria, with its ancient villages and its centuries-old churches, welcomes children and families from all over Italy. In the third weekend of September, during the three days dedicated to the fairy tale, events, games, music and tastings take place in a festive and joyful setting. Coming to the "Land of Fairy Tales" in September will therefore be a unique opportunity to visit not only Castel Ritaldi, but also the surrounding area that offers many opportunities for lovers of nature, landscape, art, culture and food.

The "Mario Tabarrini" Literary Prize is a competition addressed to three-year-old children, passing through the adolescent universe till reaching the adults. The prize-giving ceremony of the competition takes place on the third Sunday of September, when adults and children can participate with their fairy tales, which have to be presented by the end of May. Animation, readings of fairy tales, games and music follow one another, involving adults and children. For the final evening there will be a fireworks display with music and tasting of typical local products. In the past few years the Municipality of Castel Ritaldi, in order to raise the quality of the event, has established stable relationships with important institutions such as the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Education, the Umbria Region, the Province of Perugia, the University of Perugia and the Gal Valle Umbra. In this context the "Corrado Spaziani" Municipal Library is inserted, specialized in fiction for children and texts on popular traditions, a reference point for schools and scholars, and the literary path "The Healthy Road", an itinerary where a set of Illustrated totems guides the visitor within the ideal world for children.

The "Palio del Fantasma"

The "Palio del fantasma" was born in 1984 from the idea that both the physical, cultural and luck components played equally important roles. From that time it has been growing and steadily improving, for fifteen editions, until 1998.

It was a Summer contest in Medieval costume between the neighborhoods of the municipality.

The aim is to bring back to life an ancient game that Count Ritaldi wanted in August 1499 to honor the hospitality of Lucrezia Borgia in his castle. The noblewoman, sadly famous for her moral conduct, had so much fun in assisting in the competition of the knights, who even asked Count Ritaldi for the reply of the game. It is said that it was Lucrezia Borgia who selected the numerous knights from Spoleto countryside, who came to the Count's palace to take part in the game. Unfortunately, a selection was necessary and 16 riders (horse and rider) were chosen and contended for an armed courteous prize. The prize was the carousel prize, a richly designed drape that was handed over to the best knight, among the good knights, who fought at the playground. The race consisted of tearing a flag suspended in their hands by two gigantic armies, sheathed in their iron armor. The carousel took place inside the sports field, where, for the occasion, a ring-shaped path was traced, divided transversely by an insidious diagonal. It was 650 meters long and its edges were marked by 45 small flagged poles which constituted the only delimitation reference. At the center of the diagonal, divided in turn by two lanes, there were the armies with the flag set at 2.10 meters from the ground. Two knights at a time clashed starting the path at a gallop from two different positions, trying to hit the flag one before the other and then deliver it to the jury. Before the departure the challenge notice was read over the carousel. The challenging riders were 16 and they played for the following districts: Castel Ritaldi, La Bruna, Mercatello, Castel San Giovanni and Colle del Marchese. The strongest knight, the wandering one, was the bearer of Madonna Lucrezia Borgia. Then an interruption until autumn 2006, when, on the occasion of the IX edition of "Frantotipico", a small group of young volunteers of the IAC association, re-launched a "special" edition of the Palio in order to test a possible interest for a rebirth of the event, but without the joust of the knights. From that unusual winter edition the organizational machine enthusiastically started and in less than a year, in the summer of 2007, brought the Palio back to the past.

Christmas

The Christmas is characterized by a series of cultural events: the magical music of the bagpipers, Santa Claus and the Befana who deliver gifts to children and finally the choirs in the churches. Every third Sunday of the month there is a special market with handicrafts and antiques.

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