

# THE MUSEUMS OF CRAFTS AND TRADITIONS IN THE PISTOIA MOUNTAINS

DESCRIPTION

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**Destination:** The Pistoia Mountains Eco-museum: **Orsigna** - The Giamba and Berto Mills, the Chestnut trail and the Charcoal track. **Pontepetri** - The Iron Itinerary: the Iron Didactic Garden and the Didactic Centre. **Pracchia** - The Sabatini Iron Foundry. **Rivoreta** - The Museum of the People of the Pistoia Apennines. *We also advise visits to:* **Torri** - Museum of Everyday Life, the Renzo Innocenti Collection.

## The Chestnut Trail and the Charcoal Track, Orsigna



These are two outdoor itineraries that aim to illustrate the typical working activities that once exploited the woodland resources and were carried out by the inhabitants of the Pistoia Mountains until a few decades ago. The two itineraries, organised and run by the Or-

signa Valley Cooperative, are part of the Pistoia Mountains Eco-museum.

The Chestnut trail follows an un-made track that passes alongside the Berto Mill, now transformed into a tavern, and winds its way downhill, interrupted here and there by self-supporting bridges carried out on a design attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. The route goes past chestnut drying sheds, as well as the Giamba Mill, which dates from 1820; the water mill, with two wheels, is still in perfect working order and regularly used for milling the products picked in the surrounding woods.

The Charcoal track passes instead along the un-made track

that starts after the Giamba Mill; reconstructions of a charcoal burner's hut, as well as a section of a didactic charcoal kiln that shows the building's internal structure and the combustion process, can be found on the way.

### How to get there:

*by car, from the Pistoia motorway exit: keep to the left and take the Tangenziale Ovest (west bypass). Continue along this road and exit following directions for Modena/Abetone; take the Sr66 and continue for about 15 km as far as the village of Pontepetri. Turn right here in the direction of Pracchia (Sp632). At Pracchia, carry on past the village for about 200 m and then turn left in the direction of Orsigna. (It is a narrow road with many bends, not suitable for vehicles over 8 m in length). At Orsigna, drive past the church square to reach the Berto Mill about 100 m further on, immediately after the bridge.*

### Info and reception:

Molino di Berto - Via di Paoluccio Orsigna - tel. 0573 97461 (Province of Pistoia - Cultural Office)

**Opening hours and prices:** always open. As this is an open-air route it is advisable to visit these sites in fine weather and by day.

The Giamba Mill is open only on prior reservation (Val d'Orsigna Cooperative - tel. 0573 490101/939347/939207) entrance free.

## The Iron Didactic Centre and Garden, Pontepetri; the Sabatini Iron Foundry, Pracchia



In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the natural local resources (water and wood) allowed the Pistoia Mountain area to give life to the first industrial iron centre in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. The Didactic Centre and Garden were set up with the idea of reconstructing the history of iron working in this area and, with the ancient Sabatini Iron Foundry of Pracchia, they form part of the Pistoia Mountains Eco-museum Iron Itinerary.

The existence of a blast furnace at Pracchia, which Cosimo I de' Medici had set up to work the mineral imported from the Isle of Elba, is mentioned in documents from as early as 1543. Over the centuries the furnace was transformed into the Sabatini Iron Foundry. Today the foundry has been transformed and included in the Pistoia Mountain Eco-museum and offers a display of period machinery and tools linked to iron working. The structure also organises demonstrations at the forge.

A power hammer, a vertical wheel and a mill wheel, all powered by water have been reconstructed inside the Didactic Garden at Pontepetri. There is also a fully functioning hy-

draulic turbine that exploits the water from the Maresca stream and thus supplies enough electric power to illuminate the entire didactic route.



### How to get there:

*by car, from Orsigna: go back the way you came in the direction of Pracchia. Turn right at the crossroads and go back onto the Sp632 again as far as Pracchia. From here continue along the Sp632 until you reach Pontepetri.*

**Info and reception:** Sabatini Iron Foundry - Via delle Chioderie - Pracchia - Iron Didactic Centre and Garden - Via la Piana - Pontepetri - tel. 0573 97461 (Province of Pistoia - Cultural Office)

### Opening hours and prices:

*Sabatini Iron Foundry:* from Apr to Jun and Sept to Oct: Sat Sun 4-7pm - Jul and Aug: Tues Wed Thurs Fri Sat Sun 4-7pm

*Iron Didactic Centre and Garden:* open during the Summer period and on prior reservation. As this is an open-air route it is advisable to visit these sites in fine weather and by day - full tickets: € 2.00 - reduced tickets: € 1.00

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## The Museum of the People of the Pistoia Apennines, Rivoreta



It was created in the 1970's on a spontaneous initiative of the people of Rivoreta, a tiny village at the foot of Mount Libro Aperto and, over the years, has been transformed into a real itinerary describing everyday life. The museum, which can also be visited by the blind thanks to the innovative walk-assistant technology, proposes a journey in the life of the people of this territory from modern times to our day, while also encouraging visitors to go back to making things by

hand. The various exhibits are arranged on a route full of suggestions, evocations and sounds.

The museum moreover contains a Toy Laboratory where visitors can construct toys with simple materials. The Wool Didactic Section that documents the ancient craft of spinning can be found in the immediate vicinity.

### How to get there:

*by car, from Pontepetri: take the Sr66 following directions for S. Marcello. Go straight through the town and, at La Lima, turn right in the direction of Abetone on the Ss12. Follow this road for about 10 km as far as Pianosinatico. Turn right here and continue for about 3 km to reach Rivoreta (it is a narrow road with many bends and not suitable for large tourist coaches).*

**Info and reception:** Museum of the People of the Pistoia Apennines - Via degli Scoiattoli - Rivoreta  
tel. 0573 97461 (Province of Pistoia Cultural Office)

**Opening hours and prices:** from Mar to Jul: Sat Sun 10.30am-12.30pm and 4-6pm - from Sept to Dec: Sat Sun 10.30am-12.30pm and 3-5pm - Aug open daily  
full tickets: € 2.00 - reduced tickets: € 1.00

## We also advise visits to:



Starting out from Pracchia, an alternative itinerary to the one proposed above to the Museum of the People of the Pistoia Apennines at Rivoreta can be a visit to the **Museum of Everyday Life at Torri**, in the Borough of Sambuca pistoiese. The collection is arranged in nine sections and contains tools, utensils and other objects collected by the owner Renzo Innocenti (private structure, open from August 1<sup>st</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> 3-6pm. In other periods open on prior request, tel. 0573 401261 or 338 2786544).



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