

# THE HISTORIC ORGANS IN THE PISTOIA MOUNTAINS

**Destination:** **S. Marcello pistoiese** - The Church of S. Marcello. **Mammiano** - The Church of S. Biagio. **Cutigliano** - The Church of S. Bartolomeo. *We also advise visits to:* **Gavinana** - The Church of S. Maria Assunta. **Popiglio** - The Church of S. Maria Assunta. **Montagnana** - The Church of Ss. Giusto e Lucia. **Serra pistoiese** - The Church of S. Leonardo. **Treppio** - The Church of S. Michele Arcangelo. **Gavinana** - The Sound Archives in Palazzo Achilli.

In a not too distant past, almost all the Italian churches possessed an organ in order to add solemnity to the liturgical services. This was even more frequent in the mountain villages, where the parish churches were a significant point of reference for the population.

The art of organ making became particularly important in the 17<sup>th</sup> century so that a prestigious school also grew up in Pistoia and permitted the spread of finely made instruments even in more isolated areas like the mountains. An inversion of this tendency at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century however led to the modernisation of many of the traditional instruments in order to follow the

most fashionable trends from over the Alps. Pistoia, and in particular the mountain areas, lacked the necessary funds to carry out any alterations on the ancient organs in the area, this is the reason why the organs were thus preserved and then progressively restored from the 1960's onwards.

The Academy of Italian Organ Music was set up in Pistoia in 1975 with the aim of further increasing the importance of this tradition; in 1984 it was transformed into a foundation under the same name thanks to the collaboration of the City Council, the Province of Pistoia and the Cassa di Risparmio di Pistoia e Pescia (tel. Academy 0573 403053).

## The organ in the Church of S. Marcello, S. Marcello pistoiese



The oldest part of the instrument was probably enlarged with other registers by Pietro Agati at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and only later restructured

by the Tronci family. Still in working order thanks to its restoration (restoration carried out by Riccardo Lorenzini, 1993) the organ we see today is richly decorated with a monumental casing in finely carved gilded wood.

### How to get there:

*by car, from Gavinana: keep to the left on leaving the motorway exit and take the Tangenziale Ovest. Drive along it for about 5 km and then follow the directions for Modena/Abetone. Turn onto the Sr66 and continue along the main road for about 20 km to reach the centre of S. Marcello.*

### Info and reception:

Church of S. Marcello  
Piazza Arcangeli, 14 - S. Marcello pistoiese  
tel. 0573 630179

**Opening hours and prices:** the church is always open  
visits are not allowed during services - entrance free

## The organ in the Church of S. Biagio, Mammiano



Carried out by the Agati family in 1798, the instrument is still in a very good state of repair and in working order.

### How to get there:

*by car, from S. Marcello:*

*continue along the Sr66 for 3 km in the direction of Abetone/Modena to reach Mammiano.*

### Info and reception:

Church of S. Biagio  
Via della Chiesa, 26 - Mammiano - tel. 0573 976133

**Opening hours and prices:** the church is always open  
9am-6pm - visits are not allowed during services (Sun at 9am) - entrance free

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## The organ in the Church of S. Bartolomeo, Cutigliano



This monumental instrument, with its richly painted and gilded casing, is made up of an older original nucleus, carried out in 1626 by Cosimo Ravani, an organ maker from Lucca, and later renovated in a joint effort by the Agati and the Tronci firms in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The organ is at present being restored (2009).

### How to get there:

*by car, from Mammiano: continue along the Ss66 as far as La Lima. From here continue along the Ss12 in the direction of Abetone/Modena. Turn right at Casotti into the Sp37 and continue as far as Cutigliano. Keep to the right and pass the departure station of the cableway to reach the church.*

### Info and reception: Church of S. Bartolomeo

Via Pacioni, 14 - Cutigliano - tel. 0573 68022

**Opening hours and prices:** the church is always open, however visitors are advised to contact the parish office beforehand at the phone number provided - visits are not allowed during services - entrance free

## We also advise visits to:



The **Church of S. Maria Assunta** at Gavinana contains a recently restored **organ** (Riccardo Lorenzini 2006) of most unusual proportions that was built around an older nucleus carried out in 1586 by Cesare Romani from Cortona. The instrument was further enlarged and modified in 1775 and 1811 by the Agati family and by the Tronci family in 1852. The organ at S. Maria Assunta is today, with the organs of Catania and Trapani, the most imposing complete historic organ to have survived to this day. The instrument originally came from the Church of S. Lorenzo and was later purchased, along with the chancel, in 1811 by Domenico Achilli from Gavinana, precisely for the Parish Church of Gavinana (tel. parish office 0573 66266; tel. "Domenico Achilli" association 0573 66057).

The **Church of S. Maria Assunta** at **Popiglio** contains an ancient **organ** built in 1665 by the Roman organ maker Giuseppe Testa. The instrument was altered several times in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Tronci and again in 1823 by the Agati (restoration by Lorenzini, 2003).

Although the organs preserved in the Church of Ss. Giusto e Lucia at Montagnana and in S. Leonardo at Serra pistoiese, as well as the recently restored organ at S. Michele Arcangelo at Treppio, are not on the main itinerary, it is well worth making a short deviation to see them.

The **organ** in the **Church of Ss. Giusto e Lucia** at **Montagnana**, in Neo-Gothic style, was carried out by the Tronci firm and dates from 1859 (restoration by Hiroshi Tsuji, 1987).

The suggestive village of **Serra pistoiese** can be reached from **Montagnana**; a historic **organ** of 1780, the work of Pietro Agati, though only the casing has survived, is preserved there in the **Church of S. Leonardo**. The organ maker Glauco Ghilardi from Lucca constructed a new organ, in North German style, inside the casing in 2000.

A majestic organ dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and re-elaborated by the Agati family in 1794 can be found in the **Church of S. Michele Arcangelo** at **Treppio**, in the Borough of Sambuca pistoiese (restoration by Pierpaolo Donati, 1981). Every year concerts are performed on this instrument by artists from all over the world.



**Palazzo Achilli** at **Gavinana** hosts the **Sound Archives** (Province of Pistoia, Cultural Office tel. 0573 97461) that collect the oral traditions of the Pistoia mountains and are the result of meticulous research work that has brought hundreds of songs, stornellos and nursery rhymes to light, recorded live from local informers.