



National Days of Italian Castles, XXII° edition Saturday 9th, Sunday 10th May 2020

From north to south, from east to west: **the peninsula of castles.**

19 regions to be discovered and rediscovered

A dense network of events:

free guided tours, conferences and books presentations, concerts, lunches at the castle, historical reviews and exhibitions

19 regions involved with a main site each and many collateral ones which are not just **castles** or **towers** but often **entire city walls** like those of **Fossombrone** - Marche region fenced borough suspended between Apennines and the Adriatic Sea - or **Laconi** located in the heart of Sardinia island - all animated by free guided tours, book presentations, concerts, exhibitions, conferences and much more: these are the figures, in short, of the **National Days of Italian Castles 2020**, reaching the **22nd edition** and set for **Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 May 2020**, organized by the **Italian Institute of Castles (IIC)**, scientific non-profit organization founded in 1964 in Milan by Piero Gazzola whose regional offices are present in all Italian regions.

Since 1998, May has become synonymous with the keenest tourism trends throughout the Italian peninsula. Families, foreign visitors, schools and universities can devote themselves to an intense 'two days' of discoveries of **castles**, **fortresses**, towers and **other fortified architectures**, without forgetting the possibility of visiting **entire villages**, **walled cities** and **ramparts**: this appointment for enthusiasts of history, restoration and architecture, cultural tourism is so well established that it is often *sold out* in many of the interested locations.

Every year the sites chosen by the IIC members in agreement with local authorities and other decision-making bodies including private owners **are different from the previous ones**, allowing visitors to **constantly enrich** their **knowledge** and **spend a spring weekend even in less known**



places in Italy or in their own city to visit fortified architectures often not open to the public where they can discover a building and its history told by experts and scholars, browse a new book just presented, attend a conference, an exhibition or a concert, or know the state of the art of valorization and of public-private synergies.

Milestones of our civilization, these places and these architectures **tell the story of a country**, its socio-political transformations, **the richness and diversity** of its territories **along with the stories of people**, families and dynasties - brought to us thanks to the strenuous activity held by volunteers, students, young graduates, university professors, authors, essayists and experts, architects and restorers who personally conduct visits to sites identified with competence and passion.

The 22nd National Days of Italian Castles are designed and organized, as every year, by the **Istituto Italiano Castelli**, a scientific non-profit organization that has been committed to safeguarding the entire historical and cultural heritage for 56 years and the enhancement of the immense heritage of castles, fortresses and architectural buildings. For a great celebration of the **inestimable wealth of the Italian landscape**.

With **over 20,000 surveyed, photographed and studied sites** and with a capillary organization, the non-profit organization designs and promote cultural and scientific activities all year round, including the publication of two editorial series and a specialized magazine, periodic meetings and conferences, discovery trips, a prize for the most deserving degree thesis on fortified architectures and *Il Castello tells a story*, a photographic competition dedicated to secondary school students. Not last, every year, numerous conferences as well as real courses of 'castleology'.

There is a constant need to spread the knowledge of these testimonies of our past, which constitute one of the foundations of our historical and cultural identity, and this can happen both by highlighting its importance in public opinion and by stimulating the new generations to a a better understanding of this extraordinary, fascinating and suggestive patrimony, whose consistency is second only to that of religious architecture.

It 's true, today there is a strong excitement and interest from the institutions and the civil world around castles and fortified villages, but it must be remembered that the IIC began to deal with them since 1964, recognizing the importance of their protection and enhancement and their extraordinary po-



tential in the life of our country when very few, if any, had looked at them least.

Strengthened by its history and its constant commitment, the IIC has also obtained for this edition of the National Days of Italian Castles the **patronage** of the **Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage** and Activities and Tourism (MiBACT).

Practical information:

Giornate Nazionali dei Castelli/National Days of Italian Castles Days 2020:

22nd edition: Saturday 9th, Sunday 10th May 2020

Each selected site offers free guided tours and other initiatives (presentations, concerts, tastings and lunches, conferences, seminars, round tables, book launches): they are organized on the two days according to a regional calendars (main sites list follows)

Age Association: 56 years

Members: 1400

Censed sites: about 20,000

Website (Italian): <http://www.istitutoitalianocastelli.it/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Istituto-Italiano-dei-Castelli>

Hashtag: #giornatenazionaleideicastelli2020



The fortified architectures are the second national asset after the religious ones: inestimable architectural and cultural heritage, they're open once a year with free events and guided tours to accelerate or promote territorial development

Fabio Pignatelli della Leonessa, architect, President of Istituto Italiano Castelli (IIC): 'Every year we try to show hidden or never seen places, or to rediscover them with new eyes: we also inaugurate restructured architectures or try to repopulate sites related to the current history of our country. Within the past two editions of the National Days of Italian Castles we'd welcomed thousands of local and national visitors happy to rediscover some places in the country yet damaged by the heart-quake but full of potentials and already rebooting (Abruzzo, Marche); in many other Italian regions our volunteers designed multiple itineraries adding collateral sites to the main one where to enjoy free guided tours and other activities.

On 2020 we're going to celebrate sites conjugating outstanding historical and landscape values and for the first time our volunteers designed itineraries involving the totality of the territory of the region around our designated sites in order to increase the permanence of the visitors and the aficionados who can continue with extended tours of other nearby fortified architectures.

IIC **Basilicata** region members will open the doors of Moliterno Castle; **Calabria** ones of the Castrovillari castle. The privately owned Montechiarugolo Castle will be the main site **in Emilia Romagna**; **Friuli Venezia Giulia** will open Gemona Castle.

Liguria invites to discover the Carretto's Family **Castello di Balestrino** (SV) and the Marchesato Stables, plus one of the finest boroughs of the Ponente Ligure.

Lombardy will animate Pavia Castle (while on Saturday May 23 it will be possible also to visit Castionetto di Chiuro Tower).

Campania region will celebrate the system of fortresses in Irpinia subregion by opening the Monterverde site immersed in the fine natural landscape of the Ofanto and Osento valleys; other collateral events will be taking place in



this region - including visits and conversations - in the main Naples, Agropoli, Teano, Teggiano and Castelpagano castles (in this latter beside the free tours there will be a conversation on the system of Sannio subregion castles).

Lazio invites you to discover the Palazzo and Archaeological Museum of Fortuna Primigenia in Palestrina (Rome), half owned by the Italian Ministry of Culture and half still a private residence, which will be open for the occasion.

Marche region celebrates a cradle of history, art, culture and nature: Fossombrone, an ancient town of Roman origins.

Molise celebrates the Baronial Castle of Rotello and its history dating from 1061 to the present day. It is finally reopened and accessible again after long restoration works which were necessary to repair the damages of the 2002 earthquake and conducted with extreme care and dedication by the owner Anna Maria d'Alessandro, an agribusiness entrepreneur.

The IIC members of this region designed the largest tourist-cultural itinerary to encourage visitors and enthusiasts who come from outside the region to stay the whole weekend and discover all the other fortified architectures open with free guided tours organized for National Days of Castles (Macchiagodena, Castropignano, the brand new 'Museum of Castles' in the Castle of Pescolanciano, further the castles of Venafro, Gambatesa, Castropignano and Macchiagodena) plus other places of culture and history.

Piedmont opens the doors of Ceva Castle, Puglia the doors of the Bionto Castle and Tower as well as the fifteenth-century Palazzo Vulpano - Sylos.

Sardinia invites you to discover one of the most beautiful villages in Italy, Laconi, located in the heart of the region close to Barbagia with the Aymerich Park where the rare arboreal essences and an exceptional historical-landscape guided tour will be flanked by the discovery of the homonymous castle dating back to the 9th century as well as a vast network of other events to dedicate an entire weekend to the island.

Sicily IIC members design an outstanding walk-tour at the Castle of SS. Salvatore and at the Montorsoli lantern in Messina alongside the external walkway on the seaside walls of Messina Harbour. The sites, of which the Lanterna is the oldest lighthouse in Italy, are both owned by Italian Navy and therefore



are **normally not accessible to the public**. The authority maintains this heritage with great care and on August 9, 2019 opened the **new permanent public lighting** of the walls which has been designed by Istituto Italiano Castelli, Sicily Section (Messina Delegation) with the collaboration of Italian Navy.

Tuscany exploration is dedicated to Michelangelo's San Miniato fortification with a talk and to the Middle-Age Florence towers with a walk tour.

The **Trentino Alto Adige** section of the IIC chooses to highlight Castel Trostburg, which will be the site of a free guided tour and conference: the manor houses an exhibition of the entire history of the regional castles. Also in this region, the members of the IIC have prepared further itineraries of castle culture.

The **Veneto** section which in recent editions has celebrated restorations by opening the gates of places often closed for decades by registering flattering numbers of visits for each site concerned, this year invites to the discovery (or rediscovery) of the Fort of San Felice (Chioggia) immersed in the extraordinary landscape of the Venetian lagoon. This fortified architecture is the subject of a complex and innovative restoration intervention that benefits from the compensation, conservation and environmental redevelopment measures in the areas where the MOSE hydraulic system is built.

Umbria IIC section proposes a visit to Montecolognola, a delightful medieval village with a castle overlooking Lake Trasimeno in a strategic position: it retains its primitive appearance almost intact, the walls and entrance doors date back to the early fourteenth century.

Montecolognola had been chosen on the occasion of the 2019 National Days by the local IIC volunteers with the aim of starting the restoration of some frescoes of valuable pictorial value found in the parish church of S. Maria Annunziata. The works have started but, as the funds destined for the completion of the conservative intervention are not sufficient, the Board of IIC Directors of the Umbria Section has unanimously expressed itself to propose again Montecolognola on 2020 with the aim of further raising public awareness both of the knowledge of the site and the urgent need to complete the restoration.



The fate of each castle is different from that of the noble palaces that were always located in the city center and for the most part have survived the events remaining intact. The fortifications, precisely because of their historic defensive and offensive function, are on the edge: in the mountains or in the hills. For this reason, most of them have been abandoned, destroyed by wars, or even by wicked architectural projects. Very rarely they are inhabited because living in a fortification, as well as being inconvenient, is too expensive. In the most fortunate cases they have been reconverted to accommodation facilities, or have been restored to be returned to the public, but many continue to be closed: the Castles Days therefore give the time to discover and appreciate them, perhaps taking advantage to build different itineraries in unknown and wonderful corners of our country to which otherwise we would not have thought.

With more than a thousand members and a headquarter in every Italian region, we take care of an often unrecognized heritage and are unique in the Italian non profit landscape for longevity and for the quality of the represented interests.

We do not perform this task only with the more challenging appointment of the year to be organized - the **Days are the result of an incredible teamwork of volunteers and enthusiasts, scholars and teachers** - but also through the **careful and daily relationship with local authorities, Ministries and other stakeholders** to also help in understanding the **'needs' of these particular architectures of which our country is the richest in the world. And the less sensitive to valorization.**

We are working, together with other non profits and NGOs also dealing with heritage to try to lighten the tax burden on these architectures and above all to study how to stack these assets that have spaces so special for their function - now lost and therefore difficult to be classified in the tax schemes for properties.

We look for the collaboration with other parts active in this sector, even though each one with its precise identity, in order to engage in projects of common interest.'



Four volunteers from the Italian Castles Institute invite us to discover their regions on the occasion of the National Days of Italian Castles

Itineraries dedicated to history, the castle heritage, culture and landscape over a weekend

Over the years, the National Days of Italian Castles, the event dedicated to the history and future of the fortifications and their protection, has turned from a few hours' visit solo or with friends to an ideal time for an out town trip (or to the rediscovery of hidden places in our cities) and also to another lesser-known Italian region, perhaps combining the itineraries of guided tours, concerts and exhibitions organized by the Istituto Italiano Castelli with a longer itinerary over a weekend.

Four voluntary members who animate the activities of the regional offices of the Istituto Italiano Castelli all year round - from publications, to visits, to research trips and collaborations with organizations and associations - suggest other visit itineraries to best exploit the potential of their regions. And to invite visitors and enthusiasts to become members of the non-profit organization to help write the 2021 and following years of this adventure together.

Onorina Perrella (1940), retired literature teacher passionate about history, has been president of the **Molise** Section since 2000, the year of its establishment. In this twenty years she has followed the castellan 'heritage' of her region with growing passion and says: 'It has been a very intense row of years of work which, thanks to the collaboration of a group of voluntary scholars and researchers, has brought members and an ever wider public interested in discovering and deepening the wealth of fortified architecture present in our land.

'This year, here in Molise, we will celebrate the opening to the public of the Baronial Castle of Rotello, the ancient Norman county of Loritello, after a long and complex restoration work that saved a seriously damaged site after the 2002 earthquake. The opportunity to celebrate this event is mainly due to the tenacity and obstinacy of the entrepreneur Anna Maria d'Alessandro who



followed the restoration of the residence she owned with the immense love of those who have always lived it as a real home, after years in which, with the family, she had to reside elsewhere.

Several collateral events will complete the National Days in Molise and will give the opportunity to get to know and appreciate a castle heritage of all respect to those who want to spend a different weekend.

In collaboration with the municipal administration of Vastogirardi, in the province of Isernia, on Saturday May 9th we will offer a seminar on the de Petra feudal family who became its owners at the end of the 16th century and a guided tour of the beautiful fortified village of Vastogirardi, one of the few Medieval Molise settlements still completely protected by the walls that follow the apical trend of the hill on which it stands.

With the patronage of MIUR (Italian Ministry of Education and Research) and the collaboration of the Polo Museale del Molise, free guided tours are planned in the castles of Venafro and Gambatesa, which I recommend to visit for their artistic and architectural particularity; moreover, in the ancient Castle of Alessandro di Pescolanciano, a few kilometers from Collemeluccio, a UNESCO MAB heritage-listed area, and from the Italic theater and temple of Pietrabbondante, guided tours of the restored rooms and of the 'Museum of Castles in the Castle' we inaugurated last year within the National Days 2019.

Still in the province of Isernia, don't lose Macchiagodena, a small town in Molise creator of the Reading Borough, an original project followed by 11 Italian regions: this ancient castle is born in a landscape of great natural beauty and can be visited."

Valentina Pintus (1982), PhD in Restoration, secretary of the IIC **Sardinia** section: "The village of Laconi and the surrounding area offer numerous cultural opportunities that we certainly feel to promote on the occasion of the 2020 National Days.

Inserted among the 'Finest Boroughs of Italy', Laconi is a real oasis of history and landscape charm and, above all, a real open-air museum in the heart of Sardinia, towards the Barbagie.

The program proposed by our Section is rich and articulated and involves local entities, as well as the National Boarding School of Cagliari, Vittorio Emanuele, who will take care of visits to the Castle, the Forests Authority that will accompany visitors to discover the naturalistic peculiarities of the park and surrounding landscapes, and the Don Bosco association, which will take care of the guided tour of the nearby Aymerich historical garden.



The first human traces preserved here date back to 6000 BC. Between the late Neolithic and the beginning of the Metal Age (3700-2400 BC) a unique sculptural phenomenon developed: the menhirs. The civic archaeological museum houses 40 carved monoliths, dated between the 4th and 3rd millennium BC, some are gigantic. Eight monoliths have been found in Perda Iddocca, six statues-menhirs in Pranu Maore. The museum itinerary is completed by ceramics, obsidian and metal objects found in other sites in the Sarcidano area, including the megalithic tomb of Masone Perdu and the dolmen of Corte Noa. The fame of the country is also linked to the figure of San'Ignazio, an object of deep devotion in the island context: it is possible to visit his birthplace and the church dedicated to him and to Saint Ambrose. Other valuable visit tips for travelers who want to stay longer are also suggested by [Sardegna Turismo](#)'.

Giorgia Gentilini (1968), architect dealing with restoration and lecturer, president of IIC **Trentino Alto Adige**: 'It is always difficult to tell where to organize a weekend in my region, too many choices! For the occasion of one of the past editions of the National Days, for example, we have also invented a series of cycling routes since Trentino is one of the Italian best equipped regions to travel on cycling routes.

In the area or along the route to get to Castel Trostburg (the site chosen for the 2020 activities, owned by the Südtiroler Burgeninstitut) I would also suggest visiting [Castel Taufers](#). And [castel Moss-Schulthaus](#) if you come from Verona (it is located in Appiano, the right direction to then reach Castel Trostburg).

For those who want to extend the range of visits, I recommend [Velturmo](#) and its castle, [Rodengo](#), [Castel Prösels](#) in Piè allo Sciliar / Presule and [Castel Brunico](#) south of the Val Pusteria. “

Chiara Orsi Bin (1946), retired teacher of literature, passionate about history and art, secretary of IIC **Umbria**: 'It is difficult for me to suggest just one itinerary, since Umbria is rich in extraordinary architectural, historical and landscape resources.



Less than two kilometers from Montecolognola, I recommend visiting Magione and the Castle of the Knights of Malta dating back to the end of the XII century - seat of the conspiracy against Valentino (1502).

At 6 km, in San Feliciano, there is the embarkation to visit Polvese an island of particular naturalistic interest (it is an educational-scientific park) with the remains of a medieval fortress and an Olivetan monastery.

In Passignano, located about 9.4 km away, I recommend visiting the medieval fortress and embarking for Isola Maggiore, a suggestive lake area mentioned in documents from the century. IX, with interesting civil and religious monuments of the sec. XIII, XIV, XV and the historical lace museum; in 1211 St. Francis spent Lent weeks there.

For those who want to visit Perugia, the regional capital is only 23 kilometers from Montecolognola and Castiglione del Lago - a charming coastal town with the medieval Rocca del Leone, the sixteenth-century ducal palace of the Della Corgna and the seventeenth-century church of S. Domenico - only 28!

Last but not least, Solomeo, the historic village renovated by cashmere entrepreneur Brunello Cucinelli, is only 18 kilometers away.

Press office:

Diana Marrone

pr/undercover - lifestyle news agency

journalists, press officers, event designers Venice, Milan, Naples (IT)

email || prundercover@gmail.com

skype || [diana_prundercover](#)

mobile || + 39 349 5517623

<http://www.prundercover.com>