



NATIONAL DAYS OF ITALIAN CASTLES:

XXIIIrd edition will run from September 17 to October 16 on every region of the peninsula, islands included

61 architectures and places revealed

L'Istituto Italiano Castelli (IIC; Italian Castles Institute Onlus-charity) unveils in more than one region the new Atlante Castellano (Castles Atlas)

Istituto Italiano Castelli, Italian scientific Onlus-charity founded by Piero Gazzola on 1964, established the dates of the **XXIIIrd edition** of the **National Days of Italian Castles: on September 17/October 16 (2022) - 24th and 25th are the main days** from north to south, Italian islands included.

'The 2021 XXIIInd edition, which has been deployed after the pandemic year, was fulfilling us for the massive exploit in visit rates, for the quality and the quantity of involved sites animated under the auspices and the patronage of **Italian Ministry of Culture Heritage** and with the adhesion of the entire events calendar at the [European Heritage Days](#) which will be organized in the same dates also this year.

We'd opened more than 25 main sites and various collateral ones in 19 Italian regions, some of them accessible for the first time.

We dealt, region per region, with either prestigious or unusual ones - as the Sardinian fortified architecture of Laconi and the Venetian San Felice island and fortress ones but not only! - which were completely sold out or demanded the triplication of the visits shifts.

Sites opened for the first time to the general public - as a private castle in Piazza Armerina (Sicily) and a military compounds, Fortress SS. Salvatore (Messina), thanks to the work of our volunteers and their agreements with the ruling authorities - recorded scores of 900 visits per day considering also the emergency laws we're still subjected in the whole country on those days.

The **National Days of Italian Castles** will be continuing also on 2022 to valorize fortified architectures of every scale and of every conservative state for general au-

dience and for scholars: they stand for a relevant Italian asset that, nonetheless having lost their original defensive function, can act as a cultural, historical, architectural and touristic driving force for all the Italian territories where they are placed, especially for those that are more remote and unconnected to the beaten tracks.

The **2022 theme our charity designed** on every selected site with events, performances, conferences and conversations, guided tours, walks, book presentations, 3D tours and physical exhibitions, is **sustainability declined starting from accessibility and restoration**' says **Fabio Pignatelli della Leonessa**, architect, **Istituto Italiano Castelli Onlus** president.

Abruzzo and **Basilicata** regions are very rich of fortified sites ranging on different styles and origins. In the first region the Istituto Italiano Castelli local associates will offer on **Saturday 24 a guided tour (also on 3D) and a conference at Castel D'Ocre** and at the **Forcona Cathedral**, including a visit at the **cloister and museum of Santo Spirito D'Ocre**. The program of the second region rounds all in and around the state owned **Castello Ruggero** (Lauria, PZ) dating back the Normans civilization: researchers attributed to this site a date ranging back IX-X century a.C..

A very interesting example of local best practice, the Castello Ruggero - its ownership was passed only on '90ies to the local council of Lauria, which started the restoration - is a ruin standing fierce again right in the middle of the community interests claiming for its valorization, key to the development of the entire rural settlement and the revitalization of the stunning relation with its surrounding landscape of **Valle del Noce**. On 2017, when the site has been listed and protected, new consolidation works started in order to access it in safety: it is in the centre of **Percorsi Jacobei**, a **8 km pedestrian path sneaking around religious and civil places** of Borgo and Castello di Lauria. Local charities and institutions keep the light on the castle and visits will be ruled by the Istituto Italiano Castelli expert volunteers with the local Lauria volunteers either on **Saturday 24 and on Sunday 25 September until sunset**.

The members of the Istituto Italiano Castelli **Calabria** Section turn on the lights on the **Castle of Caccuri (KR)** with a tour itinerary, a conference and itinerant walks in collaboration with the **Caccuri Literary Prize** also to the abbey, the Matrice church and the streets of the village both Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th September.

The suggested itineraries include visits not far from the main site: **San Giovanni in Fiore (CS)** and **Santa Severina (KR)**.

The ancient Byzantine Castrum of Caccuri in the Middle Ages became an important feudal center with Cerenzia and Cariati as early as the thirteenth century. under the Lordship of the de Riso. Among the most significant passages: from 1400 the castle belonged to the Ruffo family until the middle of the same century. The Cavalcanti family held the fiefdom from 1651 with the title of Dukes of Caccuri, the seventeenth-century palatine chapel with paintings of the Neapolitan school and a first transformation of the manor into a ducal palace in the 1700s are ascribed to them. After the subversion of feudalism, the castle was purchased in 1830 by the Barracco barons who made a second transformation in 1885 with the architect Adolfo Mastrilli who added a ravelin and the cylindrical tower that served as a reservoir for public

water. In the 1900s, the ownership of the castle passed to the Fauci and Lopez families whose restorations brought to light frescoes on wood, capitals and portals. The part of the castle that can be visited is now owned by the Municipality.

Ceppaloni borough, few kilometers away from Benevento, is the main site to discover in **Campania region** and all the activities designed by the IIC local associates, included the guided tours, will be on **September 17 and 18**.

Already during the early Middle Ages, Ceppaloni was part of a widespread settlement system that included various hamlets and the former fief of Barba. Off Barba, an ancient strategic center on the valley of the Sabato river, the ruins of a fortress control the strait through which the via Antiqua Maiore passed to Avellino and Salerno, which connected the Appia with the via "Capua or Brutium". In the Strait of Barba, according to local tradition, the **Sabba delle janare** took place - janare stands for witches in the local dialect - who, in the shade of centuries-old walnut trees, used to perform wild dances and satanic rites until dawn. **Saturday 17 September**, at the presence of the mayor of Ceppaloni, the **President of the Italian Castles Institute, Fabio Pignatelli della Leonessa**, and other scholars will animate a round table on Samnite fortifications, with particular attention to the enhancement of the castle of Ceppaloni and a network of sites of tourist and cultural interest of the area, of the marketing of these cultural assets.

The members of the Campania section of the Italian Castles Institute have **prepared a program of visits extended to all types of fortifications in the area which includes conferences, meetings and guided tours in each province**.

Naples sees **Castel Dell'Ovo**, the regional headquarters of the Institute in Naples, protagonist on **22 September** with a day of studies, guided tours and the inauguration of the 'egg chamber', the province of the regional capital with the **Castle of Pimonte (24 September)**.

In the province of **Avellino**, conversations and guided visits to the **Castle of Monteforte Irpino (24 September)**, to **Torella dei Lombardi** and to the manor and village of **Guardia Sanframondi (1-2 October)**.

In the province of **Salerno**, the **Camerota Castle** and the **Castelluccio di Licusati (23 September)** host an excursus on the **Cilento fortifications**, to which will be added, on the weekend of **1 and 2 October**, the **castle of Agropoli** where the mayor and scholars will hold a conversation entitled 'From the Turkish assaults of the 16th-17th centuries to the latest restorations'.

The **Terra di Lavoro (Caserta)** hosts a round table and guided tours to **Vairano Partenora** on **1 and 2 October** in the presence of scholars from the Italian Castles Institute and the mayor on the subject of the recovery and enhancement of this type of fortification.

The castle of **Calendasco** (XIth century) is the protagonist of the Days in **Emilia Romagna**. For the occasion, the volunteers of the regional IIC section, the Milan Polytechnic and the municipal administration organized a busy calendar of activities

on **Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 September** that celebrates the end of the restoration works and the return to the public of the imposing castle, built in the vicinity of the Via Francigena to defend the famous Sigerico ford. On **Saturday 24 September**, visitors will be able to attend, among other things, a **theatrical show** on the history of the castle and **entertainment by street artists** in the parade ground. On **Sunday 25th** there will be **guided tours** of the building by the Institute's volunteers to discover the recovered rooms and the recent findings during the works, while in the fortified stables outside the castle the **exhibition of the students' degree theses of the Politecnico di Milano on the proposals for the recovery of the complex** is staged.

It will be also possible to visit the **hermitage of San Corrado**, a remarkable and well-preserved medieval accommodation that now houses the studio of the painter **Bruno Grassi**.

The **Spilimbergo Castle** - a complex of buildings and palaces for private and public use (Palazzo Tadea) - is the protagonist of the Days in **Friuli Venezia Giulia**: the visit scheduled for **Saturday 24 September** over several shifts constitutes the first stop on a slow-paced journey to a sustainable approach to the territory, which allows us to understand the signs of time, the presences and absences, the details of the fortified architecture present in Spilimbergo. The Castle, documented in 1122, is characterized by palaces and noble residences that develop in a ring on an internal courtyard. Over time they have undergone major reconstruction, modernization and refinement interventions. The **Painted Palace** is valuable, with frescoes attributed to Bellunello dating back to 1480-1490. **Palazzo ex Ciriani**, today Furlan, preserves a frieze and three stucco medallions made by Giovanni da Udine. The itinerary winds through the main buildings of the historic center, with the Cathedral begun in 1284, and **Borgo Valbruna**, with **Palazzo di Sopra** and the **Church of the Ancona**. From Palazzo di Sopra, dating back to 1300 and today the town hall, there is a **splendid view of the Tagliamento river and the Carnic Prealps**.

The members of the Italian Castles Institute of the **Lazio** region open to the visit a **couple of buildings still privately owned** (Tittoni's family descendants) located in **Manziana** (Saturday **October 1st**) and in **Rome** (Sunday **October 2nd**).

The Manziana palace is placed in the center of the main square and was built at the end of the 16th century on the ancient castle of Santa Pupa. After being papal property for centuries, the building was bought by Vincenzo Tittoni, senator of the newborn Kingdom of Italy, then passed to his son Tommaso Tittoni, politician and diplomat, foreign minister with Giolitti and then held the position for about twenty years of President of the Senate.

Palazzo Tittoni in Rome was built at the end of 1500 on some vineyards belonging to Cardinal Grimani, the palace was enlarged in the second half of the XVIIth century (among the additions there is the glazed pavilion used as a greenhouse or winter garden) joined to the hall also from the magnificent marble floor from a destroyed ancient Roman palace. In the early 1800s it was sold to chevalier Antonio Tittoni, whose descendant Tommaso, at the beginning of the XXth century had restructured it and partially enlarged.

Liguria celebrates **Bordighera alta** (IM), which constitutes the medieval historic

center in which a labyrinth of uphill and downhill alleys winds. The guided walking tour conducted by the members of the IIC Liguria takes place on **Sunday 25 September** with departure from Genoa and includes among other things the village, the **Doria Castle of Dolceacqua** and the **Moreno Gardens** whose Mediterranean vegetation was an inspiration for Monet in painting some his works.

The Doria Castle of Dolceacqua is a manor inserted in the historic village of the town, in an overhanging position. The first mention of the castle and the village of Dolceacqua, called Dulzana at the time, dates back to 1177 in an ancient document in which the ownership of the Counts of Ventimiglia is attested.

In 1270, almost a hundred years later, the fiefdom and its manor were purchased by Oberto Doria - the latter founder of the famous Doria dynasty that will dominate Genoa - who expanded his territories in the Nervi valley up to the villages of Apricale, Perinaldo and Isolabona. The castle was enlarged in the 16th century by the then local lord Stefano Doria, who added to the previous structure a spurred bastion in the eastern sector and the two identical square towers.

Today the structure appears to be divided into two blocks, the front part intended for the control and safety of the village as well as service rooms, prisons and warehouses; the rear part, connected to the front body through a large courtyard, was instead the place where the reception and reception rooms for guests were located and where the local lords resided.

Lombardy celebrates two strategic sites in view of **BGBS Capital of Culture 2023: Saturday 24 September** the **Venetian walls of Rovato**, an interesting example of fifteenth-century fortification of the transition period. Its emblematic history of transformations and ongoing restoration projects will be presented at a meeting - in collaboration with local authorities and the University of Brescia - which will be followed by an external tour of the walls led by historians and architects. On **Sunday 25 September**, the **fortified city of Martinengo** will be the protagonist, where a meeting will be dedicated to the Venetian fortifications of the area and where free guided tours will allow you to get to know the spectacular village, originally surrounded by 1800 meters of walls, which was the fief of Bartolomeo Colleoni.

The leitmotif of the visits is linked to fortified inhabited centers that have had significant strategic value in the territories between Bergamo and Brescia and whose defenses over time have been strengthened by the Republic of Venice. Also in this region will be presented an important dissemination work of the **Italian Castles Institute**, the **Atlante Castellano/Castles Atlas**, a mapping of the fortified heritage in order to create a unique database for the discovery of Italian castles.

Marche region dedicates free guided tours and much more on Saturday and Sunday **24 and 25 September** to the extraordinary **village of Gradara** in the province of Pesaro-Urbino, one of the most beautiful in Italy and theater of the literarily love of Paolo and Francesca (*Dante Alighieri's Divina Commedia, Chant V*).

Puglia dedicates itself to the **Castle of Barletta** - whose origins probably date back to 1050 by the Normans - with a visit and a conference. The imposing fortress, considered no longer useful for national defense, in 1876 was auctioned for 30,100 lire by the Municipality. From that moment a slow decline began, also due to improper

use, already reported at the beginning of the century by Bacile da Castiglione. The last restoration works carried out from 1973 to 1988 have given the castle an important seat for cultural activities with a civic library, exhibition hall and conference room, known as the "Red Room".

To enrich the Apulian program there are also two guided tours in the city in the afternoon, protagonists Palazzo Della Marra and Palazzo De Martino, a private residence of the sixteenth century opened for the first time thanks to the National Days of Castles.

Initially scheduled for 25 September, all visit activities were postponed to **16 October** to coincide with the electoral appointment that made the Castle of Barletta unavailable.

Palazzo Della Marra represents a rare testimony in the land of Bari of a private residence with a mannerist style. Built in the 16th century by Lelio Orsini, it then passed to the powerful Della Marra family who initiated impressive transformations. The palace was then acquired by the Fraggianni family. A garden was created in the area behind the building, facing the sea. It still retains rows of columns with late sixteenth-century capitals. It houses the Giuseppe De Nittis collection donated to the city of Barletta by Léontine Gruvelle (wife and muse of the painter).

The **Palazzo de Martino** dates back to the end of the 16th century. The ground floor, covered with ashlar in alternating horizontal bands (protruding and receding), is marked by four doors. The main one, with a round arch, leads into the central courtyard, on which there are numerous shops. Historically it has considerable importance for having hosted the kings of the French period of the Kingdom of Naples.

The **Molise** section of the Istituto Italiano dei Castelli has chosen the recently renovated **Castello di Macchiagodena (IS)** as its main event, which will host a conference on its restoration and Molise heraldry, along with two days of guided tours. on **24 and 25 September**. A **network of surrounding castles** will be suggested to those who wish to extend their stay in the region.

The baronial castle is the main monument of Macchiagodena. Built on a limestone spur, it was founded as a watchtower by the Lombards and, in 1269, donated by Charles I to Barrasio, to govern it on behalf of the Kingdom of Naples. It was around the castle that the town developed with stone houses that retain their original medieval characters. The village with its castle is also called the "**Terrace on the Matese**" because the whole surrounding landscape is dominated by the Matese massif.

Macchiagodena, a **village dedicated to reading and culture**, will see its library enriched on the occasion of the National Days of Castles, by a **substantial donation of books on castle architecture donated by a member of the Institute**, thus becoming a regional reference point for scholars of topics about fortified architectures.

The **Piedmont - Valle d'Aosta Section**, thanks to the contacts and collaborative relationships established over time with institutions and entities active in the area, offers a **path to get to know some towers in the provinces of Alessandria and**

Asti. The central event will be the visit to the **tower of Masio** (AL), an interesting structure commissioned in 1229 by the municipality of Asti as a tool to promote the settlement reorganization of the village. Restored thanks to the initiative of the municipal administration, which owns the property, today it houses the **Educational Museum The Tower and the River**, inaugurated in 2013 and dedicated to the history of the building and its relationship with the territory.

Sicily offers **two destinations in as many provinces** and extensive tourist-cultural itineraries.

In the **province of Messina**, the protagonist is the **Branciforti castle in Raccuja** and the surrounding cultural landscape. Its first elevation dates back to the Roman period and dominates the Val Demone: today it is a cultural center and a library.

Initially scheduled for 24 and 25 September, the rich program of conversations, lunch and dinner at the castle, gala concert and cultural trekking is **postponed to 6/7 May 2023** due to the coincidence of national and regional elections that make the manor unavailable. The new date was chosen to present a preview of the new artistic lighting project of the site, financed by public funds obtained by the Municipality of Raccuja thanks to the Municipality and the Superintendency.

In the province of **Enna**, a rich program of visits, weaving workshops, tastings of typical sweets and a parade of historic cars at the **Sperlinga castle** (year 1133) set for Saturday **24 September** with a walk also in the **rupestrian village**. The castle stands on a rocky outcrop between the Nebrodi and the Madonie mountains in the heart of central Sicily, from which you can enjoy **a spectacular view of Mount Etna** as well. From the end of the 16th century, the current urban center of Sperlinga was born at the foot of the castle, as an extension of the previous medieval village. **Sperlinga is known as the little Matera of Sicily: the more than 50 caves that make up the rupestrian village were inhabited until the 1960s.** In the eighteenth century, on the west side, outside the castle but within the walls of the Norman era, the church dedicated to the Madonna della Mercede was built, a building of historical interest. On 25 September, the day following the visits organized by the local association of the Istituto Italiano Castelli, **Sperlinga hosts the famous religious procession of the Madonna della Mercede** on the whole town.

Castelpergine is the site chosen by the volunteers of the Italian Castles Institute of **Trentino Alto Adige**. **Guided tours** of the manor, scheduled for both **Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 September**, are organized by the **Castelpergine Onlus Foundation** (owner of the Castle) and by the members of the Board of Directors of the Istituto Italiano Castelli. An **intense program of meetings and presentations** is offered on **Saturday 24 September**, interspersed with a **brunch in the castle garden** (or in the splendid Throne Room, in case of adverse weather conditions). In the morning there will be conferences conducted by architects, scholars and expert superintendents of the region's castle system; in the afternoon **presentation of a volume in English by Anna Kerschbaumer** (Reviving the ruins. Recent projects for retrieval on Trentino-South Tyrol Fortifications) and **a photographic book** (Nel Regno della Notte - The castles of Trentino between landscape and legend) author **Andrea Contrini**. The Trentino Alto Adige regional headquarters of the Italian Ca-

stelli Institute also presents a first mapping of the **Atlante Castellano** (Castles Atlas).

The first evidence of the castle of Pergine, dating back to 1220, can be found in the town planning of the Cathedral Chapter of Trento. Fifty years later, a document from 1270 allows us to identify some structural elements of the fortification and, a few years later, the existence of a stately home is also attested.

The members of the Italian Castles Institute Tuscan section dedicate **visits and conferences to special Florentine sites** and these activities are included in the roster of events at the **Festival of the Florentine Cultural Associations**, a rich annual event organized by the Municipality. Starting from 4 pm, **Sunday 25 September**, free of charge and booking required, the **Certosa del Galluzzo**; at the same time on **Friday 30 September** the **Forte Belvedere** and the adjacent **Porta San Giorgio**.

In **Umbria**, spotlights turned on the **Borgo di San Savino** (XIVth century), owned by the municipality of Magione. The local volunteer IIC members together with other charities and the Pro Loco (as well as with the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering of the University of Perugia, the Superintendency and the Patria Deputation), **will create a rich program of studies** (Saturday 24 September) dedicated to the restoration, history and above all to the still unexpressed potential of the site. On the same day, the opening of the **exhibition of the reliefs of ten castles of Trasimeno** which will end on 24 October 2022 and a **trekking on the hills of San Savino**: the guided tours will be held free of charge both on Saturday 24 and on Sunday 25 morning in concomitance with the other planned programs.

The IIC of the **Veneto region** in agreement with the property and the Municipality, with the collaboration of the **Mirabilia association** that will conduct the guided tours, will open the **castle of Montegalda** and its magnificent Italian garden to the public. There will be other collateral initiatives with the Municipality. At this visit, by popular demand given the success of last year, the volunteers of the Istituto Italiano Castelli also organized **multiple visits to the Fort of San Felice** (Chioggia, VE) on **Saturday 24 September** starting at 2.30 pm and **Sunday 25 September** starting at 10. The Venetian itineraries are completed by the **Castle of Thiene** (Saturday 24 September); the **Castle of Roncade** (Sunday 25 September).

The IIC volunteers of the **Umbria** region, such as those of **Trentino, Molise, Sicily** and other regions, have built an additional 'castles lovers' itinerary for those visitors from outside their regions who want to stay the whole weekend and dedicate themselves to the knowledge of other fortified architectures around the sites chosen for the National Days of Castles 2022.

National Days of Castles, 23rd edition, from 17 September to October 16 2022: **free or paid** guided tours, conversations, conventions and conferences, 3D exhibitions and presentations, theatrical performances and animations, book presentations, trekking, food tastings and other visiting activities

Organizer: Istituto Italiano Castelli Onlus (IIC)

Regions involved: 19

hashtag: #Giornatenazionaleideicastelli2022

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Press kit, images and HD videos:

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