

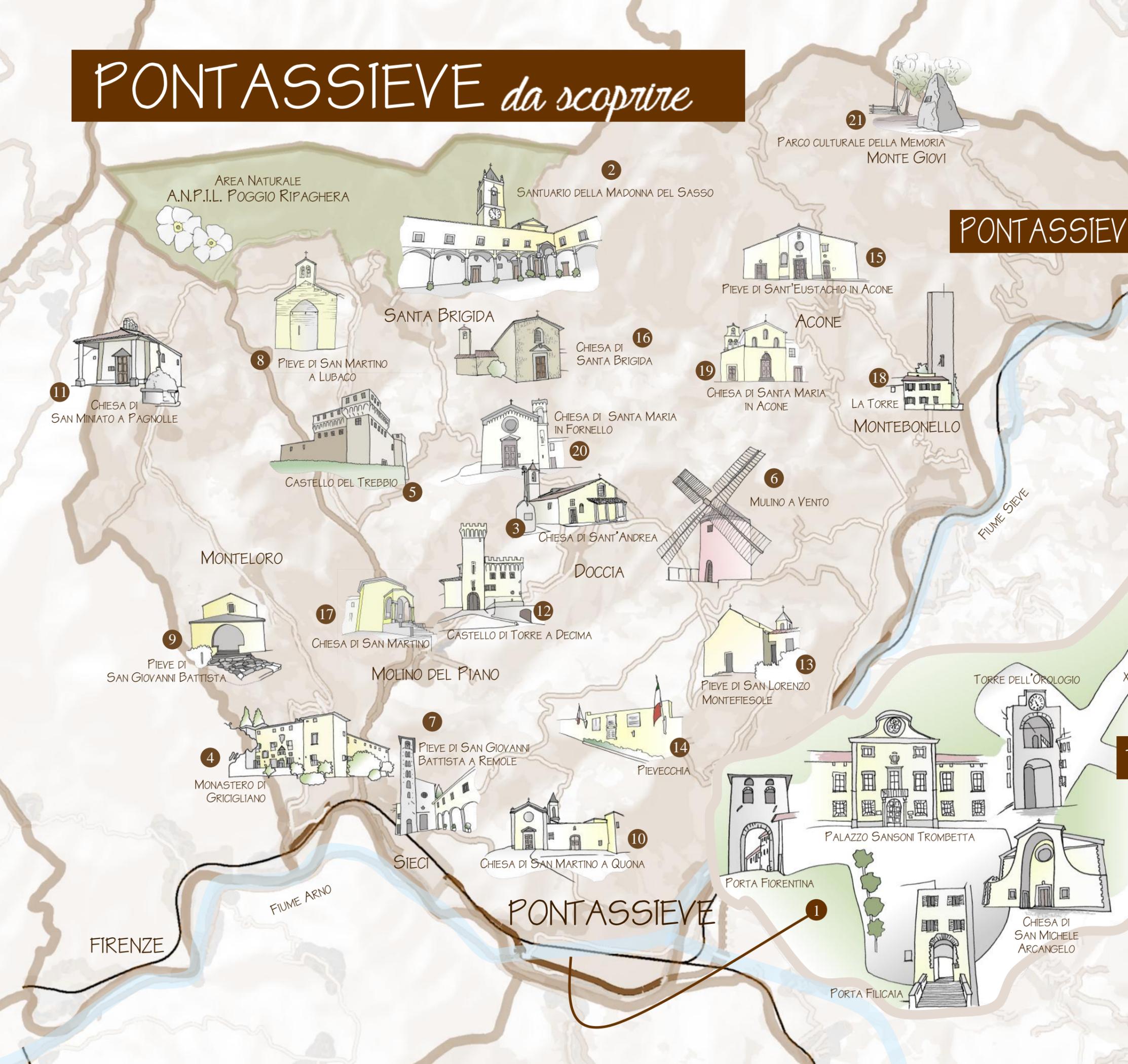
# PONTASSIEVE *da scoprire*



COMUNE DI PONTASSIEVE

## PONTASSIEVE and its SURROUNDINGS

Pontassieve is a precious town close to Florence, a territory surrounded by rivers running down from the ridges to the valleys, softened by the curvy shapes of our hills, living witnesses of the presence of man. The richness of its **churches, villas and castles** give rise to an open-air museum all around its territory. It is a place to discover thanks to its natural beauties, vineyards, **olive groves, woods** hiding breath-taking views.



### THE MEDIEVAL HEART of PONTASSIEVE

Pontassieve grew and developed between the rivers Sieve and Arno. This important river system was of great interest for the close town of Florence: in 1357 the Florentines built there a majestic castle, named Castel Sant'Angelo, surrounded by high sheltering walls. Through the years the name **Castel Sant'Angelo** was substituted by Ponte a Sieve because of the presence of a very important ancient bridge, built by **the Medici** under the guide of Duke Cosimo de Medici: the bridge provided a link to the road from Florence to the towns in Mugello, Casentino and Arezzo.

# PONTASSIEVE

## da scoprire

### 1 THE OLD BOROUGH OF PONTASSIEVE



SANSONI TROMBETTA PALACE

The palace, nowadays seat of the town hall, was built in the middle part of the 18th century. Once heart of the political and social life under the power of the Anforti family, the building became property of the Trombetta family in the 19th century; this family became related by marriage to the Sansonis from Leghorn, (hence the union Sansoni-Trombetta). The ceiling of a beautiful room inside the building, the so called heroines room, is covered with important

frescos by Fernando Fochi, showing heroic actions performed by famous women of the time. Inside the building are also masterpieces by contemporary artists whose works were displayed in Pontassieve; the Sansoni book collection includes 1452 books, mostly from the 19th century and some rare editions from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.



THE MEDICI BRIDGE

This ancient bridge was built mid-16th century; following flooding by the river Sieve that destroyed the old stone bridge, Cosimo I Medici commissioned Stefano from San Piero a Ponti and his son Tommaso a new bridge to be built. The Medici Bridge was restored in 1788, thanks to the Archduke Pietro Leopoldo Lorena and afterwards, following the damages of

WW II. Its structure is made up of two arches in red bricks leaning on a strong stone pillar with the family emblem of the noble Medici on the top.



SAN MICHELE ARCANGELO CHURCH

In ancient times the church was named "Sant'Angelo a Sieve" and dates back to the 13th century. It was completely rebuilt in the 18th century and was consecrated in 1788. The 18th century building was wrecked during WW II, then restored in 1948 and 1971. The presbytery was modified according to the documents of the Second Vatican Council. The main rose window has been lately restored: it portrays St. Michael, patron saint of the town.



CASTEL SANT'ANGELO: THE DOORS

The only remains of the old castle are the three doorways to the town: Porta Fiorentina, Porta Aretina and Porta Filicaia. The fourth door, Porta del Capitano, does not exist anymore. Porta Aretina, also called "the clock tower", is the only one showing its original medieval embattled structure from the 14th century. This tower is the doorway to the medieval borough, whose pavement runs down to the Medici Bridge. Porta del Capitano was the northern door, it was destroyed at the beginning of the 19th century; Porta Fiorentina is the eastern door, the



southern one is Porta Filicaia; originally called "Porta a Sieve", it was renamed in the 16th century when it was consigned to the Filicaia family. The only leftover of this door is its arch.

**IX MARTIRI SQUARE** This square is dedicated to fourteen people who lost their lives on 8. June 1944. The square, placed in the medieval heart of the town, overlooks the river Sieve and is an important meeting point for traditional happenings.

MADONNA DELLE GRAZIE AL SASSO SANCTUARY



The Sanctuary was built in 1490 replacing a medieval Oratory and was repaired many times down the centuries. It is generally called "Madonna del Sasso" (Madonna by the rock) because of the tale telling of the apparition of the Virgin Saint on a rock nearby. Inside the sanctuary there is a valuable painting of the Madonna with Saint John the Baptist and Leonard from the beginning of the 15th century, whose author is supposed to be Giovanni Benintendi; another important painting from the 18th century is a portrait of the Virgin Mary by the Florentine painter Francesco Curradi. Info +390558300456



3 SANT'ANDREA A DOCCIA CHURCH

Evidence of the presence of this church dates back to the beginning of the 11th century; it was the baptistery for all people coming from the churches nearby. The building underwent profound changes over time; the wall structure is the only original part of its medieval architecture we can still admire today. The church was entirely restored in the 17th century and again in 1921. The artistic heritage of the church includes the paintings *Madonna with child*, *St. Anne*, *St. Andrew* and *St. John the Baptist* (school of Ghirlandaio, 1503), a tabernacle (school of the Master della Robbia) and a terracotta credited to Andrea della Robbia himself.



4 GRICIGLIANO MONASTERY

The "fortress Gricigliano" was a property of different families over time. Thanks to the changes made starting from the last decades of the 15th century, the building – at that time "almost ruined, among ditches" – took on the aspect of a beautiful modern country house. The natural beauties around the villa increased their value with the design and realization of a romantic garden provided with water falls, caves and small woods.



5 TREBBIO CASTLE

The building of this castle dates back to 1184, thanks to the Pazzi family. It was probably erected around an older core and took on the current aspect between the 12th and the 13th centuries. The story goes that the noble Florentine family engaged in a conspiracy against the Medici family discussing all the details inside the Trebbio Castle in 1478. The current owners book guided tours and wine tasting: Info +39 0558304900



6 THE WINDMILL

Placed on the ridge of a hill which dominates the valley, with a stunning view, it stands at the crossroads of different routes. Built in the first half of the 19th century, it was completely restored in 2000. The internal part of the windmill is a fascinating "Leonardo da Vinci machine", and it may speed up to 62 mph. Info: Fattoria di Lavacchio +39 0558396168



7 SAN GIOVANNI BATTISTA A REMOLE CHURCH

Present in an old document dating from 955, it is one of the oldest buildings in this area. It is provided with a beautiful bell tower and a medieval structure with three aisles, the central one raising above the lateral ones. Close to the church body are the rectory and a cloister. The 19th century renovation brought its Romanic aspects to light. The artistic heritage of this Romanic church includes a painting of a Madonna with child, two angels and John the Baptist from the 13th century.



8 SAN MARTINO A LUBACO CHURCH

The building incorporates the foundation of an older church from the 11th century and became a parish church in 1526. The main entrance presents a descending staircase to enter the church: it is a rare example of a sacred building you enter in "walking downstairs". The place name "Lubaco" has uncertain origin: the most accredited theory is "Lubaco" might mean "matt", "shady", from its hidden position on the western side of the hill.



9 SAN GIOVANNI BATTISTA A MONTELORO CHURCH

Mentioned for the first time in a papal bull of Pope Celestino II in 1143, this church has Romanic origins and was erected close to the ruins of the castle with the same name. Although its structure was completely renovated in the 17th century, its original form is still there for all to see, thanks to the investments in restructuring required between 1959 and 1962.



10 SAN MARTINO A QUONA CHURCH

Erected on a hill underneath the old Quona castle, it was destroyed in 1143 by the Florentines in the war against the Guidi Earls, whose vassals were the Quona family members. The existing church front was completely renovated in the 19th century and the bell tower, with its pyramid pinnacle, was rebuilt in 1855 according to Giuseppe Gondi's project, owner of the Bossi villa nearby.



11 SAN MINIATO A PAGNOLLE CHURCH

The small 12th century church stands on the way from Monteloro church to San Martino a Lubaco church. On top of its beautiful gabled façade is a precious wooden roof truss. The porch and the lovely belfry were later built in the 16th century. The church stands close to the Portinari Villa and 500 yards from a house that belonged to the Alighieri family. Who knows if this church was a Sunday morning set for the spark of love between Dante and Beatrice?



12 TORRE A DECIMA CASTLE

Erected at the base of Croce mount, close to Molino del Piano, it dates back to the 12th or 13th century. The castle still preserve its ancient tower and some traces of the medieval wall. It is said that, after the unsuccessful conspiracy led by the Pazzi family in 1478, Torre a Decima castle became the safe place they took shelter in. The close medieval chapel is dedicated to St. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi who lived there in the 16th century. Today the castle is a private residence and is open for visitors only at the outside.



13 SAN LORENZO A MONTEFIESOLE CHURCH

Mentioned as a Collegiata in 1190 and as a church in 1461, it was built close to the ruins of the Florentine bishops' castle, that dominated the church itself. Positioned on a fascinating ridge, the church – recently restored – still keeps its Romanic structure: inside the church you can admire a beautiful painting of the Virgin Mary dating back to the end of the 14th century, attributed to Antonio Veneziano, school of Giotto.



14 PIEVECCHIA

On 8 June 1944, some Nazi soldiers shot here 14 people from Pontassieve, killing them all. The wall, by which they were fired upon, still presents the bullet holes together with some memorial plaques commemorating their innocent deaths. Following this massacre, the Municipality of Pontassieve was awarded the bronze medal for civil rights.



15 SANT'EUSTACHIO IN ACONE CHURCH

The church is also mentioned with the name "Sant'Eustachio in Jerusalem", it was completely rebuilt by Cosimo II Medici in 1552 not far away from the ruins of the previous building, according to an inscription carved in a stone on the front of the church. The present building has a single nave plan, covered by a barrel vault ceiling with late baroque decorations.



16 SANTA BRIGIDA CHURCH

According to tradition, the church stands on the cave where St. Brigida lived as a hermit in the 10th century. The building was renovated in the 14th century and, as from 1686, it was restored and enlarged. In 1938 the apse was enlarged with a neo Romanic appendix.



17 SAN MARTINO A MOLINO DEL PIANO CHURCH

Mentioned from the 15th century it was erected beside a road leading to the Torre a Decima castle. The original building was rebuilt towards the end of the eighteenth century keeping the original octagonal plan and an elegant perch supported by columns in classical style. A painting by the Pontassieve painter Massimo Cantini can be appreciated in the church apse.



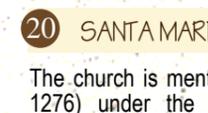
18 MONTEBONELLO TOWER

The tower is the only element left of an old castle already mentioned in documents of the 11th century. The tall tower was the donjon of the medieval building; today it stands out on the valley and is surrounded by houses that form a little village.



19 SANTA MARIA IN ACONE CHURCH

The present building, completely renovated, has no signs of its original Romanic structure, apart from some parts in stone. Very interesting is a fragment in sandstone on the front of the building on the right side of the church.



20 SANTA MARIA IN FORNELLO CHURCH

The church is mentioned in the "Decima" (year 1276) under the name *Sanctae mariae ad Furniculum*. Placed on the southern side of Monte di Croce, the church was property of the Guidi family, first, and of the Florentine Archbishop, then. It was consecrated on 15. August 1398, as mentioned on a headstone inside the church and completely restored in 1702 with the presbytery.



21 MONTE GIOVI PARK

The park lays on the slopes of Monte Giovi and is dedicated to the partisan Resistance in World War two. Between 1943 and 1944 it was the gathering of those who fought Nazis and Fascists. Annually in July the park, with its monuments and symbols of historical Memory, becomes the theatre of the "Festival of the Partisans and of Youth".