



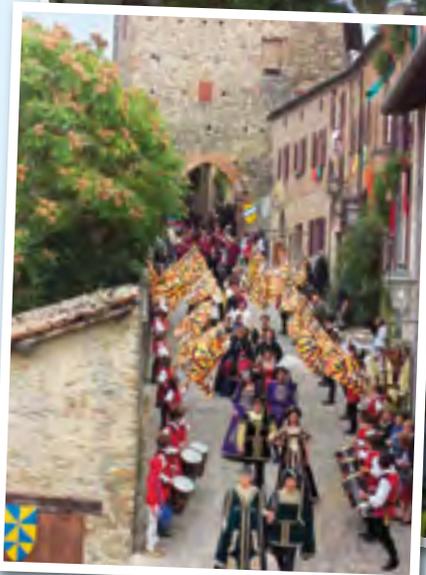
Savignano

sul Panaro

Guide to the Old Village

SAVIGNANO SUL PANARO

Where the last heights of the Apennines decline towards the Modena plain, where among rich fruit trees and thick woods the Panaro river finds its way out into the valley, there rises on a verdant hill the ancient village of Savignano, one of the most suggestive medieval centres of Emilia-Romagna region. Gentle hills full of vineyards and oak trees surround from below the old castle. The beauty of the cherry trees coloured in white and pink when their flowers blossom is unrivalled. In a land of ancient agricultural traditions, Savignano can boast excellent products: from cherries to plums and pears, up to a wine production which was already well-known around the year One thousand. Witness to this are the abundant requests of the Savignano *Bruschetto* wine by bishops and abbots of that time, by armed men, and by the great Countess Matilde of Canossa herself. Nowadays in the territory of Savignano there are eleven DOC (Controlled Origin Denomination) wines. The striking agricultural inclination of Savignano is strengthened up by the fact that the territory of its municipality is included in the prestigious Consortiums for the protection of the Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, the Modena Raw Ham or prosciutto and the typical Plum and Cherry of Vignola. But agriculture is not the only output: in the flat area of the village a remarkable impulse has been given to the small industry, craftsmanship and the tertiary sector. Savignano is a village rich in culture and history. It is famous for its amazing archaeological and paleontological finds that have been going on with no interruptions since the second half of the 19th century until now. They are much talked about and keep on giving rise to widespread and ever increasing interest. Among the most significant finds there is the Savi-



gnano Elephant, a female specimen that lived nearly two million years ago, the very famous little statue of Venus that experts think dates back to the Upper Palaeolithic (nearly 30,000 years ago), and one of the most beautiful relics in the Modena district as a whole: the Attic amphora depicted in black found in Pontalto area. The territory is crossed by the old Roman Road now called *Via Claudia* which replaces a prehistoric convoy road. During the centuries the Neolithic, Villanovan, Etruscan, Celtic, Roman and Lombard cultures were established in this territory to witness the healthiness and prosperity of these enviable lands particularly favourable to the human presence. Thanks to the archaeological and numismatic finds by Arsenio Crespellani and subsequently by Benedetto Benedetti and by the Superintendence for the Archaeological Works of the Emilia-Romagna region, lithic relics and documents of remarkable relevance have been brought to light in the Savignano area: from the remnants of a Neolithic village in Doccia, to the bronze boards of the Mombrina farm, from the Villanovan necropolis of St. Anastasio up to the presence of some villas foundations of Roman times and a Late Roman Empire necropolis with Lombard tombs. The Savignano Court originated during the late Roman times from a villa nucleus subsequently fortified by the Longobards and then conquered and widened by the Franks. From a diploma of the year 1025 we learn this villa had been bequeathed, after the Longobards' defeat, to the Church of Modena by Pipino, son of Charlemagne, who was King of Italy from 781 to 810. The old Savignano Court is also witnessed in a decree of the year 855 issued by the emperor Ludovico II. The Savignano Castle is named for the first time in a parchment paper of the year 1026.

A SMALL GUIDE TO THE OLD VILLAGE

The structure and signs brought about by historical, political and social vicissitudes taking place all along the centuries give the **Old Village** its present look. The village has been brought back



to its ancient beauty thanks to a clever intervention of restoration carried out in the 80's and 90's. Nowadays it is one of the most beautiful and representative villages in the Province of Modena and of the entire Emilia-Romagna region. "Savignano castle was born as a fortress, a keep to guard the lands along the banks of the river Panaro and for centuries it worked as such". With these words Sir Franco Mantovi describes the role and the function of a castle which was contended over and over again all along its history by Bologna and Modena. It was always in between until peace was reached starting from the year 1360 when it became the property of the Este Family. The urban scheme of the medieval village spreads out with some buildings of no particular value and no peculiar style, nonetheless it has an important historical and typological value.

Zanantoni Square, the former Garibaldi Square, is divided into two sections: the upper part is surrounded by a stone wall, and the lower part included the Castle Mound up to 1922.

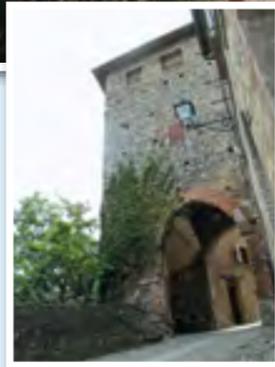


St. Rocco's Oratory was built in 1631 as thanksgiving after escaping the danger of the pest in the year 1630 of which we are reminded by the Italian writer Manzoni. It was restored during the last century in the 70's.

Arsenio Crespellani Street leads to the castle and is paved with pebbles from the river; inside the old walls, the street winds through the vil-



lage up to the Parochial Church. In ancient times the main gate tower leading to the village had a draw bridge. In the middle of the castle tower itself there is a niche with a **Madonna with Child** inside, the work by some Bologna School Master dating back to the 17th century. On the right you can get a glimpse of some relics of a World War I Memorial. This is the work by a sculptor from Savignano called Giuseppe Graziosi. As you keep on going along Crespellani Street, before you reach the well ascribed to the painter **Ugo Lucerni**, you come across a small recess with a dwelling which used to be an Oratory devoted to the Saints Antonio and Thomas. On the right unfolds **Paolo Pallotti Street** with very old restored houses that go on lining the old defensive walls. The building on the left, rebuilt in the 80's, is called **Matilde's House**, as a legend, for which there has never been any evidence, goes that the Countess Matilde from Canossa was living there time and again. The building complex ends up with the keep named **The Chaplain Tower**, one of the keeps that used to guard the old walls. As you go along Crespellani Street you come across an imposing structure called **The Captain's or the Bishop's House**. Inside there are some frescos and one of them depicts the coat of arms of the Contrari Family who dominated and ruled the village with their Signoria between 1400 and the first half of 1500. **The gate tower** of the second vault is a very old tower as you can see from the river pebbles it was built with. It is the keep leading to the darkest part of the Castle and it was also built to guard it.



lage up to the Parochial Church. In ancient times the main gate tower leading to the village had a draw bridge. In the middle of the castle tower itself there is a niche with a **Madonna with Child** inside, the work by some Bologna School Master dating back to the 17th century. On the right you can get a glimpse of some relics of a World War I Memorial. This is the work by a sculptor from Savignano called Giuseppe Graziosi. As you keep on going along Crespellani Street, before you reach the well ascribed to the painter **Ugo Lucerni**, you come across a small recess with a dwelling which used to be an Oratory devoted to the Saints Antonio and Thomas. On the right unfolds **Paolo Pallotti Street** with very old restored houses that go on lining the old defensive walls. The building on the left, rebuilt in the 80's, is called **Matilde's House**, as a legend, for which there has never been any evidence, goes that the Countess Matilde from Canossa was living there time and again. The building complex ends up with the keep named **The Chaplain Tower**, one of the keeps that used to guard the old walls. As you go along Crespellani Street you come across an imposing structure called **The Captain's or the Bishop's House**. Inside there are some frescos and one of them depicts the coat of arms of the Contrari Family who dominated and ruled the village with their Signoria between 1400 and the first half of 1500. **The gate tower** of the second vault is a very old tower as you can see from the river pebbles it was built with. It is the keep leading to the darkest part of the Castle and it was also built to guard it.

Family who dominated and ruled the village with their Signoria between 1400 and the first half of 1500.

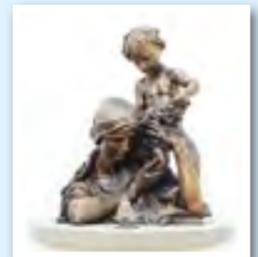
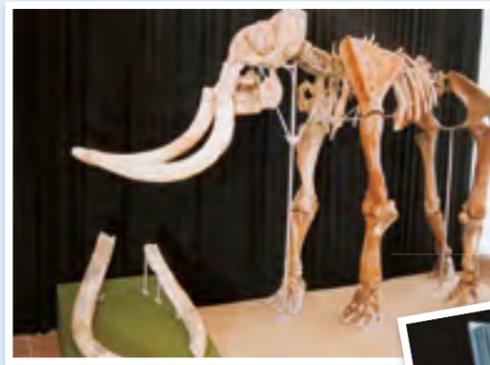
The gate tower of the second vault is a very old tower as you can see from the river pebbles it was built with. It is the keep leading to the darkest part of the Castle and it was also built to guard it.



rises the **Parochial Church** devoted to Our Lady St. Mary. The church underwent reconstruction between 1746 and 1750, and the old church, of which there is evidence in some documents dating back to 1027 and 1033, was so replaced. An extensive restoration of the frescos inside the Parochial Church has been carried out recently, thus giving it back its former beauty.

The small cemetery located where the church square is now was transferred at the beginning of the 19th century to Borgo S. Giovanni district, and the works to build the new bell tower started. This was meant to replace the old bell tower situated on the south-east side of the church. The new tower, completed in 1813, was built with materials taken from the old walls exception made for the spire built with brickwork. Some remnants of a 17th century clock can still be seen on the Northern side of the building.

Three works of art still unpublished by Giuseppe Graziosi are a feature of the Old Village: **The Redeemer** made of bronze on his family gravestone, the **World War I Memorial** which is today located in the area in front of the cemetery, and inside the Parochial Church the **Lamented Dead Christ**. In the tiny centre called Doccia, near the Town Hall, you can admire two marble sculptures. They are the work by **Antonio Sgroi** from Savignano. One is situated in Falcone Square, and one in the small park in Gramsci Alley to witness, as an ideal continuity with Giuseppe Graziosi, the importance Savignano gives to art and culture.



USEFUL INFORMATION

The municipality of Savignano sul Panaro has a surface of 25.45 sq. Km and a population of about 9,500 inhabitants. It is located between the hill and the right bank of the river Panaro and its borders are: the municipality of S. Cesario on the north side, the municipalities of Bazzano, Monteveglio and Castello di Serravalle on the east, the municipalities of Guiglia and Marano on the south, and on the west side are the river Panaro and the municipalities of Vignola and Spilamberto. In the tiny centre of Doccia, in the rooms of the Civic Centre, there are two museums hosting the Savignano Venus and Elephant. On the hills surrounding the village, where the environment is characterised by thick vegetation, you can admire big size oak trees, some true and real green monuments that witness the environmental patrimony of a territory which was rich in woods until the first years of 20th century. Today the woodlands are quite reduced but some ultra-secular oak trees are still there and they can be seen by walking through the paths of the green itinerary called *The Oak Tree Road* which starts from the Old Village.

RENOWNED PEOPLE

Arsenio Crespellani (1828-1900), patriot, numismatist and archaeologist well known all over the country. The most important archaeological finds in the two provinces of Modena and Bologna are ascribed to him.

Giuseppe Graziosi (1879-1942), painter and sculptor. His works can be admired in several exhibition rooms and his monumental sculptures can be seen in various Italian and foreign cities. The town of Modena has devoted to him a gypsotheque. He is buried in the village cemetery of Savignano. **Evaristo Pancaldi** (1872-1950) canonical pioneer and reformer of sacred music in Modena. In 1900 he was assigned as director and master to the Chapel of the Cathedral in Modena.

HOW TO GET TO SAVIGNANO

From Bologna

S.S. (State Road) 569 Via Bazzanese
then Via Claudia
Towards Bologna to Vignola

From Modena

S.S. 623 Via Vignolese (Vignolese Road)
Towards Spilamberto-Vignola-Bologna

Motorway A1

Exit Modena Sud (South)
Towards Spilamberto-Vignola

Exit Bologna - Casalecchio
Towards Bazzano-Vignola

CAR PARKS FOR CARS AND COACHES

Entry to the Old Village
small square "Piazzetta della Pace"
(in front of the cemetery)

BY TRAIN FROM BOLOGNA STATION

Suburban Railway (Linea Suburbana)
Bologna/Vignola
from Bologna Main Railway Station, West
Section (Bologna Centrale, Piazzale Ovest)
Bicycle transport every day
if booked at 840151152

GUIDED TOURS

On request by booking at +39 059/731439
www.savignano.it



Paging and print

Tipolitografia FG - Savignano sul Panaro

Pictures

Antonio Frignani, Pier Giovanni Galesi, Lombardi e Pattelli, Eros Pancaldi, Marco Pancaldi, Mauro Soli, Maurizio Tedeschi, Massimo Trenti, Patrizia Zanetti.

Text

Giorgio Pancaldi, translated by Giuliano Rizzi