

**REGIONE
MARCHE**



THE COASTAL AND HILLTOP TOWNS OF LE MARCHE



Always changing the coastal landscape of the Marche appears, in its shapes and colours, from Gabicce Mare to San Benedetto del Tronto, and so able to amaze it is, with its white cliffs dropping into the blue of the Adriatic Sea, with the deep green of the smooth hills dotted with old villages, and the ochre of the so long sandy shores.

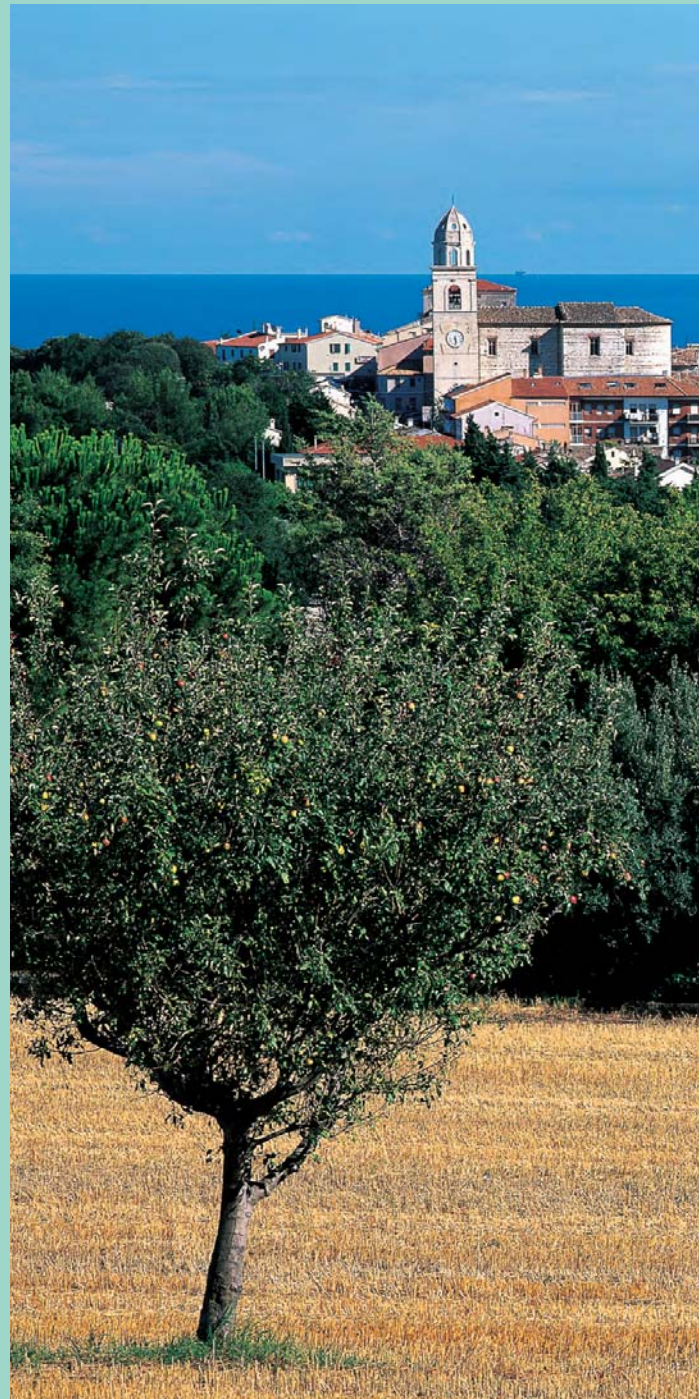
Likewise, in synch with the variety of the landscape, the urban structure of those many cities overlooking the sea changes as well: it is not about their being more or less ancient, since here history lives everywhere and they all share Greek, Roman, Picene or early-medieval origins, but it is a different distribution of spaces that favoured, territory permitting, a double function, the defence and the trade one.

So it may happen to spot out in many villages of the coast an “upper village”, well protected by the walls of a castle high up on a hill and first living settlement, and the “seacoast”, the flat area lying along the shore, only later used for living and commercial purpose.

This kind of composition pattern is typical of the medieval “*castra*” of **Gabicce Monte** (the ancient “*Castellum Ligabiti*”), **Casteldimezzo** and **Fiorenzuola di Focara**, in the province of Pesaro-Urbino, as well as those of **Falconara Alta**, north of Ancona and, south, of **Sirolo** and **Numana**, ancient walled cities, whose origins are lost in the mists of time; different are **Recanati**, **Potenza Picena** and **Sant’Elpidio a Mare**, important towns, fairly far from the sea, whose seacoasts, first simple coast moorings, then began the major towns of **Porto Recanati**, **Porto Potenza Picena** and **Porto Sant’Elpidio**. Emblematic is **Civitanova Alta**, with its suggestive walled village, dominating the sea, while the nearby **Porto San Giorgio**, the ancient “*Navale Firmanorum*”, has an upstream part, the *Castello* quarter and the *Fortress* and, past the highway, the seacoast; in the nearby stands the splendid **Torre di Palme** castle, clinging on a rock dropping into the sea. Then here are other cities of the Piceno area: **Cupra Marittima** and **Marano**, **Grottammare** and *Grottammare Alta*, then again **San Benedetto del Tronto** with its observation deck, where the *Tower of Gualtieri* stands over.

Easy to guess the reasons behind this kind of urban development, in a land, as the coast of the Marche, that for ages has been the scene of pirates’ forays: Turks, Saracens, Uscocchi, Narentani and Barbary corsairs.

Fancy their presence among the families on the coast cities was so



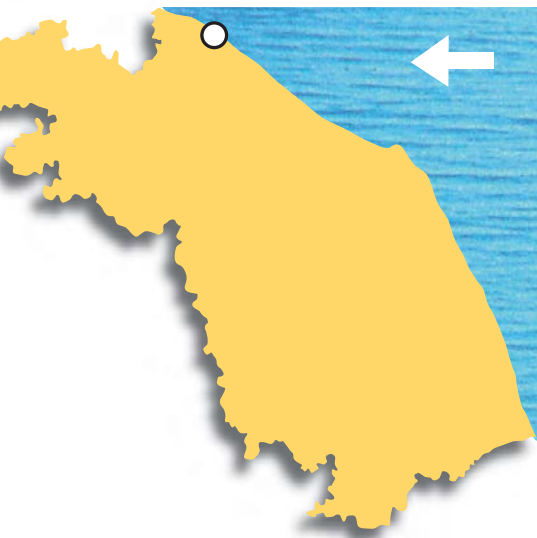


UPPER VILLAGES ABOVE THE SEA



looming that, in the saying of the *Rosary*, besides the request for protection “from the evil”, they added the one from “the Moor landing on the seacoast”.

In order to get defended against such dreadful enemies, in the 18th century the seacoast of the Marche was provided with around 60 look-out towers, one every 3 km, able to raise the alarm with the smoke in daylight and at night by the fire, (to have an idea of the speed in the delivery of messages, think that the time to pick out a sighting from Ancona to Venice was about three hours). What remains of such a complex and branched communication system, is the *Tower of Montignano*, (notice the toponym “mons ignis”, meaning the mountain of fire) south of Senigallia, then the *Tower of Portonovo*, in the homonymous bay south of Ancona and the so called *Tower Guelfa*, at the mouth of the river Tronto in Porto d’Ascoli; part of the integrated compound were also the *Tower of S. Andrea* in Cupra Marittima, the *Castle Tower* in Grottammare and the *Tower of Gualtieri* in San Benedetto del Tronto. No more pirates nowadays, but their presence is easy to be felt, wandering around those alleys and palaces of the old upper villages above the sea, as silent spectators of a page of history still able to evoke vivid suggestions and unforgettable emotions.



GABICCE MONTE GABICCE MARE

“... here in our land we have countless kinds of legumes and wheat, flowers, violets and thousands of fragrant fruits; plenty of popular and healing herbs, as many as you can number. Here around in our villages, there are places whose beauty, fertility, clearness and richness are equal to the Averno and the Benaco...”

Veronica Coradella Countess of the Gabizze (1549)

Altitude: 11/144 m a.s.l.

Inhabitants: 5.356

The historical roots of this suggestive place are all linked to the old village of Gabicce Monte, rising at 150 m above sea level, and whose original name *Castrum Ligabicij* o *Ligabitii* seems to derive from the Lord Ligabitio, the feudatory controlling its lots at the end of the 10th century. The name Gabicce could be traced back to the activity once carried out by the dwellers, mainly devoted to agriculture and breeding: from here comes “legabecchi”, billygoats breeders.

In 909 already, it is attested the existence of a parish community around the *Church of S. Ermete*, still now at the city gates. To the same age should date back the city walls, since in a papal bull dated 998, the place is called *Castellum Ligabitii*.





Down the centuries, in the area with its castle, become City at the beginning of the 13th century, the domination followed domination, starting from the Archbishop of Ravenna then the Malatesta, the Sforza, the Montefeltro and Della Rovere families, and the Papal State. Strictly linked to Pesaro until 1539, the Castle was then granted as fiefdom to Orazio Floridi of Fano. Many have tried to locate traces of the Castle of Gabicce, discovering some parts of the walls and its gate topped

with a bell tower: unfortunately from the 40s on, everything has got lost. The village economy, traditionally based on agriculture (corn, forage and vines above all) and fishing, underwent a radical change in those years before World War II when, seen the considerable increase of the population, they decide in favour of the flat area where Gabicce Mare then developed. Despite the moving of the Town Hall to Gabicce Mare in 1942, Gabicce Monte up to today, still holds the folk memory in itself. You can start sightseeing, from the *Piazza* dedicated to *Valbruna*, the legendary town that all along inhabitants have believed as sunken off the natural *Bay of Vallugola*, where today rises an old nice marina, already operating at the time of the Greek coasting. Mysterious events, stirring stories have livened up the collective imagination about the lost city, whose myth of *Atlantis of the Adriatic* was strengthened by the archaeological finds accidentally discovered into the fishing nets. Do not miss the *Church of S. Ermete*, an ancient the *Madonna of the Milk* and a valuable wooden *Crucifix*. Gabicce is also home of the excellent ceramist *Girolamo Lanfranco*, operating in Pesaro together with his son *Giacomo* from 1530 to 1590, so bound

to the land to sign as “*Mastro Girolamo delle Gabicce*”. Today **Gabicce Mare** is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Marche region, with more than 100 hotels. Widely known for its sandy shore, its excellent fish restaurants and its colourful nightlife, it shows a suggestive scenic road stretching along the windy coast, from where you can enjoy a wonderful glimpse in a sheer drop onto the sea. Nature lovers will find an uncontaminated setting, so evocative, as the *Monte S. Bartolo*, under the protection of the homonymous *Regional Park*, offering amazing routes both for those keen on hiking and mountain bike, along fascinating ways so rich in breathtaking views. For yachtsmen and see lovers as well, it is recommended the tiny and cosy marina of the *Vallugola Bay*, with its beautiful beach watched over by a cape. Thanks to the quality of life and the care for the nature conservancy, Gabicce Mare, more times down the years, has deserved the *Blue Flag of Europe*, an important award intended to those places favouring the environment quality and able to deliver qualified facilities to the visitor.



HILLY VILLAGES “TOWARDS” THE SEA

GRADARA

The Malatesta, the Sforza and the Della Rovere families were the Lords of this ancient settlement, 3 km far from the sea, set all within mighty walls with embattled towers at intervals. In the very heart of the village stands out the *Rocca*, ideal scene, according to the tradition, for that fatal kiss between Paolo and Francesca, so told in 5th canto of Dante’s *Inferno*.



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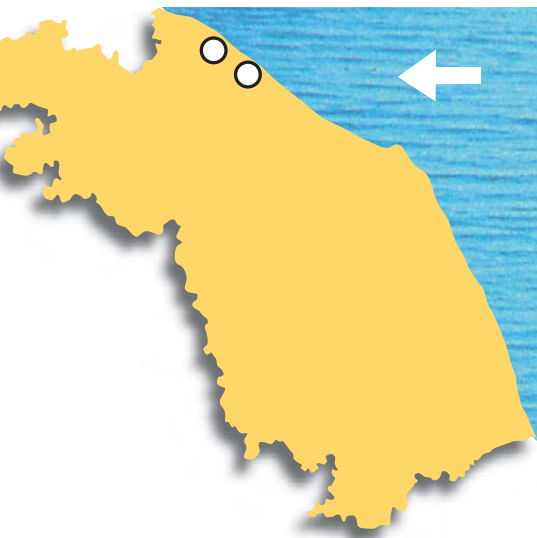
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EVENTS

Festival of the Park of S. Bartolo, end of May;
National painting contest, end of June; *Martedì dell'arte*, June to September;
La vetrina di Gabicce Monte, all Sundays from June to the end of august.

All summer long, several guided tours by sea in the *Regional Park of Monte San Bartolo* are arranged.



CASTELDIMEZZO FIORENZUOLA DI FOCARA (PESARO)

*“...poi farà sì ch’al vento di Focara
non sarà lor mestier voto né preco...”*

Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia, Inferno*, Canto XXVIII, vv. 89-90

Altitude of Casteldimezzo: 197 m a.s.l.

Altitude of Fiorenzuola di Focara: 177 m a.s.l.

High wind and rough sea were the marks of these small villages, just a few km from Pesaro, high up in a steep rock dropping sheer into the sea, where it took “vows and prayers” to escape the tempests.

These old villages, together with the nearby splendid Gradara with its mighty walls and Granarola, represent the four castles built, between the 10th and the 13th century, in order to create an organic system of defence and control of the Siligata pass, important for the defence of Pesaro, beautiful coastal town often awarded the *Blue Flag of Europe*. **Casteldimezzo**, once called Gaiola, Galliola and Gazoletto, since the 14th century has taken the current name, suggesting the location in-between Gabicce and Fiorenzuola. Thanks to its easily defensible position and to the presence of the nearby Port of Vallugola, the castle was used as residence for “*rusticale dimora*” (rural relief), by the Archbishops of Ravenna and as established see of the Viscount, their representative.



In 1356, it went to the Malatesta family and then became property of the Sforza and Della Rovere families. Today, just few traces are left of the ancient mediaeval walls. Inside the *Church* dedicated to the *Saints Apollinare and Cristoforo*, dated back to the year One Thousand, but later rebuilt (the dedication recalls those awayback origins from Ravenna) stands a *Crucifix* dated 15th century, attributed to the Venetian Antonio Bonvesin and Jacobello del Fiore, discovered on the seashore, inside a large wooden case. The tradition wants it to be the core of a mysterious event: it was the year 1517 and as many as 7,000 “transmontane” enemies, in the pay of Lorenzo di Piero de Medici, beaten by Francesco Maria I Della Rovere, threateningly closed on *Castrum Medi* walls; but the frightening and expected looting of the city was escaped, thanks to the mercy granted to the terrified dwellers by the

Crucifix “from the sea”. Curious is also the story about the finding of the precious artefact: Casteldimezzo dwellers and those of the nearby Fiorenzuola, sighted a case lying on the shore at the foot of the cape and ended up scuffling and getting a beating to get hold of it. In the meanwhile the oxen carrying the load, tired of the long fight, decided to make for the way to Casteldimezzo, leaving them all dumbfounded.

Moving along the *Panoramica road*, whose gentle hairpin bends follow the smoothness of the hill and of the coastline overhanging in the Adriatic Sea, within a wonderful environment protected by the *Regional Natural Park of Monte San Bartolo*, you go past the picturesque “*Picco del diavolo*” (*Peak of the Devil*), dangling in space, and soon you reach **Fiorenzuola di Focara**, the old *Castrum Florentii* that, harshly disputed by the Churches of Ravenna and Pesaro, ended up

being taken over by City of Pesaro, definitively in the 13th century.

More times damaged by earthquakes, of the castle are just left the front gate, the belfry and the suggestive ruins of the *Church of S. Andrea* (the bell tower and the parsonage).

Past the gate, the narrow streets of the village draw concentric semicircles leading to the sheer space over the cliff to then go up again towards the old church.

Many of the old mediaeval houses have survived up to nowadays, but just as much were swallowed by the sea, which keeps on wearing away the bottom of the rock. The village, originally named just Fiorenzuola, in 1889 took the name of “Focara”, place-name due to the fires lighted to help sailors to locate the position of the cape, well known since the old times, for its headwinds or for the presence of “fornacelle” (small kilns), where they fired bricks and earthenware.

HILLY VILLAGES “TOWARDS” THE SEA

NOVILARA and CANDELARA (Pesaro)

Baldassarre Castiglione, the author of “*Il Cortegiano*”, appointed Lord of the Castle of Novilara, in 1513 by the Duke Francesco Maria I Della Rovere, used these words to describe the area around his castle “*bonissimo aere, bonissima vista da terra e da mare...fruttifero al possibile*” (“excellent area, excellent sea and land view... very fructiferous”). Turning into the *Strada dei Colli* in Pesaro and past the historic village of **Trebbiantico**, you soon reach **Novilara** where taking a walk along the walls, you can still enjoy the open view (once rich in woods and waters) that astonished the great man of letters. The defence of the place was assured by its position on top of the hill, optimal to catch sight of any boat trying to sail up to the Fosso Sejore, whose landing, now totally filled in, was navigable almost up to the village. The fame of the village is linked to the finds of the so called “civilization novilarese” (8th-6th century b.C.) dug up in a *necropolis* of the Piceno and now shown in the *Museum Oliveriano* in Pesaro. Somewhere around, high up in a hill and set within the walls, rises **Candelara**, in whose castle the Emperor Federico Barbarossa took refuge in 1176 after the setback of Legnano; its later history is then linked to the Malatesta Family. Highly interesting is the whole defensive system (gate, walling, pieces of ordnance) of which the house-walls on the left of the front are still intact, including also a kiln and a clock with its original clockwork. Worth a visit is the tiny *Church of S. Giovanni* and the old *Pieve* and the Gothic *Church of S. Maria of the Arzilla*.

MONDOLFO and MAROTTA

The historic hilly village of **Mondolfo** with its bathing resort **Marotta**, represents a typical example of “two in one”, sign of the synthesis and mix of two cultures, the land and the sea one. Amazing view point onto the sea, the old village keeps the imposing *Church of S. Agostino* with its cloister, the Romanesque *Church of S. Gervasio* and the *Sanctuary of the Madonna delle Grotte*, swathed in the green pinewood. In the renowned bathing resort of Marotta still so alive is the devotion to the local traditions, respecting the habits of the sea life, as for example, the fishing with the “*tratta*”, still carried on with devotion and pride.



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EVENTS

Gastronomy week-ends,
spring and fall;

Panorami di cultura,

all year long;

Itinerari Extravaganti,

April-June September-

November;

International New Film

Festival, June;

Burattini Opera Festival, July;

Mare Magnum, July;

Metti una sera a... Villa

Caprile, July;

En attendant Rossini,

July- August;

Rossini Opera Festival,

July- August;

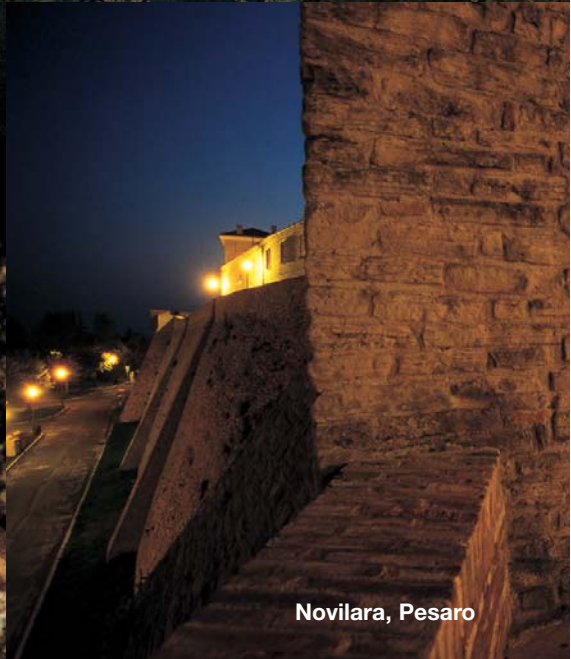
Sipario d'estate, July- August;

National Drama Festival,

September-October.



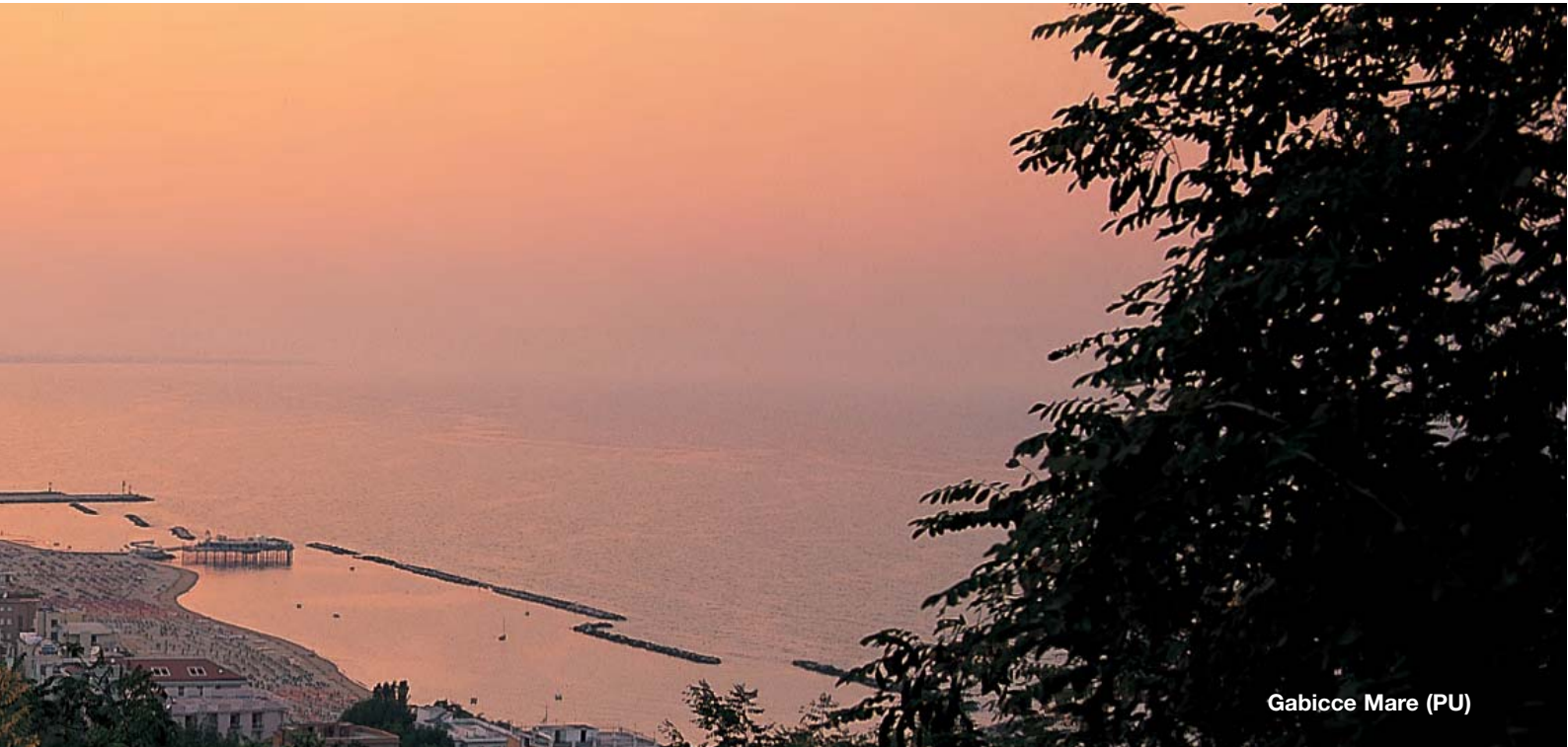
Gradara (PU)



Novilara, Pesaro



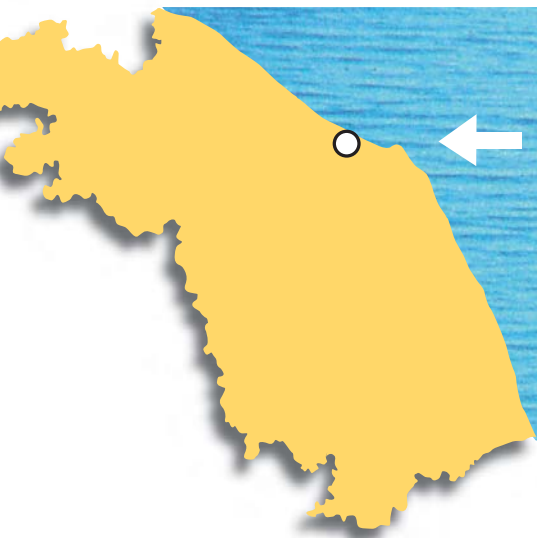
Candelara, Pesaro



Gabicce Mare (PU)



Fiorenzuola di Focara, Pesaro



FALCONARA ALTA FALCONARA MARITTIMA

“... it is a vast and beautiful castle, its name coming from how they call it, Falcone Mountain...”

Bartolomeo Alfeo, *Gli annali anconetani*

Altitude: 5/118 m a.s.l.

Inhabitants: 28.349

Falconara Alta, the original core of Falconara Marittima, rises at about 2 km inland, with a panoramic position on the *Valley of the Esino* and the Adriatic Sea. The place was a Roman colony, as proved by the large underground cistern of the 1st century b.C., kept underground in a place called *Il Tesoro*.

Around the year One thousand, it is proved the presence of a small rural community, subject to a Lord and settled according to the court economy rules. According to the tradition, founders of the castle were the Cortesi Family, descendant of a Germanic “*condottiere*” arrived in Italy with Belisario in the 6th century, at the time of the wars between the Byzantines and the Goths, who conquered several lands around Ancona, and later built the *castles of Varano and Sirolo* as well (and maybe also the *Churches of S. Pietro and S. Maria of Portonovo* on the Conero Mountain).

In 1353 “*The Big Company of Fra’ Moriale*”, so well known for its fierce, plundered the city; then the annexation to Ancona.



Significant for the development and the expansion of the seaside village and the steady decline of the rural one, was the opening of the railway line Rimini-Ancona and the side one Falconara-Orte. Debated question is the origin of the name Falconara, maybe coming from a certain Falcone, condottiere of the Senoni Gauls, or from the crowned falcon on the Cortesi Counts' family coat of arms.

In the centre of **Falconara Alta** stands the mediaeval *Church of S. Maria delle Grazie* with its simple Gothic portal; lovers of arts cannot miss a visit to the frescos in the *Church of S. Maria della Misericordia* in Castelferretti, built in the early 15th century thanks to the Ferretti Family, as thanksgiving to the Virgin after an epidemic of plague. Highly interesting is the *Francescana and Picena Library*, held on to the *Convent of Frati Minori of Falconara*, one and only in the world for its collection of as many as 170 exemplars of the *San Francesco's Fioretti*.

In the area of Falconara four Castles stand out: besides the *Castle of Falconara Alta*, in whose vaults is hosted the interesting *Museum of the Resistenza*, there are the *Castle of Castelferretti*, built in 1300 by Francesco Ferretti, who turned an old watchtower into a walled place, the *Castle of Barcaglione*, imposing fortress of the 11th century, of which just part of the donjon is now left, and the important *Castle of Priora Fortress*, all along disputed by Jesi and Ancona for its appealing position between the Esino and the Adriatic Sea, once feeding its defensive moat. The castle was widely reworked in the 18th century: major were the works out-

side and in the interior equipped as mansion, as the adding of the Vanvitelli portal with a drawbridge and sentry boxes on the southern curtain or the construction of the family chapel in the bailey.

Today **Falconara Marittima** is a modern industrial and sea resort, characterized by its many Liberty style villas both on the hills and on the seafront, and that is worth a visit for its scenic location and for its smooth sandy beach, provided with all facilities making it a first class resort.

For those keen on sports, here you can go sailing, surfing, you can play beach volley, beach soccer, and at night, for everybody lots of fun with dancing and entertainment in the kiosks by the shore. Nature lovers should not miss a tour along the bank of the Esino river,



so rich in particular arboreal and faunal species, such as foxes, badgers, weasels, dormice and a varied bird life. Particularly nice is also the quite short route (600 m) going from the *Aula Verde* to the ruins of the "*Liscia*", once used for the control of waters. Interesting is the historic *Molino Santinelli*. Right of the mouth of the river stretches the *Park of Cormorano*, wide green area often used for concerts and events. A long bikeway borders the Esino river joining Chiaravalle and *Rocca Priora*.

If you wish a very special day, a must is a stop (6 km from the centre, in Barcaglione) at the *Zoo Park "Paese dei bimbi"*, the animals kingdom, hosted in these 60,000 sm, in the highest respect of their natural habitat.



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EVENTS

Festival of ice-cream, June;
Esinofestival, music show, theatre and tours along the river, July;
Beer Festival, July;
Palio dei quattro castelli, with shows, games and competitions, first week-end of August;
Musica in Villa, enjoyable culture, poetry and music nights, all summer long, in the gardens of some mansions, as Villa Barbaresi (1761), Villa Terni (1760) and Villa Montedomini (1505), created by the Ferretti Family on top of the hill soaring above Castelferretti, joined by a suggestive 105 step stairway;
Festa del Mare, shows, music and the 15th of August, and a lively parade of boats.

HILLY VILLAGES "TOWARDS" THE SEA

The small village of **Scapezzano**, once Castle of **Senigallia**, still keeps part of the medieval city walls, with its towers and offers a beautiful view on the nearby Adriatic Sea. An example of "gemination backward", from the seacoast to the village, is **Montemarciano**, venue of a medieval castle, destroyed in 1578, already vicariate of the Malatesta and the Piccolomini Families. The village was founded by the dwellers of the coast, escaped to the terrifying fire started by the Barbarians in the 5th century, an then populated by a colony of Dalmatians called by the Duke of Urbino to drain the salt pits south of Senigallia. Worth a visit is the *Parrocchiale of S. Pietro Apostolo* and the historic "*Vittorio Alfieri*" Theatre. Ancient is the origin of **Marina di Montemarciano**, better known as "*Casa bruciate*" (burnt houses), to recall the above mentioned fire, likely venue of a roman settlement, used throughout the centuries as changeover point along the coast way, function still kept later on, as shown by the significant remains of the 15th century *Mandracchio*, old postal station and storehouse, along the S.S. 16 highway.

SIROLO

"The Marche... are the region where you can meet with the Adriatic. This small special sea, here spreads out more intimate, free and silent, with its unusual colours making it different from all other seas on earth. I'm talking about those cold greens, translucent greys, red-streaked blues, recalling precious stones and marbles..."

Guido Piovene, *Viaggio in Italia*, 1957

Altitude: 125 m a.s.l.

Inhabitants: 3.313

Lain upon a shelf of the south slope of the Conero Mountain, dropping sheer into the clear sea, a short way to enchanting beaches, Sirolo shows a mediaeval wattle structure.

The finds in Monte Colombo area (now kept in the *Antiquarium* of Numana) and going back to the Neolithic in particular, lead to think the area already inhabited in prehistoric age. Important Piceno centre as from the tombs discovered in 1949 in the *Town Hall*, it was during the Roman age an outbuilding of the town hall of *Umana*.



Goes back to the 560 the origin of the name, due to Sirio, a *condottiere* serving Belisario who, after the victorious war against the Goths in 550, was granted the fiefdom of the Conero where he then built a fortalice.

Ancient land of warriors, Sirolo is famous as an impregnable fortress, able to face the attacks thanks to its strong towers, its walls and its strategic position. In the 11th century it was fiefdom of the Cortesi Counts, nobles of French-German origin, who raised here a fortified castle and gave in 1038, to the Benedictine monks the *Badia*, on top of the Conero Mountain, today *Church of S. Pietro*. In 1225 the village passed under the rule of Ancona and then was annexed to Papal State territories, until the Unification of Italy. Deep in the uncontaminated nature of the *Regional Park of Monte Conero*, the old village of **Sirolo**, sunny and windy,

sweeping from the harsh and white cliffs of the Conero Mountain to the smooth seashores of the southern coast. Here stands the *Church of S. Nicolò* (1765), with its 15th century portal and the tall belfry, while not far stands the ex *Church of SS. Sacramento*, now become a tavern, whose portal shows an important relief of the 15th century portraying the *Madonna con Bambino*. Walking on you reach the *Church of S. Rosario* (built with reuse materials, including an *Arcangelo Gabriele*) dated Early Middle Ages, where it is treasured a painting by Pompeo Morganti from Fano. Inside the old city walls, including a strong donjon and two mediaeval arches, stands out the historic *Theatre Cortesi*, dedicated to the old Lords' family. In the immediate outskirts, worth a visit is the beautiful *Villa Vetta Marina*, that took the place of an ex Franciscan convent, of which

Romanic foundation, with its 18th century facade, a naive and two aisles on pillars and columns with valuable capitals. Of remarkable importance is the early discovery of the *Archaeological Area "I Pini"*, a necropolis of the Piceno, marked by several circle burials, as the rich "*Tomb of the Sirolo Queen*", buried with two carts (6th cent. b. C.), whose remains are kept in the *Antiquarium* of Numana. From the old centre, through the pathways, you can reach the wonderful beaches, so rich in bays, reefs and coves, whose beauty has been unanimously recognized and awarded the prestigious *Blue Flag of Europe*. Worth a mention are *Sassi Neri* and *San Michele* beaches, the Urbani one too, from the name of the homonymous cave. Noteworthy is the enchanting small beach of *Due Sorelle*, whose name recalls those two peculiar stately rocks facing the coast.



is placed between a sea full of fish (in its coat of arms appears a bass, the fish living in this stretch of sea) and the rolling hills of the countryside around, so rich in corn, vines (the excellent *Rosso Conero* is produced here) and olives.

In the plenty and lively alleys, once lived craftsmen, labourers and shopkeepers, as in the names of the streets, as the *vicolo (alley) dei ciabattini*, *vicolo degli armaioli* and *vicolo del cerusico*. The visit of the village can start from the *Via Italia* that leads you to the *Piazza Vittorio Veneto*, delightful deck where the view opens up to the sea,

just the belfry is left; nearby you can admire those huge elms planted, according to the tradition, by S. Francesco d'Assisi in 1215 (during a trip when he predicted the arrival, then occurred 79 years later, of the *Santa Casa of Loreto* in the Marche, prophecy then reported as acrostic in the word *Picenum: Portatur Iuxta Conerum Edicula Nazarenae Virginis Mariae*). Do not miss the suggestive *Theatre of the Cave*, made from a huge old abandoned quarry, that in summer offers unforgettable shows under the Conero stars. On the edge of the Conero mountain rises the *Badia of S. Pietro* of



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EVENTS

Handicraft market,
all friday of july and August.



NUMANA

*“Numana a Siculis condita;
ab eisdem Colonia Ancona opposita
Promontorio Cumerio...”*

Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*

Altitude: 65 m a.s.l.

Inhabitants: 3.293

The ancient heart of Numana, old fishing village, clings on top of a hill, in the southern part of the Conero Mountain and offers a splendid view all over bays and coves of the coast beneath.

The place was already populated in the prehistory and since the 8th century b.C. it has had a significant function as harbour of the Piceni, quite used by the Greeks for the coasting trade. In the 6th-5th century b.C. Numana turned out to be an important and frequented call, as proved by the rich stock of Attic vases, in the over one thousand burials discovered in the necropolis placed on top of the hills, between the ditch of the Molini e the ditch of the Fonte. As the Romans conquered the Piceno,



the city was reduced to bondage, yet keeping some importance and autonomy.

In 558 it was devastated by the earthquake, but its decadence started around the year One thousand and got worse in the 14th century because of another earthquake (1292). Later bound to Ancona, in 1868 it took back its original name as modified into *Umana* in the Middle Ages.

The beauty of **Numana** lies in the magical marriage of the ancient town hung on to the Conero side and the amazing surrounding landscape of sea and hills. The village consists of three parts: *Numana Alta* on the utmost mountainside, wrapped by woodlands, *Numana Bassa* and its well known and equipped port, its beautiful fine pebbly beach and those typical restaurants and then *Marcelli*, the most modern area of the *Conero Riviera*, with its many holiday camps, residential complex and different accommodation facilities. Clean beaches, clear sea and tourist facilities of good level have made Numana and its port deserve the prestigious *Blue Flag of Europe*.

The visit to the city can start in the *Piazza del Santuario* where you can admire the former *Town Hall Palace*, a building dated 1773 once used as summer residence of the Archbishops of Ancona, and the modern *Sanctuary of the Crocifix* where it is treasured, besides some of Andrea Lilli's important works, also an adored cedarwood *Crucifix*, relevant sculpture of the Byzantine time, dated back to the 13th – 14th century, considered Saints Luca and Nicodemo's masterpiece by the



local tradition. Continuing towards the panoramic *Piazza Nuova*, you find a *font* (restored) representing what is left of an ancient Roman waterworks coming from the Conero, and the ruins of a Roman wall in *opus reticulatum*. In the nearby you cannot miss a visit to the *Antiquarium Statale* and its exhibition of a rich and well documented collection of finds, ranging from the civilization of the Piceno to the Roman age. Carrying on along the central *via Roma*, starting from the main piazza, you walk on, leaving on your left the

way that slopes downwards the beach of Numana Alta and, on the right, the stairway called "*la Costarella*" (in summer, venue of art exhibitions) leading to the beach of Numana Bassa and to its lively port. Shortly afterwards you reach the panoramic *Piazzetta della Torre*, onto the sea, with its view of the Conero cape on one side and on the other, of Loreto and Porto Recanati, where noteworthy are the remains of an ancient *Tower* fallen down in 1928, maybe part of the medieval city walls.

DISCOVERING SOME MORE

What is left of the ancient Numana founded by the Siculan over 2,000 years before Christ, are the necropolis of the Piceno village and poor remains of some buildings.

The rest of it might lie deep down the sea, as it seems proved by those ruins underwater in front of the port of Numana and by the discovery, few metres off the shore, of significant sculptures as the *Head of Warrior*, kept into the *Archaeological Museum* of Ancona.

With clear sea, old fishermen tell they saw walls and arcades underwater and still alive is the legend telling that in those stormy nights, you can hear strokes from the sunken bells.

The story tells it was a queen who, not properly welcome by *Numana the superb*, had the city razed to the ground, ordering to throw the rubble in the sea. Indeed, historically the destruction of the place is to be traced back to the earthquakes and seaquakes hitting the zone in 558 and 1292.



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EVENTS

The rite of Spring, end of March;
Market-exhibition of artistic handicraft, antiques and collectionism, the end of August;
Premio "Città di Numana", 2nd of August;
the Processione del Cristo Re, last Sunday of October.



Sirolo (AN)



Falconara Marittima (AN)



Marina di Montemarcano (AN)



Numana (AN)



Montignano, Senigallia (AN)



Riviera del Conero (AN)



Sirolo (AN)



CIVITANOVA ALTA CIVITANOVA MARCHE

“Sun! Sun! What a dazzling sun! All around shining in the place I reached: the sea was a vast silver sheet, the sky an infinite splendour above my head, an endless blue caress to the eye that, for the first time, had the earthly beauty revealed...”

Sibilla Aleramo, *Una donna*, 1906

Altitude: 3/155 m a.s.l.

Inhabitants: 38.299

Emblematic example of how the seacoast is so tied to the high village is Civitanova Marche, born upon the ruins of the Roman *Cluana* and called *Ripa* or *Castello di San Marone* from the name of the saint patron. The city is made of two clearly different centres: the *Upper town*, old mediaeval village, and the coastal built-up area. *Cluana*, probably founded by the Piceni in the 9th century b.C. and placed alongside the left bank of the river Chienti, (as shown by the many archaeological finds discovered) it was then destroyed following the crisis of the Roman Empire and the Barbaric invasions; the survivors found refuge in a village on top of the hill, the ancient *Cluentensis Vicus*, becoming so “*Civitas Nova*”, the new town, that is Civitanova. The *vicus* survived to the invasions of the 408 and the 413, then followed by the wars between the Goths, the Longobards and the Byzantines, and their forays, havoc and famine. Over the next centuries several dominions followed one another: the Church and the Da Varano da Camerino Family, the Malatesta, the Sforza and the Visconti Families, then the Cesarini from Rome.



Under the rule of the seignior of the Sforzas, in 1440 the Comacini carried out brand new “shoe” town walls, and the four towers defending the gates. In the meanwhile, in order to face the steady pirates’ forays and protect their trades, a fortress was built, then completed in 1475. Since 1551, when the town was made over by Pope Giulio the III to the Roman noble Giuliano Cesarini, a time of renaissance and urban renewal started: the new town walls were built as well as the Lords Palace and a new residence for the Magnificent Priors. Later on in the centuries, the deterioration of relationships between the communities of Civitanova Alta and Porto Civitanova, lead to the splitting in 1913. Today the two cities are joined again in one, called Civitanova Marche. The tour of **Civitanova Alta** can start from the walls of the castle with the four gates, (Girone, Mercato or of the Ponte, Sant’Angelo or Marina, Zoppa or San



Paolo), including the 15th century *Porta Marina*, marked by a cypress born within the embattled bar. Worth a visit is the *Palace of Delegazione* dated 1867, see of the *Archivio Storico Comunale*. In the nearby, within the ancient Collegiata area, stands the *Church of S. Paolo Apostolo* with its baptismal font dated 5th century and interesting paintings. Not faraway you can find and visit the 14th century *Church of S. Agostino* with its baroque interior together with an original Roman portal, lively and popular place in summer, thanks to the several concerts and art exhibitions, and the beautiful *Theatre Annibal Caro*, noble residence built in 1872 on the project of the engineer Prosperi, (its 1480 portal belonged to the *Cantucci Palace*), and inaugurated by the

famous dancer and choreographer from Civitanova, Enrico Cecchetti. In the central *Piazza della Libertà*, you can see the *Ducal Palace Cesarini Sforza*, of 14th century origin but fully revised in the 16th century, whose rich interior is decorated with frescos by Pellegrino Tibaldi. Not to be missed is the 14th century *Church of S. Francesco* (unchurched), with its valuable roman portal and the bell tower attributed to the venetian artist Marino di Marco Cedrino. Plenty are the noble residences, such as *Palace Sabatucci*, *Palace Ricci*, *Palace Centofiorini*, home of Enrico Cecchetti and of the great Annibal Caro, prestigious poet and translator of the *Eneide*, that now hosts the *Town Art Gallery “M. Moretti”*, holding paintings by Carrà, Morandi, De Chirico, Guttuso and Ligabue. Noteworthy is the historic Liberty style *Bus Station* (1900), rich in polychrome pottery and the *Museum of the Arts and popular Traditions* with its many manu-



factures from the rural tradition of the Marche, and, absolutely one of a kind, the *Historic Museum of the Trotto*, out of the built-up area.

Civitanova Marche, grown around the *Fortress* and upon the remains of the Roman Cluana, boasts the imposing *Palace Cesarini Sforza*, built in 1862 on a construction dated 16th century, and today see of the Municipality. Then you can see the *Public Gardens*, the Liberty houses in *Lido Cluana*, and the fish-monger’s shops. The north area of the city is characterized by all the trees of *Viale Vittorio Veneto* where the former *Casa del Balilla* stands, an interesting building planned in 1933 by Adalberto Libera, one of the masters of the Rationalism, now hosting the *City Library* and the *Theatre “E. Cecchetti”*.

The Church of S. Marone, of Roman hardcore but strongly reworked at the end of the 19th century, is in the homonymous quarter, an ancient roman settlement, as shown by the many finds cropping out in the area. The area of the port, attracting plenty of yachtsmen who can count on every kind of facilities and comforts, is the nerve centre of the town life as for fishing, industry, trade, handicraft and tourism. In summer, from here leaves the fast sea link by catamaran connecting to the Croatia. Civitanova is as well famous for its many factories and outlets of the most prestigious *griffes* in the footwear sector above all. Plenty are also the sporting facilities equipped for the most different sports, such as golf, horse riding and sailing. Enogastronomy means such a strong attraction as well, thanks to typical dishes as the *brodetto* or “*lo pulentò co’ li furbi e l’abbiti*”, that’s to say, the maize flour based dish dressed with octopus and chard sauce.



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EVENTS

Domus Antiqua, January and November; *Carnevale civitanovese*, February; *Market of artistic handicraft and antiques*, the fourth Sunday of every month, except July and August; *Festa del mare*, June; *Regata Italian Cup*, *Regate a Civitanova Marche*, July; “*Lo Vattajò*”, end of July; *Market-exhibition of artistic handicraft*, every saturday in July and August; *Sagra del pesce*, August; *Spettacolo pirotecnico sul mare*, the 14th of August; *Cartacanta, national market-exhibition*, October; *Civitanova Danza*, July, an event not to be missed because of the all year long wide and articulated project this town has devoted to this discipline; *Civitanova Arte*, July-August; *Season of the Theatre Rossini e of the Theatre “A. Caro”*.

HILLY VILLAGES “TOWARDS” THE SEA

A particular history is linked to the origin of the bathing resorts of Porto Recanati and Porto Potenza Picena, both risen as coast mooring for Recanati and Potenza Picena, important municipalities with notable urban centres, that, being fairly far from the coast, felt the need of having a port of call on the Adriatic seacoast. This kind of process unites lots of seacoasts and is proof of the progressive approach to the sea coast by the *métayer* man of the Marche. About 13 km separate the evocative town of **Recanati**, where all around recalls those Giacomo Leopardi's poems, from the long seashore of **Porto Recanati**, better known as “the suite of the Riviera”. The historic sea village developed all around the 15th century *Castle Svevo*, up to reach the current large dimensions; efficient tourist facilities set among the pinewoods and the picturesque streets, a top quality eno-gastronomy, boasting a delicious *brodetto* and a rich cultural scenery with shows and art exhibitions, make this town one of the favourite destinations as for the sea tourism.

Porto Potenza Picena is an hamlet of **Potenza Picena**, just 8 km far from it and noble city rich in palaces, churches and ancient traditions (as damasks and brocades woven by the Nuns of the Addolorata). The peaceful bathing resort hosts a lively Sport Centre and a marina, ideal for those keen on sailing and water sports. Interesting, on the naturalistic side, the area of the brine water small lakes. Do not miss the *Villa Buonaccorsi* and its wonderful Italian garden enriched with fountains and waterplays and tiny lakes, niches and wonderful statues.



Recanati (MC)



Potenza Picena (MC)



Civitanova Alta (MC)



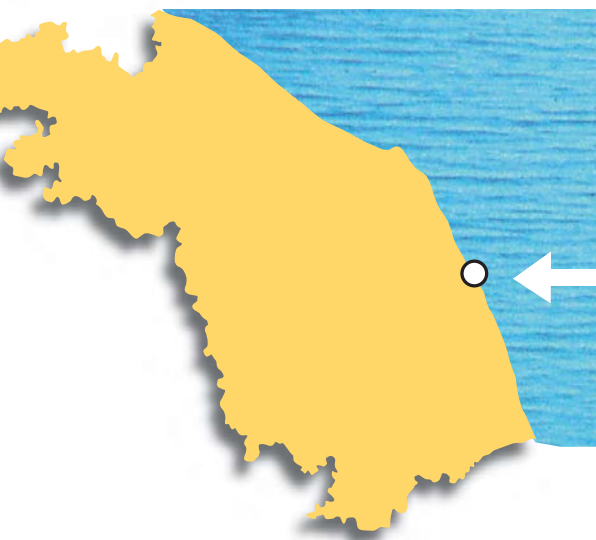
Potenza Picena (MC)



Porto Recanati (MC)



Porto Recanati (MC)



TORRE DI PALME (FERMO)

"The sea is already East. The wind from the South-East blows straight from Greece, all full of that ancient land's scents. In the tartanes full sails the Levant beats: yellow or red, often striped with large dark bands, they do take on more lively and flaming colours on this lapis lazuli blanket..."

Gabriel Faure, *Italian pilgrimages*.

Altitude: 120 m a.s.l.

Inhabitants: 303

The suggestive centre of Torre di Palme is an extraordinary panoramic balcony on top of a hill dominating the coast and the Adriatic Sea. The village belongs to the group of *Castles* of the Fermo area, grouped according to their location, into sea, mountain and middle ones: those above the sea rise up on top of the hills and they usually have a urban structure of elliptic or ship shape (with east-west axis) and surrounded by walls opened by gates "*da Sole*" or "*da Bora*".

The built-up area was born in the Middle Ages as a fortified protection of the old port of call of the Roman city of *Palma*, in order to get it defended from the frequent pirates' forays. The coast area between the rivers Tesino and Chienti in the old maps of the area named "*Agro Palmense*", had its harbour in the ancient *Palma* in *Agro Piceno*, mentioned by the Latin writer Plinio the Old in relation to the production of the highly fine wine *Palmense*.



Stately mediaeval castle, provided with a solid defensive system, Torre di Palme owes to the Augustinian religious movement the creation of most of the oldest core of the village.

Proud of its independence, the village was often engaged in long fights



inside, not to be missed is a painting by Vincenzo Pagani (1578) and an imposing polyptyc by Vittore Crivelli, stolen in 1972 and soon after retrieved (except for three compartments of the predella), with its original carved wood frame of bright enamelled

swathed into the green of a park, using the water *Palmense of the Piceno*, a bicarbonate-alkaline medium-mineral, recommended for the treatment of the metabolism diseases.



against the City of Fermo; its autonomy came to an end in 1861, when it became hamlet of Porto San Giorgio, and later it definitely ended up under the administration of Fermo, in 1878.

Torre di Palme stands out thanks to the preservation of its environment and to the uniformity in style of the Mediaeval and Renaissance building, points making it one of the most interesting centres of the region, despite its small dimensions.

The village is crossed, west to east, by *via Piave* that not only holds the most significant buildings of the old built-up area, but let you enjoy those urban glimpses where the tight lanes, with their typical fronts in terracotta blooming with geraniums, frame a wide view of the sea and the hills all around.

The tour of the village can start from the tiny *Church of S. Giovanni*, dating back to the year one thousand, made of ashlar and hanging small arches, inside of which you can admire frescos of the XV century; then there is the *Palazzo Priorale* with its round arch walled within the facade and a sail belfry and the gothic *Church of S. Agostino* (already belonging to the Eremitanis) with annexed convent, and their characteristic red “cotto” used in the beautiful gothic portal and in the rose window and the saddle facade:

colours, even brighter on that gold background. Walking along the main way you reach the *Church of S. Maria a Mare*, erected in the 12th century and later modified, in ashlar and “cotto”, whose bell tower is decorated with little intertwined arches and majolica basins: very interesting is the nave and two aisles interior with raised presbytery and the Byzantine age frescos dating back to the 14th century.

On the left of the church, within a tiny garden, stands a well curb, once a Baptistry.

Opposite the church stands the Romanic *Oratory of S. Rocco* of the 12th century, whose 16th century portal shows Torre di Palme’s coat of arms.

The main street ends in the *Belvedere* square that offers such a wonderful view on the coast and the sea beneath. The village is surrounded by the thick growth of the *Boschetto di Cugnolo*, protected wildlife area, peculiar because of the maquis species here preserved; a further beauty making this the ideal place for hikers, is the suggestive *Grotta degli Amanti* as well, scene of the tragic love of Antonio and Laurina, the two lovers died throwing themselves off the *Fosso of S. Filippo*.

In the nearby you can find the hydropinic centre of *Fonti di Palme*,



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EVENTS

Tipicità, fair of typical local product, March, in Fermo;
Festa di Primavera, March-May, in Fermo;
Market-exhibition of handicraft and antiques, all Thursdays in July and August, in Fermo;
Palio of the Assunta, sumptuous historic courtly commemoration with its *Corteo della Cavalcata*, 15th of August in Fermo;
Market-exhibition of the antiques and restoration, December, in Fermo;
Market-exhibition of vintage watches and jewels, December, in Fermo;
Opera and theatre season of the Theatre dell'Aquila, all year long, in Fermo.



CUPRA ALTA CUPRA MARITTIMA

"All here around is clear, bright, steady: this land is a book everyone can read and appreciate, at first sight... a neat, poetic and rational land, as well as harmonic, with no pleonasms and interruptions, with no falsity and untruths..."

Giovanni Bucci, *Il Mio Paese*, 1986

Altitude: 4/112 m a.s.l.

Inhabitants: 5.017

Cupra boasts ancient origins, as proved by the many finds come to light in those large necropolis of the first Iron Age (7-5th century b.C.) in this area, whose 400 graves contained carts, weapons, ornaments, vases, ceramics, and those mysterious big bronze rings decorated with six knots, whose meaning the archaeologists have been wondering for long.

The place was a major religious centre for the *Piceni Cuprenses*, renowned for its *Temple* dedicated to Cupra, the Etrurian-Sabine goddess that, to all the finds discovered over the time, had to be situated on the edge of the Colle Morganti.

The place, centre of the Piceni Cuprenses, was renowned for a Temple dedicated to Goddess Cupra, the Etrurian-Sabine divinity. The old city rose north the village as today, on the *Colle d'Agnesia*: here stand the ruins of the so called *Temple of the Cesari*, besides the remains of the town walls and the harbour facilities from the Roman times. Already *Municipium* and colony named *Iulia Cuprensis*, lived



flourishing times thanks to the arrival of plenty of legionaries, who were given the lands to be cropped: that was the time of the raising of tough walls to defend the Forum, the Capitol, the Thermae, the Theatre and the Amphitheatre and of the construction of the Basilica and the Curia, as well as roads, squares, waterworks, sewage systems.

Sucked by the Leutari in 554 and destroyed in the 9th century, it was then rebuilt up Middle Ages in its present area, under the name of *Castrum Maranum*, then *Marano*. Other two settlements, *Sant'Andrea* and *Roccabianca*, rose on top of the hills around, following that typical fortified system, in order to defend the population from the Franks, Longobards, Byzantines and Saracens's forays.

Marano, free city in the 11th century, had a flourishing harbour thanks to which it kept up relationships and trades with Venice, Chioggia, Ragusa, Sebenico and Durazzo. In 1862, G. Possenti, a follower of Garibaldi, promoted the relocation of the city centre near the coast, giving it the name of the old lost town.

Absolutely unique is today the urban structure of **Cupra Marittima**; indeed, here, differently from all other coast towns, the roman city, the mediaeval and the modern one, lie in clearly distinct areas: the Roman *Cupra* was located on the hills in the lands of *la Civita*, as show the town walls, the numerous finds of bricks, tiles, vases, and the assumed finds of the *Capitolium*; the mediaeval *Marano* still today standing high on top of the hill sheer down into the sea, with its towers, its alleys, the old palaces; the modern bathing resort, more than once awarded the prestigious *Blue Flag of Europe*, spreads out along the coast between the mouths of the Menocchia and of the Tesino rivers, with its many hotels, the beautiful villas dated early 20th century (among them the neo-gothic *Villa Cellini*), and all the attractions of the equipped promenade, enlivened by palms and oleanders bordering the long sandy beach.

You can start your visit to the modern city, from the central *Piazza della Libertà* designed by Giuseppe Sacconi and dominated by the *Collegiata* dedicated to *San Basso*, risen in 1887, whose noble facade stands out at the end of two spectacular stairways; inside there is a triptych by Vittore Crivelli portraying the *Madonna ador-*

ing the Baby between the Saints Sebastiano and Basso and, in the vestry, an enamelled *rocco di pastorale* portraying a *San Michele and the dragon*, masterpiece of the limosine art of the 13th century. In the nearby you find a road uphill among the pines leading to, after about 600 m, **Cupra Alta** or **Marano**, the old suggestive village, the heart of it, with an amazing panora-



ma over the sea and the Riviera of the Palms, its many alleys brightened up by the flowered balconies, and the historic *Churches of the Annunziata* and of the *Suffragio*. The old town is almost intact, with walling marked by square and polyhedral towers, erected in the 15th century by Francesco Sforza, and the gates of the *Fortress*, the *Marina* and of *S. Rocco*, standing out among the green of pines and palms. Through an open gate within the bailey, you can go high up to the upper part of the built-up area, where the tiny *Church of Santa Maria in Castello* stands, dated 1330, whose rectangular facade with Romanesque portal, two single-lancet windows and a little arches bar, topped with a sail belfry; noteworthy inside are the precious frescos dated 14th and 16th century. Walking on, passing between the two towers, you reach the *Fortress* swathed into the pinewood.

Right south the city (about 500 m), from the Adriatic highway, a road moves away and goes up into the deep green of the pinewoods "*of the Fortress*" or "*of the Pignotti*", leading to the top of the *S. Andrea* hill, where rise the imposing ruins of the *Castle of S. Andrea*, ancient fortress of the 13th century, created for sighting

and defence purpose, whose remains overhang into the sea. Carrying on southwards for about 9 km along the panoramic Provincial Cuprense Road, you reach the Gothic *Church of S. Maria della Petrella*, so rich in frescos dated 15th and 16th and in particular ancient inscriptions.

One of the major attractions of the city is the *Archaeological Park of Cupra Marittima* on the *Colle of Civita* (and on the adjoining *Colle of San Basso* or *Morganti*), at around 1,500 m north of the built-up area, where it is possible to spot a relevant part of the urban system of the roman town and maybe the finds of the ancient Temple dedicated to the goddess Cupra; the several archaeological finds, coming from the excavations, are held in the *Museum of the Territory*, recently moved to the *Palace Cipolletti* in the village of Marano.

Worth a visit is with no doubt the important *Malacology Museum of Piceno*, one of the most important museums about shells in the world, thanks to the over 700,000 specimen displayed and the interesting marks of the primitive malacologic art.

Lovers of nature should not miss a ride along the bikelanes, connecting Cupra Marittima to Grottammare, stretching over 3 km among palms and oleanders, just a short walk to the sea.



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EVENTS

Festa di San Basso,
Easter Monday;
Festival of May, last sunday
of May; *Contest – National
contemporary painting
exhibition "Premio Cupra"*,
July; *TAU, Teatri Antichi
Uniti*, end of July;
*Scena Picena, Rassegna
Teatrale*, July-August;
Clams Festival, August (the
city is the most famous in the
Adriatic for the fishing of this
shellfish);
Cupra Music Festival,
September.



GROTTAMMARE ALTA GROTTAMMARE

"The blue sea, the pleasant verdant hills, the mildness of the climate and the scent of flowers and of oranges do create a poetry equal to the heavenly sounds harmony..."

Franz Liszt, Grottammare, 1868

Altitude: 4/126 m a.s.l.

Inhabitants: 14.278

Grottammare faces the Adriatic coast and wins the visitor thanks to its green pinewoods and palms, the splendour of its orange grooves and the oleanders, its gold beaches and the clear sea.

The marks making this town so attractive to deserve the *Blue Flag of Europe* prestigious award, are then, besides the quality of facilities, the clean sea, the fine sandy seashores, the enchanting glimpse on the ancient core, the flourishing woodlands, where orange-trees stand out, real peculiarity of this area, as in the town coat of arms, showing two oranges beside a round embattled tower, recalling the old harbour lighthouse. Praised in the 15th century by the humanist Flavio Biondo for its richness in nature and architecture, already in the 17th century was chosen as health and thermal resort by nobles as the Cardinal Decio Azzolino. In 1800 well known doctors recommended it as ideal place for periods of convalescence and for the treatment of skin and respiratory system illnesses. In summer 1827 as Azzolino Countess' guests, stayed in Grottammare, Girolamo Bonaparte, Napoleone's brother and his wife Caterina and, in summer 1868, the musician Franz Liszt alike choose it for a short holiday, as counts Salvi-Fenili's guest.



The history of **Grottammare** owes its origins to a Umbrian-Tuscan league and to the Piceni, as proved by the finds within a large necropolis on the hills behind the seashore from which comes a rich funerary set datable from the 9th till the 4th century b.C. In the 8th century, a group of monks settled in the *Church of S. Martino*, while in the 9th-10th century the *Fortress* was raised, whose remains can still be seen on the hill dominating the old village. Its harbour, lying at the northern end of the current built-up area, is mentioned in a document dated 1259, where king Manfredi granted the castle of Grottammare, "*cum suo porto*", to the City of Fermo. Lost its autonomy, the town underwent those frequent and ruinous passing of the soldiers, the neighbouring cities fights and the Turkish pirates' forays,



highly threatening in this stretch of coast.

It was just with the purpose of facing the pirates' forays that in 1299 the harbour was expanded and later also the castle walls restored. Nevertheless in 1525, the pirate Dulcigno succeeded in conquering it; following this event, Grottammare was completely fortified with walls, gates and a *Donjon* called "*of the battle*", right by the beneath harbour, in order to adequately return any new attack. For long the city kept on enjoying its prestige coming from the harbour so that, in 1643, it was chosen as base for a government office controlling boarding and landing on San Benedetto, Cupra and Pedaso shores.

The city took active part to the fights for the Unification of Italy, also thanks to the many proselytes Giuseppe Garibaldi made here during a stay in 1848-49. In 1860 Grottammare helped to the setback of the Papal army: the days following the fights, Vittorio Emanuele II remained in the city and received on the 12th of October 1860, in Laureati Palace, the Neapolitan delegation come to formally offer him the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. From the end of the 18th century the village interests moved towards the coast; to the 1779 dates back the area plan for the enlargement of the new built-up area, conceived by the architect Augustoni, providing a network of same roads on the square, marking off rectangular blocks and later used for the further city expansion as well. Between the 19th and the 20th century, came the creation of thriving pinewoods close to the railway and the building, at the back of the seashore, of many lovely Liberty style small villas (as the prestigious *villino Matricardi*) overlooking a splendid palms and oleander boulevard. All over the 30s Grottammare has been equipped with all facilities as for sports and leisure: tennis courts by the sea, meeting places and clubs, new movie theatres and then the *Kursaal*, the legendary dance hall livening up, for years, the Adriatic Coast trendy nights. A lovely way going up through the greenery gets you to the ancient village of **Grottammare Alta**, rising on top of the *Monte Castello* dropping sheer into the sea: along the way the 17th century *Villa of the Cardinal Decio Azzolino*, that had Christine of Sweden as guest. Among country houses and narrow alleys, stand out the *Torrione of the Battaglia* and the *Church of S. Agostino*, dating back to the 16th century, where it is treasured a *Madonna della Misericordia* by Vincenzo Pagani (1577). In the nearby *Piazzetta Peretti* you can enjoy an enchanting view from the arcade with balcony of the building hosting the historic *Theatre of the Arancio*, close to which stands the Clock Tower. Worth a visit is the prestigious *Church of S. Lucia* (1597) wanted by Camilla Peretti in memory of his brother Sisto V (Felice Peretti), born in Grottammare, whose architecture reveals Domenico Fontana's imprint: particular is the square layout interior, topped with a dome borne by four pylons. In the upper part of the built-up area lie the remains of the ancient 14th century castle. Worth

a visit is the *Museum Sestino* as well, so rich in heirlooms and paintings linked to the figure of Sisto V, set in the *Church of S. Giovanni Battista*, building of old origins restored by Pietro Maggi. In Grottammare was born Pericle Fazzini, "*the sculptor of the wind*", as in Ungaretti's inspired words, whose works can be admired in the *Fazzini Centre* and all around the town. Worth a visit is the Romanesque *Church of S. Martino* as well, about 1 km southwards from Grottammare: the naive and two aisles interior owns a Roman epigraph to remind the restorations wanted by the Emperor Adriano to the *temple of the Goddess Cupra*, whose remains might be found in the left walls opposite the church and in some other structures below the religious building. From these ruins called "*Cruptae ad mare*", comes the name of the following settlement of Grottammare. Not far there is the so-called *Bagno della Regina*, big roman round water cistern.



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EVENTS

Season of Theatre Ragazzi,
 February-March;
Cabaret amore mio, *National Festival of the Umorismo*,
 July-August;
Operetta Festival, August;
Vivalastradaviva, *Theatre in the street "Scena Picena"*,
 August; *Market of Antiques and Handicraft*, every monday
 in July and August.



SAN BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO

"Still similar to the Homeric boats, the paranza (fishing trawlers) of San Benedetto are: steered as those ones, requiring same operations, same efforts to set sail and to land. Here, as well as in old times, they rake the sky before sailing; here, as Ulysses did, they unfurl the sails Piceno people have all enriched with symbols telling about Greece, Bysantium, Eastern civilization..."

Adolfo De Carolis, in *Rivista Marchigiana Illustrata*, 1906

Altitude: 6/283 m a.s.l.

Inhabitants: 45.054

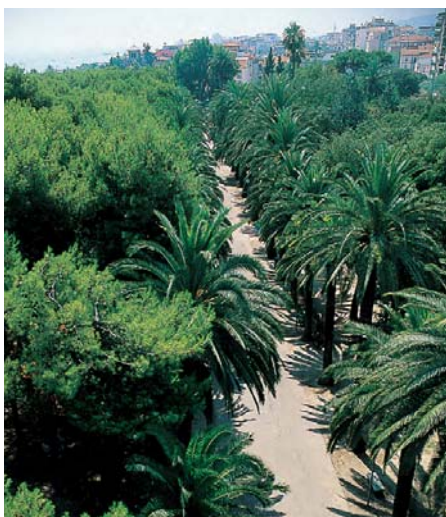
This town name comes from the retrieval in the sea, in the 3rd century, of the body of a Roman soldier, Benedetto, killed because of his refusal to abjure the Christian faith; it is around his tomb, worshipped by the local population, that the first houses of the old village are assumed to be built.

But further to some finds along the right bank of the stream Albula, the origins of the place turned out to date back to the Roman city of *Alba Picena* and, going even back in time, to the settlement founded by the Liburni in the 9th century b. C. from which the Roman *Truentum* was born.



Mentioned in a document dated 998, in 1211 it was given by Ottone IV to Fermo, together with the territories from the Tronto to the Potenza.

When in 1245 the Emperor Federico II granted to Ascoli a stretch of coast between Ragnola and Tronto rivers to build there a fortified port, the long and ruthless fights between Fermo and Ascoli Piceno started. Stricken, in 1478, by a pestilence decimating its population, the town stayed almost deserted for many years, till it was repopulated by refugees from the Romagna, in the upper Marca, who were granted territories in emphyteusis. From the 16th to the 19th century the city underwent the dreadful Saracens pirates' forays, so cunning in capturing sailors and get them in bondage in far-away lands; from 1650 the centre grew out of the walls and in 1754 the first coast suburbs of Sant'Antonio and of the Marina rose.



Annexed to the Kingdom of Italy in 1860 thanks to the “*Cacciatori delle Alpi*”, since 1869 it has kept its current name.

Lying at the mouth of the little stream Albula and spreading out in-between the Tesino river, north, and south the Tronto river, **San Benedetto del Tronto** is now one of the very first bathing resorts in the Adriatic coast, the capital of the amazing *Riviera of the Palme*. For years awarded the *European Blue Flag*, it boasts a splendid promenade, enriched with over 7,000 palms, so able to recall wonderful exotic landscapes.

Thanks to the long white fine sandy beach (10 km of beach and 5 of promenade) San Benedetto del Tronto has been, since the end of the 19th century,

a renowned bathing resort, as proved by the many Liberty style small villas here, the historic *Stabilimento Bagni* and the famous *Palazzina Azzurra*, once a fashionable meeting point for visitors and today exposition venue within the pinewood and gardens area. The town consists of two clearly distinct cores: a *high village*, that is a real castle able to protect itself from the pirates' forays, and a *coast city*, the fishing village developed from the 18th century.

Like an open balcony onto the Adriatic Sea, the old village, named *Belvedere*, marked by its 14th century hexagonal *Tower of Gualtieri* (noble family who settled in the castle in the 12th century), with its brackets and merlons. In the nearby, among those narrow alleys and “cotto” houses, stands the imposing *Church of S. Benedetto*, erected where before the 10th century old Pieve rose. Worth a visit in the close Episcopacy, is



the *Intercomunale Diocesan Museum of Sacred Art*.

Walking along *via Risorgimento*, past a roundabout with a fountain, you reach the *Lighthouse*, symbol of the ancient history of the local marine. The town, so strictly linked to the sea, boasts an important port provided with a mighty fishing fleet and one of the major wholesale fish market in Italy.

Emblem of San Benedetto marine is the “*paranza*”, a kind of boat conceived at the end of the 18th century, consisting of a lighter and nimbler boat, as for the manoeuvres, with peculiar symbols on the sails, useful not only to identify boats, but also to portray fishermen's dreams and needs. Among those liberty style small villas embellishing the promenade, notewor-

thy are the *villino Sorge*, the *villa Bozzoni* and, along the S.S. 16 highway, the amazing *Villa Brancadoro*, holding Adolfo De Carolis' frescos (1899).

Today the town is equipped with many sports facilities, a marine with a yacht club ideal for yachtsmen, and an indoor stadium, areas for playing bowls, swimming-pools, an athletics track, a modern conventions hall and rich and varied hotel facilities.

Sights to be seen are then the lively and rich *Fish Market* nearby the port and the alleys of the “*u labirintu*”, the historic fishing quarter where to enjoy the delicious *brodetto alla sanbenedettese*; do not miss the many and interesting museums of the sea, such as the *Marine Museum “A. Capriotti”*, the *Museum of the Amphorae*, the *Antiquarium Truentinum* and the *Museum of the Fishing and the Maritime Civilization*.



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(seasonal opening)

EVENTS

Art Exhibition “Scultura viva”, June;

L'antico e le palme, last decade of June, July and August;

Season of Italian

Documentary, “Premio Libero Bizzarri”, July, one of the

most renowned events as for the film documentary sector;

Festa della Madonna della Marina, last Sunday of July, a religious procession, from the

Cathedral to the port, where boats take to the open sea for a parade ending with a laurel crown tossed in water, in memory of all those dead into the sea;

Festival “Voci nuove”, August-September;

National Meeting “*Teatri Invisibili*”, September;

Pre-finals of “Miss Italia” Contest, September.



S. Elpidio a Mare (FM)



Grottammare (AP)



Torre di Palme, Fermo

HILLY VILLAGES “TOWARDS” THE SEA

The bathing resort of Porto Sant’Elpidio started as port of call of **Sant’Elpidio a Mare**, a picturesque small city treasured within the mediaeval walls, in whose 14th century core stand out the *Tower Gerosolimitana* (XIV century) erected by the Knights of Malta, the *Collegiata* and the *City Hall Palace*, holding a precious polyptyc by Carlo Crivelli and a triptych by the Garofalo. A fine sandy and pebbly beach is the distinguishing mark of **Porto Sant’ Elpidio**, an old sea village, become an equipped bathing resort: worth a visit is the ancient *Tower*, the *Church of the Annunziata* and the noble *Villas* lying right in the hinterland, where in summer you can enjoy interesting cultural events. Do not miss the nearby **Porto San Giorgio**, once named *Navale Firmanorum*, characterized by an upper part in the quarter *Castle* and the *Fortress* and, past the highway, a seacoast and its promenade dressed up with ancient palms, where stand elegant Liberty style buildings. Suggestive is the *Tiepolo Fortress* with its mighty main donjon and the walls protected by the tall maritime pines. It was the Governor of Fermo Lorenzo Tiepolo, the Doge of Venice-to-be, who wanted the austere counterworks to be built in 1276, in order to defend the village from the dreadful Saracen galleys always ready to attack. Among narrow alleys and ancient palaces, noteworthy are the historic *Theatre Vittorio Emanuele*, the 19th century *Church of S. Giorgio*, the *Villa Bonaparte* and the baroque *Church of the Suffragio*.

Examples of “gemination” from the village to the seacoast are Altidona and Marina di Altidona, Campofilone and Marina di Campofilone, Massignano and Marina di Massignano. **Altidona**, old centre still keeping most of the town walls, rises on top of a hill with a panoramic position dominating the nearby hamlet of **Marina di Altidona**, a bathing resort in ongoing growth, placed between the green pinewoods and the palms.

Then comes **Campofilone**, on top of a rise overhanging the coast city of **Marina di Campofilone**, noteworthy because of its remarkable ruins of the town walls, its particular alleys topped with barrel and cross vaults and the historic *Theatre Comunale*. Do not miss to taste the delicious *maccheroncini*, a kind of egg pasta hand-cut in very thin strings, as an old 15th century recipe tells. 6 km far from the hamlet of **Marina di Massignano**, bathing resort with a sandy and pebbly beach, lies, in a panoramic position, the small mediaeval village of **Massignano**, with its noble palaces, the *Theatre Comunale*, the *Churches of the Misericordia* and of *S. Giacomo Maggiore* and the interesting *Museum of Sacred Art*.



Altidona (AP)



Porto San Giorgio (FM)



S. Elpidio a Mare (FM)



Cupra Marittima (AP)



San Benedetto del Tronto (AP)

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