



PROVINCIA
DI TERAMO

Assessorato al Turismo



THE FINO RIVER VALLEY

ARSITA, BISENTI, CASTILENTI, MONTEFINO,
CASTIGLIONE MESSER RAIMONDO



Abruzzo's Mountain tastes and treasures



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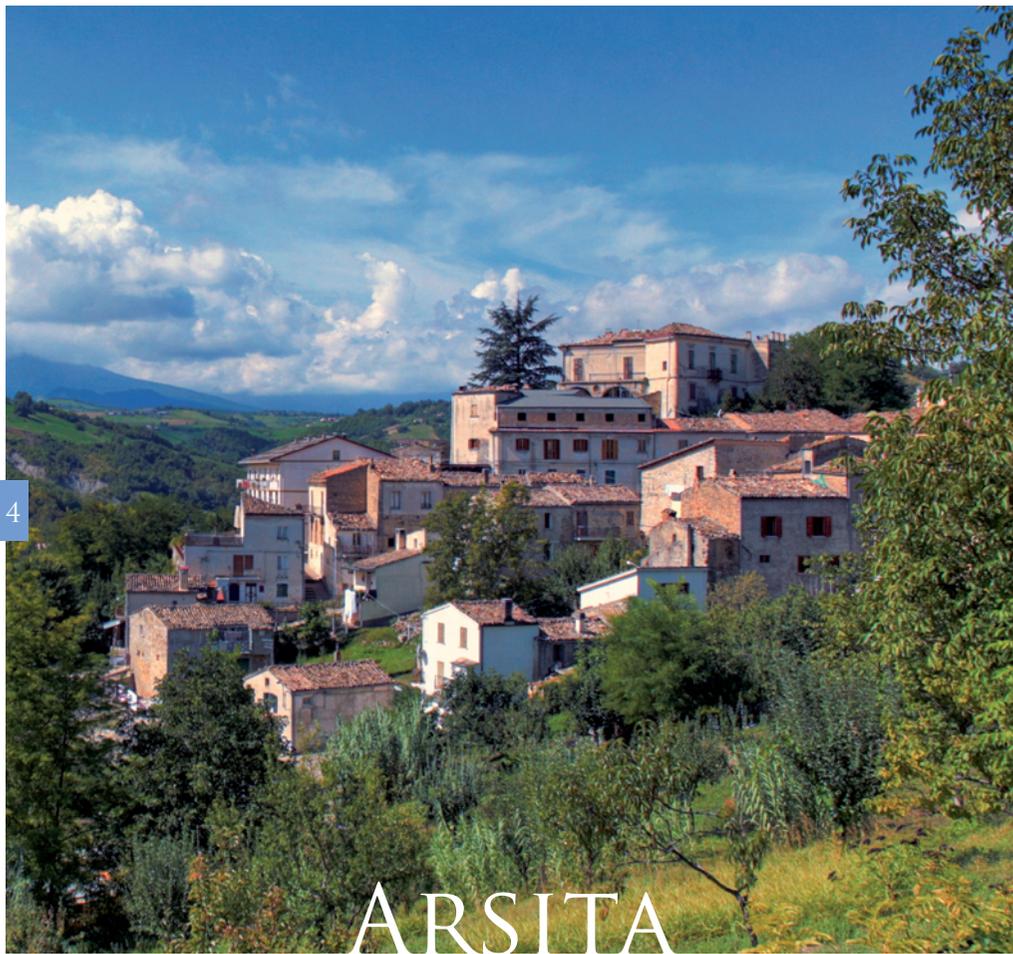
A BORDER LAND.

Although the Fino River Valley (Val Fino in Italian) is an area in the Province of Teramo it is deeply influenced by the near Penne, ancient capital of Vestinia, which it belonged to in the past. The river's name itself is evidence of it. "Fino", in fact, stands for the Italian "confine" (edge) indicating exactly its role of border between Vestinia and the old Praetutii area.

Therefore one of the possible descriptions of the Fino River Valley is that of a border river running through a border land. This unexplored area features a stunning landscape with an ancient history, an unspoiled nature with magnificent views and old-age peasant traditions.

Visiting its medieval villages will show you the great charm this unique place has.

Arsita, Bisenti, Castiglione Messer Raimondo, Castilenti and Montefino await to welcome you in all their beauty.



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ARSITINA

From Bacucco to Arsita.

Arsita dates back to a pre-Roman time when it was seen as border land between the Vestini and Pretuzi populations. In the Middle Ages it huddled around the **Bacucco castle** (Castello Bacucco). This was, in fact, the name the village was known for at the beginning of the 1900s before it was changed for Arsita. The origins of the name Bacucco are still ambiguous. The word Bacucco could have been referred to “Bacucche”, which were thatched huts or to Bacco, the Roman god of wine.

Signs of the castellation.

Arsita has the peculiar layout of the villages of the castellation time, although it features a 1800s architecture. Nowadays it is possible to see just some ruins of the Bacucco castle set on the top of the town. The parish **church of Santa Vittoria**, the **Santissima Trinità chapel** and outside the village the small **church of Santa Maria d’Aragona** are also worth seeing.

Hiking in a flourishing nature, a museum and many events.

Arsita is part of the **Gran Sasso and Laga Mountains’ National Park**. In the village there is the **Museo del Lupo** (Wolf Museum). Arsita is the perfect starting point for excursions to discover the Fino springs, grottos and mills. In August there are two interesting events. “**Valfino al Canto**”, a music festival gathering musicians from the valleys and the “**Sagra del Coatto**”, a food festival of an ancient mutton dish.



Ph. M. Anselmi

Wolf Museum

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BISENTI

Pontius Pilate's hometown

There are many different opinions about the origins of Bisenti. Some historians believe that it was the rich Roman settlement of **Berethra**, which according to the legend was **Pontius Pilate's** hometown. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the village was under the control of the Lombards and in the 12th century it became a property of the Montecassino Abbey. At the end of the 12th century it was ruled by the **Acquaviva** family and later by the **Sforza** family and the **Fallerio** family.

Small squares, remains of its ancient walls and nice churches.

The old town center features nice small squares where it is possible to admire the **medieval tower**, the only one still existing amongst the three which were part of the town walls. The parish church of **Santa Maria degli Angeli**, with its belfry and its elaborate furnishings inside, is worth visiting. Also worthy of note are the churches of Sant'Antonio Abate and San Pietro, in the near district with the same name. **Pilate's house**, the Palazzina Di Marco and the Casa Badiale are worth mentioning as well.

A native grape variety and many local dishes.

In Bisenti there is a great choice of food and wine. In the first week of October there is the "**Revival dell'Uva e del Vino Montonico**", a special festival dedicated to the **Montonico**, a native grape variety. Among Bisenti's specialty dishes there are the "**maccheroni alla mugnaia**" and amongst the desserts the "**tatù**".



Pontius Pilate' house

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CASTILETTI

Traces of an ancient history.

Many archaeological findings testify Castilenti's ancient origins. Hence, grave goods related to the Italic time were found in Casabianca, the remains of an **Hellenistic temple** were discovered in San Romualdo while a Roman **necropolis** and the "**cippo miliario**" (the starting point of a roman road TN) were found on Colle San Pietro. Nevertheless Castilenti developed in the Middle Ages and its urban layout is still perfectly visible.

During the 1500s it became a fief of the De Sterlich family who ruled it until the end of feudalism.

Symbols of the feudal power.

The monuments around the main square of the village are especially interesting. Amongst them the "**palazzo marchesale De Sterlich**" stands out. Another valuable building is the parish church of **Santa Vittoria**, while outside the town the **Franciscan convent** and the 16th century abbey of **Santa Maria di Monte Oliveto**, with its frescoed cloister, are worth visiting.

Outstanding badlands and an evocative parade.

The landscape of Castilenti is dominated by its **characteristic badlands** (calanchi in Italian). A very evocative event is happening on may 8th, when the "**sfilata delle fracchie**" is held,

dedicated to **Saint Micheal** (San Michele). This a parade of young people carrying burning sheaves of reeds.



Convent of Santa Maria di Monte Oliveto

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MONTEFINO

The Fino River Valley's sentry

Montefino, which is built on a hill, overlooks the valley below. Together with Castiglione Messer Raimondo, which is set just in front of it, it worked as “sentry” for the area. Its origins are still mysterious although historians agree that it was inhabited by the **Sabines** (Sabini in Italian). It was mentioned for the first time in the 12th and 13th century when it was named as “**Castellum Montis Sicci**” and “**Mons Siccus**”. In the mid 15th century it became a fief of the Acquaviva family and later it was given to the Bishops of Teramo.

Among the streets of a fortified village.

The well preserved remains of its **fortification** testify Montefino's defensive function. In the center of the hamlet, in fact, there is a **1300s great tower** which was part of the boundary wall, the **Acquaviva castle of the 1400s** and one of the two town's gates. The parish church of **Madonna del Carmine** with interesting frescos inside and the church of **San Giacomo Apostolo**, which holds precious reliquaries and a valuable silver cross, are of interest.

A stunning view and a great craft tradition.

Montefino features many **terraces** from where you can enjoy a stunning view of the Fino River Valley with its **badlands** and **olive trees**. The whole area is also characterised by a great

craft tradition shown in its beautiful **embroidery** and its **wicker basket** production.



1400s Castle of the Acquaviva family

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CASTIGLIONE
MESSER
RAIMONDO

Three castles and the uprisings of the “carbonari”.

Castiglione Messer Raimondo was an important crossroads along the Via Cecilia. Its history begins during the Italic period. As its three castles testify it was an important garrison of the surrounding area. It was a stronghold until the end of the Acquaviva family domination.

In the 19th century people from Castiglione rose up against the French dominion taking part in the many uprisings of the “Carbonari” (groups of secret revolutionary societies TN).

A magnificent architecture.

Castiglione Messer Raimondo preserved its ancient **medieval layout** enhanced by its 15th century fortifications. The old town center is marked by its small lanes, stairs and small squares gracing its beautiful architecture. Inside the village the **parish baroque churches of San Donato** and **Santa Lucia** are worth noting. Outside the hamlet the church of **Santa Maria** which was probably built on an extant temple of Diana is well worth seeing.

Stunning views, surroundings to discover and a private collection.

The fortified hamlet which dominates on the valley below offers stunning views and captivates with its surroundings.

The tiny district of **Appignano** is worth visiting. Here remains of a medieval stronghold and of a **castle** are to be found. Inside the village the **Collezione Gambacorta di Arte e Cultura Cinese** is worth mentioning (Gambacorta Collection of Chinese Art and Culture).



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The castle of Appignano

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