



PROVINCIA
DI TERAMO

Assessorato al Turismo



THE SICILIAN VALLEY

ISOLA DEL GRAN SASSO, TOSSICIA,
COLLEDARA, CASTEL CASTAGNA



Abruzzo's Mountain tastes and treasures

PROVINCIA DI TERAMO



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THE SICILIAN VALLEY

AN ODE TO HISTORY AND ART,
CHRISTIANITY AND NATURE.

Fascinating hamlets, spellbinding places of worship and regenerating nature enhanced by the great majesty of the Gran Sasso d'Italia Massif. This short description says everything about the charm of the ancient Sicilian Valley, A land where people from Abruzzo and from Sicily (who gave the name to the area) found refuge when they escaped from the Barbarian tribes at the end of the Roman Empire. An unforgettable place just like the feeling it gives with its art, traditional culture and untouched nature.

The Sicilian Valley, which is crossed by the River Mavone, is located between the Corno Grande and the Mounts Prena and Camicia. It includes some of the most beautiful towns in the Province of Teramo such as Castelli, famous for its ceramics; Castel Castagna with its Santa Maria Abbey considered the most representative of the Abruzzese Romanesque; Colledara with its splendid medieval hamlet of Castiglione della Valle; Isola del Gran Sasso with its important Sanctuary of San Gabriele and Tossicia, the ancient capital during the Mendoza domination.



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ISOLA DEL GRAN SASSO D'ITALIA

In the lands of Saints.

The birth of the hamlet dates back to prehistory. Its name comes from the Latin “**Insula**” for its location between the rivers **Ruzzo** and **Mavone**. Before becoming a dominion of the **Mendoza** family, it was a fief belonging to the **Counts of Pagliara** and of the **Orsini** family. Abundant watercourses, luxuriant woods and the impressive presence of the **Gran Sasso** give this area an extraordinary spirituality that over the centuries attracted Saints and monks who chose to live in its hermitages and convents. According to legend Saint Francis of Assisi stopped here and built a convent that would then turn into the extant **Sanctuary of San Gabriele**.

The Village of mottos.

Nature, religion and culture are represented in the architecture of this village with its still visible medieval structure. Narrow roads, stairs and little squares which highlight the beauty of the buildings of noble families. These buildings bear inscriptions the hamlet is famous for and that



Santa Maria di Pagliara

earned it the name of “the village of mottos”. The hermitage of **San Nicola** and **Santa Colomba** are both worth visiting. The churches of **Santa Maria di Pagliara**, San Massimo, San Sebastiano, San Leonardo, Madonna delle Grazie, Santa Lucia, San Valentino are all very interesting, together with the marvelous Abbey of **San Giovanni ad Insulam** which is another masterpiece of the Abruzzese Romanesque.

Age-old traditions, nature and the flavors of the mountain.

“**Li tamurri**” is a little band of musicians from Pretara that continue a tradition started in the 16th century. They are just an example of the strength of tradition which survives in this area. Isola del Gran Sasso, is a charming place immersed in nature and with an ancient history. It is the perfect starting point for hiking up to the Gran Sasso Massif and it offers its visitors characteristic dishes and flavors of the mountain’s area such as **cold cuts**, **cheese** and **very good meat dishes**.

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San Giovanni ad Insulam (crypt)





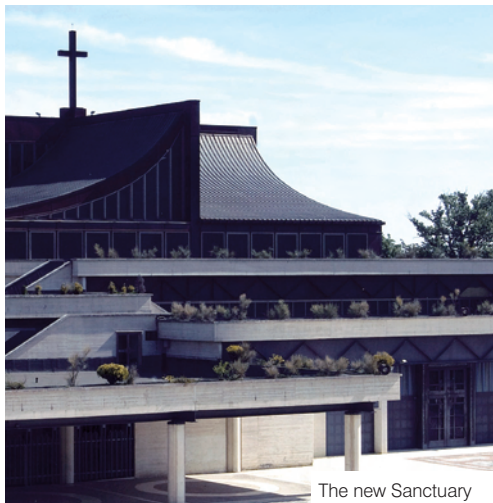
Hermitage of San Nicola



The Sanctuary of San Gabriele dell'Addolorata (Old Church)

A strong religious vocation.

The religious vocation of this little town is testified by the **Sanctuary of San Gabriele dell'Addolorata** who is known as the patron of the Abruzzo region and the protector of young people and miracles. Every year millions of pilgrims visit Saint Gabriel's shrine where a modern structure has been added to the Basilica of the old sanctuary and its convent. The "**Staurós of Contemporary Sacred Art** and the **ex voto** museum (from the Latin "from the vow made") are worth visiting. The **Library of the Passionists** (Biblioteca dei Padri Passionisti) with more than 50.000 volumes is also very interesting.



The new Sanctuary



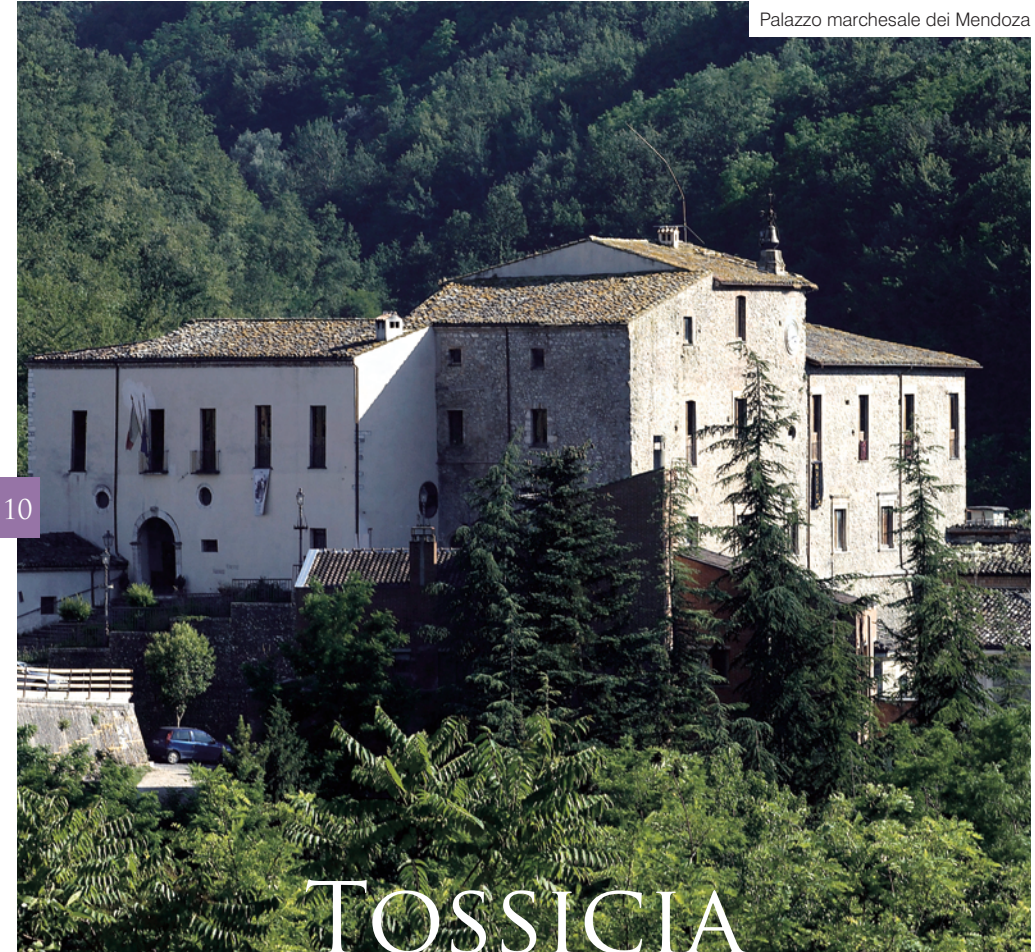
A Statue of Saint Gabriel

Info & Contacts

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www.comune.isola.te.it

Palazzo marchesale dei Mendoza



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TOSSICIA

The ancient capital.

Tossicia has an ancient and glorious history. In its area numerous findings and graves from the Neolithic Age have come to light. **Etruscan** traces and remains of a Roman temple have been discovered as well. It was a fief of the **Counts of Pagliara** and later fief of the **Orsini** family. During the dominion of the **Mendoza** family it was so important to become the **capital of the Sicilian Valley**.

Well-designed buildings of the Renaissance and magnificent churches.

The ancient importance of the hamlet is testified by its beautiful buildings.

The **palazzo marchese dei Mendoza** (the marquise's building) now home of the town hall stands out. In the old town center, along the paved roads there are well-designed buildings and houses from the Renaissance enhanced by mul-tioned windows and coats of arms. Also worthy of note are the churches of **Sant'Antonio Abate**, **Santa Maria Sinfiorosa** and the church of the "**Madonna della Neve**".

Age-old traditions, the mountain's flavors and evocative events.

The **Museum of Abruzzo Techniques and Traditions** offers the chance to know how people from this area lived and the traditional way to process **copper**. Gastronomy offers local foods which are typical of the area. Regarding the events, it is worth mentioning "**I Mendoza**

nella Valle Siciliana" and "**Scendono i Briganti nella Valle del Chiarino**". In August "**I muri raccontano**" in **Azzinano** is an unmissable event. During this week painters belonging to the naïve art movement from all over Italy paint **graffiti** on the town's walls.



A coppersmith at work

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COLLEDARA

Lucrezia Borgia and Fedele Romani.

Colledara sits on the top of the surrounding hills. The remains of a **castle** attest its medieval origins. Two important historical characters are in connection with this town. According to a legend **Lucrezia Borgia** took refuge here at the end of 1400s to escape from her brother Cesare. Another legend tells also about **Fedele Romani** (a great Italian intellectual of the 1900s).

Discovering an enchanted land.

The most representative monuments of Colledara are the nice parish church of **San Paolo** and the **casa natale (birthplace) of Fedele Romani**. Not far away from Colledara there is the wonderful **Castiglione della Valle** and its enchanting atmosphere. The stunning village was once the very centre of the Sicilian Valley. Not to be missed is a walk among its characteri-

stic streets which lead to the nice square where the church of **San Michele Arcangelo** is to be found.

Medieval villages, a nature reserve, “la porchetta” and an evocative historical re-enactment.

Some interesting places to visit are Ornano, Villa Petto, Bascianella, Chiovano e Collalto. For nature lovers there is the **nature reserve of “Fiume Fiumetto”** while for food lovers the excellent “**porchetta**” is a must. In regards to events, the main one is “**Con Lucrezia Borgia a Castiglione della Valle**”.

Info & Contacts

Comune di Colledara

Via San Paolo

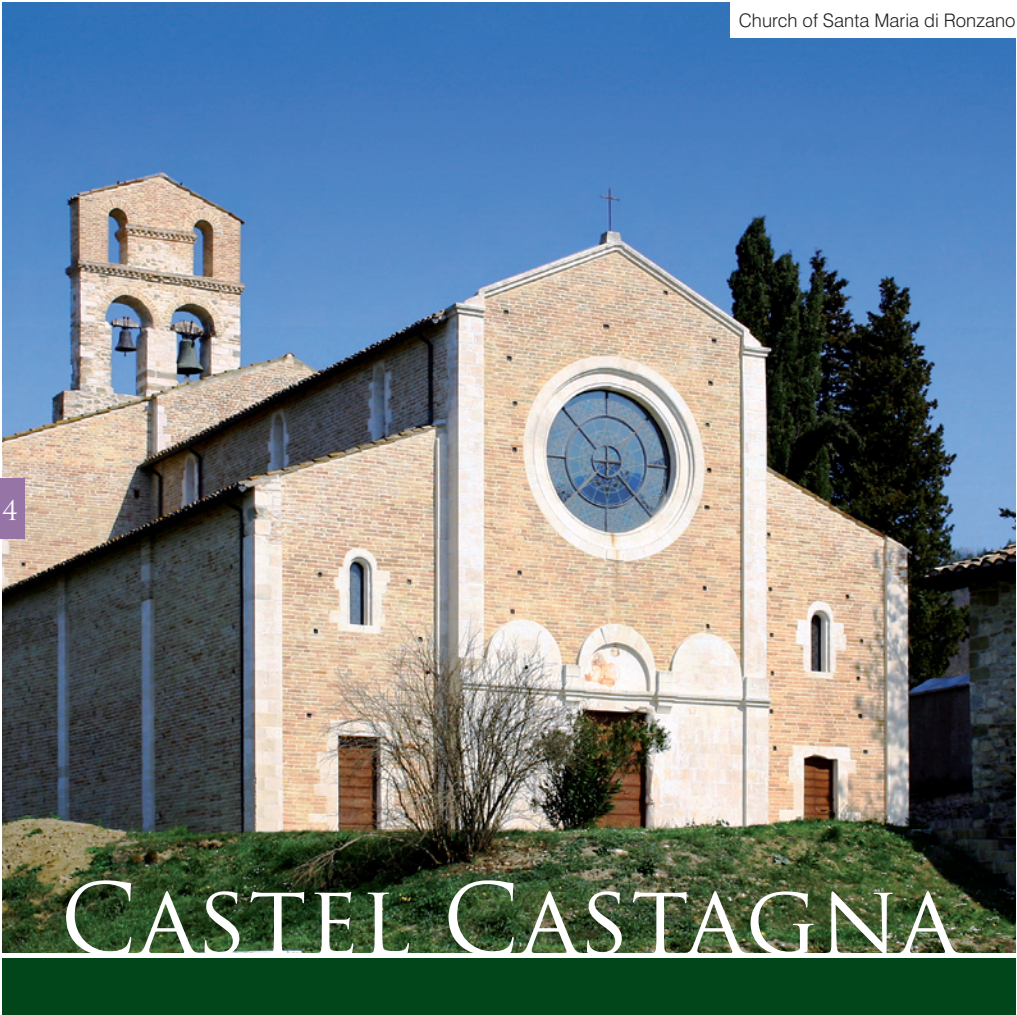
Tel. 0861.698877-Fax 0861.698810

www.comunedicolledara.gov.it



Natural reserve of Fiume Fiumetto

CASTEL CASTAGNA



Prehistoric origins and a medieval castle to protect its population.

Although Castel Castagna developed in the Middle Ages, researches reveal it has been inhabited since the prehistory. There are many doubts about its birth but historians seem to agree that its name came from the word "Castanee", a castle that assured protection to the locals.

Characteristics alleys and one of the masterpieces of the Abruzzese sacred art.

The village features beautiful stone portals and mullioned windows. Upon entering the town we encounter many nice churches: the church of **San Pietro**, the church of **Madonna delle Grazie** and right outside the village the church of **San Salvatore**. In the hamlet of Villa Ruzzi the church of **San Vincenzo** is worth visiting.

Just 3 km away from the old town of Castel Castagna there is the district of **Ronzano** where it

is possible to admire one of the masterpieces of the Abruzzese Romanesque and sacred art: the church of **Santa Maria**. It is splendidly located with its façade looking at the Gran Sasso; its stunning interior holds inestimable treasures.

An extraordinary view, traditional peasant dishes and ancient rituals.

From the village it is possible to enjoy a stunning view of the Gran Sasso. Gastronomy offers traditional peasant dishes that can be tasted in a special event in June during the threshing. On August 15th another event is the ritual of the children "**Consacrazione**" (consecration).

Info & Contacts

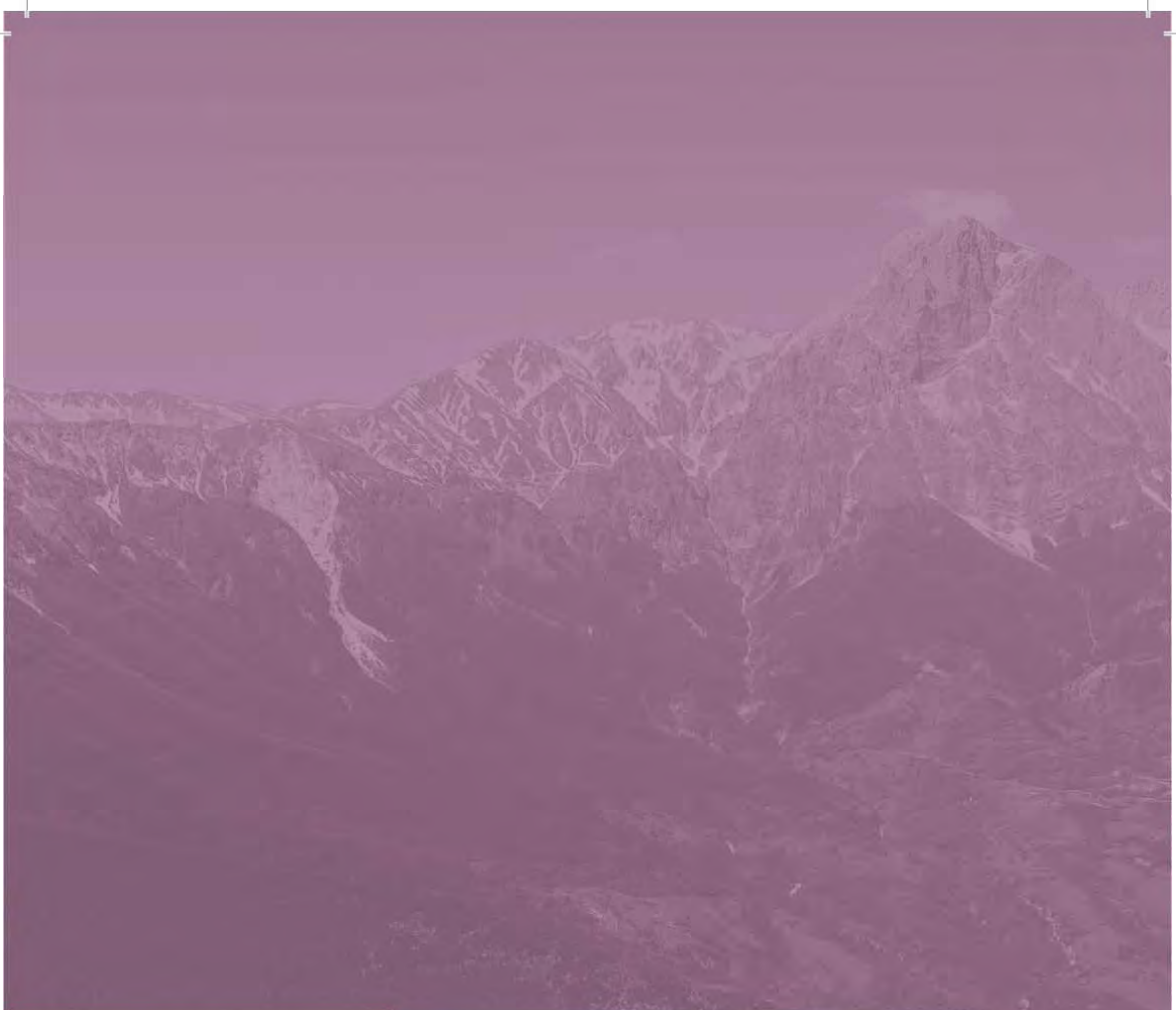
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