

MOUNT SORATTE

On reaching Mount Soratte (691 mt.) standing alone in the middle of the Roman countryside, from the top there marvellous view of the Appennine mountains, Lake Bracciano and the Tyrrhenian Sea the same sight that appeared to those who in the early Middle Ages came to this hilltop in search of solitude in which to meditate, setting up hermitages that were later transformed into sanctuaries and churches. While the temple to Apollo, god of the sun, can no longer be seen on Mount Soratte white with snow, as Horace described it, on its ruins, partially visible in the crypt, stands the Sanctuary-hermitage of St.Silvester which can be reached by various routes either on foot or on horseback inside the Soratte Nature Reserve amongst karst caves, green olive trees, woods of broad-leaved trees inhabited by small mammals and birds. According to legend, given credit by Dante whose lines are carved in the entry portal of the hermitage, Pope Silvester came here during the persecutions by the Emperor Costantine who, when he was converted to Christianity, was baptised by Silvester himself. The hermitage tour proposed by the local authorities begins at the Church of Santa Lucia (1596) on the lowest peak of the mount, where there are few remains of the dwellings used by the hermits. From there the tour continues towards the Church of Sant'Antonio on the south-east slope, dating perhaps from 1532, where the Prior of all the Mount Soratte hermits lived. Going back the next stop is the Sanctuary of S. Maria delle Grazie, built upon a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, whose image, painted on the wall, was particularly venerated during the 16th century. Here Camaldolite, Franciscan and Cistercian hermits and priest lived.

The Cistercians converted the hermitage into a monastery in 1628.

Continuing on towards the top, there are a few remains of the S.Sebastian Hermitage (16-17th century) and on the highest peak, the Church of St.Silvester, the original structure of which Carloman had restored in 747, after its destruction by the barbarians. It has a rectangular layout, preceded by an atrium with two aisles and a large central arch, and a nave and two aisles surmounted by barrel vaults. The church is decorated with frescoes dating from the 1200-1400s partly ascribed to the 14th century Roman school, the most interesting of which are those on the life of St.Barbara.

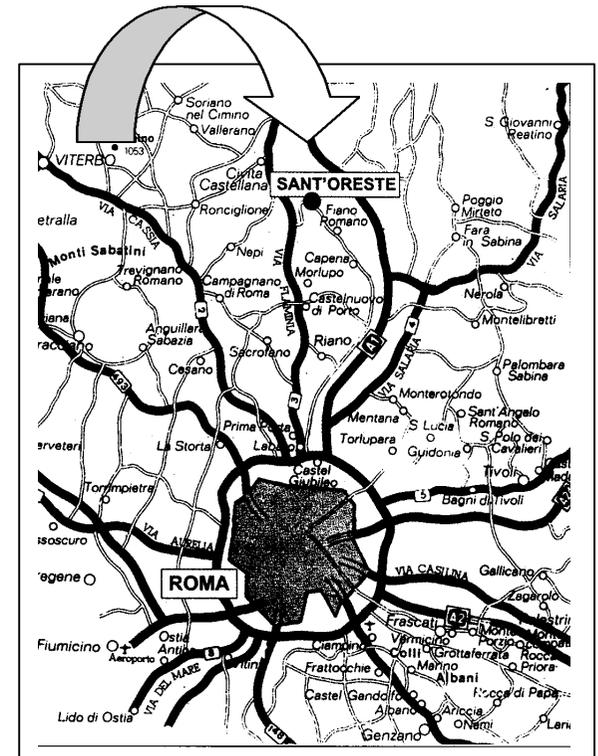
Outside there are a few traces of the monastery to which the church was annexed built according to some sources by San Nonnosio native of Sant'Oreste (6th century). To him amongst others, the monastery has been linked the legend of a miracle connected with the production of olive oil, that in those times, like that of wine, had survived because of the principle of self sufficiency preached by St.Benedict.

A separate route leads to the Santa Romana Hermitage on the north-east slope of Mount Soratte, today only a ruin while the church (1218) is inside a karst cave that was perhaps the site of pagan worship in ancient times. An inscription on the altar commemorates the fact that it was St.Silvester who baptised the saint and there is a marble bath that was once used in a ceremony by women who were unable to breast-feed.

FESTIVALS AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Madonna di Maggio on the last Sunday in May in which there is a magical torch light procession, the Fiaccolata al Soratte, a tradition

dating back hundreds of years, in which bonfires placed on the slopes of Mount Soratte.



Pizzeria "Soratte": 0761578198
Ristorante "Da Romano": 0761508660
Ristorante "Il Noceto": 0761579903

Nature and the perfect town

To get to Monte Soratte, take the Via Flaminia until you reach a 42 km sign at a crossroads. Take the road to S.Oreste. After 3 km you will find yourself in this delightful village made up of noble palaces and churches dated from the 14th to the 17th centuries. A perfect example of a Renaissance town, aristocratic in character. The 691 metres high Monte Soracte is a natural defence for S.Oreste.

You can make the trip by car followed by a ten minutes walk along a footpath. There you will find the church of S. Silvestro, with frescoes dated from the 11th century. But the most spectacular thing is the panoramic view all around, which sweeps down to the sea.

The story of Monte Soratte is crowded with myths and legends: it was here that Pope Silvestro I° took refuge to escape from the Emperor Constantine; in S. Romana church water flowing from the rock is a magic fountain, ideal for curing the after-effects of childbirth; in its maze of underground tunnels and caves the German army hid its fantastic thesauri when retreating from Rome.

“The western side of the mountain is a range of precipices; the peak nearest the town of S.Oreste is naked rock; on the next stands the church of Santa Lucia, on the beyond, the Madonna delle Grazie; On a projecting shelf near this, the church of S. Antonio; and upon the central, or highest top, is convent of San Silvestro.

(Gell. W. – The topography of Rome and its vicinity – London 1834 pag. 406)

SORATTE ADVENTURE

We promote pleasant, leisurely trips on foot, by bike or airborne where you are immersed in nature and culture on every venture.

Association activities

Guided visits of archaeological interest:

Mount Soratte has been an important religious centre since antiquity. The paths meander through the historic centre or travel along panoramic paths, taking you to churches, monasteries, historic buildings, hermitages, retreats and cliff-top churches.

Guided woodland walks:

We will accompany you through the forest of mount Soratte, crossing woodland, Mediterranean shrubland, calcareous crests, karst shafts, a great variety of wild plants and the traks of small animals, as well as the noteworthy spring flora.

Paragliding

Thanks to its geomorphic structure, Soratte is ideal for paragliding, above all in the spring and summer months. There are both thermal flights, making use of the hotter currents of air which emanate from the slopes or from the valleys, and dynamic flights, making use of the wind which rises in the mountains to create a cushion of air along the crests, which is ideal for gliding. The take-off is situated on the summit of the mountain, near church San Silvestro, at a height of 691 mt., with an optimal south west wind. It can be reached by following the road which runs from the village to the convent and by then walking towards the summit for around 200 mt.

SANT'ORESTE SUL SORATTE



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