

# Cassino

City guide



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## The territory

The city of Cassino is located west of the Liri Valley, a wide area in southern Lazio, bordered with Campania and lying between the Abruzzi-Molise Apennines and the Tyrrhenian Coast.

The plain, with some isolated reliefs such as Mount Trocchio and Mount Porcchio, is bordered with two mountain systems: the Massif of Mount Meta and the Massif of Mainarde on the northern side, together with the Aurunci Mountains on the southern side. It is closed by the mountain range of Rocca d'Evandro on the North, becoming wider northward in the hydrographic canal carved by the Rapido river, which separates the range of the Aquilone (1270 mt) from the range of Mount Cairo (1669 mt).

The area is particularly rich in waters: the Rapido river (ancient *Scatebra*), flows north from the western Mainarde range, meeting the Gari in St Angelo in Theodice; the Liri from Roveto Valley flows north-west, then joining the Sacco river (ancient *Trerus*) in San Giovan-

ni Incarico, creating a lake. After that it receives the waters of the rivers Melfa and Gari, becoming the Garigliano river and emptying into the Tyrrhenian sea, in Minturno.

Since the ancient times, the area has been rich in natural resources, being hills and mountains well ventilated with a good exposure to the sun. According to that, olive trees cultivation was well established, and the taste of the olive oil from *Casinum* was really appreciated by the ancient authors. Of equal importance were the *fiscinae* (pressing mats) and the oil mill ropes, produced in the same area, as well. Sheep farming was extremely flourishing too, in fact the erudite writer *Marco Terenzio Varrone*, who owned a villa in the vicinity of the Gari Springs, reminded that the inhabitants of Cassino were used to pastured the flock “*ad centenas*” (by the hundreds).



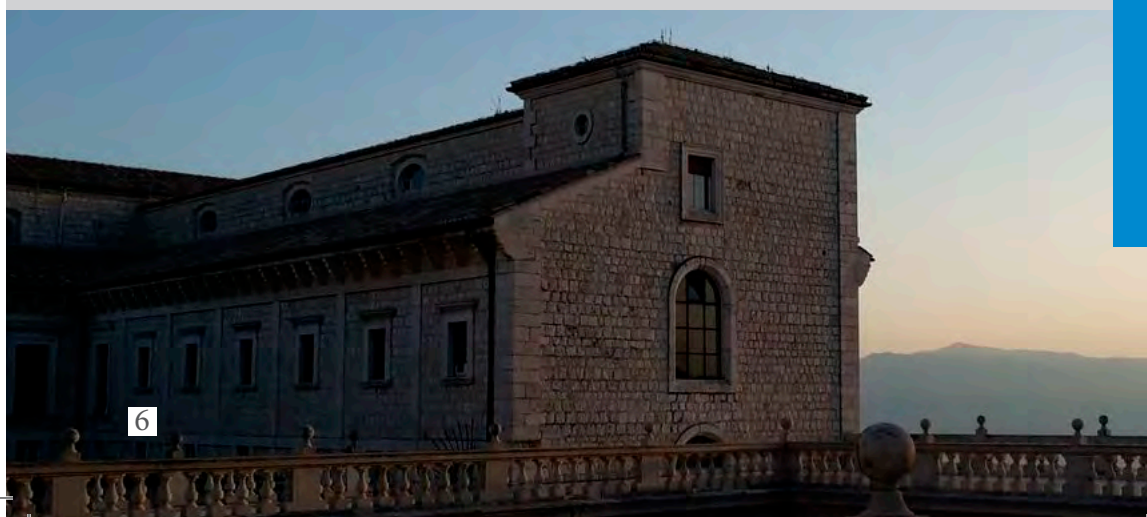
## Cassino and its history

Cassino rose on the slopes of the Mas-sif of Mount Cairo, at a very strategic point in the Liri Valley, which had been the very crossroads both for trade routes and transhumance since prehistoric times. Between the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the area experienced the passages of the Volscian peoples who were aiming to conquer the fertile Pontine Valley. Once the Volsci's power gradually started to decay, and the Latin League was finally defeated in 338 BC, the Samnites moved toward southern Lazio, occupying the territories of Cassino, as well. The pre-Roman inhabited area, which was originally Volscian and then Samnites, was protected by a city walls and probably situated in the *Crocifisso* area. It was positioned on a natural terrace on the slopes of Montecassino, in the same place where the Roman city saw its birth. Between the end of 4<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, the land went under Roman control: Casinum became first a *civitas sine suffrage*,

then a prefecture. In the first half of 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, it became a municipium, which was ruled by *duoviri iure dicundo*, and subsequently, during the triumviral age, it was turned into a colony. Between 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the city lived a period of great splendor, which saw the birth of the first public buildings, but starting from 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD it went through a slow decline and ended up to be only a small town. Nevertheless, it was an Episcopal seat and a fortified center, "*Castrum Casinum*", when St Benedict founded Montecassino in 529 AD. Unfortunately, some years later, between 581 and 589 AD, the Longobards of Zotone sacked Montecassino, and only in 8<sup>th</sup> century, a new urban centre developed on the slopes of the Rocca Janula; a century later, the abbot Bertharius called the city *Eulogimено-polis* (the city of Benedict). In 874 the city changed its name in San Germano, to honor the relics of the Saint bishop from Capua, which were donated by King Ludwig II. Afterwards, in 883 the

Abbey was hardly destroyed a second time by the Saracens, that invaded the inhabited area and killed the abbot Bertharius, as well. It was only in 10<sup>th</sup> century, that the abbot Aligerno decided to build the Rocca Janula, a stronghold in defense of Montecassino and its territory, tired of the several incursions and destructions. A very impressive moment in history to be remembered is the signing of the peace treaty, signed by the Emperor Federico II and Pope Gregory IX, inside the cathedral, in 1230, even though another sad memory was going to reach Montecassino in 1349: an earthquake that shocked the center of Italy, wiped out the Abbey, probably causing the abandonment of the city *Castrum Sancti Petri*, which was risen on the remains of the ancient *Casinum*. Moreover, in 1527 the territory was hit by a terrible plague, which decimated the population. Two centuries later, in 1799 the city went under Napoleonic occupation. Therefore, a filo-Napoleonic administration was appointed also in San Germano, with the disagreement of many. The whole area, eventually occupied by the adversaries, was devastated by the French troops that were retreating from Naples. In 1863 the city definitely

changed its name from San Germano to Cassino, with the opening of the railway station on the same year. The city had belonged to the Land of Labor District (*Terra di Lavoro*) until 1927, when the province of Frosinone was established. In 1930, a funicular railway, which also acted as a stronghold of the Gustav Line during WWII, together with the Abbey, was unveiled too. It allowed the visitors to reach the Abbey in seven minutes, leaving from the square in front of the railway station. From September, 1943 to March 1944, armies from all over the world, which were marching toward Rome, tried to force the German opposition, hidden on the reliefs around Cassino. On February 15, 1944, two huge bombardments razed the Abbey to the ground, together with the city, on March 15. As far as this enormous sacrifice, Cassino was named the “Martyred City for the Peace” and was awarded the gold medal for gallantry. Today Cassino is a modern city counting about 35,000 inhabitants and hosts the *Università di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale*. Its hinterland also hosts the FIAT factory, one of the most modern car plants in Europe



# SAINT BENEDICT

*and Montecassino*

SAINT BENEDICT OF NURSIA

FOUNDED THE MOST IMPORTANT AND WELL

KNOWN MONASTERY

IN 529

It was on the acropolis of the ancient *Casinum* that Saint Benedict from Norcia founded the most important and well known monastery, cradle of the western monasticism, in 529. In this peaceful place the Saint wrote his *Regula Benedicti* (Rule of Saint Benedict), adding study and manual labor to the prayers of the monks, and laying the foundations for the western monasticism. Unluckily, Montecassino went under four heavy destructions through its millennial history: in fact soon after its building, it was invaded by the Longobards in 577, and sacked by the Saracens in 883. The third destruction saw the Abbey hardly devastated by a violent earthquake, while the fourth and well known last one razed the monastery completely to the ground because of the allied fire, which was attempting to hunt out the German troops. Montecassino has been known since the Middle Ages to be a flourishing cultural site, where the amanuenses monks gave life to a famous *scriptorium*: the archives and the library, which is a National Monument, preserves still today precious documents such as incunables and miniature codex. Those ones visiting the Abbey, can have the chance to admire the overwhelming view of the *Terra Sancti Benedicti* (Land of Saint Benedict) the city of Cassino together with the city walls that used to link the ancient *Casinum* to its *acropolis*. At the entrance of

the monastery, we can admire the first cloister, which is the very place where Saint Benedict built the first oratory, dedicated to St Martin; at its center a bronze group representing the Saint, donation of the German chancellor Adenauer. Reaching the Bramante Cloister, the two statues of Saint Benedict and Saint Scolastica welcome to the wide staircase leading up to the Benefactor's Cloister, enriched with statues of kings, popes and important personalities who made generous donations to the Abbey through the centuries. The entrance to the Basilica has three bronze doors installed. While the central door is original and was made in Constantinople in 11<sup>th</sup> century, and brings on its panels the inscriptions of all the belongings of the Abbey, the side doors are instead a donation by Luigi Einaudi, President of the Italian Republic, and were sculptured by Pietro Canonica in 1951. Inside the basilica, where the majority of the Neapolitan School frescos have gone forever, noteworthy are the frescos by P. Annigoni, which partly replaced those ones by Luca Giordano. The high altar holds the remains of Saint Benedict and Saint Scolastica, while on the side of the presbytery the funeral monument of Piero De' Medici is preserved (1539). Beside the high altar, another artwork is preserved: the choir, dating back 17<sup>th</sup> century. Part of it survived to the destruction, and it was brought back



to its ancient splendor by the Colicci family. The crypt below the church was built in 1544. Even though its wonderful decoration, dating 16<sup>th</sup> century went under deterioration, the restoration works, that ended in 1913, wonderfully replaced the decorations with important mosaics

and other works by the Art School of the Beuron Monastery, in Germany. The museum of the Abbey hosts the most precious traces of what was the artistic, cultural and religious life both in Montecassino and its surroundings, also including its pagan culture.



# ARCHAEOLOGY

*Cassino still preserves today both monuments and places of high archaeological interest, which miraculously survived to the cruel bombardments of WWII. The archaeological park of the ancient Casinum covers the area that goes from the National Museum "G. Carettoni" to the Abbey of Montecassino. The museum hosts the most impressive findings of the place, from prehistory to the Roman period.*

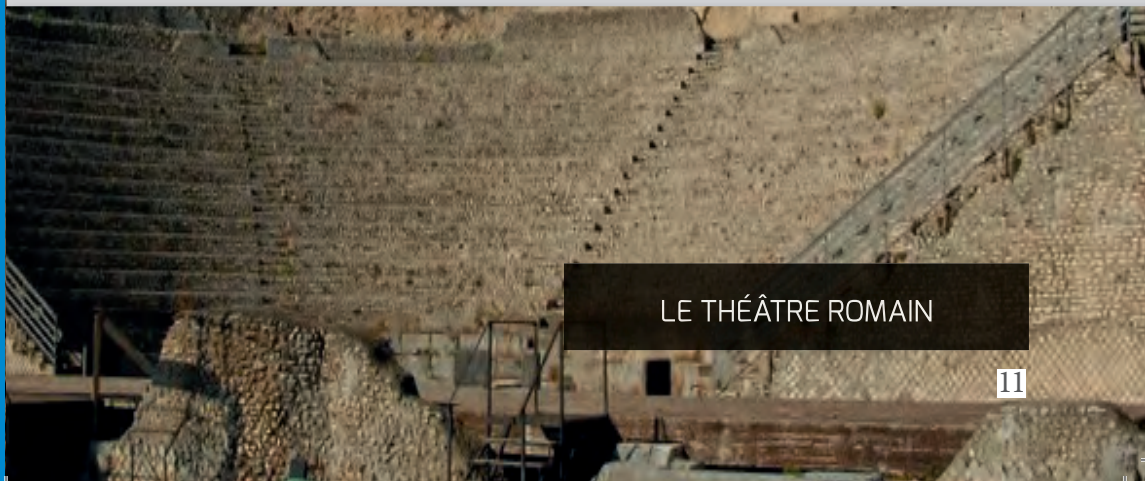
1

**THE ROMAN THEATER** Located in the central area of the Roman town, the theatre was built in bichrome *opus reticulatum* in the natural slopes of the hill. The building, well known since the Middle Age, was brought to light in 1936 by the archaeologist Gianfilippo Carettoni, and eventually restored between 1959 and 1962. The *cavea* used by the audience, whose semicircular rows of seats was made up of five steps, was divided into two areas: lower (*ima cavea*) and upper (*summa cavea*). On the upper side, traces remain of a gallery (*crypta*). The *scaenae frons* had a structure in stone work and two orders with their columns. There were three entrance doors, the *porta regia*, the main central one, and two small ones at both sides, *portae hospitales*. The area of the *post scaenam*, made up by a quadriporticus with a garden, went under excavation and restoration works during 2000. Still nowadays the monument which can host almost 3000 people, maintains its original use: in fact every summer it hosts any kind of performances both cultural and theatrical. ■

2

**THE MAUSOLEUM OF UMMIDIA QUADRATILLA** The impressive building, built in two levels, was set in the urban area, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, despite the strict laws that banned the burial in populate areas. The upper level, of which no traces remain anymore, was the pedestal, that directly faced the paved *Via Latina nova*. The lower level was instead made up by a *hypogeum*, in large chalk stone blocks, perfectly squared and organized in horizontal lines, without cement and put together only by metallic cramps. The structure has the shape of a Greek cross, with symmetric arms, surmounted by semi-circular vaults with an hemispherical dome integrated with four little skylights used both to air and light up the room. Even though it has not been proven, the tomb seems to be ascribed to Ummidia Quadratilla, who lived between the first and the second century AD, daughter of the consul Gaio Ummidio Durmio Quadrato. During the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD, the tomb was rearranged to become a Christian church dedicated to St. Nicolas. At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Abbot Andrea Deodato reopened it to the cult, finally consecrating it

LE THÉÂTRE ROMAIN



to the St. Crucifix. That is why today, the same name of the neighborhood to this day. Following the bombardments of WWII few remains of the old church; some important frescos have been recovered and are now preserved in Montecassino. ■

3

### THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATER

Built in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, just outside the urban walls, with a plant of rather limited dimensions (85 x 69 m), the building was assigned to wild beasts hunting and gladiators fighting. It has been estimated that the bleachers of the *cavea* could host almost 4500 spectators. Two important inscriptions, found during the past centuries, remind us the lavish activity of the matron Ummidia Quadrattilla, who was the one who economically contributed for the construction (or maybe only for the restoration) of the amphitheatre and another temple, of which unfortunately no traces remain. Three large entrances allowed the access to the bleachers; two of them,



LE MAUSOLÉE  
D'UMMIDIA QUADRATILLA

placed on the major axis, allowed the access into the arena, which had no underground sections. In fact, still today, only a small hole, through which the waters were drained, is visible. Another entrance was placed on the hillside; it allowed the access to the *tribunal*, for the authorities. According to its reduced dimensions together with many missing adequate closing devices, it is easy to think that no naval fighting could be held inside the structure. During the Middle Age, the Amphitheatre of *Casinum* was continuously subjected to spoliation. ■



L'AMPHITHÉÂTRE ROMAIN

#### 4 THE URBAN WALLS AND THE ACROPOLIS

The Roman city was protected by massive polygonal walls, which with their length of 4.5 km, covered a more wide surface than the one actually inhabited. The urban walls of the city of *Casinum*, suffered many damages during WWII, in fact some sections downstream the valley, were restored during the Middle Age or made part of new buildings, as well. Moreover, the *Porta Romana* (south west) and the *Porta Campana* (south east) were erected inside the walls. These doors were crossed by the *Via Latina nova*, the *decumanus maximus*, representing the main axis of the city. A temple dedicate to Jupiter, was built

on the acropolis, which was actually the strategic and sacred place of the city; together with that, a wood consecrated to Apollo was standing. The *arx* was equipped with an imposing *opus poligonalis* subsurface, and protected by surrounding walls linking to the much wider perimeter of the urban walls. A monumental door, called “the door of the acropolis”, used to stand on the western side of the acropolis; it was demolished during the eighteen century. The defense system of the city has been proven to date back to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. ■

#### 5 PONARI'S NYMHEUS

The structure known as Ponari's Nymphus by the name of the family who owned the area, is made up of two adjoining rooms: a room in rectangular shape, showing a barrel vault in *opus caementicium* and rectangular niches along the walls, together with a small roofless *atrium* provided with an *impluvium* at its center. The Nymphus, which was used to host water games, was closed to a private rich residence. It was built during the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC in *opus coementicium* and eventually restored during the first century AD, or the next one, as some decoration techniques employed suggest. On a first stage the walls were covered with a rustic mosaic in vitreous paste encrustations, lapis lazuli and shells. From

then on, more restoration works were made and the structure even changed its destination; in fact the walls were plastered and painted with geometrical motifs, in imitation of polychrome marble slabs. The paving is made of *opus scutulatum*, with encrustations of colored stones. The building, also used as a shelter during WWII, has been object of excavations and restorations work in the last two decades by the Regional Board for Archaeological Heritage. ■



6

**ROCCA JANULA** The fortification, which dominates the city from a steep cliff (193 mt above sea level), was erected approximately in the middle of 10<sup>th</sup> century AD, by the Abbot of Montecassino, Aligerino (949-986), as a defense both for the Abbey of Montecassino and the inhabited area of San Germano (the ancient *Casinum*), from the continuous attacks by the enemies. His successor, the abbot Mansone (986-996), reinforced and widened the city walls, but the Rocca, damaged by the strong earthquake in 1004, soon tumbled down. The Rocca, repeatedly occupied by the citizen from San Germano, who had risen up against the authority of the monastery, was eventually freed by the abbot Gerardo (1111-1123), who reinforced the walls in the central courtyard, also building a pentagonal tower (20 metres *height*) and a chapel. During 1200 under the abbot Roffredo de Insula (1188-1210) additional walls and moats were built, finally protecting the underlying town centre;

they were still visible until the allied bombardments destroyed the city during WWII. Unluckily, in 1221 the Rocca was demolished under the will of the Emperor Federico II, even though reconstruction works soon restarted in 1229. Between 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century the Rocca was object of disputes between Cassino, the French and the Spanish people. In 18<sup>th</sup> century it became state owned and tumbled down again because of abandonment. During WWII the Rocca Janula was one of the main stages of the battles between the German and Anglo-American troops for the occupation of the monastery. The origin of the name is uncertain, but according to some scholars it would be connected to a temple dedicated to the god *Giano*, whereas others ascribed it to "*janua*" (door), therefore the small entrance door of the Abbey of Montecassino. During these last years the Rocca has been object of significant restoration works by the Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activities. ■



ROCCA JANULA  
MOITIÉ DU XE SIÈCLE

LA BATAILLE

# THE BATTLE OF MONTECASSINO AND THE PLACES OF THE MEMORY



ITS STRATEGIC POSITION, OVERLOOKING THE ONLY NATURAL WAY THROUGH BETWEEN THE SOUTH OF ITALY AND ROME, DEFINITELY DETERMINED BOTH ITS FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES. IN ITS MILLENNIAL HISTORY, MONTECASSINO HAS BEEN DEVASTATED AND HARDLY DESTROYED FOUR TIMES; ITS LAST DESTRUCTION OCCURRED ON **FEBRUARY, 1944**

## THE BATTLE OF MONTECASSINO AND THE PLACES OF THE MEMORY

WWII saved a very sad leading role to Cassino and its Abbey. Soon after the landing of the allied forces, the German troops retreated along the Italian peninsula to take shelter among the mountains that stretched from the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic sea. It was there and in that occasion that they started to build the Gustav Line, thanks to which they could organize their defense and, at the same time, slow down the advancement of the allies who were heading towards Rome, and who remained stuck along the Rapido - Gari river from December, 1943 to May, 1944. Because of the many attempts to break the Gustav Line, many young soldiers sadly lost their lives. On February 1944 the battle

saw its pinnacle with the bombing of the Abbey by the Anglo-American forces which were convinced that the sacred walls of the monastery were just part of the German defense. The heavy attack razed the Abbey to the ground, and the same fate happened to the city only one month later. The Gustav Line was unfortunately broken only during the month of May thanks to the unforgettable sacrifice of the Polish soldiers. The majority of the soldiers who fell in the long battle of Cassino, lie in the war cemeteries of the city, which are main destination for pilgrimages and stunning evocative ceremonies that every year take place in the martyred city.





## THE ABBEY OF MONTECASSINO

Its strategic position, overlooking the only natural way through between the south of Italy and Rome, definitely determined both its fortunes and misfortunes. In its millennial history, Montecassino has been devastated and hardly destroyed four times; its last destruction occurred on February, 1944, and was caused by the bombing of the allied forces in attempting to hunt out the German troops that were defending the Gustav Line. In fact, in the early morning of February 15, more than 500 tons of high explosive incendiary bombs were dropped over the monastery, terribly razing the house of St Benedict to the ground. On May 18, 1944, a patrol of the Polish 12<sup>th</sup> Podolian Uhlands Regiment finally made it to

the heights and raised a Polish flag over the ruins, eventually making an end of the sad history of the bloody battles of Montecassino. The Gustav Line was broken thanks to an attack over the whole frontline, from the bottom of Mount Cairo to the mouth of Garigliano, which remarkably forced the German defense to retreat. From that moment on the liberation of Italy had its start, allowing therefore the allies to triumphally enter Rome on June 4. In spite of that new destruction, reconstruction works to rebuilt the Abbey soon started in order to make the building “where it was and as it was”, not only to testify its several destructions, but also its impressive and unpredictable rebirths. ■

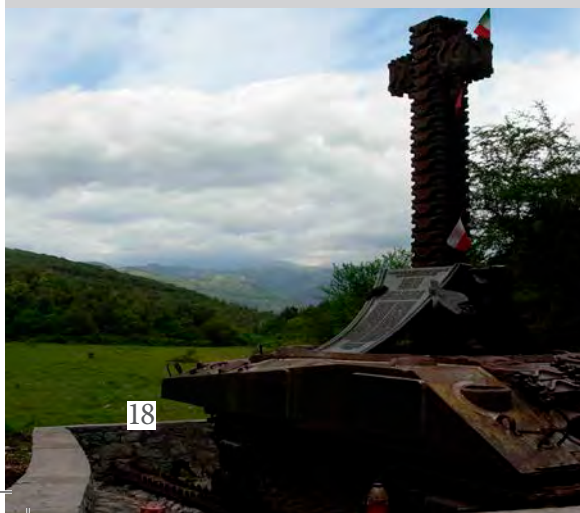
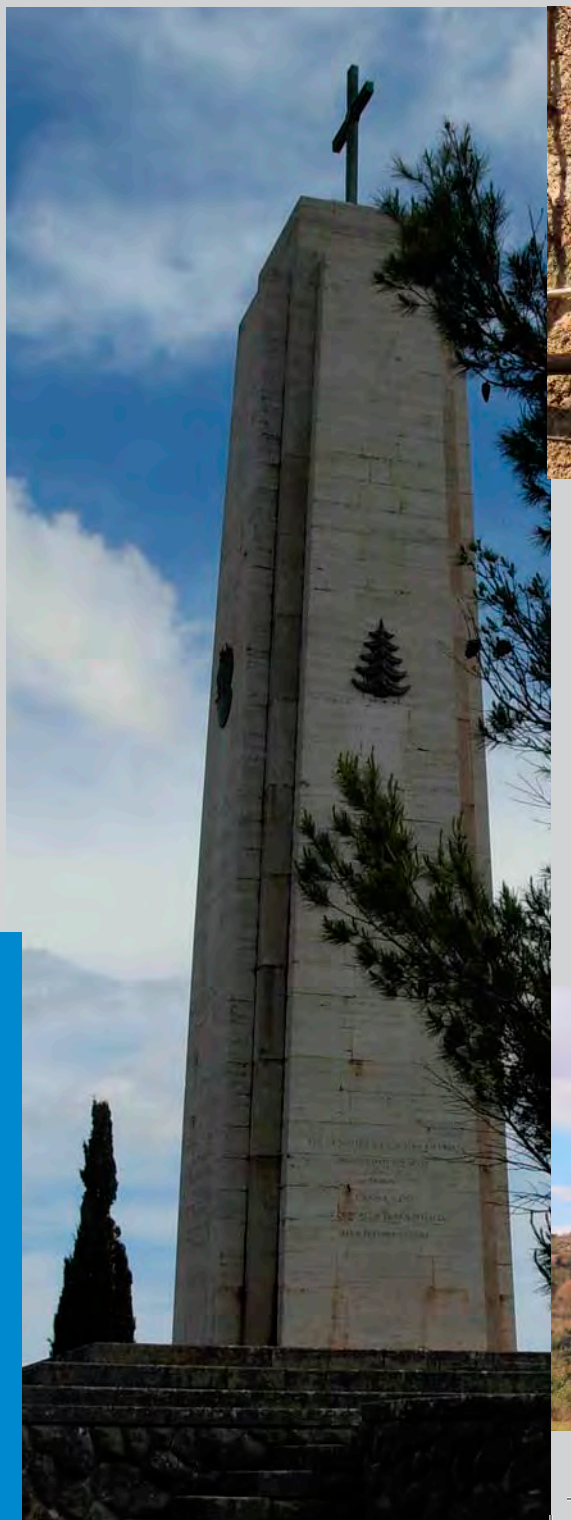


8

**OBELISK (POINT593)** The Polish Memorial Obelisk visible atop Point 593, Mount Calvario, that overlooks the Liri Valley, is the most important monument that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corp of the Polish Army erected on the battlefield to honor the soldiers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Carpathian Rifle Division. Among the many other inscriptions, impressive is the one remembering the strong values of the Polish soldiers: *“For our freedom and yours we, polish soldiers, have given to god our souls, our bodies to the italian earth and our hearts to poland”*. ■

9

**THE SHERMAN TANK MEMORIAL** LA Sherman tank with a cross made from tank caterpillar tracks, mounted on the body of the wreckage, is dedicated to the fallen soldiers of the 4<sup>th</sup> “Skorpion” Armored Regiment. The tank was destroyed by a mine on May 12, 1944, killing Lt *Bialecki* with his crew. The memorial is standing at the very place where the tragedy happened, in memory of the fallen and the many other cruel battles fought in the area. ■



10

## THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE (DOMEK DOKTORA)

This old rural house, which was also very close to the Abbey and Point 593 (500 mt height), and is still inhabited by a family nowadays, was used by Polish soldiers as a little field hospital during the battles between May 12 and 18, 1944. ■



11

## CAVENDISH ROAD

Lieutenant-General Freyberg, who was in command of the New Zealand Corps with the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand and 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Divisions, strongly wanted the construction of the Cavendish Road, a tank path that started from Caira village to the Massa Albaneta and the Monastery. It was employed during the third battle of Cassino, while the Polish army were there on May 1944. Today the route is still accessible to the visitors. ■



12

## MASSA ALBANETA

The Massa Albaneta, was located among a small valley, behind the monastery, downstream Point 593 and along the road that went from Caira village to Montecassino. The old walls of the building, which reminds to a fortress, were used by the German army both as a control station and as a field hospital. ■



# THE WAR MEMORIAL CEMETERIES

The majority of the fallen soldiers of the four battles of Cassino is buried in the military cemeteries in the surrounding areas. They are one of the main destination for pilgrimages and stunning evocative ceremonies.



### 13 THE POLISH WAR CEMETERY

Located in the vicinity of Montecassino, it holds the graves of 1,052 soldiers of the Polish Army who died during WWII. It also holds the grave of General Władysław Anders, commander of the Polish forces. He firmly expressed his remains to be buried in this cemetery, to be close to his soldiers, and so it was, after he died in London in 1970. ■



### 14 THE GERMAN WAR CEMETERY

Close to Colle Marino, in Caira, the cemetery holds the german graves of 20.035 soldiers, who died in southern Italy (with the exception of Sicily). ■



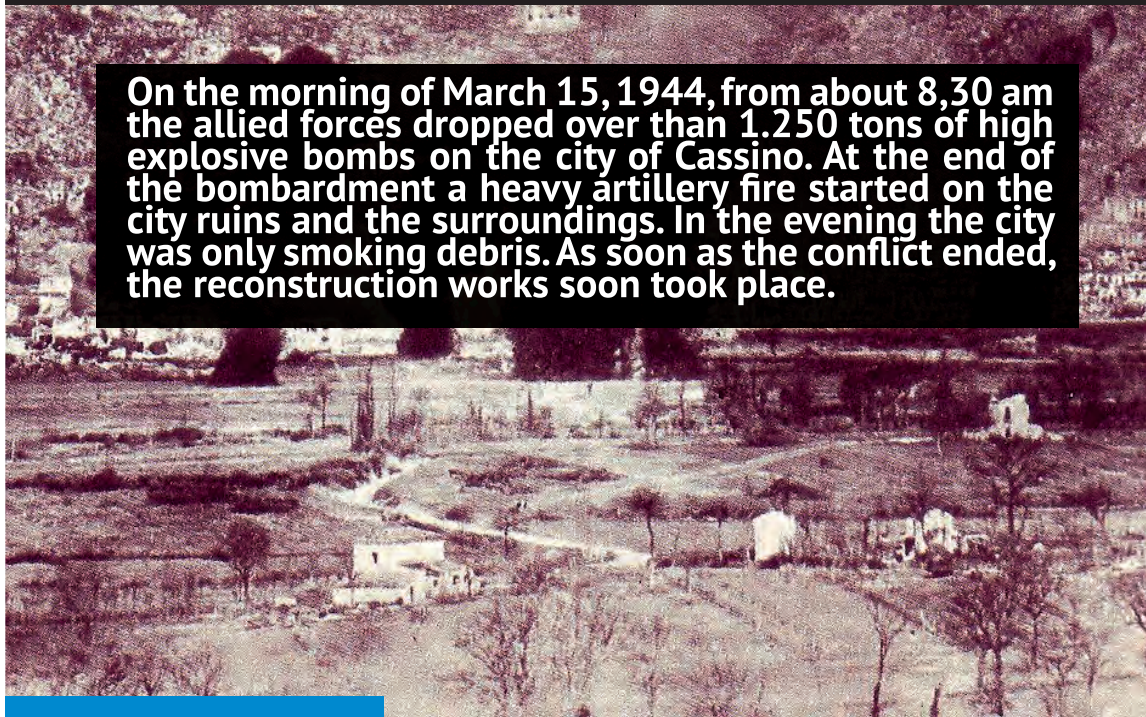
### 15 THE COMMONWEALTH WAR CEMETERY

The cemetery is located along the road to St Angelo in Theodice. There are now 4,271 Commonwealth servicemen of the Second World War buried or commemorated, 289 of the burials are unidentified. General Alexander and Commonwealth ambassadors took part in the moving opening ceremony on August 31, 1956. ■



# CASSINO

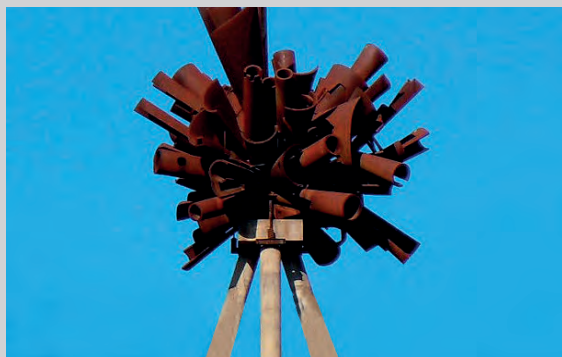
On the morning of March 15, 1944, from about 8,30 am the allied forces dropped over than 1.250 tons of high explosive bombs on the city of Cassino. At the end of the bombardment a heavy artillery fire started on the city ruins and the surroundings. In the evening the city was only smoking debris. As soon as the conflict ended, the reconstruction works soon took place.



## MEMORIALS

### 16 THE PEACE MONUMENT

LA Peace Monument on the slope of Montecassino dominates the city. Designed by the famous sculptor Umberto Mastroianni, it strongly depicts the metallic explosion of the bomb. A warning against any kind of war and a yearning or peace among the people. ■



## 17 THE PEACE BELL MEMORIAL

The Bell was unveiled in 2008 along the Gari River, in Sant'Angelo in Theodice, to honor the fallen soldiers who lost their lives in January, 1944 during the famous Crossing of the Rapido River, well known as the first battle of Cassino. ■



## 18 CASSINO CITY MEMORIAL

Alcide De Gasperi square hosts the "Cassino City Memorial", created in memory of the Battle of Montecassino (15 January–18 May 1944), during which the Abbey and the town below were almost totally destroyed. An M14 Sherman tank (rehashed after the war) is located in the center of the square, together with a Pak 40 anti-tank gun, a memorial plate, honoring the fallen soldiers of the USA 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Red Bull) and a monument in memory of the fallen civilians of the city of Cassino. ■



## 19 THE MARTYROLOGY WALL

The Martyrology Wall, inaugurated on January 2008, remembers the huge sacrifice of the city during WWII with a long panel in majolica, upon which pictures and name lists of the victims are placed. While the civilians from Cassino who lost their lives were 2.000, the service persons were 477. Unfortunately many are the missing ones, being their remains still unidentified. ■



# THE STONE MEMORY

Unfortunately, the memory of the medieval buildings in which the city was rich, was destroyed forever by the bombardments; that is why, a project ,driven by the *Centro Documentazione e Studi Cassinati*, (Documentation Center for Casino Studies), set up a theme based itinerary placing chalk stone boulders where the old buildings were before the war. A commemorative stone with a sketch of the building or an accounting of the event on each boulder, remembers the history of that building. Visiting the old city following this impressive itinerary gives younger generations a more solid idea of what it was and what it is not anymore.

**a CHURCH OF SS. ANNUNZIATA:** Also known as *Chiesa dell'Assunta*, because it hosted the statue of the Madonna, the Church dates back to 400 AD, was annexed to the Dominican convent. Even though the bombardments of 1943-1944 razed the whole complex to the ground, the statues remained miraculously undamaged.

**b S. MARIA OF THE FIVE TOWERS:** The Church, also known as “the haven”, was built up during 8<sup>th</sup> century in the vicinity of the Gari’s springs. It originally had a squared plan with central colonnade, enriched with four towers on each corner plus one more at its center.

**c BELL TOWER:** Built under the will of the Abbot *Grisulfo*, in 9<sup>th</sup> century, opposite the church of the Salvatore, it was rebuilt in Romanic Age. Hardly damaged during the war, it was definitely demolished between 1965 and 1967 with the promise to be built again in the future in another site.

**d CURTIS MAJOR:** The “*Curtis Major*” was hosted by the *Palagio Badiale*, inside which the *Terra Sancti Benedicti* (Land of Saint Benedict) or San Germano State was run, under the government of the abbot of Montecassino. The place used to be the residence of the *Rector Casinensis*, who was the vicar of the Abbot.



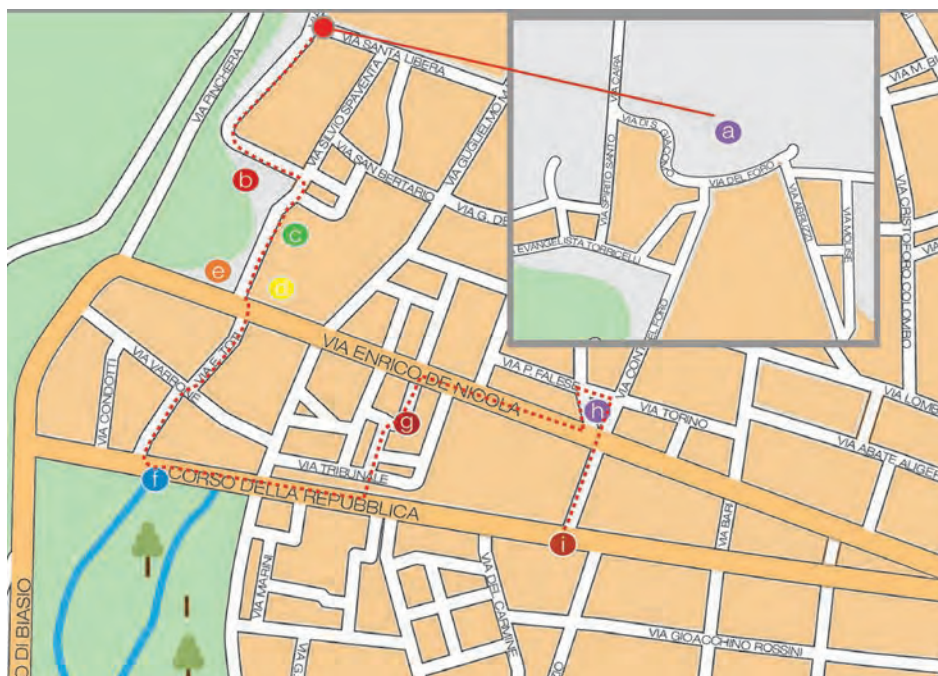
**e PEACE OF SAINT GERMANO:** Signed by the Emperor Federico II and Pope Gregory IX, in 1230 (in front of the church of San Germano).

**f DESTRUCTION OF CASSINO:** 1944 (Park XV March, 1944).

**g MANZONI THEATER:** It was the very heart of the city from 1875 to 1943 when the war completely destroyed it. It was here that not only important performances were frequently held, but also school and associations used to meet together with conferences, as well.

**h DESTRUCTION OF MONTECASSINO:** 1944 (XV Febbraio Square, 1944).

**i CHURCH OF THE CARMINE:** It was right in this Church, built outside the urban walls, that travelers and the people from San Germano used to stop before they started a journey. After a restoration in 1611, it was eventually abandoned and turned into a cemetery until 1940, when the Abbot Diamare, reconsecrated it to the cult. It was reduced into ruins by the bombings.



# MUSEUMS

**20 NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM "G. CARETONI"** Even though it was 1962 when the first stone was laid, the Archaeological museum saw its official opening ceremony only in 1980. Recently the museum was dedicated to the distinguished archaeologist Gianfilippo Caretoni, who was the first to regularly work on the excavations in the ancient *Casinum*. The building, erected inside the Roman city, uses its ancient spaces to host offices, warehouses and exhibition areas. The findings are displayed in three halls, hosting the new acquisitions, prehistoric and proto-historic section, the pottery and architectonic material section together with the sculptures and epigraphs one. Inside the *Lapidarium*, at the lower level of the museum, architectonic elements and funerary inscriptions from the surrounding area are also collected. The museum is located in a wide archaeological district, where part of a paved street, a mausoleum, traditionally ascribed to the matron *Ummidia Quadratilla*, an amphitheatre and a theatre of Augustan Age are preserved, as well.

[www.archeolazio.beniculturali.it](http://www.archeolazio.beniculturali.it) ■

**21 THE HISTORIALE MUSEUM** The Historiale Museum was opened in 2004, to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle of Montecassino and honor the fallen soldiers from all the Countries that lost their lives for the triumph of peace and liberty. The museum was set up by Officine Rambaldi, under the supervision of the creative genius Carlo Rambaldi, known for his special effects in movies like ET, Alien, King Kong, that granted him three Academy Awards. The itinerary is developed through the most emblematic stages of the twentieth century: the evocation of Saint Benedict's work, the two world's conflicts, the making of the Gustav Line, the bombardment of the Abbey of Montecassino, the military strategy, the commentaries of the civilians, the rebirth of the territory and the strength of reconstruction.

[www.museohistoriale.org](http://www.museohistoriale.org) ■



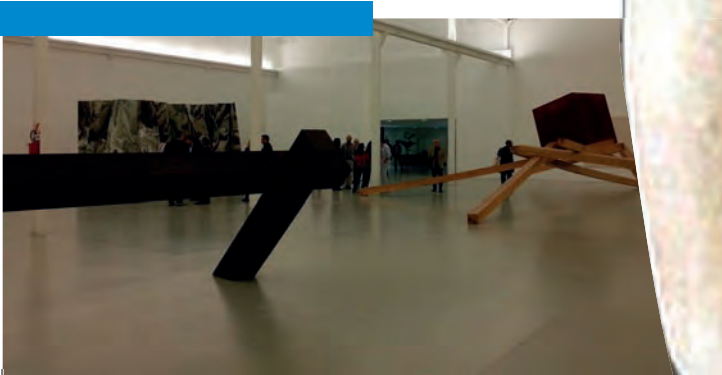


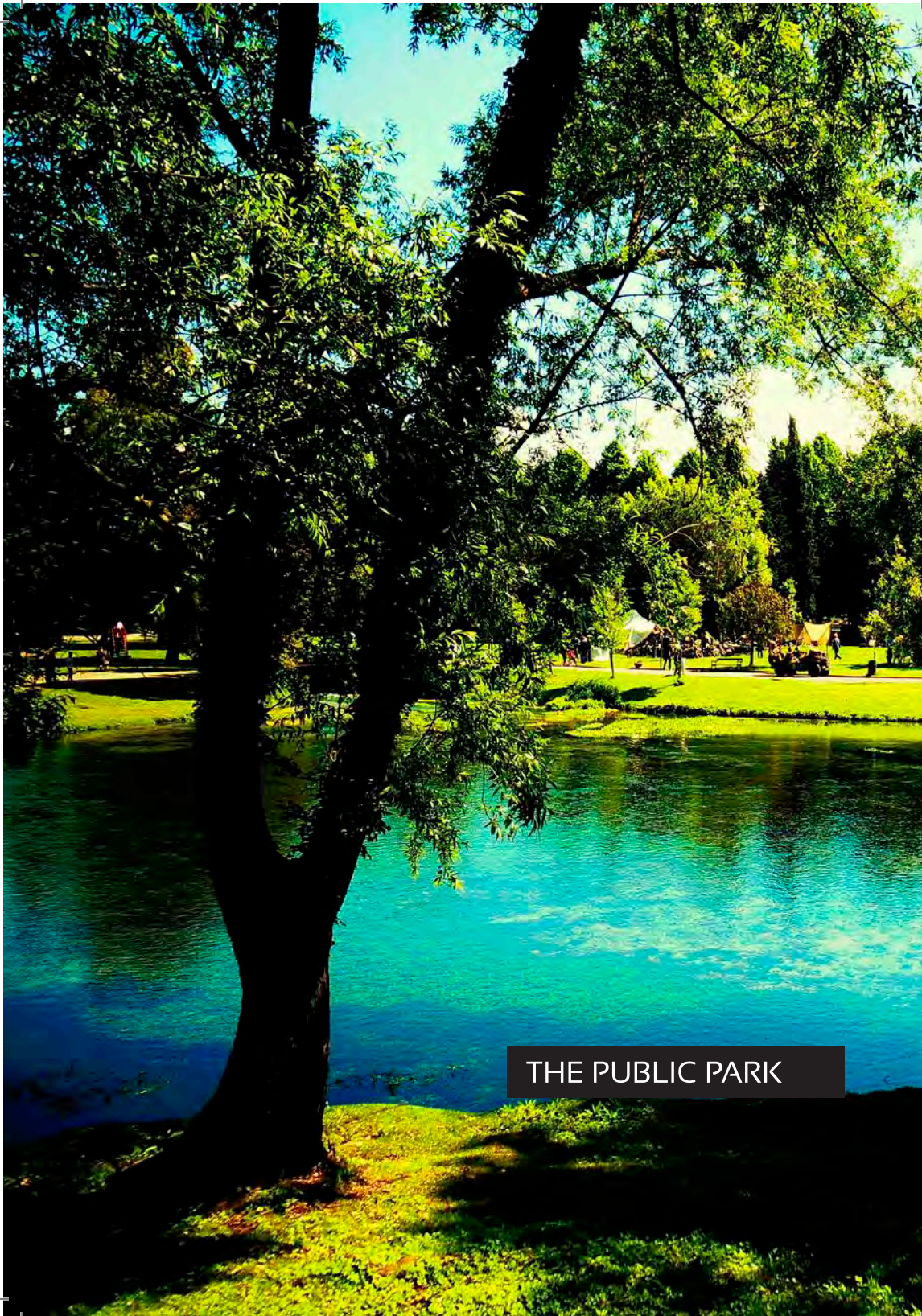
22

## **CAMUSAC – CASSINO MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**

The Cassino Museum of Contemporary Art, CAMUSAC, was opened in 2013. Its permanent collection hosts 250 works of contemporary artists in an area of two hundred squared meters. The park surrounding the museum is also the scenario for more sculptures from the collection of the foundation.

[www.camusac.com](http://www.camusac.com) ■





THE PUBLIC PARK

# NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

## 23 MONTECASSINO NATURAL MONUMENT

The territory is well known for its naturalistic importance and the strong tourist attraction as well, like the Montecassino Natural Monument -whose management has been entrusted to

the Monti Aurunci Natural Park since 2010 - the Abbey of Montecassino, together with the Rocca Janula, the Theater and Amphiteater, the Polish War Cemetery, the Sherman Tank, the Obelisk on

Point 593 and part of the Cavendish Road as well. Not only do the natural trails and paths make the most of an environment rich in fauna and flora,



but they also disclose to the visitors those memorable places strictly linked to WWII. Exactly among these mountain peaks the most painful pages of the local history were written both because of the many losses provoked by the war, and the

important artistic and cultural heritage, which has been damaged forever. Today an important work of theme-based routes planning of those places, linked to the war, is in progress through the valorization and restoration of the area. ■

## 24 THE PUBLIC PARK AND THE URBAN PARK OF THE GARI RIVER

The peculiar hydrogeological conditions, make the urban centre of the city of Cassino one of the richest hydric basin of Europe. The value of this resource is especially made by the refined physical-chemical characteristics that make the waters of the river

*Gari* particularly indicated for human consumption, beyond its available capacity (about 20 m<sup>3</sup>/s), and stable supply distribution.

Its springs are located on the slope of Montecassino and *Rocca Janula*, in Piazza Croce, behind the cathedral. After a short underground path, the *Gari* river comes to the surface again inside the Public Park (AKA Par-

co XV Marzo 1944), where it splits into two canals that, once joined up again, create a peculiar small lake. Starting from the gardens up to the Varronian Baths, a suggestive nat-

uralistic walking and cycling path, flanking the river, has been realized. Besides that, the river is also accessible for canoeing, boating and echo-rafting. ■

## 25 THE VARRONIAN BATHS

The Varronian Baths, plunged in a rich and charming vegetation, are located in close proximity to the railway station, in an area called "Monticelli". The bath complex takes its name from the famous and erudite writer *Marco Terenzio Varrone*, who lived in the first century BC. Although it is certain that he owned a luxurious villa right in this area, the exact location is still unsure. The natural spring waters that flow into the park system, eventually pouring

into the River Gari, are piped into continuous flow drinking fountains. The thermal water flow has been estimated to be 18 cubic meters per hour, with a temperature reaching 13°C. Their hydropinic use make them particularly indicated for diuresis induction, kidney stone disease and gout. A camping, provided with picnic areas, meetings, and outdoor sports can be found close to the fountain area. It is certainly the ideal place where to spend a full relaxing day. ■



THE VARRONIAN

BATHS

# CASSINO AND ITS UNIVERSITY CENTER

The Public University of Cassino was born in 1979. It included degrees such as Teaching, Economics and Mechanical Engineering. Today, the Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale counts about 12,000 enrolled students coming from Lazio and the surrounding regions.

Today it offers five majors:

- **Economics**
- **Law**
- **Engineering**
- **Philosophy and Literature**
- **Physical education**

Not very far from the center is the *Folcara University Campus*, which will host all the faculties, offices, administrative offices, research laboratories and the dormitories of the *Casa dello Studente*, in the imminent future. The Campus already hosts multi-purpose sport grounds and an indoor gym.

## 26 UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI CASSINO E DEL LAZIO MERIDIONALE

Viale dell'Università – Rettorato  
Campus Universitario, Loc. Folcara  
03043 Cassino (FR)

Main switchboard: +39 0776 2991

Fax +39 0776 2995561

<http://www.unicas.it>

Branches of La Sapienza University (Physical Therapy and Nursing Degree) and Tor Vergata University in Rome (corso di laurea in Scienze Infermieristiche) are also hosted by the Cassino University. ■



# TASTES

The culinary tradition of Cassino has very ancient origins, and it is based on the genuine and poor products of the Italian countryside. The leading role is played for sure by the extra virgin olive oil, widely produced in the area. Homemade pasta is definitely the queen of the first courses, with its several and different preparations: *sagne e fagioli* (strips of pasta with beans), *fettuccine with ragù* (fettuccine with tomato sauce), *gnocchi* made with potatoes. However, second courses aren't of less importance, above all if we talk about chicken and peppers, *alici arraganate*, snails, *abbacchio*, *coratella*, all of them well combined with a glass of local wines, among which the good Cabernet Atina Doc or the Maturano. Cassino offers a large variety of Restaurants, trattorias and wine bars where all the many different dishes of its local cuisine can be tasted. From the basic "slow food" and "km 0" regional dishes to a smart modern revisitation of the tradition, all the palates will be satisfied!

## Some recipes:

### Pasta e fagioli (pasta e fasule)

*Ingredients (4 people):* 10 oz Cannellini beans\*, 10 ounces all purpose flour, 1 spoon garlic or chopped onion, salt, 2 to 5 table spoons olive oil, pepper, 2 or 3 tomatoes.

Heat oil in a cooking pot, add garlic or onions, and stir a few minutes until the garlic / onions are softened. Then add the chopped tomatoes, and

simmer again for about ten minutes more. Add beans, and salt and pepper, hot water, and boil the sauce until the beans are cooked. When the pasta is made and the beans sauce is boiling, you can add the *pettole* (a kind of pasta) and cook everything together until it will be ready. Average: 10/15 mins.





## Cassino-like Fettuccine

*Ingredients (10 people): Dough: 10 eggs, 2lb 3oz whole-wheat flour  
Sauce: 7oz.lard, 10.5 oz ground beef, one sausage, 2lb 3oz mutton one onion, olive oil, salt, celery, basil, parsley, 2 liters tomato sauce, pecorino cheese, chilli, white wine,1.7 oz grated bread, parmesan. Prepare the phyllo dough as described in the other recipe, and wait flour t to get dried for about 30 minutes. Afterwards, cut the fettuccine, one cm large.*

Put oil and chopped onions in a pot together with lard and pan-fry the

ingredients for a few minutes. Add the tomato sauce, basil, celery and salt. Meanwhile prepare meatball with ground beef, eggs, pecorino cheese, parmesan, grated bread , salt and parsley. Add them to the sauce together with the sausage and a pinch of chilli, and let everything slowly boil for about two hours. Cook pasta into boiling water, and when it will be al dente mix it with the sauce and pecorino cheese.

## Pigna - Easter Cake

*Ingredients: First Step: 2,50 oz flour, all-purpose flour, 4 tbsp. water, 1 egg, 1 spoon sugar, 1/2 cube of beer yeast. Second Step: ½ cup milk, ½ cup olive oil, 5 tbsp vermouth or sweet white wine, 2 eggs, 5.30 oz sugar, ½ cup of sweet liqueur such as sambuca, 1 grated lemon rind, aniseeds, candied fruit, one teaspoon cinnamon, 1,50 lb flour (50% type '00')*

*First Step*, kneeing and working the dough. Then cover it, and let it rise for a whole night. On the second day, add all the ingredients of the *Second Step*, mixing them into a large bowl. Cover with a tea towel and place in an oven preheated to 30°, and let it rise for 4 hours. At this point, reheat the oven and cook for 40 minutes. When the pie is ready, ice it with caster sugar and colored aniseeds.



### Abbuoto (Lamb's Offal Rolls)

*Ingredients (6 people): 1 lamb offal and well washed and dried intestines, rezza (the the film around the lamb's liver), 1 onion, celery, parsley, 1 cup white wine, grated parmesan, 6 eggs, 1 sausage, salt and.*

Put oil and chopped onions with celery in a large pan, and, while the ingredients pan-fry for a few minutes, chop the offal and add it to the pan, and simmer. When partially cooked, pour white wine and wait until it evaporates. In the meanwhile mix the eggs and add them to the pan together with parmesan, salt

and pepper, parsley and slowly cook everything for about three minutes. When the offal is cooked, stretch the film on a large cutting board, or any kind of wood board, and put part of the ingredients on it, adding small pieces of sausage. At this point, wrap the film around them, creating a roll out of them, and finally wrap the intestines around the roll, as well. Put the rolls in the pan again, pan frying them for about three minutes more, before placing them on a baking pan and putting them in the oven. Oven cook for about twenty minutes. After that, rest the *Abbuoto* for about thirty minutes, before cutting it in slices. Enjoy it!

### Canascione –Easte Pastry

*Ingredients : 1 cup parmesan, 5 oz Roman cheese, 1 sausage, 4 oz chopped salami slices, 9 eggs, ½ lb flour.*

Filling: Mix in a bowl parmesan, Roman cheese, sausage, salami, adding 1tsp parsley, binding everything together with 6 eggs. Dough: Mix flour, 3 eggs with 1 spoon lard. Knead and

work the dough, stretching it out into a large flat disc with a rolling pin, on a wood board, and cut small discs out of it (7 inches large). Fill each of them with the mixed ingredients. Fold over the discs and cook in oven at 350 degrees. They take about 25 minutes. You may want to turn the oven up to 400 degrees to brown on the top

Source: G. Salveti, *Fasule & Tagliarieglie*, Cassino 1985.



# TRADITIONS **AND** EVENTS

MARCH 21

**HISTORICAL PARADE “TERRA SANCTI BENEDICTI”** The traditional homage of the Abbey militia’s oath to the Abbot of Montecassino as a lord of the “*Terra Sancti Benedicti*”, by the castles once under the jurisdiction of the Abbey, is re-experienced during the Benedictine celebrations in the spring feast of St. Benedict. The celebrations, which start

with the arrival of the Benedictine torch and take place both along the streets of the city and in the striking scenario of the Abbey, with a wonderful scenery and perfect choice of costumes, characters and medieval settings, take us straight back to the Benedictine era, bring visitors from all over Italy.

JULY

**CASSINO MULTIETHNICA** Impressive an unique exhibition in its genre in the area, Cassino Multiethnic was born with the idea of a cultural container developing multidimensional artistic meeting, with a glance toward the “involuntary theatre” of the Italian artists *Antonio Rezza* and *Flavia Mastrella*, crossing the *Etno*

*Rap* to reach the photographic-pictorial “*Future Memories*” “*to put on the same line of sight the head, the eye and the heart*”. The multiethnic contamination that every year meet up on the vital stage of this eclectic event, remind us the wideness of a cross-cultural world as an outstanding treasure for our common living.



## JULY-SEPTEMBER

**CASSINOARTE** Theatrical, music, choreotic, stand up and cinema proposals meet and coexist in the magical summer setting of the Roman

Theatre transformed in the neuralgic center of the city where international artists meet and involve the spectators.

## NOVEMBER-APRIL

**MANZONI THEATER** The Theatre offers a wide range of cultural events, from ballet, to music, drama and cha-

rity exhibitions. The Lyric season hosts the major lyric singers on the International stage.

## DECEMBER

**CHRISTMAS VILLAGE** The Christmas Village, hosted in Piazza Labriola, right in the heart of the city of Cassino, the peculiar Austrian like

town with its more than twenty little wooden houses selling all the culinary specialties of the tradition.

## TIRD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH

**ANTIQUES MARKET** The Antiques Market which takes place along the most central streets of the city, Viale

Dante, Corso della Repubblica e Piazza Labriola is one of the main tourists attractions.

# WALKING AROUND

**SAN PIETRO INFINE** The medieval town, destroyed by the bombardments in 1943, offers the visitors the chance to walk around its narrow streets with large steps and houses made in chalkstone. Worth of a visit are the “caves of the valley”, where the people from San Pietro took shelter, after having dig them with their own hands inside the mountain. Nowadays the old center is a National Memorial Center, and it is part of the Park for the Historical memory, whose Memorial Museum has been designed and built by *Officine Rambaldi*, under the supervision of *Carlo Rambaldi*.



**MIGNANO MONTE LUNGO WAR CEMETERY** The cemetery holds 974 graves of all those fallen whose bodies were buried in several war cemeteries spread in the peninsula, and it is the only WWII Italian war cemetery in Italy. General *Umberto Utili's* grave is hosted here, as well. Impressive is a chapel with a black marble altar in the center, surmounted by a sculpture by *Pietro Canonica*, portraying a dying soldier.



**AQUINO** Inside the archaeological park of the ancient *Aquinum*, a stretch of the ancient *Via Latina*, passing through the Sain Lorenzo Gate, can be covered by foot. The Romanic church Santa Maria della Libera, built in 1125 on te ruins of a roman and the small medieval suburb are very little jewels to visit.

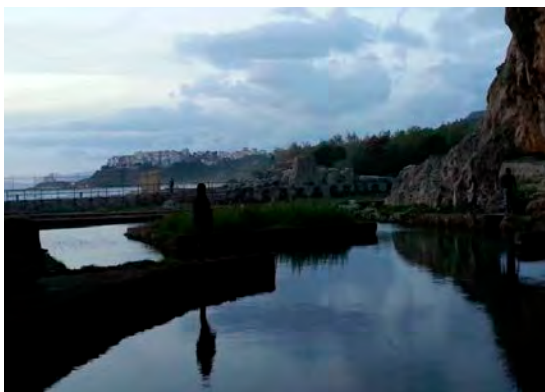




**ABBEY OF CASAMARI** The Abbey was founded in 11<sup>th</sup> century on the ruins of *Ceratae Marianae*, the Roman municipality that gave the birth to Caio Mario. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Cistercians rebuilt the place in the characteristic Gothic - Cistercian style. Inside it we can admire the squared plan cloister, surrounded by a corridor with a colonnade and mullioned windows, the chapter room, the refectory, the three naves church and the pharmacy. Also an important library and a small but precious archaeological museum are hosted



**GAETA** The city was born during the Roman Age as the arbor of the closet Formia, and was an independent dukedom from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century. Of historical interest are the Angevin-Aragonese castle, the Cathedral with its bell tower dating back to 12<sup>th</sup> century, the SS Annunziata Shrine and the Golden Cave (16<sup>th</sup> century), the neogothic church of St Frances and the shrine of SS Trinity, in the Broken Mountain.



**SPERLONGA** Renowned touristic site in the Roman Age, rich in wonderful villas, among which the Emperor Tiberius', Sperlonga is a very evocative fishing village built on Mount Saint Magno, characterized by narrow alleys and white houses, also famous to have been under Saracens and Turkish sieges.

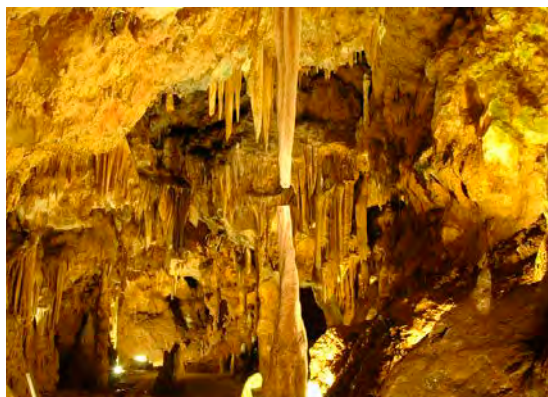
**ATINA** According to the legend, it was founded by Saturn, and named “*potens*” by *Virgilio*. Atina still preserves many archaeological evidences, as the mighty huge walls upon the hill of Saint Stefano. The Palazzo Ducale, in gothic style, still well preserved, too, was built by the Cantelmo family, in 1349, while the cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, rose upon a roman temple. The Archaeological museum, hosts precious findings from Pre-history to Roman Age, found in the surrounding areas.



**LAKE OF POSTA FIBRENO** The Lake of Posta Fibreno, natural reserve from 1993, is a wonderful oasis in the earth of the Comino Valley. Its springs, with an all year long constant temperatures (10/11°), keep stable the lacustrine habitat. Beside the peculiar flora and fauna, the extraordinary floating island, also mentioned by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia*, can be also admired while taking a break in the nature. The lake is rich in the endemic fish species known as *Carpione del Fibreno*.



**PASTENA** Pastena, a small village among the green reliefs of the Natural Park of the Aurunci Mountains, is famous for its caves, which are considered one the main speleological complex in Italy. Discovered in 1926, the caves lie in a fairy tale scenario crossed by small river and characterized by many caverns and concretions of carsic origins.



# USEFUL INFORMATION

## INFOPOINT

Piazza Garibaldi (Stazione FS)

## MOVING AROUND

Public Transport: Buses

Magni Turismo: +39 0776301351 - [www.autoservizi.magniturismo.it](http://www.autoservizi.magniturismo.it)

Mastrantoni Autolinee: +39 077623547 - [www.mastrantonibus.com](http://www.mastrantonibus.com)

Taxi: Service available in the area in front of the station FS

## Bike Sharing

Service available every day from 6:00 am to ore 10:00 pm. The bikes can be picked up through an electrical key card, at a station and dropped off at another one.

Info and card activation: Cassino City Hall: +39 0776366815

## HOW TO GET HERE

By train:

Line Railway: Rome-Naples via Cassino (Line Fr6)- Stop in Cassino Rail Station - Also available high velocity trains that allow to reach Rome without any intermediate stop.

The center of the city can be reached by foot (800 mt from the center) or by using the public transport, or getting a taxi outside the rail station.

By car: HighwayA1 (Milano-Napoli)- Ramp of Cassino. Once at the toll, turn on the left on SR 630

(Regional Road 630 linking Cassino to the cities of Formia and Gaeta, on the Pontine Coast, to Abruzzi and Comino Valley). The city is at about 5 km from the center.

For more info:

[www.cassinoturismo.com](http://www.cassinoturismo.com)

Tourist Information Office

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