



The Castle of Castevoli

MULAZZO

Location: The fortified village and the castle of Castevoli stand on the left bank of the river Magra, on a hill between Lusuolo and Groppoli. The area around the court of Castevoli was an important point for the roads on the right bank of the Magra river, as the stream coming from the North went towards Lusuolo and Tresana, which were linked to Chiesaccia and Terrarossa.

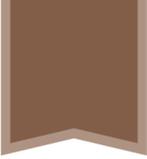
Type of castle: Fortified residence.

Construction period: 11th century.

First appearance in historical sources: In 1077 the emperor assigned the village to the Marquis Ugo and Folco d'Este.

Strategic role: Castevoli, as well as Groppoli and Mulazzo, was located along the road on the right bank of the river Magra linking the Apennine passes of Lunigiana.





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Further use: In 1797 the rule of the Malaspina on the area ended. From that moment on, the castle was abandoned. It was only in 1990 that the ruins have been restored by the painter Loris Nelson Ricci and his wife, who reopened the castle in 1998.

Current condition: Inside the castle there is an international cultural centre of arts, and there are several paintings, sculptures and architectural projects.

Viewing: Upon request.

History: It was initially owned by the Este. In 1195 it was assigned to the Malaspina and became part of the large fief of Mulazzo of Corrado l'Antico in 1221. After the division of 1266, it was assigned to the Marquis of Villafranca, who kept it until 1416, when it was given to the Genoese for fifty years. In 1561 it became an independent fief due to the division of the Marquis of Villafranca, who owned the territory after the short period in which it was annexed to Mulazzo.

The first marquis of Castevoli was Tommaso Malaspina, an important character in the political élite of Liguria and Tuscany. In 1676 the fief was then assigned to the Villafranca, as there were no descendants of the Malaspina.

In 1605 there was evidence of the dissatisfaction of the inhabitants, "the villagers of Castevoli complain about being exploited by their lord"

It remained under the rule of the Villafranca until the abolishment of imperial fiefs. In the same period there was a popular insurrection in 1794, which led to a revolutionary government for about one year. During the insurrection the castle was damaged.

Structure: The castle is composed by a triangular courtyard overlooked by a cylindrical tower. The western side of the castle is particularly impressive and equipped with corner sentry boxes. Tommaso I Malaspina started some restoration works in the 16th century to enlarge the castle for his wife Bianca Sicchi d'Aragona and so the main structure and the tower were linked. After his death in 1603, his son Francesco ended the works. Castevoli became then a well organised feudal village, with an impressive residence and strong defensive walls.