



# Castle of Filattiera

FILATTIERA

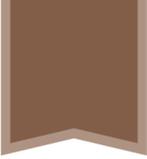
**Location:** The castle and fortified village of Filattiera (Fulacterion) are located on a hill on the left bank of the Magra river, in the north of Lunigiana, on the edge of a pretty high fluvial terrace deposit overlooking Pieve di Sorano (or Surianum) and the road to the Po Valley, the main arterial road in Lunigiana.

**Type of castle:** Fortified manor house

**Construction period:** Several rounds of archaeological excavations have proved the importance of this location between the 6th and 7th century AD, when the Byzantines fortified the *Kastron Soreon*, mentioned by George of Cyprus, to fight the Goths. The discovery of a 1st-century building near the parish church, including dwelling house, warehouses and shelters for the horses, proves once again the importance of its position alongside the road.

**First appearance in historical sources:** The castle was first mentioned in 1221, when the assets were divided between Corrado and Opizino Malaspina, ancestor of the lineage of the Spino Fiorito.





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**Strategic role:** Professor Tiziano Mannoni called Filattiera “the Apennine door on the Via Francigena” because of its position in the upper area of the river Magra, which allows the roads that come from the Cisa pass and the Cirone pass (avoiding Pontremoli), as well as those that come from Liguria through the Casoni pass, to join.

**Further in use:** Starting from the 18th century, the castle was turned into a residential building. Sold by the heirs of the Malaspinas in the 20th century, it was renovated by its new owners, who kept the internal structure and partially modified the external appearance.

**Current condition:** Renovated.

**Viewing:** Privately owned. If you wish to visit the castle, you can make an appointment by calling the municipal office of Filattiera on Monday mornings.

**History:** Initially owned by the Estensi family, the castle of Filattiera is a symbol of the feudal power in Lunigiana. It became property of the Malaspina family before 1202, when the Este family sold everything they owned in the Val di Magra. In 1221, it was an independent feud and the administrative centre of the lineage of the Spino Fiorito, which stretched from

the left of the river Magra to the sea. From 1275 on, a series of divisions gave birth to many marquis lineages mentioned in the pages about the related castles. The first division created the branches of Filattiera, Olivola and Verrucola. In 1351, the feud of Filattiera was divided between the sons of Nicolo I Malaspina: Opizzino got the castle of Filattiera and the surrounding mansions, Giovanni got Treschietto, Bernabò got Malgrate, Franceschino got Castiglione del Terziere and Antonio got Bagnone.

The Malaspinas of Filattiera kept the ownership of the feud until 1787, when the male lineage ended, but it was not easy to hold it and in 1549 they sold the feud to Cosimo I in order to resist the pressure of the Duchy of Milan, a pressure which came to the torture of the marquis Bernabò in 1513. The complex controversy that followed ended only in 1614, when Grand Duke Cosimo II became the owner of the feud, even if he left the personal belongings and feudal income to the marquis, who had practically moved to Florence. After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era, Filattiera (whose importance had decreased after 1650, when Florence acquired Pontremoli) became part of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and then of the Duchy of Parma, from 1848 to the Italian unification.



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**Structure:** Turned into a residential building in the last two centuries, the oldest structure of the Malaspina castle of Filattiera dates back to the 13th and 14th century. The previous castle of the Este and Malaspina families of the 12th - 13th century was located on the western side of the plain of Filattiera, near the Romanesque church of san Giorgio.

Now the castle consists of an almost rectangle-shaped residence encircled by a wall and an L-shaped moat which protects the residential unit, facing east and south towards the village. A medieval tower, partly ruined and incorporated into the walls, can be seen on the northern side. The perimeter wall encircling the garden corresponds to the perimeter of the city wall and includes some angles typical of the curtain walls of the 16th century, when firearms were largely used.

The interior is very evocative: it still has the classical structure with three big halls, the upper one being covered with a wooden coffered ceiling. In the hall on the ground floor, communicating with a well containing a recently renovated gangway, there is a strong central stone pillar supporting four massive cross vaults.