



# The Castle of Lusuolo

MULAZZO

**Location:** The structure is located between Terrarossa and Villafranca, on a hill overlooking the ancient ford of the Magra River. It includes the castle and the fortified linear village.

**Type of castle:** Castle and marquis residence.

**Construction period:** The castle dates back to the 14th century.

**First appearance in historical sources:** There are no writings regarding the construction phase. Nevertheless, the northern part dates certainly back to the 14th century.

**Strategic role:** The castle of Lusuolo surrounded the village and protected the roads; it was in a strategic position to control the bottom of the valley and the Francigena Road

**Further use:** At the end of the 17th century, when the castle lost its military function, the structure was slowly dismantled.

**Current condition:** It was restored and strengthened in the 1980's and in 2003 it was re-opened to the public.









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**Viewing:** It can be visited. Inside the castle there is the Museo dell'emigrazione della gente Toscana.

**History:** In 1221, Lusuolo belonged to the Malaspina di Mulazzo during the rule of Corrado l'Antico. In 1266, it passed to the Malaspina di Villafranca and in 1355, after a division, it became the core of the large fief of Azzone Malaspina, ancestor of the Malaspina di Lusuolo, one of the two sons of the Marquis Opizzino/Opizzone Villafranca. In 1450, it was conquered by Ludovico Campofregoso and was subsequently demolished in 1451. The Malaspina recovered this area in 1467, thanks to the Marquis of Fosdinovo and the Duke Galeazzo, Maria Sforza di Milano. After several family disputes, in 1500 Ettore Malaspina asked the Grand Duke of Tuscany for protection and offered him the whole fief. So Pontremoli became part of the Grand Duchy, which led this area becoming decayed.

**Structure:** There are few remains of the original stronghold. The most ancient walls are on the northern side, near a 14th century tower, while the remaining part dates back to the 16th century reconstruction.

The structure of the castle dates back to the middle of the 14th century, when Lusuolo became the residence of the Marquis in the independent fief of Azzone, thanks to whom the first transformation works of the original core into a fortified residence began.

After several destructions of the neighbouring Genoese territories – which Lusuolo survived due to an agreement between Moroello Malaspina and the French allied to Genoa - the Marquis became subject to Florence in 1424. At the end of the 15th century, the fief returned to the Malaspina, who assigned it to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, as they had been exhausted by the rivalry between Florence and Milan.

During the 16th century, the castle was transformed into a residence, and the defensive structures were strengthened. After the annexation to the Grand Duchy, Lusuolo lost its importance and the Medici partially demolished the fortress. In the second half of the 18th century, the site lost its military function.