

Castle of Podenzana

PODENZANA

Location: Not far from Aulla, in a dominant position on Mount Gaggio.

Type of castle: Fortified castle and residence.

Construction period: 13th Century, with pre-existing cores.

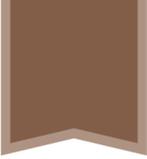
First appearance in historical sources: In the paper stating the foundation of the abbey of Aulla of 884 AD the castle is named locus di Potentiana. The castle and the village of Podenzana were then built on what was probably a small, inhabited built-up area.

Strategic role: Control of the confluence between Magra and Aulella; it became convergence point for the main roads in inner Lunigiana.

Current condition: It has been restored and is now used for events and weddings.

Viewing: Private property.





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History: The bishops of Luni, the Malaspina family – to whom this territory belonged – and the Republic of Genoa competed for this feud for a long time. The expansionism of the Florentine Republic, the Genoese Republic and Milan subverted Malaspina's estates during the 15th Century, until this area came back under the rule of the Malaspina in 500 AD.

At the beginning of the 18th Century, after Marquis Alessandro II refused to give any allegiance to the King of Spain, the castle was conquered and its external walls were destroyed by mines.

After the War of the Spanish Succession, Alessandro Malaspina obtained the feud again and also became administrator of the Aulla feud until 1797, when imperial feuds were abolished after the arrival of Napoleonic soldiers. After Napoleon's defeat and the Treaty of Vienna, Podenzana was annexed to the Duchy of Modena. On the 17th May 1861, thanks to the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, it was annexed to Tuscany in the province of Massa Carrara.

Structure: The polygonal structure has been deeply modified during the centuries, partly because of the destructions of the 18th Century, when all Podenzana fortresses were demolished. According to Branchi, only the defensive walls remained standing. It was then restored and demolished several times, due to an earthquake in 1920 and during the last World War.