



# Malaspina Castle of Pontebosio

LICCIANA NARDI

**Location:** The castle dominates the main square of the village, a suburb of Licciana Nardi, on the left bank of the Taverone river. The location is important because of the ancient road from Lucca to Piacenza, which was still considered the main road to Pontremoli according to the real estate registry of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Peter Leopold. The position of the bridge was so relevant that, in the 17th century, it led the marquises Malaspina of Podenzana, who back then held supremacy over a part of the Monti fief, to build a fortified manor house, which remained unfinished. It was called the Poderetto and was situated in front of the Pontebosio castle, on the opposite side of the Taverone bridge.

The Malaspina family often used it to host meetings in order to solve common problems related to the management of their dominion or to sign deals about the goods passing through it.

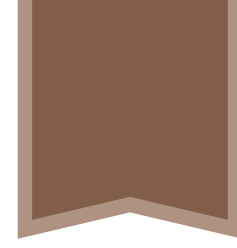
**Type of castle:** Fortified manor house

**Construction period:** The current structure dates back to the 17th century and it was probably built by Fabrizio Malaspina, who was ruling the fief of Pontebosio when it was declared independent.









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**First appearance in historical sources:** It probably belonged to the Bosi of Verrucola family. The origins of the town and the castle are unknown, since the first records of the castle appeared in the 16th century.

**Strategic role:** The castle controlled the bridge on the Taverone river, which opened the way to the Aulella valley towards Luni and Lucca. Its position made it desirable because it was suitable for collecting fiefal taxes on transit.

**Further in use:** The building's function ceased after the Napoleonic Era, when Francis IV (Duke of Modena) donated it to the new diocese of Massa, established in 1822 to host the Minor Seminary. The earthquake in 1820 caused the building to be abandoned until 1954, when it was turned into a school. After 1974, it was sold to private owners.

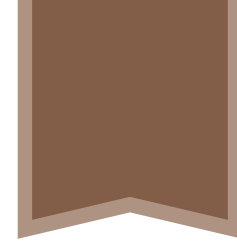
**Current condition:** Poor preservation status.

**Viewing:** The castle is privately owned and it cannot be visited.

**History:** The town, ruled by the Malaspinas, was involved in many political happenings that caused it to be annexed to several different fiefs over the years. In the 16th century, after being part of the fief of Villafranca, Pontebosio was annexed to the fief of Bastia and it became independent in 1574. At this time, it was assigned to Fabrizio Malaspina, who built the castle.

The marquis Fabrizio had agreed to exchange the fief of Pontebosio for the one of Terrarossa, so in 1581 Pontebosio was annexed once again to the Bastia properties. In 1631, the fief was declared independent again. The marquis Ippolito of Bastia granted the fief to his cousin Ludovico, clearly against the will of his wife Taddea, who was ruling it at the time. This started a war that the marquise ended in 1640, as she reconquered Pontebosio in an armed conflict.

The fief was given back to the Malaspinas by the Grand Duke of Tuscany and was involved in further bloodbaths caused by the misgovernment of Lodovico's descendants. The dynasty of the marquises del Ponte kept on ruling the fief until its last descendant, Claudio, was relieved of his imperial privilege during the Napoleonic Era. After the Congress of Vienna, the fief was submitted to the Duchy of Modena.



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**Structure:** The castle is built on a four-sided frame with four angular bastions and a small courtyard similar to the one of Terrarossa. The design is based on an architectural style that was popular between 16th and 17th century and was used to build fortified manor houses.