

Fortress and Castle of Verrucola

FIVIZZANO

Location: The fortified village of Verrucola is located on a hill on Mount Pò, overlooking the road that links the Magra valley to the eastern Lunigiana mountain passes, towards the Reggio Emilia plain and Modena, in the municipality of Fivizzano.

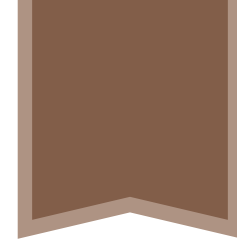
Type of castle: Control tower with enclosure, noble residence, fortified village.

Construction period: 11th century, when the Boschi established their power in the area. The most important construction works date back to the first half of the 14th century and were done by Spinetta Malaspina the Great.

First appearance in historical sources: In 1148, a document written by Pope Innocent III mentioned the ecclesiam S. Margarithae de castro Verucula.

Strategic role: It was mainly a military structure, located close to the road leading to Reggio Emilia and Modena. There is also a tower located on a taller hill, which was built to improve the castle's defensive system, as it was difficult to notice enemies from it.





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Further in use: The earthquake of 1481 drained the area, and the political and commercial centre of Fivizzano started to assert itself, so Verrucola was doomed to decay. In the 16th century, it was partially restored and transformed into an Augustinian cloister.

Current condition: In 1977 the castle was restored by the sculptor Pietro Cascella and his wife Cordelia von den Steinen, who transformed it into their residence.

Viewing: Private property.

History: By 1044 there had already been a reference to a fortified residence, where the Bosi established their siege.

In 1300 Spinetta Malaspina the Great obtained the fief and enlarged it by adding strong towers beside the original keep and by completing the defensive walls.

Spinetta temporarily lost its power due to Castruccio Castracani, lord of Lucca. After his death Spinetta re-conquered this territory, in middle of which there was Verrucola, and started the construction of his own residence. Thanks to a testamentary disposition the fief passed to the nephews of Spinetta, who kept it until 1478, when the Florentine State conquered it and established their headquarters in Fivizzano, whose castle became an administrative centre.

Crime news: The descendants of Spinetta the Great were involved in a tragic event provoked by Leonardo, the Marquis of Castel dell'Aquila and Galeotto Malaspina. In June 1418, they attacked the castle of Verrucola and killed all the family members: men, women and children. Only the young Giovanna and Spinetta survived, as they were with nurses. The Florentine lords intervened in the rule of the fief, opposed the expansion attempts of the murderers, and took care of the child. When Spinetta grew up, he took control of the fief until his death in 1478, when the fief passed to Florence by testamentary disposition. (He is the character in room 19.)

Structure: On top of the hill stands an auxiliary tower, which was built to improve the defensive system of the nearby castle. Inside the village there is an impressive palace divided into superimposed levels. On the western hillock there are the remains of a crenellated tower, which became a romantic part of the marquis' garden. This was located east of the hill and included two big quadrangular defensive residential towers within its perimeter. Between the garden and the palace there was the chapel of Santa Margherita, with a spacious loggia. The structure is surrounded by walls: enormous sandstone blocks, superimposed using a technique which was unusual in Lunigiana. The external wall, constructed in the 15th century, surrounds the village. It can be accessed via two doors.