

La città di Mattia Tosani

# Santa Sofia

ROMAGNA' VILLAGES

PROVINCE OF FORLÌ CESENA

## Origins.

Archaeological finds testify to the fact that the area around Santa Sofia has been inhabited since ancient times.

## From the Middle Ages to the Present.

Evidence of daily life and historical events from the Middle Ages can be found in the ruins of castles such as those in Corniolo, Pondo and Spinello. There are also various religious and monastic settlements dating from the same period, which have been rebuilt over the centuries due to devastating earthquakes that have totally changed the appearance of many places.

Precious sacred relics and important works of art are on display in many of the area's churches: the church of San Pietro, the oratory of the 'Madonna delle Grazie' in Corniolo, the church of 'Santa Maria in Cosmedin' in Isola, and the oratory of the 'Santissimo Crocifisso' in Santa Sofia

## Residences.

Interesting examples of private architecture can also be found next to the religious buildings, such as Palazzo Giorgi in Santa Sofia, built towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Palazzo Bianchini Mortani, in the quiet hamlet of Mortano.

## The Florentine period.

Florentine influence is very strong in this area: in its art, its customs and its food. Santa Sofia was in fact part of the province of Florence up until 1923, before passing to the province of Forlì.

## The Casentinesi Forest National Park.

Traces of the past survive in what is a wonderful natural environment, since part of the area of Santa Sofia is situated within the boundaries of the National Park. Places of particular interest include the forest of Campigna, which is both charming and mysterious for people more accustomed to the hustle and bustle of the city, and the meadows of San Paolo in Alpe, and the vil-

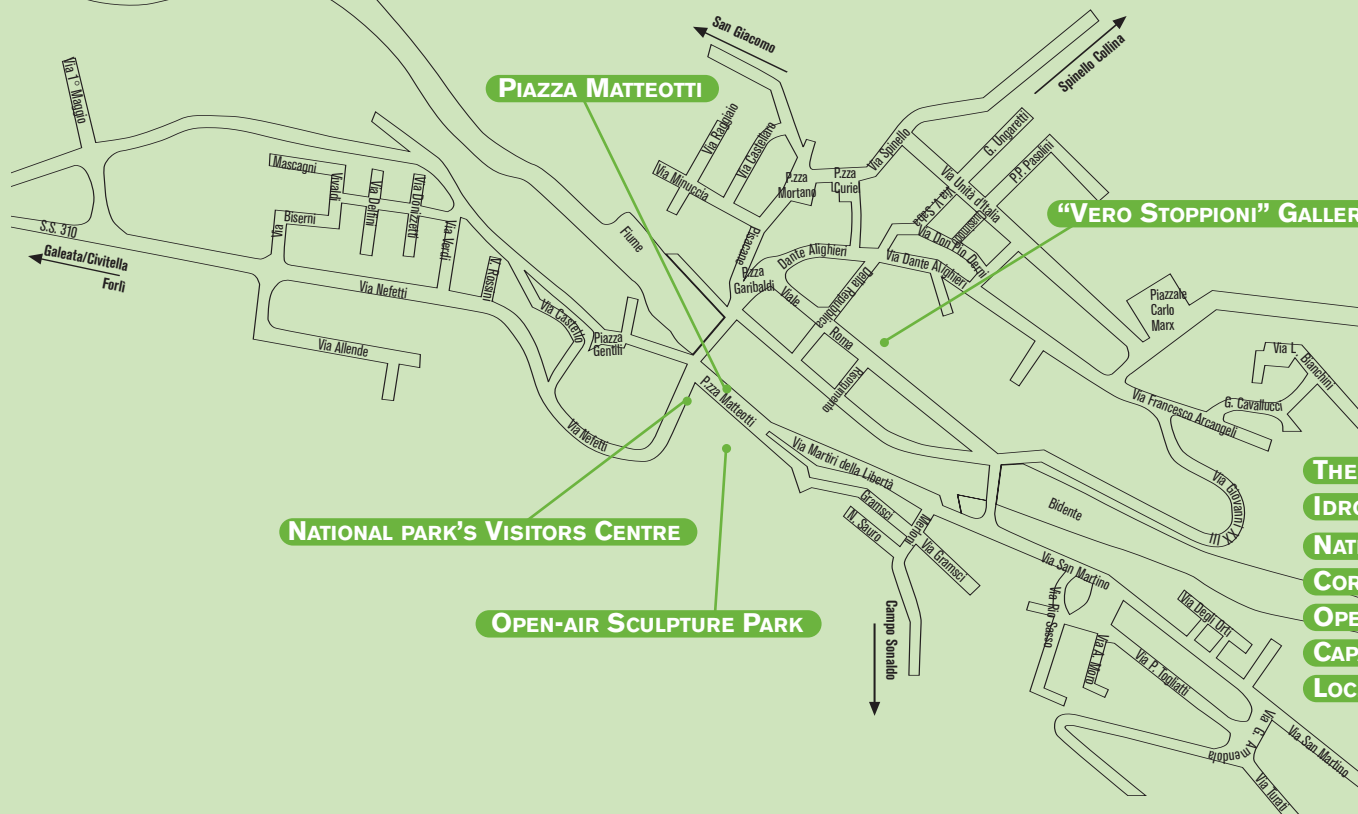
lage of Piandelgrado, where you can almost hear the voices of bygone days. The artificial lake formed by the Ridracoli Dam has also created a fascinating landscape. A well-maintained network of paths allows visitors to tour the park on foot, by mountain bike, on horseback, or even using the Campigna ski- lifts.

## Modern Art.

Santa Sofia has become a centre for modern art (it is home to the Vero Stoppini Modern Art Gallery and an open-air Sculpture Park), thanks in part to the famed Campigna Art Prize, which has been held here since 1955.

## Past and Present.

Santa Sofia has recently joined the list of towns that are members of the association of Slow Towns, towns where life is good, thanks to the quality of their food (which here includes Ravaggiolo cheese, Romagnola Beef cattle and "Tortello alla Lastra" pasta) and the search for a harmonious lifestyle.



## FAMOUS PEOPLE:

**Pascuale II** (1050 ca. - 1118) Pope  
**Nicolò Gentili** (1810 - 1866) "gonfalonier" of Santa Sofia  
**Francesco Protonotari** (1836 - 1888) founder and director of "Nuova Antologia"  
**Cesare Roveroni** (1874 - 1952) composer and director of the town band  
**Torquato Nanni** (1888 - 1945) politician  
**Innocente B. Biserni** "Cencino" (1895 - 1964) painter  
**Guelfo Zamboni** (1897 - 1994) named a 'Righteous Gentile' by the state of Israel.  
**Vero Stoppioni** (1920 - 1987) promoter of the Campigna Art Prize  
**Mattia Moreni** (1920 - 1999) artist

## TYPICAL PRODUCTS:

- \* *Raviggiolo cheese*
- \* *Romagnolo Beef Cattle*
- \* *'Tortello sulla lastra' pasta*
- \* *Honey*
- \* *'Gota' (cured pork cheek)*
- \* *Ciavar 'salsiccia matta', a typical sausage.*
- \* *Bread and pastries.*

## USEFUL NUMBERS:

**MUNICIPALITY OF SANTA SOFIA** - tel. +39 0543 974518  
[www.comune.santa-sofia.fo.it](http://www.comune.santa-sofia.fo.it)

**CASENTINESI FOREST, MONTE FALTERONA AND CAMPIGNA NATIONAL PARK**  
 Head Office tel. +39 0543 971375  
[info@parcoforestecasentinesi.it](mailto:info@parcoforestecasentinesi.it)

**TOURIST OFFICE** - tel. +39 0543 971297  
[cv.santasofia@parcoforestecasentinesi.it](mailto:cv.santasofia@parcoforestecasentinesi.it)

**Ospitalità nei Borghi**  
 progetto interregionale di sviluppo turistico (Legge 135/01)

Con il finanziamento del  
 *Ministero delle Attività Produttive*  
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 **Regione Emilia Romagna**

Assessorato Turismo. Commercio  
 tel. 051 283491 - [www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it](http://www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it)  
[emiliaromagnaturismo@regione.emilia-romagna.it](mailto:emiliaromagnaturismo@regione.emilia-romagna.it)

 **PROVINCIA DI FORLÌ CESENA**  
**IL CUORE VERDE DELLA ROMAGNA**

[www.turismo.fc.it](http://www.turismo.fc.it)



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 Rotary Club Forlì Tre Valli, Faenza,  
 Valle del Rubicone, Valle del Savio

Al progetto partecipano le Regioni Emilia-Romagna, Campania, Basilicata, Molise, Toscana, Liguria, Friuli Venezia Giulia.

# The “Vero Stoppioni” Modern Art Gallery

The “Vero Stoppioni” Art Gallery opened in 1990 and from the very start was strongly linked to the Premio Campigna Art Prize, reflecting the spirit of its promoter, Vero Stoppioni.

Using makeshift ‘labs’, Stoppioni’s idea was to give artists the opportunity to build up a close relationship with the town of Santa Sofia.

Since 1955, the various editions of the Premio have helped considerably to increase the number of works owned by the gallery, to such an extent that today it is considered an important reference point for the history of modern art from the 1950s to the present-day. The gallery’s home is an early 20th century building, with an open-plan display area with temporary metal partitions.

The most important works on display are without a doubt those by Mattia Moreni (1920-1999). Temporary exhibitions and displays are also held throughout the year.

Opening hours: for information tel. 0543 97 4551

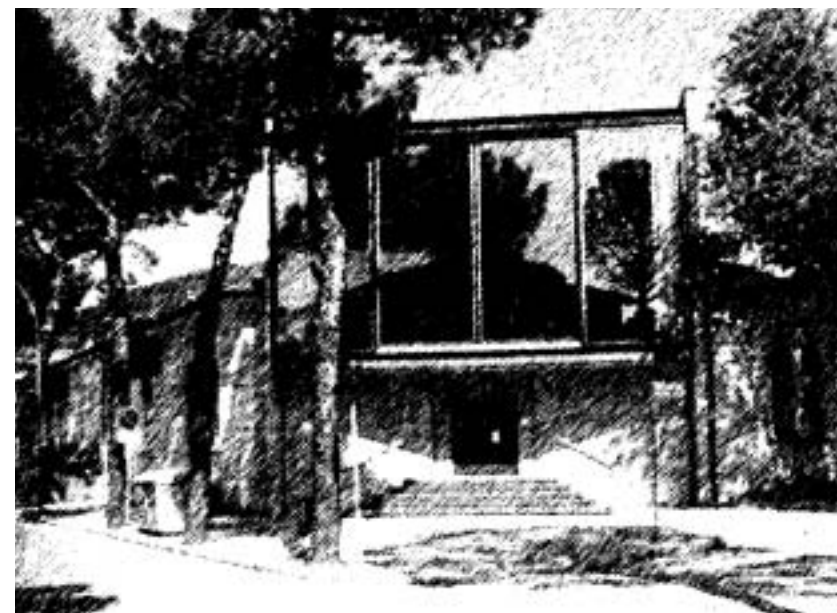
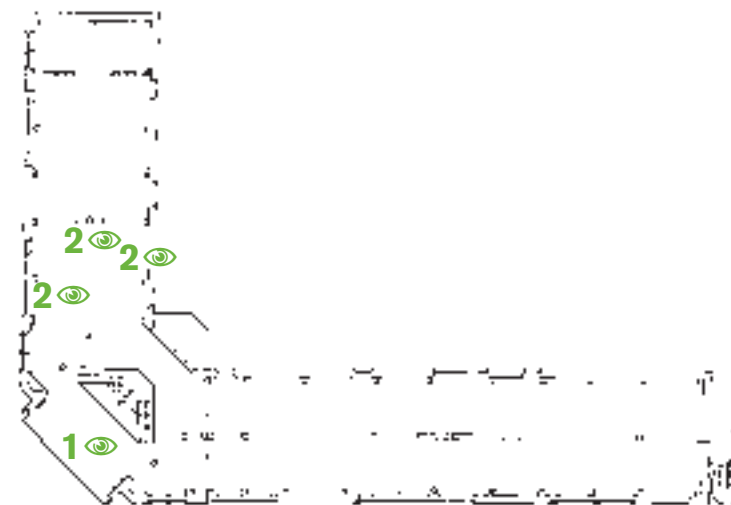
## points of interest

### 1. Mistura ( between 1976 and 1984)

An incredible work of art by the artist Mattia Moreni, made with different materials; it is an assembly of various materials which have been glued together, and belongs to the artist’s ‘Morenian’ period called the “Regression of the human race and fine arts”. A bust of Moreni (“Il Narciso”) can be found at the rear of the work.

### 2. Self-portraits (1985 – 1988)

There are five self portraits by Mattia Moreni on show in the gallery, from his “Regression of the human race and fine arts” cycle.



# Open-Air Sculpture Park

In 1993, an open-air sculpture park was opened in close collaboration with the Art Gallery. Its works, by internationally famous artists, can be found in various locations around of the town, creating an unusual interplay between art and the environment.

## points of interest

### 1. Santa Sofia 93 (1993)

A work by Mauro Stacciali. The three cement circles with metal inserts can be found in the Parco della Resistenza.

### 2. Under the Ginkgo tree (2001)

This work, by the Japanese artist Hidetoshi Nagasawa is in the Parco della Resistenza; it has been almost completely buried under the leafy branches of a large Ginkgo tree.

### 3. The exile of Ulysses (1999)

A work by Anne and Patrick Poirier, placed in the Bidente river in Santa Sofia. It is composed of a small, incomplete "building" in ruins surrounded by a series of elements: a boat, an eye and fragments of columns.

### 4. 'Costruttivo 96' (1996)

A work by Nicola Carrino. Located in the Bidente river in Bellavista; it is composed of fifteen 1x1x2 metre stone blocks, some placed on the ground, with others stacked on top.

### 5. 'Le vie del cielo' (1994)

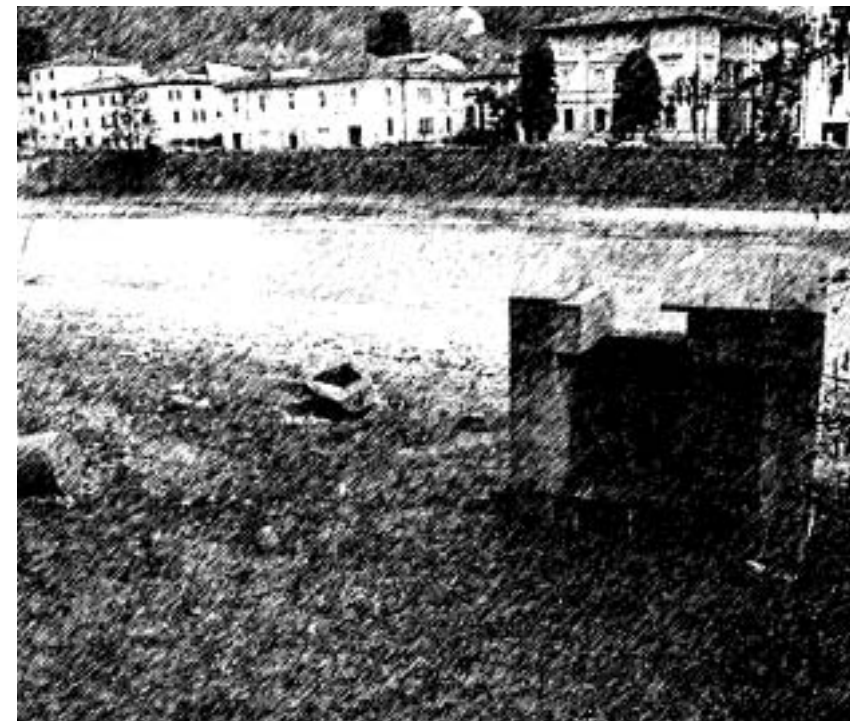
A work by Eliseo Mattiacci, located in Bellavista. It is composed of a cement frame topped by two metal rails unifying weight and lightness.

### 6. 'Casa' (1995)

This work by Luigi Mainolfi has been fitted into the natural context of the Bidente river in Bellavista; on close inspection, you get the impression that you are looking at an elongated post-atomic dwelling.

### 7. 'Memorial to the dead at Ridracoli (1994)'

This work, by Francesco Somaini, was made in the memory of those who died during the construction of the Ridracoli dam, and can be found in the middle of a fountain in Capaccio



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# The Casentinesi Forest, Monte Falterona and Campigna National Park

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The Casentinesi Forest National Park was created in 1993.

The park territory extends over two regions, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany, and three provinces, Forlì Cesena, Arezzo and Florence; the borough of Santa Sofia is part of the twelve boroughs in the park.

The heart of this protected area is the Campigna forest, one of the most fascinating natural areas in the borough, and one of the best-conserved forests in Europe; special mention should also be made of the Special Nature Reserve in Sasso Fratino (created in 1959)

## points of interest

### 1. Visitors' centre for the Santa Sofia park.

The visitors' centre for Santa Sofia provides lots of entertaining and interesting information about the Forest for tourists visiting the park.

### 2. The Valbonella Botanic Gardens ( Corniolo)

Lots of typical plant and floral species can be found from the Tuscan-Romagna Appennines; three educational/thematic nature trails have recently been created.

### 3. Campigna nature trail.

Particular attention is placed on the Silver fir-trees and the small firs of Campigna found along this nature trail where information posts provide information about the trail at ten stop-off points.

### 4. 'A trail for all... senses' in Campigna

This short trail is suitable even for disabled users, as the path is well-tended and directions are provided in Braille, and the teaching materials are easy to use.



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# Raviggiolo cheese and Romagnola Beef Cattle

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The upper Bidente valley is steeped in history and cultural traditions, and boasts a wide variety of quality, typical farming produce, including ‘Tortello di Lastra’ pasta, Gota (cured pig cheek), and ‘Ciavar’, which is a type of sausage. All these specialities can be fully appreciated only by visiting the area.

The famous Raviggiolo cheese and Romagnola Beef Cattle are worthy of a special mention and both are in fact covered by Slow Food certification.

**Raviggiolo** is a delicate tasting raw milk cheese made from unbroken curd, which is then strained onto fern leaves. The first historical record of Raviggiolo cheese comes from 1515, when Pope Leo X was given some as a gift by the public magistrate of Bibbiena.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Artusi used this cheese as a base for many of the typical Romagnolo dishes in his cookery books.



The **Romagnola breed of cattle** is native to the Far East, but it is only in the area of Romagna that its genetic and organoleptic value been fully recognised. Due to the mountain pastures and the policy of controlled feeding by breeders, this meat is particularly savoury and is therefore greatly appreciated by refined palates.

In traditional recipes, the meat can be fully appreciated in boiled beef dishes and stews where the less prized pieces are used. Thanks to a major revival, these products are now available in shops and restaurants throughout the area.

Santa Sofia, which is a member of the Slow Food association, organises various shows and events promoting these products throughout the year. (Santa Sofia Fair is held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December )

# Piazza Matteotti

Piazza Matteotti, on the left bank of the Bidente river, is the true heart of the town.

The square features several interesting religious and civic buildings, including Palazzo Giorgi (17th century) with a beautiful park stretching away behind the building, and the town hall (the former residence of the Crisolini-Malatesta families) with the civic tower.

The square has seen major changes over the centuries due to the devastation caused by earthquakes, as depicted in a canvas by an unknown 17<sup>th</sup>-century painter, housed in the parish church of Santa Lucia.

## points of interest

### 1. Oratory of the 'Santissimo Crocifisso'

A tiny oratory, extensively restored following the earthquakes of 1918-19, housing a 15th-century Crucifix and a 'Pietà' by the Florentine painter Giuseppe Bezzuoli (first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century).

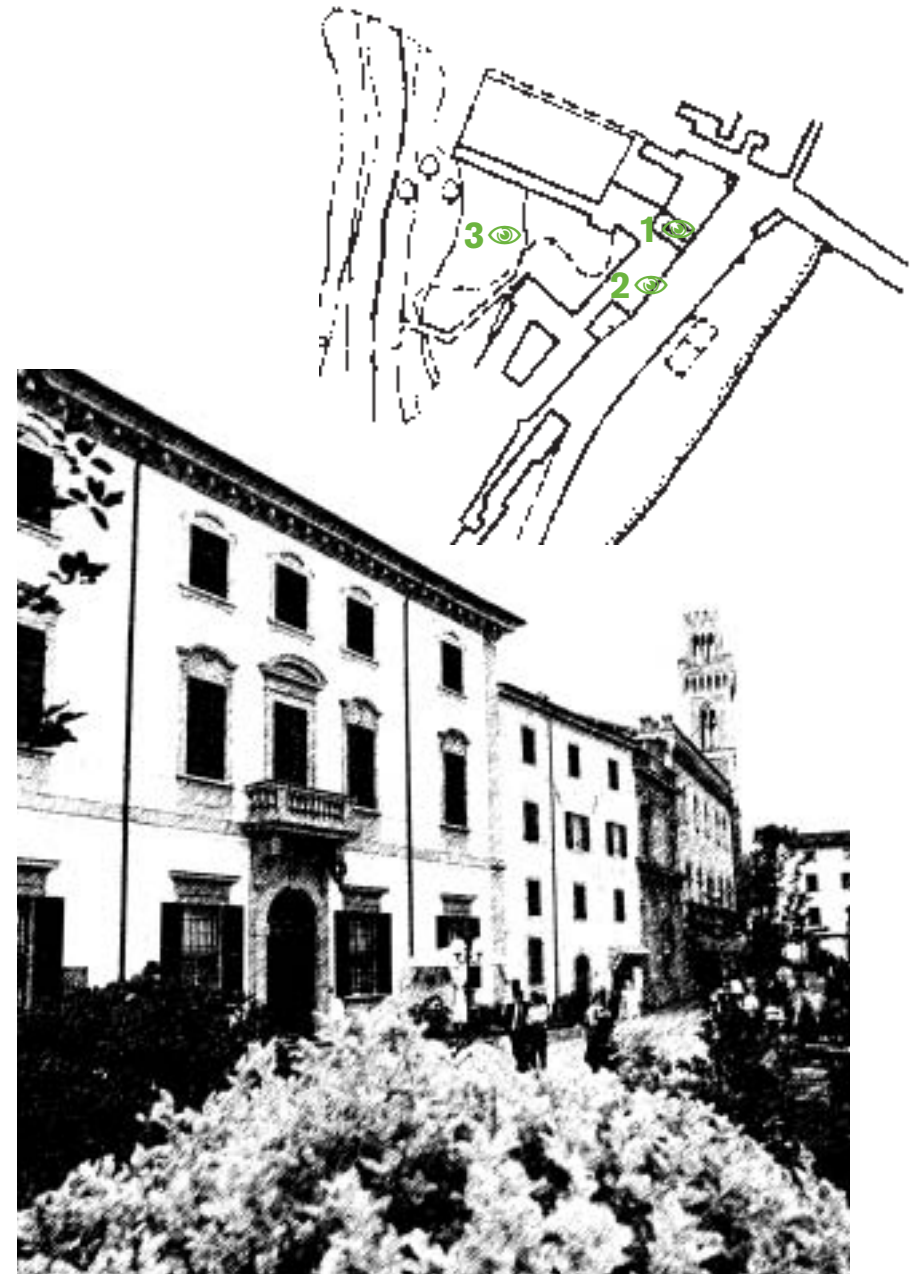
According to tradition, the oratory Crucifix was once housed in the church of Ridracoli, before being swept away by the Bidente river in flood and carried to the spot where the tiny oratory now stands.

### 2. Palazzo Giorgi

Believed to have been built by the Mortani family, this is the most important stately home in Santa Sofia; its late baroque façade features windows with different decorative motifs on each floor.

### 3. Parco Giorgi (Parco della Resistenza)

A historic park that once belonged to the noble Giorgi family, and today home to a series of sculptures by contemporary artists (open-air sculpture park).



# Church of San Pietro a Corniolo

The earliest reference to the church dates from the 12th century, when it was the spiritual centre of the ancient court of Fafforata (present-day Corniolo). Nothing now remains of the original building, as it was destroyed by earthquakes several times over the centuries. Its present-day appearance, in Romanesque style, dates back to reconstruction and renovation work carried out following the earthquakes of 1918-19. The church houses several valuable works of art (by the school of Giovanni della Robbia, and by Giulio Ponteghini, among others), dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as works by contemporary artists. Not far from the church, the Oratory of 'Santa Maria delle Grazie' is also worth a visit, with its brightly-coloured late-baroque decorations.

## points of interest

### 1. Glazed terracotta bas-relief (1520-1530)

From the school of Giovanni della Robbia, depicting the Assumption of Our Lady and, underneath, Saint Sebastian, Saint Romualdo (kneeling) and Saint Anthony Abate.

### 2. Madonna of the Rosary (17<sup>th</sup> century)

Oil on canvas by an unknown painter.

### 3. Wooden crucifix (17th century)

Hanging above the church's baptismal font.

### 4. Capital (16th century)

In Corinthian style from the 16th century; it is one of the few sculpted pieces surviving from the ancient church building.

### 5. Deposition from the Cross (16th century)

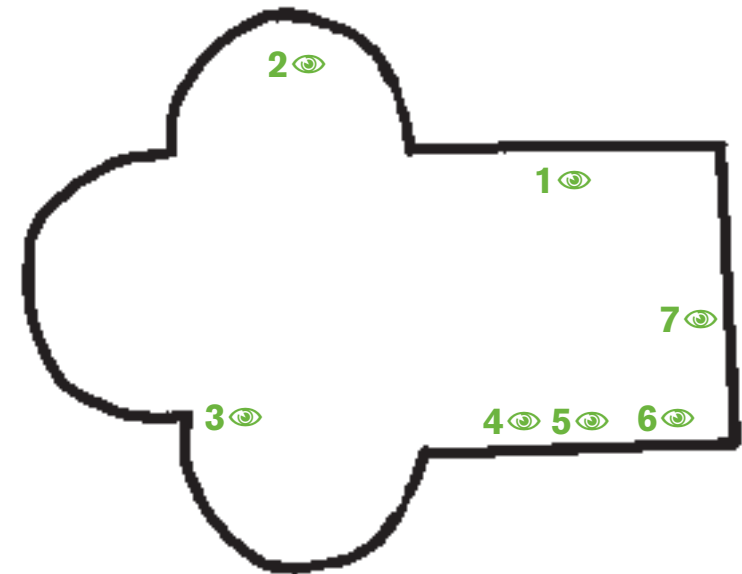
A work by Giulio Avezutti, known as Ponteghini; notice the wealth of detail in the landscape forming the background to the painting.

### 6. Pope Pascal II

Bas-relief by Giovanna Bellini, a ceramic artist from Santa Sofia, depicting Pope Pascal II, who was born in Bleda near Santa Sofia in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

### 7. Crucifixion (2004)

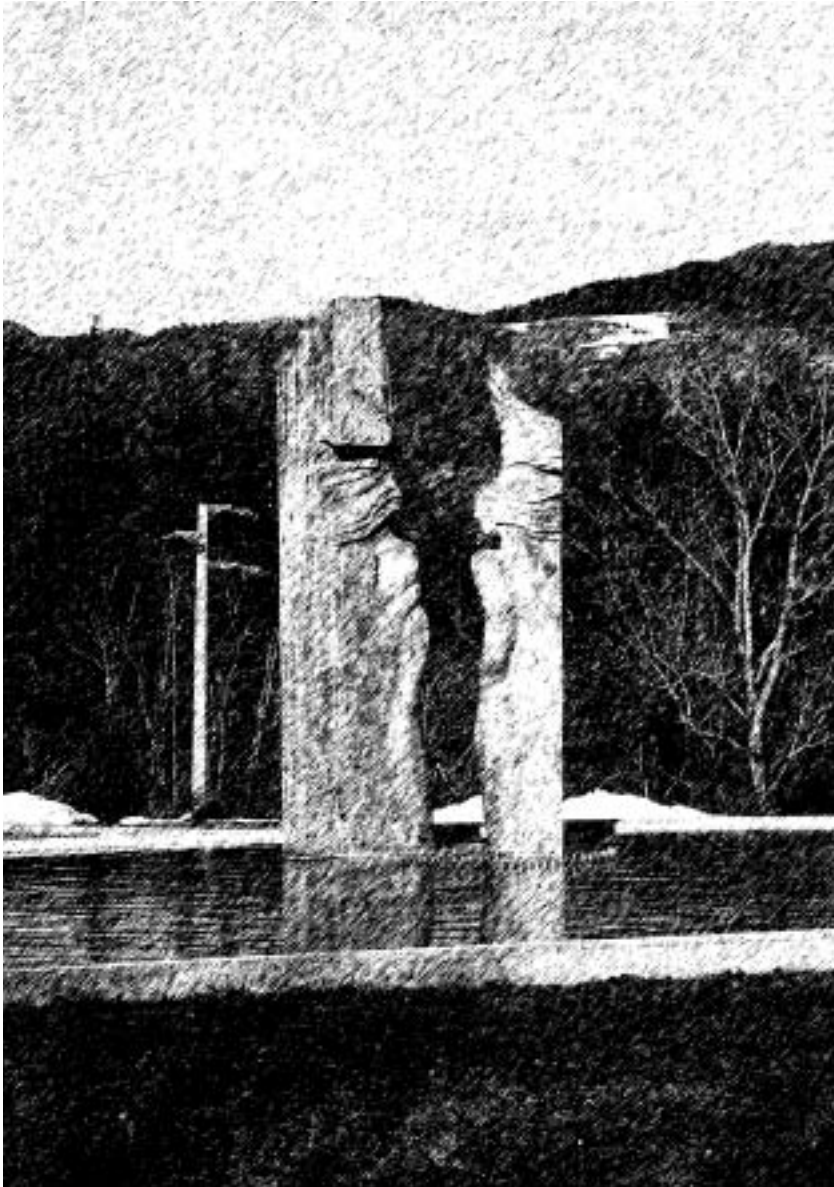
A majolica relief by the Gaeta Studio from Faenza, who also produced the church windows.



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# The Ridracoli Dam

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The Ridracoli Dam and artificial lake were constructed between the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s.

The dam's retaining wall is 432 metres long and 103.5 metres high and is made up of 27 concrete chambers separated by seams, and holds back the waters of the Bidente river at Ridracoli.

There are a variety of measurement instruments inside underground passageways, within the body of the dam and the dossieret, which allow the structure to be kept under constant control (measurement of movement, temperature, and pressure).

The man-made lake, situated in the communes of Santa Sofia and Bagno Romagna, is about 1 km<sup>2</sup> in size and can hold 33 million cubic metres of water. The water from the lake is filtered by the Drinking Water Centre in Capaccio and dispensed by means of the Romagna waterworks.

This wonderful man-made engineering masterpiece provides clean water to more than 47 towns in Romagna (the provinces of Forlì, Cesena, Rimini, Ravenna, and the Republic of San Marino) and in particular to the seaside resorts of the Adriatic coast.

The dam is situated in a particularly interesting natural area within the Casentinesi Forest National Park, where excursions can be made into the forests surrounding the dam, to visit the ruins of abandoned rural dwellings which had been occupied up until the 1950s and 1960s.

When the level of the lake is low some of these dwellings, which were submersed when the dam was constructed, can be seen. There is also a park nature trail leading from the dam to the mountain refuge of Ca' di Sopra.



Looking south-east from Ca' di Sopra, the Sasso Fratino Special Nature reserve can be seen in the distance. Created in 1959 it was the first true natural reserve untouched by man where permission to visit is given only if scientific research is to be carried out.

Animals which inhabit the high valleys of the Bidente river can often be seen while you hike round the lake. Animals such as wild boars, hinds, roe and fallow deer, porcupines, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey (eagles, hawks, goshawks and eagle-owls), and even amphibians can be seen (newts, salamanders and yellow-bellied toads)

Recently the Cenerino heron and the cormorant have been attracted to the lake to fish in its rich waters.

There are lots of facilities on offer to tourists and the most popular are the electric boat trips on the lake and the guided tours of the dam's underground passages

Some farmhouses near Ridracoli, used by tourists who love the quiet life and appreciate the beauty of nature, have lately been renovated with the help of Romagna Acque.

In the summer of 2004, a special Eco-Museum was opened in the village of Ridracoli, combining educational-cultural activities with tourism.

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# Ridracoli “Idro” Eco-Museum

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A recent addition to the Ridracoli dam complex is the Ridracoli ‘Idro’ Eco-Museum. This modern exhibition centre is located in the historic hamlet of Ridracoli, near Palazzo Giovannetti (mentioned in documents since the 18th century) and the beautiful arched bridge over the Bidente river.

The museum has a central complex and a number of theme centres in various locations around Ridracoli.

The main complex houses exhibitions explaining the distribution of water around the planet, and the importance of water as an essential element for sustaining life.

One section focuses on the management of water resources, and deals with topics linked to the water system in Romagna: from the dam, the artificial lake, water catchment structures, hydro-electric power stations, and purification, to the distribution network carrying the water into people’s homes.

A variety of natural exhibits, entertaining interactive games and experiments help visitors to grasp the full importance of water and of our natural-environmental heritage.

Another section is dedicated to the fauna of the Bidente valley, and features exhibits that were once part of the former nature museum of Ridracoli, which used to be housed in the building next to Palazzo Giovannetti. The animals on display were all found either dead or killed by poachers, while several exhibits come from the natural history museum of Verona, from the Foschi museum, and from other collections.

The museum also has several theme centres.

The nature centre: featuring displays and materials in the tunnel along the right-hand bank of the lake, where visitors can find out more about nature in general and about the Casentinesi Forest National Park, with a variety of educational materials (and exciting sensorial experiences) dedicated to the seasons in the park and to the wild animals found in the protected area (the wolf, for example).

The technological centre: here, a series of images and projects tell the story of the dam's construction, with information about the equipment and machinery employed, the water catchment and diversion processes used (for example the valley gutter used to transport water from indirect basins), and control and monitoring systems, used to ensure the safety of the structure.

The landscape centre: the starting point for a trip on an electric-powered boat.  
The museum also has two refreshment bars (one in the main complex and one on top of the dam) and a well-stocked bookshop.

The various services offered by the museum include: guided tours of the exhibitions, the theme centres and the dam; the possibility of organising educational visits for students, as well as excursions and events throughout the year.

Museum staff strive to offer all visitors, particularly school children, a stimulating introduction to a world of water, technology and nature.

