



FROM POPULONIA TO SAN SILVESTRO ALONG THE ROUTES OF IRON AND MINERALS

By following the traces of Etruscan, medieval, renaissance and modern metallurgical and mine workings it is possible to understand ancient production techniques and the history of this part of Tuscany, that looks out directly towards the island of Elba. Iron and coinable metal production has for centuries been the main economic resource of the Val di Cornia, where the extraction industry, among the most ancient and continuous down the centuries, has left an indelible mark on the landscape.

The iron age began three thousand years BC in the Val di Cornia. The **Archaeological Park of Baratti and Populonia** is a veritable open air museum, glittering with iron slag bearing witness to the power of the industrial Etruscan city. Starting at the beach, climbing through the Necropolises of San Cerbone and le Grotte, you reach the acropolis of the Etruscan city and the medieval village of Populonia travelling through thousands of years of history brought alive by the archaeological remains. The 80 hectares of the park overlooking the gulf of Baratti include the only Etruscan city to be built overlooking the sea - one of the most important representatives of this civilisation.

Using evocative reconstructions of the landscape, of ancient activities and settings, the **Archaeological Museum of the Territory of Populonia** illustrates the transformations produced by the populating of the promontory, from prehistory to the modern era. There are over 3,000 exhibits - prehistoric manufactures, finds from excavations of the Etruscan necropolises of Populonia and material from the Roman era, including the fabulous silver amphora (end of 4th century AD) and the evocative mosaic of the fishes (dated to the 1st century BC) which is the only Roman mosaic with marine decorations known to illustrate a shipwreck scene.

The **San Silvestro Archaeological Mines Park**, conserves unique features illustrating the mining and metal working cycles from the Etruscan period to the present day. It is an open air archive of the mining history of the Val di Cornia extending over 450 hectares from the Temperino mine, an underground route revealing ancient and modern mining chambers, to Rocca San Silvestro - village of miners and smelters built between the 10th and 11th centuries. The mineral extraction and metalworking activities, in addition to a system of mining tunnels and underground working areas, have left behind the remains of structures and installations that are some of the finest examples of European industrial archaeology. The mine buildings house the mineralogical, archaeological museum, and mining museums with a route especially set up within the Temperino mine, and also reception facilities.

Each park has a visitor centre, refreshment facilities and areas set aside for educational activities and workshops. From Populonia to San Silvestro, along the iron and mineral routes, each visitor can construct their own journey through history.

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