

Jewels in the Italian crown

Beauty and grandeur are never far away in Emilia Romagna

During the middle ages, Italy was a patchwork of city and papal states run by powerful lords and bishops where the ruling elite enjoyed great wealth and power.

The legacy of those times is manifested in many ways in the historic villages of the region, including beautiful works of art, imposing citadels and civic architecture of the highest order. Just a short distance inland from the razzmatazz of the Adriatic coast, in the hills of Emilia Romagna, many of these medieval jewels remain, splendid in their grandeur, redolent in intrigue and mystery. Visitors can dip their toes into history with a leisurely afternoon visit, or for a special treat stay overnight and



savour the unique atmosphere.

Just a few kilometres from the town of Rimini one such jewel is Montegrifolfo, its medieval credentials virtually intact, protected by high walls with a single entrance featuring a castle, where guests can stay in luxurious hotel rooms for an unforgettable experi-

ence. A bit further on, close to the Republic of San Marino, the village of San Leo (in the province of Rimini) occupies the most dramatic of locations; built atop a steeply sloping rock outcrop overlooking the plain, it has been associated with such legendary names as Dante and St Francis of Assisi, who both stayed here. As impressive as the guest list is the compact layout of the medieval buildings complete with an imposing and perfectly intact fortress.

Both San Leo and Montegrifolfo are regarded as being among the most beautiful villages in Italy and, in addition to these, there are many more places just as striking, including Bertinoro, in the hills around Forlì-Cesena province. Bertinoro overlooks a fertile landscape with views as far as the sea,



and because of this panorama it is often called 'The Balcony of Italy'. The medieval citadel of the village is a great attraction, but people come just as readily for the wines and food, for which it is renowned. The superb local gastronomy is characterised by fresh pasta, still handmade by the 'sfogline' (the lady pasta makers), and any dish is made even more delicious with a glass of Sangiovese red wine made with grapes from the local vines.

Discover Emilia Romagna Wine and Food Festival

Savour the flavour at the Sant'Agata Feltria White Truffle Fair on 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 October. Visitors will get to taste and buy all the typical seasonal products: mushrooms, chestnuts, honey, medicinal herbs, agricultural and dairy products, as well as handmade artisan products.



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