

## 2. STAGE

→ Artimino

→ Bacchereto

Length: 22.1 km

Time needed for the journey only: 6 h 15'

Time needed considering the stops: 7 h 25'

### Detailed description

Before moving in the direction of the villa, it is advisable to have a tour of the town by taking the small road that goes around it beyond the houses on the north side for a view of the southern part of Montalbano area and Florentine-Prato plain.

From Piazza San Carlo in the village of Artimino, move towards the Villa la Ferdinanda located on the opposite end of the long hill, and when you reach Via di Querceto, turn right and follow the small road that goes downhill between the olive trees. Pass the first house (Pollaio farm) going around it from the left and then turn left onto the country track at the height of the pole with the solar panel. Then go around the hill on which the villa stands, covering a flat stretch with a beautiful view of the apse of the parish Church of San Leonardo until you reach the asphalt near the Casone farm, which shows anomalous architectural details (the stone framing of generous dimensions and carved windows, recassing in the wall that housed a tabernacle) for a farmhouse (20'). Here you turn left uphill following the road that passes next to another house and continues with the layers of boulder plunging in the direction of North-East in evidence on its bottom, thus justifying the presence of historic boulder quarries on the other side (north-east in fact) of the hill of Artimino. These quarries have provided over the past centuries, and together with those of nearby Golfolina, the stone material for many Florentine palaces. You arrive at the asphalted road right near the point where, on the other side, a flat cart road branches off with a sign indicating the Necropolis of Prato Rosello (white-red CAI signs 300).

Take it and, skirting on your right a piece of the seventeenth-century fence wall of the Barco that comes from the south and, crossing the track we are traveling on, heads towards the Villa, continue flat in the woods, leaving out a small road that branches off to the left; continue straight on the main track and so we will do on the other occasions that arise up to the necropolis duly marked with yellow/red signs. Then arrive at a plateau at the top of the hill with a view that opens towards the North-East and where there is an intersection (40'). Go straight in the direction of the nearby necropolis that we suggest to visit following the signs placed between the various burial mounds. Go back to the intersection and here you turn left downhill towards Poggio alla Malva. Shortly after, the panorama opens towards the South on the crafts area of Montelupo and the bell tower of Capraia while on the left is the wooded hill of San Vito in Fior di Selva. A little further on, the view also widens to the nearby hill covered with maritime pines of Recinto della Pineta, to the modern vineyards with the Poggilarca estate (abandoned) in a magnificent position and to the village of Camaioni, down in the river Arno valley. Leave the wood and continue straight through the olive trees in a steep descent aiming for an Enel pole and passing the Barco wall (collapsed); at the end of the descent, turn left and touch the small cemetery of Poggio alla Malva from the right to come out on the paved road, opposite

the entrance to the cemetery itself. Turn right and immediately arrive at a crossroads with a tabernacle (1h) where you turn left onto the dirt road that winds slightly downhill between two rows of olive trees. On the left, further down, the village of Poggio alla Malva. You pass a house while on the left you can see, on the edge of a steep modern vineyard, the ancient enclosure wall of the Barchetto della Pineta, a sort of detached appendage of the Barco Reale. A little further on you come to the beautiful seventeenth-century portal with stone ashlar that delimited the entrance. Next to the portal there is a beautiful seventeenth-century mansion (the Villa) built on a manor building belonging to the Medici estate.

Go back along the same road to the crossroads where this time you turn left in the direction of Poggilarca farm characterized by a large and articulated volume as evidence of its constructive diachronicity, perhaps the result of the change in the size of the farm over time it referred to. As soon as you reach the house, follow the cart track to the right that touches a large mulberry tree and continues flat among the vineyards up to an intersection where you follow the road that gives access to the house (visible) located further ahead; this leads quickly to the dwelling; pass the entrance gate (1h 15') and then turn left downhill towards the lake below which can be reached quickly. Near the fence, turn right (signs for Artimino-La Fonticina), walk along the lake briefly and begin to climb, passing shortly after the stream that feeds it (to do this, turn left) and continue uphill towards of the house that you reach quickly (1h 30'). Pass the chain and continue on the service road to the house (L'Olivo farm), thus arriving at the intersection at the Pollaio farm, where the solar panel is located. This time you turn left and enter the field of olive trees via the country road that descends with a beautiful view of San Leonardo church and Artimino. Pass the ditch that feeds the lake below and quickly go up to the asphalted road right next to an aedicule of the Stations of the Cross (2 hours).

Turn left and you are at the beautiful parish church of San Leonardo which is worth a visit. In front of the staircase that goes up to the entrance portal of the religious building, take the country road that enters among the olive trees; go along the wood and as soon as you reach a huge and isolated holm oak, turn right downhill entering the wood following the cart track and passing a chain. At the Enel pole, keep left on a steep descent and then left again at the bird hunting post, always continuing on a steep descent. All the lateral deviations are omitted until you cross a cart track with a field of olive trees on the right: here you turn left, pass the chain and shortly after reach the asphalted road (Via Arrendevole) where you take a left uphill to the crossroads for San Martino (2h 20'). Turn right in the direction of the abbey which can be reached quickly after an uphill stretch (2h 35').

Go back to the chapel next to the road that marks the site of the ancient cemetery of San Martino. Here take the small road to the left that goes into the woods (white/red sign indicating the fortress of Carmignano) and ignore all the lateral deviations keeping on the clearly evident track until you reach a sharp curve to the right placed at the head of a small valley crossed by a ditch, and continue to find a next one. Still ahead on the flat, ignoring the lateral deviations and always following the white/red signs. A third curve to the right always obtained in the head of a small valley, with a source (not perennial) placed just below the track (3h), anticipates an even stretch which is followed by a fourth curve to the right always at the head. Shortly after you are near an intersection with two cypresses in the middle (3h 10'): continue straight, following the signs, ignoring the detour to the right and shortly after you are at a new intersection: here turn right and then, immediately after, on the left downhill always following the signs. This is followed by a downhill stretch with a rough and pebbly bottom that quickly leads into the valley of Carpineto stream, emissary of Lake Verghereto, right next to a house that has taken

the place of a mill, located on the beautiful white road that climbs to Verghereto farm (3h 20'). Enter the road (note the ancient bridge that supports it) and turn left starting to climb and passing by the house that has an aedicule facing the road. Begin to climb while at the top you can see the bell tower of the Church of San Pietro in Verghereto; the route is marked as CAI Prato 1. Leave the deviation on the right leading to the semi-ruined farmhouse located just above and continue uphill to meet, on the right side of the road, magnificent carved stone bollards, once functional to avoid the accidental fall of the wagons in the field below, and on the right a beautiful stone wall with ladders cut into its thickness to go up to the field of olive trees above. This wall gives way to another road building with the same function of containing the road, of equal beauty and preciousness due to the construction details it presents. Pass a left curve with, on the outside, the two columns that defined the entrance to the nineteenth-century cemetery area of the small village of San Pietro a Verghereto. Another short uphill stretch leads to the panoramic terrace in front of the Ginestre farm, with the adjoining Oratory of San Francesco (3h 35').

On clear days it is possible to see Mount Morello (opposite), Calvana (left), Mount Faggi di Iavello and the Acquerino of Prato area (even further left). Nearer the fortress of Carmignano, the village of Poggio Secco and the wooded hill of Poggio ai Colli. On the right, instead, the hill of Artimino with the parish church of San Leonardo and, behind, Florence. Continue to climb following the asphalted road, make a left curve with an old spring and shortly after take a downhill dirt road on the left that leads quickly with some curves into the wood cut on a stream that you cross right under the barrier in stone that forms Verghereto lake (sport fishing) (3h 45'). Once you have passed the small stream, the historical bridge made up of gigantic boulders is worth a look, used - like the others present on the course of this small stream - to slow down the speed of water rolling, thus decreasing its erosive capacity.

Continue in the woods the visible trace (ancient road system?) which shows stone walls that support it on the valley side and quickly arrive to cross a small stream that anticipates an uphill crossing (3h 55'). Here turn right in a steep climb continuing for a stretch characterized by deep slopes, outcropping boulders and a bumpy bottom that leads to a flat part where the track runs along one of the ancient walls inside the Medici Barco which then moves away. Immediately afterwards a new steep but short climb begins, also characterized by deep water grooves and a very uneven ground. As soon as you reach the top, where the path widens and flattens, you will meet an intersection that comes from the left; continue to the right to reach, almost immediately, a new intersection where also here keep to the right, climbing quickly to a bump where you meet again the Barco wall left shortly before (4h 15').

Continue straight ahead slightly downhill in a forest of young chestnut trees and keep left at the intersection that is immediately after and the same is done at the next intersection to arrive at a new intersection point with a large forest road; on the intersection stands a remarkable specimen of oak born from a stump: continue straight on even, ignoring the deviation to the right downhill which is immediately after and at the umpteenth intersection, continue straight on even; you are now in sight of Montalbano riding school which you reach quickly (4h 30'). Walk along the horse training area from the left and arrive at a well-trodden cart track (Via Valicarda) where you turn right; continue on the wide track passing Castra estate (on the left) and an area equipped with wooden tables (on the right), arriving after a short stretch to the asphalted road (4h 40').

Follow the road in the direction of Carmignano (straight ahead) to quickly arrive at the

entrance of San Giusto Campsite where the signs (CAI 300, Archery) are positioned near the gate, indicating the direction that runs parallel to the campsite fence with a narrow path in the woods. The stretch is short and shortly after you come out in the area dominated by the beautiful Abbey of San Giusto al Pinone (4h 50').

After visiting the medieval monastic complex, continue along the road that leads to the church, facing the facade, ignoring the white/red signs. You arrive at the provincial road of Pietramarina, next to a restaurant: turn right and then, after a few tens of meters, left for the archaeological area of Pietramarina and the ridge of Montalbano (signs for Pietramarina Protected Area, Torre di Sant'Alluccio 300, System of Protected Areas of the Province of Prato). You begin to climb immediately in a sustained manner on the service road to the ridge of Montalbano and, as you climb, the panorama widens to the right towards the south. Ignore the deviation to the right downhill that returns to the provincial road and then instead take the one (marked) on the left that enters the wood with the indication "Pietramarina - Torre Sant'Alluccio" continuing slightly uphill and ignoring the unmarked deviation to the right. Then follows a slightly flat stretch and then a second deviation to the right (marked) (5h 05') which you follow slightly uphill, continuing in the Mediterranean scrub without considering the various lateral deviations. You then quickly arrive at the archaeological area of Pietramarina near two green patriarchs, a holm oak and a cedar (5h 15').

After visiting the archaeological area, descend from the wide service road in the woods that moves away in the opposite direction (North-West) to that of arrival (South-East). Almost immediately you reach the characteristic Devil's Boulder, once an excellent vantage point to the west, now hidden by the trees below, and then to the asphalted service road, right in the middle of a saddle from which various paths branch off. Then turn right and take path no. 2 (marked) consisting of a large downhill road that passes almost immediately alongside the Scodellino spring which remains on the left, slightly detached from the road. The wide track, always downhill, quickly leads to a pitch where two other water deposits are installed, connected to pumps that suck water from an underground spring (5h 35').

Keep to the right on the small road where the light blue pipe of the aqueduct emerges at times until you reach the next crossroads where you still keep to the right continuing downhill and passing a bend to the left while at the next one (right) you continue straight, on the outside of the curve itself, and you come to a new intersection where you go straight on even. Also at the next crossroads you go straight, leaving out the small road that almost goes back to the left and leads to Fornia. Continue downhill always following the aqueduct pipe, pass an inspection pit of the same and arrive at a crossroads (5h 55') where you continue downhill to the right, leaving out the straight direction (in the plain) and also that to the left.

You then suddenly emerge in a stretch without vegetation where a wonderful view of the hills of Carmignano and the Prato-Florentine plain appears. Continue touching the sheet metal huts with crops around them and then keep sharply to the left near a ruin. You pass immediately after a spring (on the left), come to cultivated fields and quickly to asphalt. Turn left and quickly reach Bacchereto, in the square (6h 15').

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