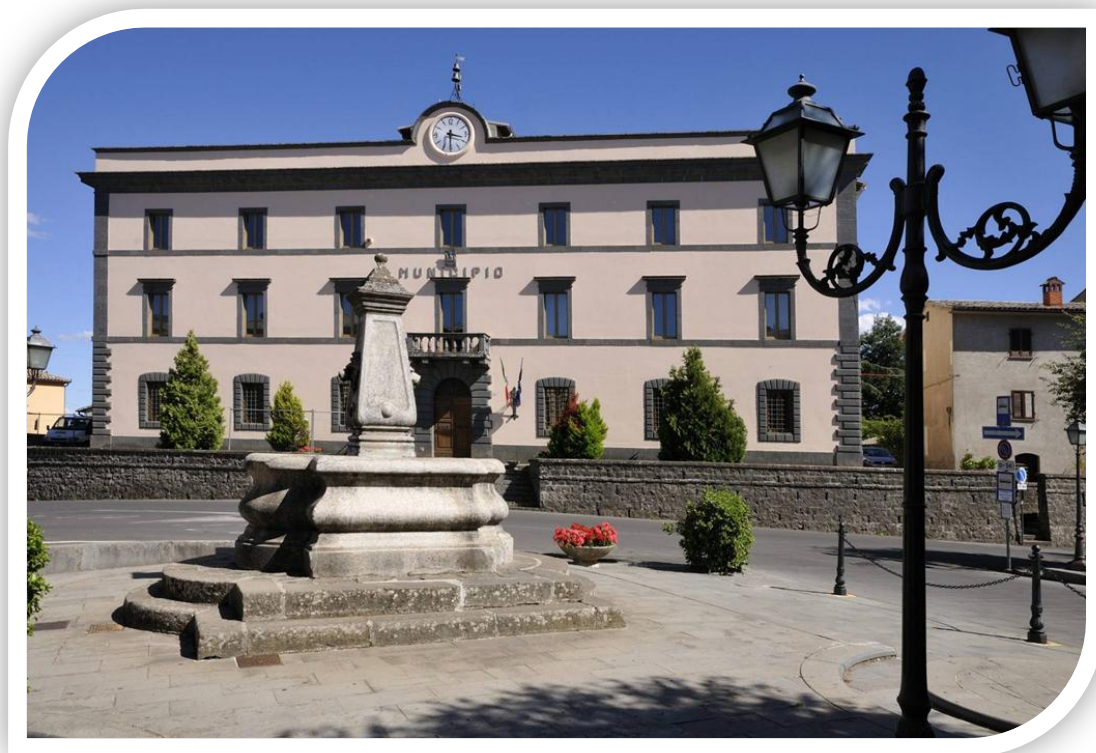


CASTEL GIORGIO



THE REGION

The Municipality of Castel Giorgio is located in the most southwestern part of the Umbria Region, on the close border with Lazio and Tuscany. It is positioned at an altitude of 560 metres above sea level. The town is part of the district of the nearby city of Orvieto and it is also close to Lake Bolsena. A little further is Monte Amiata, a well-known mountain in the area. Within the municipal territory is the Poggio del Torrone, a hill nearly 700 meters above sea level, which is the highest peak of the Volsini Mountains, a volcanic hill chain sited around the basin of Lake Bolsena. The town occupies most of the Alfina, a large tableland whose remarkable landscape has been known since Etruscan times and which delimits the area towards Orvieto. The tableland seems to be named after the latin expression "ad fines", which means land "on the border" between Etruria and Lazio.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Castel Giorgio was founded in 1477 by the then Bishop of Orvieto, Giorgio della Rovere, born in Parma, who moved a colony of farmers from his hometown to the area that now hosts the town, until then uninhabited, in order to populate it, even though there had already been urban settlements since the Etruscan and medieval periods. As a matter of fact, traces of Etruscan tombs have been found near Fattoraccio, in the Etruscan necropolis of



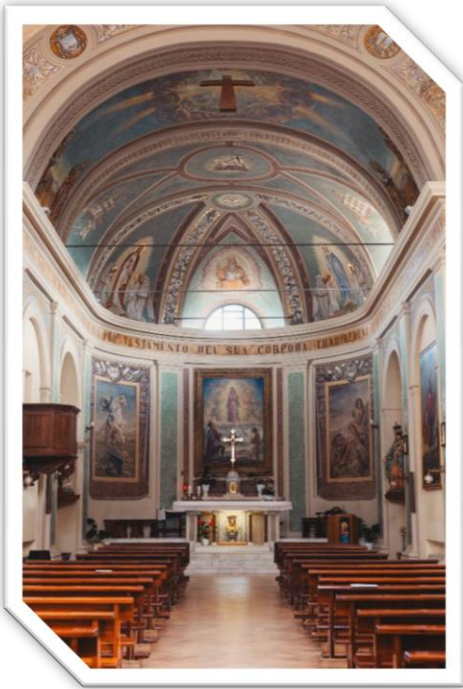
Lacuscello (third-second century B.C.) -which were quite important settlements- and in Citerno and on the Poggio del Torrone upland. The area was later occupied by the Romans, as evidenced by the ruins of several villas and the remains of the Via Traiana Nova and Via Cassia routes, which connected the people in the towns of Velzna Volsinii (Orvieto-Bolsena) and Chiusi. Most certainly, the variety of routes of communication and their frequent crossing encouraged the creation of urban settlements during the Roman period, in the area where the town of Castel Giorgio will be built. The Longobard period, after the administrative and political collapse of Rome, led to a significant growth of the area where Castel Giorgio stands today. Above all, there was a remarkable recovery of religious activity, as new churches were built and monastic orders were introduced. A church was built near Camicione and was dedicated to San Donato: as a result, the entire surrounding area took the name "Pieve" or "Piviere di San Donato". Castles and small forts started to be built at the highest points of the territory as shelters for the population in fear of armies, quarrelling factions and of bandits who lurked in the nearby woods: among these, the Pecorone castle and Montalfina castle deserve special mention. According to existing documents, the town of Castel Giorgio was founded by Giorgio della Rovere, who was Bishop in Orvieto from 1476 to 1505. "Giorgio della Rovere, born in Parma, was appointed Bishop of Orvieto on 23 June 1476 by Sixtus IV, then Pope, for whom della Rovere worked as Papal Chamberlain. It is thought that the two might have been related. On 3 June of the following year the episcopal consecration of Giorgio della Rovere took place, making thus the citizens of Orvieto very proud. After his appointment, he had farmers moved from the County of Parma to the Piviere di S. Donato, near Orvieto, where he founded a colony in the most fertile bishop's plots of land. Naming it after himself, he called the new settlement Castel Giorgio. Because of its altitude, this place provided a shelter for the bishops when they wanted to escape the scorching heat of the city...". This is what Marabottini states in his Catalogue of Orvieto's Bishops. Therefore, Giorgio della Rovere had a castle built, which was then destroyed by wars and earthquakes. Until about 1550 the bishop's relatives, in order to expand their possessions around Castel Giorgio, indeed engaged in a series of wars with the adjacent towns (Castel Rubello, Castel Viscardo, Benano and others). These wars would often cause raids and partial destruction of the original castle. The manor was then rebuilt in 1620, together with the parish Church,

by order of Cardinal Giacomo Sannesio, to become a summer residence for bishops and prelates from Orvieto. In 1581 the Community was endowed with its own Statute, while actually remaining under the barony of the Orvieto bishops until the unification of the Kingdom of Italy. Due to its strategic position, Castel Giorgio hosted distinguished historical figures in 1642 as an attempt to settle the war for the Duchy of Castro. In 1695 a violent earthquake shook the town, startling the entire population, which at the time numbered about a thousand inhabitants. In 1743 the country underwent the passage of Spanish troops heading towards Naples and, in 1798, it was invaded by French troops, becoming thus part of the "Canton of Orvieto" of the Roman Republic; Napoleon's occupation of the town lasted until 1814, when the Municipality was included in the district of the Delegation of Viterbo. On 11 September 1860 Castel Giorgio was released from papal designation, although the following year the annexation to the Kingdom of Italy was declared, after a period of interim government. In 1876 the current Town Hall was built and the topography of the town began to assume its current configuration. In 1970, by the will of the Mayor Giuseppe Calistri, a new stadium was built, thus becoming the first facility in Italy and in Europe dedicated to American football: accordingly, the structure was named "Stadio Vince Lombardi". As a result, Castel Giorgio became by definition "the European Capital of American Football".

TOURISM

Because of Castel Giorgio's geographical location, a particular charm for tourists has emerged over the last twenty years. Situated at a fair altitude, adjacent to Lake Bolsena, not far from the sea and Mount Amiata in Tuscany, the town offers a relaxing stay, with plenty of excursions in the district, well-endowed with a variety of attractions for tourist, and numerous "agriturismi" which tourists can't miss. After all, who doesn't like good food and a mild climate? The area around the town is rich in woods, ideal for walks, excursions for sightseeing, trekking on marked trails, particularly in the pine forest area and up to the Poggio del Torrone, which is well connected to Lake Bolsena; the walk also offers a lovely view. The pine forest is a green area equipped not only with sports facilities but also with tables and barbecues. The massive presence of the Black Pine and quite rare species, planted during the reforestation carried out by Austrian prisoners of the Great War, is one of its main features. Trekking enthusiasts should pay a visit to Le Pietre lanciate, volcanic formations of pyroclastic origins that are well worth a strenuous walk. The food provided by the local trattorias and restaurants is part of the local gastronomic tradition, which combines the cuisine of lower Umbria with that of upper Lazio and that of nearby Tuscany. Among some of the most traditional dishes are the wood-baked porchetta (similar to pork roast), mushrooms, of which the territory is rich due to the many woods, games and dishes from the countryside tradition.

THE PARISH CHURCH



The parish church, dating back to the 17th century, which is dedicated to San Pancrazio and is sited in the centre of Piazza Giorgio della Rovere, is also worth a visit. From an excerpt in the memoirs of priest Don Vannini, dating 26 January 1570, it is clear that the original town church had been built during the episcopate of Vincenzo Durante, which lasted from 1529 to 1545. Around 1649 the building was renovated. The funds were allocated by Don Federico, who donated 21 scudi and 10 baiocchi (which are ancient currencies that no longer exist in Italy); in return, he demanded that the community paid him back, making money by selling a plot of land. The church was consecrated on 10 August 1737 by the bishop of Orvieto Giuseppe dei Conti di Marsciano. An inventory from 1755 states that the church was home to the altars

of San Pancrazio, or the high altar, of San Giorgio Martire, of the Venerable Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, of San Michele Arcangelo, of Sant'Antonio, of San Domenico and of San Giuseppe. Around the mid-19th century the church was in very poor conditions and could not meet the believers' needs, to the point that some of them had to attend functions from the outside. Don Miscetti then decided to undertake an intervention of partial reconstruction of the structure. On 13 August 1889, Bishop Giuseppe Ingami, during his pastoral visit, mentioned that the building was in need of restoration in order to repair the damage caused by damp. Between 1941 and 1942 the church underwent renovation, but was then damaged during the earthquake of 1957, thus needing to be restored once again. The church has a single aisle with side chapels and a semicircular apse. A triumphal arch separates the apse area from the rest of the church, while in the third side chapel is located the granite altar from Orvieto. The red façade is embellished with two pilaster strips on both sides, supporting the protruding tympanum at the top of the building. In the lower part is a simple portal framed by an architrave, while in the centre of the façade is a small square window; both the portal and the window are adorned with a stucco frame. After the earthquake in May 2016, the façade was restored. Next to the church is the bishop's palace, now "Palazzo Sannesio", which was the summer bishopric until the 1950s. After its previous use, it now houses the municipal library with an adjoining room for meetings and gatherings.

THE SQUARE FOUNTAIN

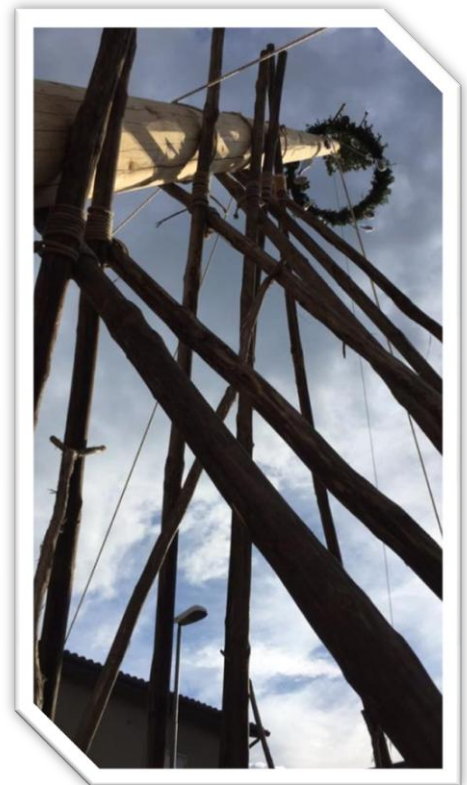
The square Fountain in Piazza del Comune, placed in front of the town hall, is the traditional landmark of Castel Giorgio, recurring in almost every picture. In 1910 the then mayor made an announcement about the construction of a new water main: the winning project aimed to get the necessary water from the Trischi source, far below the level of the town. Engineer Raniero Mengarelli then designed the "water hammer" system, a

hydraulic system that propelled the water to a higher level. This system was used until the 1930s, when it was replaced with internal combustion engines. The water main was completed and inaugurated in 1912 together with the square fountain, built with the financial support of the Prudenzi family. The inauguration of the aforementioned fountain, suggestive symbol of the town, took place during the celebration of the patron San Giorgio, in the midst of a public celebration. The fountain underwent restoration work in 2013 - 2014.

TRADITION AND FOLKLORE

THE FESTIVAL OF MAY

In this town, summer is usually animated by festivals, patron saints' days, sporting and cultural events. The town's most peculiar event takes place every year on the Patronal festival of San Pancrazio, on 11 and 12 of May: the "arzata" and "rancata" of the May tree are without any doubt the most important activities, consisting in erecting and then climbing a wooden pole about 20 metres high. This tradition, rooted in arboreal cults, is carried out after a historic parade in the same way since 1650. The festival is a two-day event: in the afternoon of 11 May, during the Historical Parade, the Musicians of Castel Giorgio and other participants march with the May tree (similar to a greasy pole), pulled by oxen through the town. Once the parade gets in front of the Bishop's Palace, the next phase, the "arzata", begins. The tree is erected upright using hay forks and ropes by volunteers while the marching Band is playing. The event ends with a small reception. The next day, after the religious parade honouring the Saint gets back to the Church, a number of men, after a scrupulous draw, line up in front of the pole. These men are challenged to the "ranacata", for which they have to climb the tree to the top using only their arms and legs. The first one to reach the gifts at the top of the pole wins and gets a financial reward. The "May Festival" has been celebrated in Castel Giorgio already since a few years before its first mention in the archives. In the official document it was stated that the usual tree, called "Magio", was to be erected only after the parade's arrival and only after the "Signore dei Bifolci" [the Lord of the county farmers] had brought a candle to the church. This character has now been replaced with the "Festarolo del Maggio". At that time the pole was probably smaller than the current one, and the event did not involve the "rancata", as it does today, but it included games, singing, dancing and dining around the tree. During the Napoleonic period and with the new agrarian middle class, the May festival also changed and supposedly became what it is today. The festival therefore lasts two days, precisely because the May tree has a considerably large size: a



giant plant, about twenty meters tall, that needs a tried-and-tested ritual, as well as adequate tools, in order to be planted.

THE "VINCE LOMBARDI" STADIUM, HOME TO THE AMERICAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Castel Giorgio is also the home of the Italian American football club and summer tournaments are held here. The first Italian championship of American football organised by the Italian Football League (LIF) was held from 19 July to 21 September 1980 in the Vince Lombardi Stadium in Castel Giorgio, which was built in record time by the then mayor Giuseppe Calistri, in cooperation with his nephew Gianfranco Calistri and Marcello Loprencipe. Among the teams, the Gladiatori Roma, the Lupi Roma, the Diavoli Milano and the Tori Torino. The first match of the national team was played on 14 June 1981 in that very same stadium, with the result being Italy 0 - Germany 12. In the same facility, in 1983, the Italian national team won the first European championship. The stadium in Castel Giorgio was the first Italian stadium to be provided with the original goal posts, comprised of a crossbar and vertical uprights, also used in the NFL in the USA, donated by the Green Bay Packers, an American team. For this very reason Castel Giorgio was by definition the "European Capital of American Football". After a 30-year period of inactivity (from 1985 to 2015), during which the stadium was no longer used by American football teams, but was turned into a football field for local teams, in 2016, as a result of the collaboration between the municipality and FIDAF, the "Vince Lombardi" stadium went back to being the European temple of American football for a three-day event called "The Return of the Supermen". For this occasion, the "MUFA", the American football museum, unique in Italy, was also created.

