

Social Program

We have an exciting social program planned for the Inaugural Summer School of Arpino including a Social Dinner, a Banquet and post-School tours. We plan to show you the best of Italian hospitality; stunning venues, delicious food and drinks.

Tuesday, 20th September – Visit to the Casamari Abbey

The Abbey of Casamari is named for the "house of Marius." Caius Marius was consul of Rome a record number of seven times; his son was the Sulla's opponent in the civil war of 88 BC.

A Benedictine monastery was established on the site in the early 11th century and briefly flourished before falling into decline in the 12th century. Following a visit from St. Bernard of Clairvaux in 1134, the Abbey of Casamari became the 29th daughter house of Bernard's Abbey of Clairvaux.

The Cistercians completely rebuilt the Benedictine buildings between 1203 and 1217, designing a new abbey church and monastery based on the standard Cistercian pattern.

Fortunately, most of the abbey's architecture and monks survived the many hardships of the centuries, including a siege by Muzio Attendolo Sforza in 1417, commendatory abbots from 1430, closure by Napoleon in 1811, and suppression in 1873 (assets were confiscated, but the monks stayed on).

The abbey was extensively restored in the 1950s.

Today, the beautiful Abbey of Casamari still houses a Cistercian community numbering about 20. Despite their small number, the monks have founded new monasteries in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Brazil and the USA, and oversee 19 other monasteries.

The Abbey of Casamari is built in the austere Cistercian style, specifically designed to avoid distraction and ostentation. Despite this (or perhaps because of this), the abbey is a beautiful sight, with delicate columns, vaulted ceilings, small stained-glass windows, and a lovely cloistered courtyard.

The spiritual life of the monks of Casamari centers on common prayer and visitors can enjoy their Gregorian chant throughout the week, either in person or online. The other main focus of the monks is work, by which they earn a living for themselves and for the poor and missions.

There is a small museum and bookshop at the abbey.



Wednesday 21st September – Social Dinner

The Social Dinner will be held in the enchanting garden of the **Hotel Il Cavalier D'Arpino.**



Thursday, 22th September – Visit to the Pointed Arch

Civitavecchia was probably the original nucleus of a primitive Volscian settlement (7th-6th century) built as a defence on a place high and steep and then fortified by massive walls. The greatness of these walls, that can be seen in other towns of the Volscians (Atina, Aquinum, Sora, Signia, Arcis) and of the Ernicians (Aletrium), suggested popular imagination to call them pelasgian in memory of the mytical pre-Hellenic Pelasgians or Cyclopeans, Homer's giants. Yet, they should be called polygonal because of the shape of the big stones which stand one upon the other without mortar.

The polygonal walls of Arpino branch off from Civitavecchia at the altitude of 627 m a.s.l. and slope down until they embrace and encircle the town at the small rise of Civita Falconara. They have no foundations and are made of enormous monolith of pudding stone that can be found in the area surrounding the ancient site. The walls originally extended for 3 km but today only some 1,5 km are left and are at times enclosed within the houses. During the Samnite, Roman, and Medieval ages they were restaured and towers and gates were added. They have witnessed an uninterrupted series of historical events. The datation of the walls of Civitavecchia has prompted a debate among scholars: Schmidt dates

them back to 7th-6th century BC, Sommella to the Roman era. Titus Livius (IV/57,7) tells of cyclopean Volscian rocks which existed already in 408 BC.



The pointed arch, ancient gate to the Acropolis, revokes strongly the arches of Tyrins and Mycenae. This extraordinary monument is 4,20 m high and is made of overlapping stone blocks that became smaller towards the top and are cut slantwise on the external part. In the 16th century it was enclosed within a semicircular bastion which has been partially demolished. Recently (2005) it was founded another archaeological site, a gate to a fortified complex, situated at the foot of the hill , near the quarter Arco.



Probably it was used as a secondary entrance to the Acropolis. It's different from the famous pointed arch, it was named "Porta del Lupo" (the Gate of the Wolf) and it has well levelled polygonal blocks. It's interesting the cave situated near the wall used for quarrying material for construction of the cyclopean walls.

There are neither architecture nor historical evidence of the Roman age in Civitavecchia but an old popular belief links it to the great Arpinate. It was indicated as Civitas Ciceroniana in the land register of the town in 1581 and the nearby Medieval tower is called "Cicero's tower". Evidence of the Medieval era are on the contrary real. Passing through the gate, built after the enclosure of the archaic one in a circular turret that hampered access to the village, you find on the left another tall square tower built to defend the castrum, encircled by Medieval walls, of which today only ruins are left. Inside it, a reservoir provided a source of water supply.

As Arpino became the Church's bulwark in Southern Italy since 1215 the walls that sloped down from Civitavecchia towards Arpino were reinforced with squares and round towers, with bastions provided with blockhouses linked by rounds. A pleasant scenic walking which branches off from the centre of the village allows you to admire these historical buildings.



Near the ogive arch there is a 18th century jewel: **the Church of SS Trinità** or of the Crucifix. It was built in 1720 by Cardinal Giuseppe Pesce, master and rector of the Pope's Chapel and still is a property of the Pesce family. The church is in Romanesque style with a Greek plant. The dome stands over four central pillars; the altar's frontal, painted with flowers, is the background of the small church. At its sides two big frescoes: on the left the Immaculate, on the right St Joseph . The Tyrolean Michele Stolz, a wooden sculptor, worked for Cardinal Pesce and was for long time guest in his house in Civitavecchia, where he died in 1779.

The Organizing Committee has arranged the transportation for the all activities.