

PIEVETORINA

Location

This village springs from the foot of a mountain in the upper Chienti Valley. More precisely the settlement is found along the S.S. 209 road which links the province of Macerata with Umbria.

Origins of the name

The name Pieve Torina is derived from the word *Pievania*. It is thought that this was the original name of the area up until the end of the first millennium.

Historical interest

The village is in an area which has been inhabited since prehistoric times. An area that was crossed by italic peoples who travelled from the Umbrian valleys to the Adriatic plains, from nomadic shepherds to Etruscans, Romans and Lombards. The settlement is made up of a cluster of small hamlets linked to castles from prior to the 13th century. Until 1587 the village was part of the Spoleto diocese, as testified by a document in which Pope Pelagius I addressed the Bishop of Camerino. Thus it was tied to Camerino before becoming part of the Kingdom of Italy along with all the other districts in the area.

Itinerary

The route begins from the ex Convent of Sant'Agostino (1), about which ancient stories and mysteries still circulate. The first historical information dates from 1434. The adjacent church, with single nave, boasted eight altars and a frescoed choir-stall. The monastery also had a cloister. Over the centuries the presence of the Agustinians at the convent became more sporadic, so much so that in 1728 it was the Passionists who breathed new life into the building. After the Napoleonic repression the convent was abandoned until 1810 and then permanently so from 1867. Today one wing of the building is home to the Teatro Sant'Agostino (2) and, in the section which encloses the cloister, the "Museum of Our Land". Recently established next to this is the "Museo dell'Automobilina" which has a collection of more than 200 1:18 scale model cars. After reaching the little square of G. Leopardi, continue along the Via De Gasperi until the Church of S. Giovanni.

The ancient parish church of Santa Maria Assunta is home to some wooden altar paintings from the churches destroyed at Pomarolo and S. Teodora: *Angeli e Santi* by Giovanni Andrea De Magistris (circa 1529-55) and, of fundamental importance to the Camerino school of painting, a series of frescos from the second half of the 14th century.

The original ancient parish church dates from 1200, but all that remains of the original structure is the bell tower, restored several times and built on top of the old building, and the apse beside it. This was radically altered, lowering the structure first with a slightly acute vaulted triple nave. In 1722 the old church was replaced by a new one. The front of the church was built beside the apse with the axis inverted in respect of the original building. The valuable works of art were taken from the old parish church to the new one, where today is still kept a wooden statue of the Madonna with Child, a wooden crucifix, a table by A. de Magistris from 1540 and a fresco, featuring the Madonna del latte, by Cola di Pietro, dated around the end of the 1300s to the beginning of the 1400s.

The last section of the route takes in the former Church of S. Agata (5) and the Ospedaletto dei Pellegrini (The Pilgrims' Infirmary) (6). The first is a very old gothic-style little church, dating from the 12th-13th century which depended on the Abbey of Sassovivo at Foligno. Its unique nave conserves various frescos by unknown artists, some of which date from 1457. The Ospedaletto dei Pellegrini is a small stone building with two interesting original arched doors.