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2.00h

FLIGHT FROM LONDON



01.1 WHERE TO FIND IT, CONNECTIONS

The Popogna estate is located 200 m. above sea level in the central stretch of the Livornese Mountains, in the Rio Ardenza Valley, between the city of Livorno and Il Gabbro, at roughly 8 km. from the sea; the area, characterized by gentle hills and sea view, lies for the most part in the municipality of Livorno and to a lesser extent in the municipalities of Collesalveti and Rosignano Marittimo. It represents the ideal place for a soothing stay surrounded by nature. The simultaneous combination of a stunning setting, in the heart of Tuscany, renowned for being one of the world's most fascinating and interesting regions for natural beauty, extraordinary cultural and artistic heritage and the joys of the palate, elect it as an exceptional holiday resort any time of year.

CONNECTIONS

The area is excellently served by all types of connections: by land, by sea and by air.

Road connections the motorway (Livorno exit) is only about 6 km. away. The approach is provided by the provincial road, which crosses the town, and by a number of local roads which take off from there.

Railway connections from Livorno.

Connections by air the Pisa airport guarantees international (Frankfurt, London, Paris, Nice, Bastia) and national connections (Milan, Rome, Turin, Cagliari, Alghero, Olbia, Grosseto, Palermo and Catania).

Connections by sea the port of Livorno provides connections with Sardinia, Corsica and the Isles of Elba and Capraia.



01.2 THE WAY IT WAS

Heritage findings prove that Popogna has been inhabited since prehistoric times and during the Roman epoch.

In this very period a network of roads and paths is formed, which for many centuries will make Popogna one of the most important places between the Via Emilia of Scavuro and the coast.

Around the year one thousand, a rural castle surrounded by woods arose on a promontory almost entirely encircled by the course of the Rio Popogna and its affluent.

TRANSFERS OF PROPERTY

In 1400 Popogna was divided into estates: historical records report that a part of the Popogna territory consisted of "1 piece of land, part meadow and part field" belonging to a certain Jacopo di Folcone, heir of Ugolino da Popogna.

In the XV Century, Giovanni di Puccio da Popogna, known as Cataluccio, and Taccio da Popogna, were landowners or holders of properties on the western hills, such as woods, meadows or fields.

In the years between 1618 and 1649 the Popogna estate was in the name of Vivaldo Vivaldi .

In 1693 the Popogna property belonged to the so-called Cadetti di Casa Medici (Cadets of the Medici household) who used it as a meeting venue and hunting lodge.



01.3 THE TIDI

Between 1609 and 1694 The Livorno Customs Superintendent sold the farmhouse and its outbuildings to the Tidi or Titi, one of the most powerful families in the area, who remained the owners up to the early twentieth century.

In 1700 the Tidi turned Popogna and its villa into their main abode: it was right at this time that the villa and surrounding lands underwent a radical transformation.

A private chapel dedicated to the Madonna del Rosario, with the family graves, rose near the villa.

In 1806 Giovan Battista Maggi, a well known Livorno solicitor, was appointed Superintendent of Monte Pio and in 1822 married Caterina Tidi, daughter of Francesco, nephew of Pandolfo



01. a book about Popogna (1700)



01.4 THE RECENT PAST

The Tidi dynasty expired with the death of Ranieri Maggi Tidi, on the 15th July 1911. The Popogna estate passed on to a Florentine gentleman, a certain Martelli Vieri. In 1932 the Popogna estate was sold to the countess Teresa Maddalena De Laugier, wife of count Giulio Lovera of Turin.

Not much later the property was resold to Sir Guido Giorgio Marroncini (awarded knighthood for work merits), who converted the villa, turning it into a modern country home, and on this occasion a swimming pool was installed.

Just a few years later, in 1939, he in turn sold it to Ettore Castellanza, the founder of the property as it stands today, who had new stables and workers' lodgings built in the '60s and started a cow farm for milk production.

This is when the fields passed from their original cultivation to forage farming and an artificial lake was created for irrigation purposes.

550ha

TOTAL EXTENTION
OF THE ESTATE

01.5 THE WAY IT IS TODAY

The estate stretches over a hilly region for approx. 550 hectares: about 75 hectares are farmland while the rest are made up of Mediterranean maquis with some tall trees, particularly cluster pines and holm oaks.

Since 1980 an agritourism activity has been started, having eight independent accommodation units with an average of five sleeping places each, called: Casa Colombi, Casa Grassinella, Casa Freddani, Casa Guardia, Borgo 1, Borgo 2, Borgo 3, Borgo 4. Some common and equipped green areas have been dedicated to this activity.

The Popogna estate buildings include the landlord's villa, with chapel, farmhouse and swimming pool, the main body of which dates back to 1600, plus various farmers' lodges, stables, barns, rural buildings and sheds.

The property also includes a lake of about 1.4 hectares, which was once used for irrigation purposes and now serves for fishing.



01. view of Popogna Vecchia



02. view of the Villa area



01.6 THE WOODS

We are now in an enchanted place immersed in unspoilt nature: the vast expanse of territory is mostly Mediterranean maquis; the bordering lands, also mainly woodland, are State property and almost entirely uninhabited.

The "maquis" is one of the main Mediterranean ecosystems. It is made of evergreen vegetation, mainly shrubs and trees of thermophile species or thermomesophile species, with persistent and generally coriaceous leaves, of medium average height ranging between 50 cm and 4 m. Characteristic of this maquis is the arboreal species of the *Quercus* suber type (holm oak and cork oak), those of the *Phillyrea* type (*Phillyrea latifolia* and *Phillyrea angustifolia*), the strawberry tree, certain types of *Juniperus* (particularly the red juniper), the lentiscus and other less widespread varieties. This shrubland spreads in the best pedoclimatic conditions, evolving towards the climax of holm oaks or Mediterranean evergreen forest.

From Versilia to Grosseto, the region is a patchwork of woodland, beaches, coastal ponds and dunes. Worthy of mention are the natural reserves of San Rossore and Talamone, the Garfagnana, the metalliferous hills, the Maremma, the d'Orcia Valley, and the Apuane Alps with their Park, as well as the sea resorts; the marshes and the sandy coastal "Tomboli" provide hospitality to flamingos, herons, while in the depth of the woods for hundreds of kilometres there are roebucks, deer, wild boars and wolves.



01. Holm Oak



02. Lentiscus



03. Oak



04. Strawberry Tree



05. Cluster Pine



01.7 THE COUNTRYSIDE

The Popogna territory is part of the swampy coastland of Livorno called "Maremma", which extends from the Castiglioncello promontory to the mouth of the river Cornia, which marks the boundary with the Maremma of Grosseto. It represents the most northern reaches of the entire Maremma. The area stretches between the coastal strip, called "Costa degli Etruschi", and the initial spurs of the hinterland hills; the municipal territories concerned are, from north to south, those of Rosignano Marittimo, Cecina, Bibbona, Castagneto Carducci, San Vincenzo and Piombino.

The zone has a special inclination for the production of excellent wines, especially in the Bolgheri area, the locality mentioned by Giosuè Carducci in the famous poem "Davanti a San Guido" and renowned for the enchanting Viale dei Cipressi. Right in front of the San Guido Oratory we find the well-known farm where the Bolgheri Sassicaia is produced, one of the best wines on the Italian and worldwide horizon. Right from the XIII century Popogna was surrounded by small areas with vineyards which consented the production of a typical local wine called "round wine of the Panche".

At the time fruit trees were also cultivated in the hills around Popogna between the Benedetta and Popogna Valleys and the terraced ground was covered in cherry, pear, pomegranate and lemon trees.

In the 60's the estate was converted to accommodate a dairy farm and the farmland was given over to forage cultivation.

In the 70's the activity switched to breeding free range Maremma cattle, which also grazes in the woods.

1732

YEAR OF VILLA'S
CONSTRUCTION

01.8 THE VILLA

The earliest records of the nucleus later to become the Popogna Villa date back to the middle ages.

At that time it was a country castle: a modest dwelling, enclosed by a fortification partly made of wood and partly brickwork, with a single entrance, controlled by a watchtower also made of wood. Inside the walls a small settlement arose, consisting of the manor house, a barn housing cereals and farm animals, a blacksmith, a miller and of course the chapel, with a fountain near the churchyard.

Furthermore, since Popogna rose along an important communication route, it represented a shelter for the wayfarers, which suggests there may also have been a tavern.

But it was in the Eighteenth century that the so-called "villa living" fashion emerged, and in the middle of the vast property we find the villa of the Tidi family, aptly called Popogna.

Gio Batta Bonamici, grand-ducal functionary, was able to inspect the estate and likewise its edifices on the 7th August 1782, and this is what he writes:

"In the Popogna estate, inside the Valle Benedetta Curia, stands an unfinished building to be used as Villa, the finished part is suitable for living in and consists of three rooms on the ground floor and three rooms on the first floor, with service rooms".



The villa therefore was converted for such purpose in the Eighteenth century. Such an assumption is supported by the commanding position that the building holds in the surrounding territorial context, a place crossed by many roads and standing in a niche on a hill ideally placed for keeping control over the said communication roads. It is indeed interesting to note that the villa, which was presumably built on top of one of the original castle's towers, does not have the typical characteristics of the patrician abode, such as the villas of Lucca, but rather is a practical home, made to satisfy the requirement of status but also the strictly economical needs.

The Tidi villa in particular, but more generally most of the Livorno villas were not simply built to satisfy the idleness of foreign people but instead were intended to be a point of reference and a place of meditation.

During the 30's, when it belonged to Sir Guido Giorgio Marroncini, the villa was rebuilt according to the project of a Florentine architect and became a modern country house with a swimming pool.



01.9 THE FARMHOUSES

Aside from the villa and stables (built in the '60s) some farmhouses also belong to the estate: Campo alla Menta, Fantini, S. Antonio, Portaccia, Fattoria Sovita, Grassenelli. Because of a specific topographical boundary, only a partial verification has been possible, but the first findings would confirm that some of these, now renamed, originally belonged to the Tidi's domains. They are the properties reported right back in the Eighteenth century, when they were known as:

- the estate named il Gorgo
- the estate named Cafaggio
- the estate named delle Terre
- the estate named delle Mente
- the estate named Burghietto

At the end of the Eighteenth century the property also included two mills (millstone type) located in the ward of Ferrareccia and another mill which stood in the ward of Mulino Nuovo,

The cluster of old houses known as Popogna Vecchia is particularly significant: they were the first battlements, a compulsory passageway for anyone coming from inland and heading to the coast.

The Tidi abandoned the "castle" of Popognana Vecchia, in fact, when they built their new residence in the Eighteenth century.

The stables and workers' lodgings were added in the 60's when the dairy farm was started up.

CONTACT