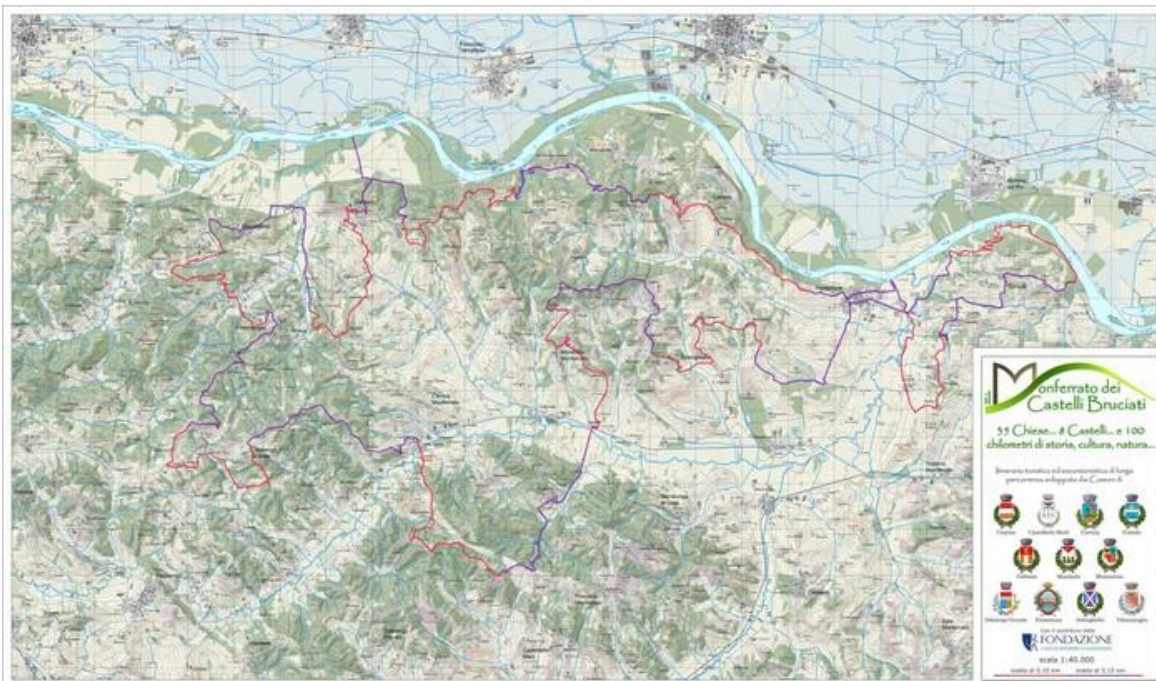


TOUR 9

THE MONFERRATO OF BURNT CASTLES

The hiking trail has a total length of more than 100 km, mostly on old unpaved dirt roads to be enjoyed on foot, by bike, and on horseback. A vast area of remarkable landscape value, characterized by soft hills which alternates with valuable vineyards. It crosses eleven Monferrato municipalities, connecting the most significant towns, to see and also perceive the smells of the seasons and the work of man. The landscape brings to mind memorable events, wars, and raids, so that almost every hill shows its imposing castle and there are many houses in the villages that still have fortified outer walls. The itinerary for the first stretch for a length of about 23 km develops almost entirely within the wooded and hilly areas that characterize the left bank of the Valcerrina. In the territory of the municipality of Gabiano, the landscape is more populated with the crossing of hilly areas cultivated with lawns, vineyards and hazelnut groves for a length of about 14 km. However after that, it goes back inside the wooded areas that characterize the hills overlooking the Vercelli plain, giving views of great beauty (about 10 km). Once in Camino, the route descends towards the Po and follows it for 13 km along its right bank in an environment of great naturalistic value within the natural area of the Po Park. From the municipality of Coniolo you return towards the Valcerrina, passing through numerous villages situated at the top of gentle hills. After 31 km you will reach the right bank of the Valcerrina. The next stretch crosses untouched areas, made up of thick woods that characterize the steep hills typical of this part of the Valcerrina, to return after about 10 km to the starting point.



Several events are organized during the year (mainly in spring and autumn), in order to make this area rich in natural and artistic beauties known. These beauties are the heritage of the municipalities involved in the event. Here below we report the activities **of sports tourism** involved:

www.monferratotour.it



[Cammini Divini](#) di Augusto Cavallo, Professional Hiking Guide and Nordic Walking Instructor
SINW cell. 339 4188277 - email: augusto.cavallo66@gmail.com

Equestrian Center [ASD Occhio con occhio](#)(Bussetti Serena: Fitetrec-Ante Technician)

[Fiab Monferrato Bike](#), e-mail : fiab.monferrato@gmail.com

From October 2020: [1st edition UTCB Ultra Trail](#) , 100km all in one breath, a complete proposal to meet all the needs and preparations of sportsmen and women and not. Staggered departures in the morning will allow athletes to start on the 100km, 100km relay, 40km, 18km, 10km non-competitive and 10km in Nordic Walking technique.

facebook: [utcb-ultra trail of burnt castles](#), email: info@utcastellibruciati.com

Here are some suggestions to organize a good stay in the territory:

To eat

[Agriturismo La Cà Veja](#) Cascina France in Odalengo Grande where we can taste the culinary specialties of the house and spend a relaxing and refreshing night in the rooms of the structure.

[Caffè Trattoria del Centro](#) in Castel San Pietro di Camino, a place characterized by the strong typicality of the cuisine (tel. 0142 469113. From Wednesday to Sunday by appointment).

[Iron Cutter Camino](#), which offers an excellent combination of traditional Piedmontese and national dishes, where at the end of the busy day you can choose from a wide selection of beers and, if on the calendar, listen to live music.

[Restaurant La Lanterna Blu](#) in Gaminella to taste the traditional mixed fried food and other specialties of the house.

[Ristorante Albergo Italia](#) ready to serve you Piedmontese specialties and a wide variety of typical Monferrato dishes, such as agnolotti, mixed fried food and hazelnut cake, accompanied by excellent local wines.

[Ristorante Commercio](#) in Gabiano which offers a cuisine characterized by recipes handed down from the tradition of the Coggiola family, managers for three generations. The restaurant has a small outdoor terrace, ideal for enjoying a pleasant aperitif or for letting the young ones free rein

[Ristorante del Peso di Camino](#), for those who want to taste the famous "fritto misto piemontese" and the homemade agnolotti.

[Restaurant Dubini](#) in Mombello Monferrato restaurant offering typical Monferrato dishes.

[Restaurant San Candido](#) in Murisengo, typical Piedmontese cuisine in a family guise rich in a wide choice of appetizing appetizers, tasty first courses (worth mentioning the gnocchi strictly homemade), selected meats cooked according to tradition and sweet tooth.

To sleep

[Agriturismo Cà San Sebastiano Wine Restor & Spa](#) Camino with access to the Spa Acquavitae

[Farmhouse Canonica di Corteranzo](#) in Corteranzo of Murisengo to immerse ourselves in the quiet life of the Rectory and forget all the problems and everyday thoughts

[B&B Casa Novecento](#) in Camino in rooms with nostalgic "retro" taste, for charming nights lulled by nature.

[Cascina Montena](#) in Zenevreto to the rediscovery of the life of a farmhouse in the past.

[Holiday Home Camino Monferrato](#) in Camino, spacious holiday homes furnished with taste and refinement, equipped with the possibility of small private spa and swimming pool.

[Locanda dell'Arte](#) in Solonghello perfect combination of past and present, lulled by art and history.

[L'Orto Fortunato](#) in Luvara to get away from chaotic everyday life and immerse yourself in the nature and simplicity of a magical world.

[La Cantinetta Resort](#) di Mombello M.to tasting and tasting of homemade wines and visit to the ancient ice house.

To taste and shop

[Agricola Dellavalle](#) (reservation required) in Camino. The great care of every aspect of the production process, from the vineyard to the bottle, and the respect for the territory with the aim of preserving intact in the wine the original characteristics of the grapes allows the producers to obtain great wines with a strong personality, although pleasant and balanced.

[Azienda Agricola Isabella](#) organic farming and the love and passion of producing wine, values and emotions inseparable from life itself. Every day on reservation are possible tastings and guided tours.

[Azienda Agricola Roberto Melotti](#) in Pozzengo tel.0142 944209 cell.340 8577506. Visit and tasting by appointment only.

[Cantina Massa Sergio](#) in Gaminella tel.0142 944162 cell.338 8873769. Traditional wines of the territory with an excellent quality-price ratio

[Cascina Iuli](#) in Montaldo - wines that can be drunk with ease, not trivial, possibly elegant, fresh, dynamic and crisp. Wines known and appreciated worldwide

[Dolcezza in Monferrato](#) by Marco Bianco a Camino, Rocca delle Donne hamlet, honey and hazelnut production.

[Farm Modena](#) in Cerrina tel.347 106 0834 - butter, cheese and cold cuts. All own production, as they have a cow breeding in the upper part of the village

[Butcher's shop Biglia](#) in Cerrina Tel.0142 943462 - selected meats and cold cuts

[Mulino Marello](#), in Camino, excellence of the territory for the production of raw materials. Here, you can buy stone-ground flours. The owners have chosen to deal exclusively with gluten-free cereals, addressing those who suffer from this intolerance and celiac disease.

[Bakery Arrodetti](#) Alessandro in Cerrina tel.339 541 4293 - production of hard dough bread with the famous "Monferrina" shape, hand ironed breadsticks, hazelnut cakes, and "brut e bun". On the occasion of ritual festivals, you can find panettoni, focaccia della Befana, doves, and Easter eggs.

[Pantalonificio Durio](#) in Cerrina - Italian handmade trousers production

[Pietrantica](#) by Paolo Virano a Gaminella curiosities, materials, and ancient objects from our tradition and not.

[Food Rita Caramellino](#) in Gaminella tel.0142 944121 selected meats of the best quality.

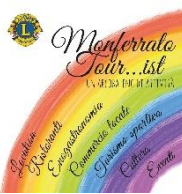
A few historical references and curiosities to present the Monferrini Municipalities that we meet along the way:

The name Castelli Bruciati (Burnt Castles) refers to the fact that some of these manors have in common fires that occurred at the time and by the Emperor Frederick I known as Barbarossa. During the wars in Italy, Frederick Barbarossa was stubborn to submit the municipalities of northern Italy to the imperial authority. He tried several times to conquer them, often setting them against each other and devastating, looting, and destroying the villages by means of fire and weapons.

Monferrini Municipalities

Municipality of Camino

Camino is a village surrounded by greenery and with a picturesque landscape, ideal if you decide to spend a relaxing holiday. The most intriguing toponym is certainly Caminus da



"camo", furnace, because here the mineral from which gold was extracted was melted was melted and sought in the areas near the abbey of Lucedio. The imposing castle, built around the year 1000 by the first aleramic marquises to defend the plains furrowed by the Po and Stura, belonged from the 14th century until 1948 to the marquises Scarampi di Villanova (rich bankers from Asti), to whom the history of Camino is inextricably linked. In 1434 it was besieged by the governor of Casale Monferrato, determined to punish his arrogance and frequent acts of bullying against the neighbouring feuds. Not even the request for grace made by Scarampo's wife took effect. The man was beheaded and his wife committed suicide by throwing herself from the stands. It is said that Camilla's ghost still wanders around the crenellated tower, accompanied by her headless husband. Still in 1631, it was looted and partly set on fire by the French, who were driven out after a few days by the Piedmontese, helped by Spanish troops. Despite a radical intervention carried out in the 19th century, the castle still retains original parts, such as the 15th century courtyard and the late Gothic chapel. From the mighty high quadrangular tower you can enjoy a vast panorama of Monferrato and the Po valley, as far as the circle of the Alps. The visit is on reservation.

[Municipality of Castelletto Merli](#)

The ancient settlement arose along an important Roman road. Castelletto refers to the strategic position of the place, which had a small fortification in medieval times that incorporated the Germanic settlements under its jurisdiction. Merli is the surname of the historic family, originally from San Salvatore Monferrato, who dominated the town from the end of the 13th century. The village extends along the village road on the ridge at the foot of the ancient fortress, now restored as a panoramic site. The village is divided into twelve hamlets, once called Cantoni, scattered on the hills of the vast territory of the municipality. In many of them the places of greatest historical and artistic interest are those linked to religion. To the north-west of the town, on a very high hill, is the Castello dei Merli, known as Palazzo Bertorelli, now ruined. Only a few traces remain of the ancient medieval building, consisting of the stately home, the church of San Nicolao, the ovens, barns and stables and the walls.

[Municipality of Cerrina](#)

According to some, the name Cerrina derives from the Latin cerrus, understood as a place rich in turkey oaks, but this thesis is uncertain. The territory of the municipality belonged since 706 to the vast possessions of the Abbey of Santa Maria di Lucedio, then to the Episcopate of Vercelli, then to the Marquisate of Monferrato and only from 1793 was annexed to the Savoy domains. Originally, Cerrina was one of the cantons of nearby Mombello, from which it separated in 1500 and gradually began to attract inhabitants from the nearby towns. The safety of the town was guaranteed by the construction of a fortress, which is still in the centre of the town, a few steps from the Town Hall and which has been completely renovated. Today, Cerrina Valle is an important centre of trade and services and on Sunday mornings it hosts a busy market. In a very panoramic position, the castle of Montalero is located in the middle of an ancient park. The castle, which today is a massive structure, in which you can see the numerous interventions of adaptation made, dates back to the year 1000. In the past linked to the Savoy court, now privately owned, the castle was also an antique gallery and restaurant

[Municipality of Coniolo](#)

Coniolo, whose beautiful hills were expressly mentioned in the book "Il mestiere di vivere" by Cesare Pavese. Coniolo, the town that lived twice, of which discover a little piece of history, starting from the Ethnographic Museum of Mines" (managed by volunteers, visits are on reservation: Nadia cell.333 3151945, Fiorenzo cell.335 6479198). A multimedia museum that reveals the extraordinary story of Coniolo Basso Antico, abandoned a century ago because of the wild actions related to the extraction of marl. This museum has the ability to make visitors relive the hard work in the mine of men and women, but also of children who, from nine to thirteen years, could already become miners. Coniolo is probably one of the most romantic counties in the world

In fact, at the belvedere there is a showcase with roses inside. The flowers are available to everyone, the only recommendation: "Open only in case of true love".

[Municipality of Gabiano](#)

Gabiano is situated on the right bank of the river Po and is concentrated on a hill around the castle which, from the inner side of the hill, dominates the whole town. In the opinion of many historians, it was born from a rural Roman settlement, but with the fall of the Roman Empire the territory was subject to progressive penetrations of Germanic nuclei, in particular Longobards, who left traces of their presence in the suffix "engo", which means community, present in the name of various hamlets of Gabiano. The Castle, of ancient construction, was occupied several times during the seventeenth-century wars, damaged, and set on fire. In the tragic 1628 of Manzoni's memory, Gabiano was conquered by the Savoy troops, when Monferrato was a battlefield between French, Spanish and Savoy for the succession of the Duchy. After being transformed into a country residence in the 18th century, it underwent a radical restoration in the first decades of the 20th century. It was inaugurated in 1935 in the presence of the of Queen Helen of Savoy, of whom the Marquise was a lady of the court. Splendid park with a maze of boxwood hedges.

[Municipality of Mombello](#)

A "hill from which you can enjoy a beautiful view" so it has always been based the interpretation of the toponym of Mombello, rather than a derivation from "mount of war" (montisbellis) recalling the clash occurred in 1172 between the Marquis William IV against the troops of Asti and Alessandria. Historiography has advanced the hypothesis that today's territory of Mombello Monferrato has been, from at least since the Roman age, a fulcrum of wide-ranging communication flows. Situated in a dominant position on one of the innervations of the Roman routes that joined Asti and Trino along a north-south direction, the territory, thanks to its opening on the valley of the Stura torrent, was equally open on the right side of the hilly Roman road that connected Turin to Valenza through "Industria" (Monteu da Po) and "Vardacate" (Casale). It is very likely that the Marquises of Monferrato, starting at least at the time of the conflicts with the municipality of Vercelli during the 13th century, established a particularly strict form of control over Mombello by granting the inhabitants the collection of tolls for all goods passing through the territory. One of the few testimonies of the medieval

vpast of Mombello, a state owned municipality directly under the Marquis of Monferrato, is the discovery of the remains of a Praetorian. This is the ancient palace of the podestà, where justice was administered, with the court, the bakery and the gardens near the walls. It stands next to Palazzo Torielli, a splendid baroque residence belonging to the noble family of Ozzano who exercised the lordship of Rosignano and Terruggia. Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was purchased by the Torielli family. The palace was entirely restored and furnished with period furniture.

[Municipality of Moncestino](#)

The village is concentrated on a hill, around the parish. It is situated on the right side of the river Po. After a fierce battle, in 101 B.C. the Romans induced the Cesti (Celtic-Gallic populations) to abandon the settlement in the fertile Po plain to seek refuge on the hill in front, where they settled permanently and since then the hill was generically called Mons Cestini (Monte dei Cestini), the origin of today's Moncestino. Subsequently the territory was the scene of bitter disputes and then inhabited in succession by Ligurians, Romans, Lombards and Saracens. In 1245 the Counts of Miroglio obtained the property from the Marquis of Monferrato with the obligation to "frame" the mountain for the surveillance of the Po. On the churchyard of the parish church emerges the baroque arch with behind it the green park of the villa-castle that was once owned by the Miroglio family. The present noble building stands on the ruins of the ancient Castle of Moncestino, built by the Miroglio family immediately after the investiture and was closed to the public when the parish church was later enlarged. Many noble families succeeded each other after the extinction of the Miroglio family in 1790, and many were also the invaders who sacked the village at different times: French, Spanish, Germans. During the Second World War the village, of a few hundred inhabitants, paid hard for the support given to the resistance and repeatedly, in the twenty months of the armed partisan struggle, was invaded by the Nazi-Fascists and put to fire and sword.

[Municipality of Odalengo Grande](#)

Odalengo Grande is perched on the hill around the castle of which only a turret remains. Originally there was a ricetto, with houses and vegetable gardens, bordered by its ramparts and relative fortifications consisting of defensive walls and various military works that surrounded it. The first settlements date back to Roman times, later the Lombards, following the course of the Po and the Tanaro river, occupied the land, forced to settle in fortified areas that allowed a good control of the territory. From the noble class of them, the "adelingi" derives the name of the municipality. It belonged to the Marquises of Monferrato, whose fate it followed. Of the ancient church of Montalero remains the Romanesque bell tower (tower of San Quirico).

The Marquises Gozani were the last owners of this feud and although they lived here for a short time, they have left numerous testimonies of their strong ties with Odalengo Grande; the most important of which is undoubtedly the church of S.Vittore and Quirico, built in the capital in 1786 at the expense of Luigi Gozani to a design by Magnocavallo.

[Municipality of Pontestura](#)

Pontestura boasts very ancient origins and has been the natural site of the river crossing for at least three thousand years. Its name seems to derive from Pont Sturae, referring to the floating ferry on the Po or, as legend has it, from Pons Turris, the mythical turreted bridge of the Celtic Gallic era, on which Hannibal and his elephants were said to have passed in 218 A. C. The castle of Pontestura for some periods became the seat of the itinerant court of the Paleologi marquises, then of the Scarampi di Asti, and prison where Ludovico il Moro was held prisoner. Recent historical analyses have recalled the events of the definitive demolition of the castle, with the tower already demolished in 1798, and the negotiations for the purchase of the ruins by the municipal administration of the time with their subsequent sale to private individuals, which took place from 1861 (the year of the unification of Italy). The castle house, later destroyed, stood where today is Piazza Castello. A large green lawn, surrounded by a double row of trees is all that remains of it, a place that is now one of the main meeting points for the inhabitants of the village.

[Municipality of Solonghelo](#)

A small town close to the hills of Monferrato, the first news about the presence of a municipality date back to 1016, when some families rebelled against the church of Vercelli and gathered in the area. The toponym is probably of Germanic origin and it is presumed to mean: small territory belonging to a condottiere named Swala. The historical events of the village and the castle are linked to those of the Monferrato territory, subject to struggles for domination and forced to suffer harassment from the French and Spanish and then, after centuries, to become part of the Savoy dukedom. The castle dominates the inhabited centre that slopes down towards the Stura. The ancient fortress was built in the 12th century by a vassal of the Marquises of Monferrato. In 1522, various nobles from Casale were housed in the castle, who sought refuge from the violent plague infection that claimed many victims in Casale. The castle was still inhabited after the Second World War by the Counts Caetani - Lorenzon of Treviso who ran a flourishing farm dependent on the castle. .

[Municipality of Villamiroglio](#)

A village characterized by numerous villages with the hamlet of Vallegioliti that develops in a context of hills, woods, paths and cultivated fields. The origins of Villamiroglio date back to Lombard settlements of the mid-eighth century. The village took the name of the founding family, the Miroglio family, later submitted to the Marquis of Monferrato, but after the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, the territory became part of the Domini Sabaudi. On the slopes of the "Bricco Castello" above the village of "Case Alemanno" among the thick vegetation there are ancient ruins of stone walls on tuff foundations, and a brick canton with small square slits, indicating the presence of a manor belonging to the noble Miroglio family, which is presumed to have been deliberately burned in the 15th century.

Translated by Vittoria e Ludovico Gallina

