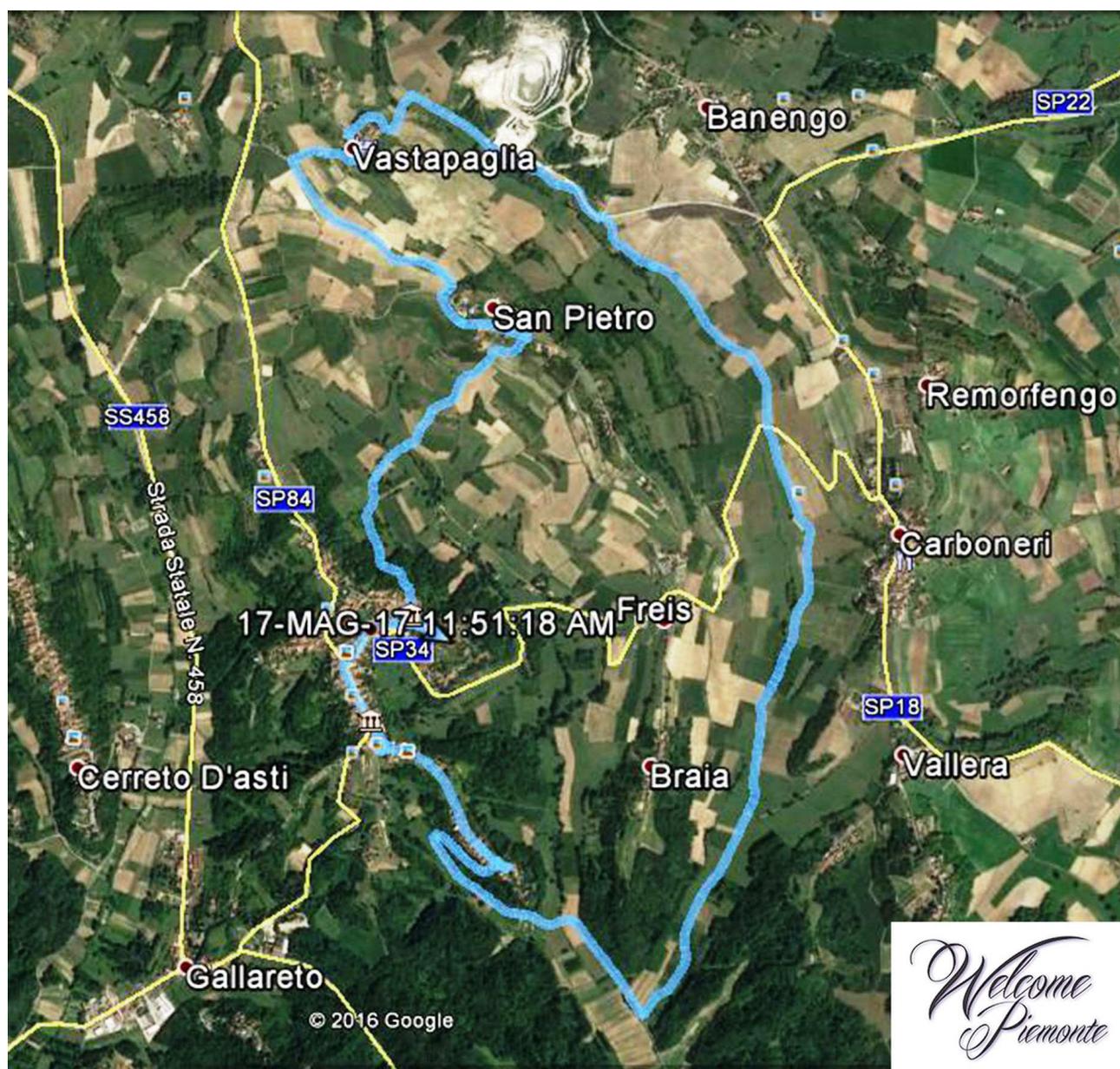


The Mint Fair, Piovà Massaia.

“In the lands of Cardinal Massaja” route: 10 km about (3 hours on foot and by horse; 1 hour and half by bike).

From the small square in front of the **Town Hall**, built in the Eighteenth century, this route starts, getting out of the village of Piovà Massaia; it makes enter us the uncontaminated nature, among woods and meadows located in the lands of Venerable Cardinal Guglielmo Massaja. Climbing up the slopes around you can enjoy unique panoramas over the hills of Monferrato, while the grades to the valley floor make discover a bucolic landscape, among silent meadows and fields, crossing the small villages that you discover during the walk. On the way back, you can visit the remains of the ancient Romanesque church of Saint Martino of Castelfero, and finally finish the itinerary at the Baroque parish church; on the first weekend in June, it is surrounded by the colored and delicious stands of the **Mint Fair**.



Starting point is **Piazza Marconi**, in front of the **Town Hall**, housing also the seat of “**Polledro Musical Educational Centre**”, dedicated to the famous violinist and composer born in this town. You get out from the town and enter a small wood, following a shady path leading to the near valley floor, where you can walk among meadows and corn fields, together with the **ancient well**, which was the public wash house in the past. You go up again in the direction of **San Pietro locality**, where you start to glimpse some panoramic interesting views. Going further on the same path, the view becomes more and more suggestive: to the South you can see the majestic **Sanctuary of Saint Giovanni Bosco**, on the top of the hill, while to the North the villages of **Cocconato, Banengo**, and the **big open cave of gypsum** in Gesso locality peep out. After you go down to **Vestapaglia locality**, near Cocconato, passing the **church of Saint Defendente** and going on up to reach the valley floor. After a short part on the paved road, you take again the path which for some km leads among small woods and meadows, in company with the singing birds only. You continue passing over a small flight field, to go on up to the end of the valley, where you come back on a quiet paved road near **Zingari locality**. From here you come back to the top of the hill up to reach the **church of Saint Martino** and the near parish house. You continue among the alleys of the village decorated by flowered gardens, up to reach the characteristic rock where the **ancient remains of the Romanesque church of Castelvero** rise up, dated to the Eleventh century; it is a small historical site, which offers also a beautiful panorama. From this point, you can cross the old town of Piovà Massaia to come back the starting point, arriving at the foot of the **majestic parish church**, built on the project by the famous Benedetto Alfieri and dedicated to the **Saints Pietro and Giorgio**. The church, located in a good panoramic position, was built in Baroque style between 1749 and 1774 on the commission of the **Count Francesco Antonio Ricci**, on the remains of the ancient church of Saint Michele in Monte Cornigliano. This building was a part of an ambitious project about the enlargement of the castle; nowadays it is the seat of the cultural association dedicated to the Cardinal Massaja, where it is possible to visit the ancient parish cinema, housing usually events and temporary exhibitions.

In the local shops and restaurants you can find several mint specialties, such as the traditional “baci di dama” cookies and the omelettes. In the wineries you can taste and buy the most representative wines of this area of Monferrato, for example Barbera d’Asti, Malvasia di Castelnuovo don Bosco and Freisa. Farmhouses and restaurants offer all the traditional dishes of Piedmont.. All the facilities are available for a relaxing stay in Monferrato hills.

On request a professional guide is available for the routes (on foot, by bike, by horse). For more info: www.stradadelvinomonferrato.it - info@stradadelvinomonferrato.it –348 3938038/339 5315104