



THE SKY, THE LAND, THE GREENNESS...BLENDED INTO A WORK OF ART BY TIME

# TIGLIOLE IN THE ALFIERI HILLS

Tigliole, whose name seems to be a derivation from Tilia, a tree of worship for German people, is a small town in Monferrato

**T**igliole, now in the province of Asti, but in the province of Alessandria in the past. Situated to the southwest of Asti, the region of Tigliole is one of the vastest areas in the green Piemontese province, with respect to its population.

Divided into three main centres, Concentrico, San Carlo and Prato-morone and surrounded by a large number of pleasant historical places, Tigliole is an interesting destination for relaxing walks on the hills, whose colours change with every season, thanks to their vineyards and oak, chestnut and linden trees, that formed large areas of forests in the past. n

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tigliole is an ancient town dating back to the end of the first millennium; its name comes from the tilius tree that was sacred to the German populations. Originally formed from two different places, the lower and the higher one, in the XII century Tigliole and its castle were dominated by the Bishop of Pavia, then by the noble family of Solaro from Asti and, afterwards, by the earls of Montafia. During the pontificate of Gregory XIII, in 1577 the domain passed to the Apostolic Delegate of Torino, but for two centuries the town was ruled, alternatively by alliances or

through conflicts, by the commune, the bishop, the Pope and the Savoy family.

In 1741 the Savoy imposed their rule over the town, causing the loss of the commune's autonomy and its feudal privileges.

The rich merchants fell into poverty and had to devote themselves to agriculture, that had always been the chief poor activity in the neighbouring territories.

Tigliole, that at the beginning of 19th century had more than 3.000 inhabitants and was, together with Nizza, Canelli, Villanova and Moncalvo, a very important centre of the Astigiano territory, during the Restoration started to decline progressively, although in the first half of the 20th century it still had more than 2,500 inhabitants.

### VISITING TIGLIOLE

**The Town Hall.** *Surrounded by an avenue of linden trees, the present Town Hall was built around the mid-19th century, on the site of the ancient castle, whose fortified walls served the local people as a defence against attacks.*

**The Romanesque Church of San Lorenzo.** *Built between the XI and the XII centuries, the Church of San Lorenzo is rectangular in shape and has a semicircular apse that is slightly curved, to symbolize the bowed head of the crucified Christ. The façade is made of bare red-brick and its apse still has the varied triple division of colour, typical feature of Romanesque Churches.*

**The Parish Church.** *The building erected between 1646 and 1696 by the architect Filippo Malabaila, dedicated to SS. Giovanni Battista and Lorenzo, is particular for the presence of some frescos of the 19th century by Paolo Gaidano, besides other paintings of special interest. Significant are the statue of Hecce Homo, the big Crucifix above the altar and the 1476-pipe organ.*

### MUSEUM OF THE SADDLER'S ART

This museum, particular for its strong cultural content, shows the art of saddling in its various skills; it preserves the heritage of a craft never seen before. Created from the Fiorano family's private collection, the museum is divided into three sections: the tools, the materials and the artefacts.

It is accompanied by an extensive etymological and genealogical documentation and also supported by a rich library to make the Piemontese art of saddling in the agricultural, military and transport sectors better known. A tour of the museum can be arranged by calling this phone number: 0141-66291.

### EVENTS

*San Lorenzo in Tigliole, a precious romanese Church in the Astigiane hills, has become the ideal location to host important events of contemporary art. For ten years, in the summer season, two annual events have had successful results, thanks to the coming together of institutions and people: the Town Council, the Region, artists and sponsors, but mainly to the untiring enthusiasm of Clizia Orlando, committed author of this achievement. As you can see in the curriculum of this event, many painting and photograph shows have been set up but, thanks to the architectural features of the aisleless Church of San Lorenzo, the vocation to privilege plastic arts, consisting of sculptural works of varied materials and styles, has strengthened with time. Giovanna Gadda, Mario Porcù, Marco Silombria, Caterina Cucco, Roberto Bricalli, Nino Cassani, Carlo Maccione, Paolo Spinogli, Plinio Tammaro and Giancarlo Tintori are only some of the distinguished artists that, with sensitivity, careful thought and introspection, have accepted the Town Council's invitation to exhibit their artistic compositions, attracting more and more numerous and well-informed people.*

### STARS IN THE CATTLESHEP FAIR

*The agricultural fair of Piemontese cattle breed, now in its 54th edition, is the event chosen by the region of Colline Alfieri to be included into the fair and event list of Gal Ecomuseo of Basso Monferrato's project. This event has produced a growth in the participation of the villages of this Region as well as a larger and more carefully organised market for their products. The scheduled programme of the event is now richer and more varied than in the past and includes, besides the exhibition of cattle, also a market of typical and local products, prizes given to the cattle by an authority or an expert of the sector, lunch in the square based on traditional dishes of Piemontese meat and typical local specialities, all brightened by the famous band of Tigliole "La Tenentina".*

### THE SURROUNDINGS: SAN DAMIANO E CISTERNA D'ASTI

Gentle corners of natural beauty, the surrounding hills of Tigliole, rounded in shape and spread with vineyards, are dotted with interesting small towns that deserve to be visited. Every village, as well as the chief town, preserves with loving care its historic town centre, where the cultural life still maintains the energy of the past times. Among the most attractive historical places, we would like to mention **San Damiano**, 15 km from the chief town, and **Cisterna d'Asti**, 23 km away. Encircled by the vast amphitheatre made of vineyards, fields and orchards, the territory of San Damiano falls between the Langhe and Monferrato, touching the Roero and bordering the Province of Cuneo. The origin of the Commune dates back to 1275 when, during Carlo d'Angiò's invasion of Piemonte, the people from Asti

built the San Damiano fortress and forced the inhabitants of the neighbouring destroyed castles to go and live there. The present town centre still preserves the original features of the typical medieval “villae novae”. We recommend you to visit Casa Castelli, the ancient Town Hall, Palazzo Vagnone and Palazzo Carlevaris, that is the present town hall. The Catholic attitude of San Damiano is evidenced by the large number of churches attractive and rich in history to be found in its territory: the Parrocchiale di S. Cosma and S. Damiano, the Patron Saints of the town, the Confraternita dell’Annunziata, the Parrocchiale di San Vincenzo and the small church of San Giulio. We would also remind you of the traditional grape-harvest festival, taking place in September, and the white truffle fair in December. To taste the “bollito”, the mixed-fry and the typical sweets of San Damiano.

Cisterna d’Asti, located at 350 m a.s.l., derives its name from the latin word “cisterna” that means water well. The town’s structure is still medieval, with its castle and the Parish Church that overlook the whole village. In one of the main rooms of the castle, a big well, originally used to receive the rain water, is still preserved. The castle, that now acts as the town hall, was mentioned in an old document dated back to 1311; its lookout tower, probably dating around the year 1200, is square in shape and is now roofless. Since 1980 it has housed the Museum of ancient Arts and Crafts, a precious collection of more than 3000 objects displayed in well presented rooms: the carpenter’s shop, the saddler’s, the cobbler’s, etc. Open all the year round from Tuesday to Sunday.

### **GETTING TO TIGLIOLE**

**By car from Torino:** Motorway A21-E70 Asti Ovest exit, turn right to the main road 10 and drive as far as Baldichieri, then take the local road towards Tigliole

**By car from Asti:** Drive along the main road 10 as far as Baldichieri, then take the local road towards Tigliole

**By train from Torino:** Asti Station then by bus to Tigliole

**By air:** Torino Caselle Airport then by bus to Tigliole

#### **PRO LOCO TIGLIOLE** *c/o comune*

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