

*Il paese di Benedetta Bianchi Porro*

# Dovadola

ROMAGNA'S VILLAGES

PROVINCE OF FORLÌ CESENA

Dovadola is a medieval village located on the lower hills of the Tuscan-Romagnolo Apennines along the Montone river valley. Its name probably derives from the Latin words 'duo vadora', two fords, with reference to the position of the town centre on a bend of the Montone river, which has to be crossed to enter and leave the village.

## **The Fortress.**

The town centre is overlooked by the fortress built by the Counts Guidi around the year 1000. This charming castle was fortified in the 13th century and today it dominates the town in the same way as it dominated the passage along the Florentine road in the past.

On the entrance portal, where there was once a drawbridge, you can see the coat of arms of the Blanc Tassinari family, the heirs of the owners who acquired the Fortress some centuries later.

Below the fortress there is the oldest built-up area, the so-called "Murata", dominated by the Clock Tower. Near the Clock Tower lies the Oratory of S. Antonio.

## **Oratory of Sant'Antonio.**

This Oratory, which today is owned by the local municipality, is very interesting from the architectural point of view since it has two aisles which are raised with respect to the nave. It houses five paintings by Giacomo Zampa, a painter who lived between the 17th and 18th century.

## **Religiosity and tradition.**

There are a lot of religious monuments, such as the Hermitage of Montepaolo, the sarcophagus of Benedetta Bianchi Porro in the Abbey of Sant'Andrea, and the Lectorium Rosicrucianum. Near the Abbey of Sant'Andrea there are the homonymous Villa and a park with many century-old plants and trees.

7 km from the town there is the Sanctuary of Montepaolo dating back to the beginning of the 12th century and dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua who stayed there to meditate.

Following the "Sentiero della speranza" path, you can see near the Sanctuary the so-called "Grotta del Santo" (the

Saint's cave) to which the Saint retreated to prey.

In the surroundings you can find and visit, on request, several typical small country churches, all hallowed and well preserved.

## **Yesterday and today.**

Today Dovadola is a quiet and industrious town, which, despite being very close to Forlì, still maintains its identity of rural village linked to its traditions, such as the traditional search for and preparation of the valuable white truffle whose Festival has been taking place for over 30 years on the third and fourth Sunday in October.

Over time a thriving agricultural activity has also developed, as shown by the about 270 farms scattered all over the surrounding area.

In the area of Dovadola there are also many artisanal firms. Not to be missed is also a visit to the luthier's and pewter processing workshops and to the weaving school where fabrics are still today woven by hand using ancient looms.



### FAMOUS PEOPLE:

Antonio Ranieri Biscia (1780 - 1839) linguist

Benedetta Bianchi Porro (1936 - 1964) Venerable

### TYPICAL PRODUCTS:

- \* *Truffle*
- \* *Pewter processing*
- \* *Musical instruments*
- \* *Woven fabrics*

### USEFUL NUMBERS:

**MUNICIPALITY OF DOVADOLA**  
 tel. +39 0543 934764 / 933213  
 www.comune.dovadola.fc.it  
 r.difazio@comune.dovadola.fc.it

**PRO LOCO**  
 tel. +39 0543 933200

**Ospitalità nei Borghi**  
 progetto interregionale  
 di sviluppo turistico (Legge 135/01)

Con il finanziamento del  
 Ministero delle Attività Produttive  
 Direzione Generale Turismo

Coordinamento progetto per l'Emilia-Romagna  
 Regione Emilia Romagna  
 Assessorato Turismo. Commercio  
 tel. 051 283491 - www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it  
 emiliaromagnaturismo@regione.emilia-romagna.it

 PROVINCIA DI FORLÌ CESENA  
 IL CUORE VERDE DELLA ROMAGNA  
 www.turismo.fc.it

 Provincia di Ravenna  
 Assessorato al Turismo  
 www.racine.ra.it/ravennaintorno

Con la collaborazione di  
 Comunità Montana dell'Appennino Forlivese  
 Comunità Montana dell'Appennino Cesenate  
 Comunità Montana dell'Acquacheta  
 Comunità Montana dell'Appennino Faentino  
 L'Altra Romagna srl  
 Strada dei Vini e dei Sapori dei Colli di Forlì-Cesena  
 Rotary Club Forlì Tre Valli, Faenza,  
 Valle del Rubicone, Valle del Savio

Al progetto partecipano le Regioni Emilia-Romagna,  
 Campania, Basilicata, Molise, Toscana, Liguria, Friuli Venezia Giulia.

---

# Via Tartagni Marvelli

---

Via Tartagni Marvelli is located below the Fortress in the most ancient part of Dovadola, the so-called “Murata”, that is, the town walls in Florentine style.

This street once linked the old town centre to the castle of the Counts Guidi and represented the ancient structure of the fortified citadel.

This link was broken in 1923 to allow the new road no. 67 pass through the town.

Today the access to the Castle of the Counts Guidi is under restoration.

You can still see the ancient structure of the hamlet, which starts with a peculiar passage through the arch of the Clock Tower leading to via Tartagni Marvelli. Along this street you can see the Oratory of Sant’Antonio, Palazzo dei Marchesi Tartagni Marvelli and some other beautiful buildings among which it is to mention the Clock Tower dominating Piazza Cesare Battisti in the town centre.

The peculiar structure of the **Clock Tower** with its roof with four weatherings can be easily seen when coming from Forlì.

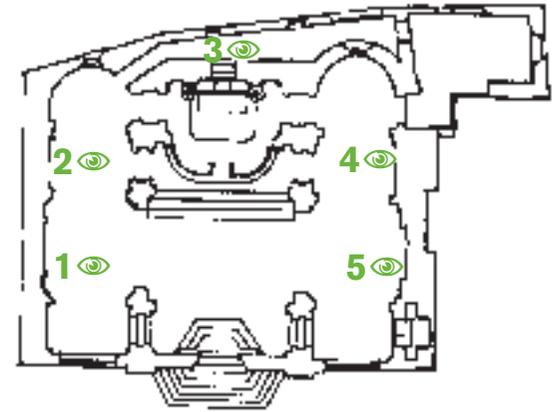
On the western side it features a very ancient but still functioning clock.

**Palazzo dei Marchesi Tartagni Marvelli** is a very famous and historically interesting building on whose northern side you can see the coat of arms of the Marquises Tartagni Marvelli.



# Oratory of Sant'Antonio

This church is very interesting from the architectural point of view since it has two aisles which are raised with respect to the nave. Today it is owned by the local municipality and houses five paintings by Giacomo Zampa (Forlì 1731 - Tossignano 1808). The Oratory was built as chapel of the medieval castle and is located along the road leading to the fortress of the Counts Guidi in Tuscany. Later on its ownership passed to the Marquises Tartagni Marvelli who changed it to its current structure according to the Baroque characteristics of that time. It houses the tombstones of the fallen in the I and II World War, thus also serving the function of war memorial.



## points of interest

### 1. Enthroned God with Child, St. John the Baptist and Saints

Painting commissioned to Zampa by the Tartagni Marvelli family from Dovadola at the end of the 1770s, maybe in 1778.

### 2. Two Cherubs with crown, lily and palm

Unpublished painting by Zampa. Two flapping cherubs show small feathery wings behind which the body becomes angelically invisible. A stem and a palm branch cross in the sky space on the sides.

### 3. St. Francis Xavier, St. Gennaro, St. Francis and St. Anthony

Work commissioned to Zampa by the Tartagni Marvelli family in 1778. The composition has been affected by the inclusion of a more ancient sacred image portraying the Virgin Mary with Child.

### 4. Tobiole and the Angel

Painting by Zampa. It portrays the story of Tobiole, Tobia's son, who starts a long journey to find a wife together with the Archangel Raphael. During the journey he catches a big fish on the banks of the Tigri river which allows him to let his blind father see again.

### 5. Glory of the Cross and Saints

This painting by Zampa is moulded and shows on the top two angels holding a cross from whose centre several light rays start over a very cloudy sky. At the bottom there is a group of six Saints in different postures.



# Benedetta Bianchi Porro

Born in Dovadola in 1936, she died in Sirmione del Garda after months of suffering from polio and diffuse neurofibromatosis, a very rare illness that destroyed her physically.

Her mother was an ardent Catholic and transmitted her a great religiosity, which she cultivated and clearly expressed in her diary. The lay Benedetta has already been declared Venerable and her sanctification is currently under discussion.

## Benedetta's Museum.

Don't miss a visit to the Benedetta's Museum located in the town's main square. The building has a portico under which you can see on the wall the stone or ceramic coats of arms of the various Captains sent by the Florentine government.

In the cellar there is a very interesting well excavated in the rock, which is 9 m deep, 3 of which are covered by water.

The upper floors now house the Benedetta Bianchi Porro Foundation with the relative museum.

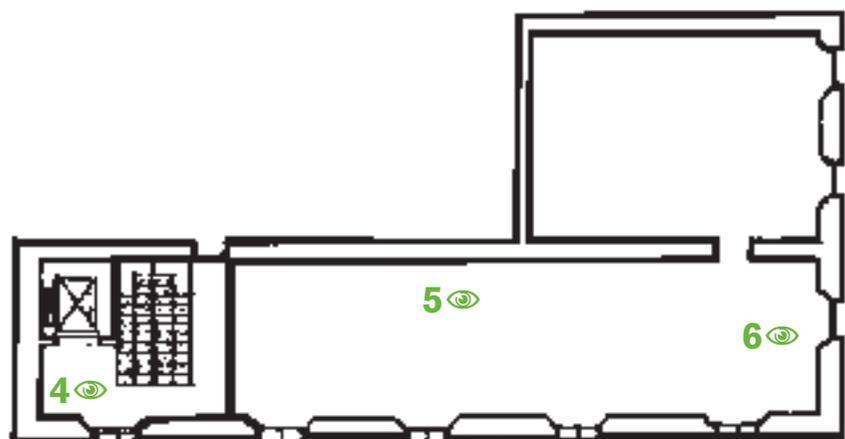
On the first floor there are the secretary's office of the Foundation, in which the great number of letters received carefully ordered by continent and country are kept, and an adjacent reference room.

On the second floor, several religious works of art by famous contemporary painters and sculptors are shown in appropriate showcases.

The room dedicated to embroidery and laces is worth visiting, too.



second floor



third floor

## points of interest

### 1. Bust of Benedetta

Bronze by A. Berti.

### 2. St. Benedict

Painting by P. Annigoni.



### 3. Benedetta

Bronze sculpture of Benedetta's face by C. Tomasi.

### 4. Madonna

Whole-length, enthroned Madonna with Child. Polychrome ceramic work by A. Biancini.

### 5. Benedetta's face

Sepia portrait by P. Annigoni.

### 6. The morning of Resurrection

By F. Messina. Unique piece given to Benedetta, gilt bronze bas-relief. Maddalena in front of the empty Holy Sepulchre.

### 7. Messina room

Room completely dedicated to Messina, which contains some pieces of furniture of his study, his working tools and a self-portrait.



### Abbey of Sant'Andrea.

This abbey dates back to the 11th century and was built on the former site of an older Abbey founded by the Cluniac monks.

The abbey has a Romanesque façade and contains the sarcophagus of Benedetta Bianchi Porro, a young lay woman born in Dovadola in 1936 whose sanctification is under discussion since 23rd January 1964.

The Abbey of S. Andrea is visited every year by many pilgrims coming from all over Italy to pay homage to Benedetta.

The sarcophagus containing the mortal remains of Benedetta Bianchi Porro is made of bronze and terracotta and was built by Angelo Biancini from Faenza. The young woman is portrayed life-size in a devotional position with her hands crossed on her chest at the feet of a turtle-shaped cushion representing the Venerable's physical slowness.

The Abbey is surrounded by a park with many century-old trees like firs, horse chestnuts and linden trees. The park is part of the homonymous Villa, which once housed the ancient monastery of the Cluniac monks and which was owned for three centuries by the Blanc Tassinari family that also owned the Castle.

---

# Hermitage and Sanctuary of Sant'Antonio di Montepaolo

---

The Hermitage of Montepaolo is the most important Anthonine Sanctuary in the Emilia-Romagna region. It was the first Italian residence of St. Anthony of Padua around 1221 and today it houses a valuable ex corpore relic of the Saint and the “Grotto” where he retired to pray.

The Hermitage-Sanctuary is located in an isolated place on the hills of Dovadola at an altitude of 425 m.

Set in parkland, Montepaolo is the ideal place to strengthen your spirit, away from traffic and noise. Walking up there, it is not rare to see some roes, squirrels, porcupines, leverets and other animals.

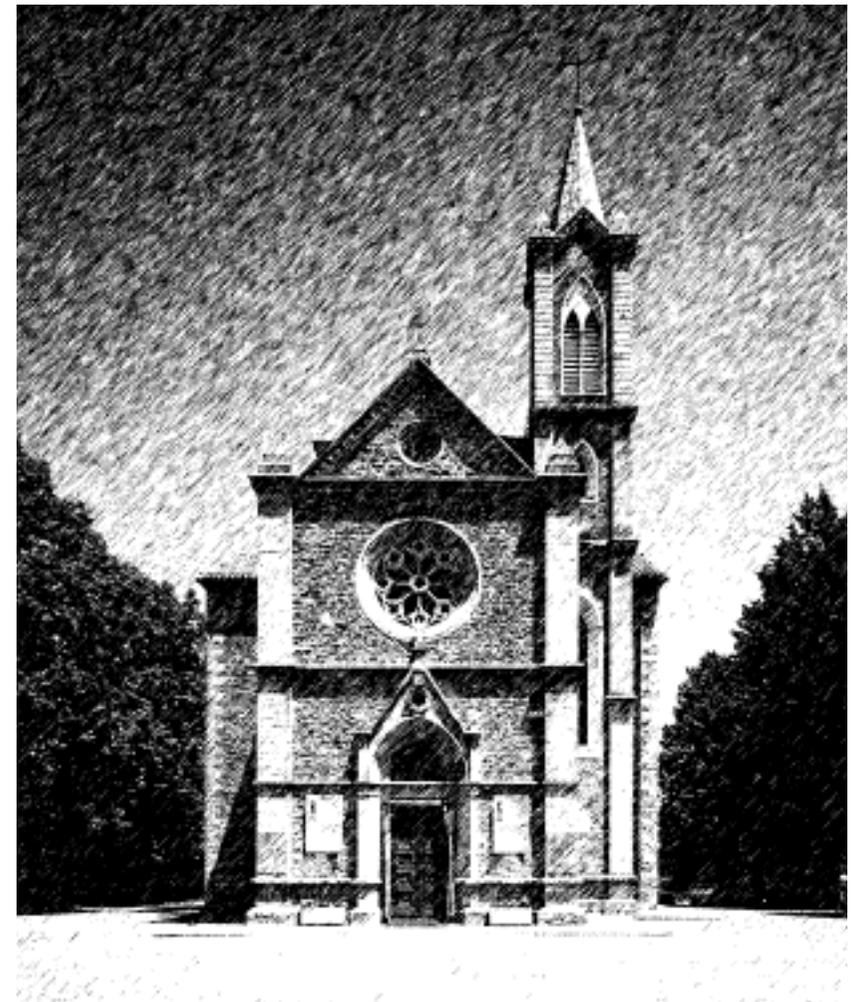
The Sanctuary was rebuilt in Neo-Gothic style at the beginning of the 20th century. It is completely decorated with frescoes and contains valuable works of modern and contemporary art.

On the outside, there are two artistic and spiritual paths: the “Sentiero della Speranza” (path of hope), along which there are some panels portraying the life of the Saint, and the “Viale dei Mosaici” (alley of mosaics) whose panels portray the history of Montepaolo.

In Montepaolo there is a community of Franciscan Friars Minor and Sisters Minor of Mary Immaculate, who live, work and pray there all year round.

Not far from the Sanctuary, a special farmhouse has been restored and equipped as a place for meditation, prayers and study. It has a chapel, a library, a conference room and other rooms.

For further information: tel. +39 0543.934723 - [eremo@montepaolo.net](mailto:eremo@montepaolo.net)



---

# Truffle

---

The white truffle, a very valuable tuber of ancient origin with aphrodisiac properties, is certainly one of the most appreciated products by gourmets. For many decades now, a Festival dedicated to these delicious 'nuggets' takes place every year in Dovadola.

Over time, this Festival has become a real institution and today it is one of the most important gastronomic events in the Emilia-Romagna region. In addition to the numerous truffle specialities that can be tasted at the various stands, you can also find many truffle sellers whose stalls diffuse the strong smell of white truffle.



---

# Fortress of the Counts Guidi

---

This fortress, which was first mentioned in 1021, was probably built on Longobard posts. It dates back to the 13th century and lies on a crag that still today towers over the town.

The fortification works include a square keep along the north-eastern curtain, two round keeps at the ends of the curtain and two returns of the curtain on the shorter sides.

Even though it was damaged several times by an earthquake, the Fortress still preserves all its charm. It is owned by the Municipality of Dovadola and it is not open to the public. However, restoration and consolidation works have been recently started. In its current aspect, it is nonetheless the best preserved example of fortifications by the Counts Guidi in Romagna.

