

CASALE MARITTIMO

5 - Gli occhiali di Casale - km. 11 – dislivello 320+ 320-

This round is not really a ring, but rather an eight or, better yet, the outline of a pair of glasses. Leave the cars at the Casale M.mo car park, we will walk past the cemetery, towards the locality of *La Rinserrata*; from here we will reach a small group of houses, where we will turn right and then right again after about 100 m., taking a path between the fields and heading towards the west.

We then reach the base of the top of the hill on which *Casal Vecchio* stood. In fact, the primitive inhabited area of Casale M.mo stood here, around the castle of the same name owned by the Della Gherardesca family.

This settlement was presumably destroyed in 1336, in a battle between Pisans and Florentines, but, probably, it had already been progressively abandoned following earthquakes and plagues in favor of the current village, at the time called Casalnuovo.

A path that climbs on our left leads to the place where the castle once stood, but it is not advisable to venture among the few ruins, because the site is in total abandonment and the spontaneous vegetation covers everything, with the consequent danger of putting your feet in some hole and get injured.

The area of the castle and that at the foot of the hill have also been the subject of repeated, but often ill-advised, excavation campaigns since the time of Targioni Tozzetti's trip to Tuscany: the Etruscan acropolis underlying the site of the medieval castle and, at the right of the path we are following, remains of both residential and artisanal buildings, always from the Etruscan period, of which, however, no trace can be seen.

Then we continue along our country lane, stopping immediately in front of a spectacular panorama with Casale in the foreground and the sea in the background.

After we passed down a beautiful farmhouse complete with a swimming pool, and after having crossed an olive grove, we come to cross the ancient *via della Pieve*, which we will take to the left, until we reach the asphalted road of the path which we will follow for a stretch in direction of Bibbona; after about 1 km we turn left onto the path that leads to the localities of Campigallo and Peralta, passing through Oliviero Toscani's horse farm.

Climbing steeply for a short distance, we reach one of the entrances to the *Macchia di Magona*, where we can make a short stop to have our snack.

Resuming the path, we will reach our way again; we will cross it to find for a short distance the path followed on the outward journey and, leaving on our right the path from which we had arrived at the same point, we turn left, passing on the medieval bridge that crosses the *Botro della Pieve* and near which it is still the ancient pavement is clearly visible.

After a short uphill walk along *via della Pieve*, reaching Casale near the *Le Volte* restaurant and, crossing the town center, we found the parking lot where we left the cars.