



RAINBOW TUSCANY
LGBTQ+ friendly project

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LGBTQ+ FRIENDLY PROJECT

The cradle of humanism is historically supportive of the idea of civil rights. Naturally inclusive, tolerant and progressive, this is reflected in the tourism sector that has dedicated experiences on offer for LGBTQ+ travelers, such as in Versilia.

Among the artistic treasures of cities like Florence and Siena, there are the troubled love stories of LGBTQ+ artists, stories of oppression and freedom that now constitute important reference points for a unique reinterpretation of some of the founding historical and artistic movements of Western culture. However, it is above all today that Tuscany looks to diversity as it evolves, grows and embodies values: an essential element for a connected and open community, with a wealth of history but also looking to the future.

For this reason, this theme gathers ideas, itineraries and offers for LGBTQ+ travelers and all those who are interested in having an original perspective of our territory, including curiosities, history and beauty.

Enjoy the rainbow Tuscany!



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IMPOSSIBLE LOVES: LGBTQ+ LOVE STORIES FROM RENAISSANCE TUSCANY

The Renaissance in Tuscany was a free period from certain points of view. In those years, many male couples were to be found, some who lived in secret and others more openly. The love stories we want to tell you about in this chapter are about men who loved other men during the Renaissance period. Relationships that often suffered, were hidden or rewritten by history, but which have contributed to creating great artists and poets who have gone down in history for their works.

MARSILIO FICINO AND GIOVANNI CAVALCANTI

The first love story is that of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Cavalcanti.

Marsilio Ficino, a native of Figline, was one of the most important humanists and philosophers of the Italian Renaissance. With his translations from the Greek of Plato's works, he helped spread Platonic thought and gave a new impetus to philosophy.

According to Ficino's thought, expressed in the *Commentarium in Platonis convivium* of 1469, love without distinction was the means to see beauty. To fully experience it, it was necessary to contemplate beauty of the spirit and body, even of another man.

His idea of neo-Platonic love was put into practice with Giovanni Cavalcanti, a young and beautiful Florentine poet. In 1484, Ficino wrote the "De Amore" for him and, later, several love letters in which he used to call him "Giovanni my perfect friend".



Fresco in Santa Maria Novella with portrait of Marsilio Ficino - Credit- Domenico Ghirlandaio, Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA AND GIROLAMO BENIVENI

Now, let's look at the love story between Pico della Mirandola and Girolamo Benivieni. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola was a passionate humanist and philosopher, an expert on the great men of his time such as Poliziano and Ficino.

Pico and Girolamo probably met in 1479 and subsequently began a stable and lasting relationship. In Fratta in 1486, the two lovers lived between Todi and Perugia in Umbria, sheltered from the threats of arrest for heresy by Pope Innocent VIII. In fact, in previous years, Pico della Mirandola had been accused of heresy by a commission of theologians for his ideas which, although they were not irreverent, were in contrast with the doctrine of the Church.

Their love was platonic, as was the custom in those days. These were also the same years of Marsilio Ficino.

When Pico della Mirandola died of arsenic poisoning on November 17, 1494, his beloved Girolamo Benivieni fell into a deep depression that led him to often consider suicide.

Pico's body was buried inside the church of San Marco, where Girolamo was also buried fifty years later. The church, included in this itinerary to discover LGBTQ+ friendly Florence, also preserves a plaque which reads "Love joined these souls in life". A declaration of eternal love that seals the deep relationship between them.



Pico della Mirandola at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence - Credit- Cristofano dell'Altissimo, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI AND TOMMASO DE 'CAVALIERI

The last troubled love story is that of Michelangelo Buonarroti and Tommaso de 'Cavalieri. Michelangelo certainly needs no introduction, but perhaps a brief summary on the artist's aesthetic expression will be useful to understand the tormented love with the Roman nobleman, Tommaso de 'Cavalieri.

The power, energy and love for the male body are a distinctive feature of Michelangelo's works. It's enough to admire his works in Florentine museums such as the Tondo Doni at the Uffizi Gallery or his sculptures like the Bacchus at the Bargello Museum to realize how every body, become an expression of love for shapes that are typical of the male body.

His life was by no means peaceful and the sculptor, in addition to being considered one of the greatest artists of the Renaissance even in his own lifetime, was also famous for his troubled personality, very quick-tempered and eternally dissatisfied. Raised in the ferment of the Florentine Renaissance, he came into contact with the great intellectuals of his time, from Poliziano and Pico della Mirandola to Marsilio Ficino, from whom he learned and embodied the neo-Platonic doctrine of love.

The meeting between Michelangelo and Tommaso de 'Cavalieri took place in Rome in 1532 and the two immediately formed a passionate bond. Michelangelo did not take long to describe the beauty of Tom-

maso as "the light of our century, a benchmark for the whole world".

As evidence of the relationship between the two, we have the letters that they exchanged from 1533, works of art whose portrait subject was Tommaso (among these is the Rape of Ganymede, whose myth we discussed in our article on the works and myths of LGBTQ+ art at the Uffizi) and several love sonnets, one of which reads "Love is not always a bitter and mortal sin".

Although their love became impossible due to the difficult temper of both, the two remained together for life. When Michelangelo died at 88 in 1564, Tommaso was by his side until the end.

Whether they are loves between two men, between two women or a love between man and woman, what is certain is that love in all its forms can be complicated.

LEONARDO AND HIS LOVES: THE SECRETS BEHIND HIS ART

We know a great deal about Leonardo da Vinci's art, pictorial techniques and genius, but we only know a little about his personal life. Here's some insight into Leonardo da Vinci in his entirety. Over the course of history, many scholars have devoted years of study to understand his personality, wishes and love life. In this article, we focus on the latter. Leonardo da Vinci: his life accor-

ding to academia. The first person to write about Leonardo's life was Giorgio Vasari in his "Lives of the Artists", in which he describes Leonardo as "wonderfully endowed with beauty, grace and talent in abundance". Over time, other writers defined him as a man of great charm, charisma and generosity. The curiosity to understand fully Leonardo da Vinci has never abated. In the early 20th century, Sigmund Freud, in his book "Leonardo da Vinci – A Memory of his Childhood", claimed that Leonardo was a closet homosexual, a theory also advanced by many art historians, including Kenneth Clark. The only known historical document regarding Leonardo's sex life is an accusation of sodomy dating to 1476. Leonardo da Vinci was 24 and on 9 April, an anonymous letter was left in the drum of Palazzo della Signoria that accused Jacopo Saltarelli, a boy involved in male prostitution. The accusation was rejected as the legal requirement to begin the criminal trial was invalid. Letters such as these had to be signed. According to several scholars, the accusation weighed so heavily on Leonardo that he decided to become celibate. But did Leonardo da Vinci ever love anyone?

We know that Leonardo usually chose his apprentices based on talent, but above all for their beauty. This was also the case for Gian Giacomo Caprotti and Francesco Melzi, with whom he remained in contact for the rest of his life.

Michelangelo statue in the Uffizi square in Florence
- Credit- Frieda, Wikimedia Commons



GIAN GIACOMO CAPROTTI

Gian Giacomo Caprotti, nicknamed “Salai”, is described by Vasari as an “ambiguous young man of grace and beauty, with beautiful curly hair, which Leonardo liked very much”. His face often appears in Leonardo’s art, especially in his Saint John the Baptist painted in 1513- 16. Many say that his face is also the same as in Saint John in the “Last Supper”, Monna Vanna, and even the Mona Lisa.

Salai immediately won the artist’s trust and became irreplaceable wherever Leonardo went. He joined him on all his travels and, although the bond seems to have become strained in his later years, Salai went to France when Leonardo was close to death.



Portrait of Gian Giacomo Caprotti
- Credit- Public domain,
via Wikimedia Commons

FRANCESCO MELZI

Another key figure in Leonardo’s life was Francesco Melzi. The pair met when Melzi was just 15 and their bond was so strong that the Milanese painter stayed by Leonardo’s side in his dying days. Only a few artworks by Francesco Melzi are known, such as “Leda and the Swan”, which can be found in the Uffizi Galleries in Florence. It is one of the best copies of Leonardo da Vinci’s “Leda”, which has been lost.



Leda by Francesco Melzi - Galleria degli Uffizi
- Credit- Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

FROM NORTH TO SOUTH, HERE ARE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL RAINBOW BEACHES IN TUSCANY

LGBTQ+ friendly beaches in Tuscany

Sun, sea and fun are the essential ingredients for a summer day in Tuscany. There’s certainly no shortage of beaches to visit, from clifly to those with fine sand, there’s the ideal beach for all types of travelers. Some of these are reference points for the Italian LGBTQ+ community that meets here in the summer for fun and pure relaxation. In this article, you will find the most beautiful gay-friendly beaches in the region.

LECCIONA

Without a doubt, this is the most loved and frequented beach by the LGBTQ+ community. It’s located in Torre del Lago Puccini, a hamlet in Viareggio that’s known for its clubs and super fun evenings.

La Lecciona is a spacious free beach characterized by fine sand and dunes as well as a pine forest where you can find shelter in the hottest hours along with the wonderful sea. On clear day, you can also see Corsica from here.

SASSOSCRIPTO

Along the Livorno coast there are several beaches for naturism lovers. Among these, there’s also one that has historically been frequented by the local LGBTQ+ community and which for some years has been officially recognized as an LGBTQ+ friendly stretch of coast. The area is located south of the Caligniaia bridge on a stretch of the Romito cliff, on the number 12 downhill of Sassoscritto. A sign with a rainbow flag, the universal symbol of the LGBTQ+ community, welcomes swimmers.



Lecciona beach - Credit- Saiko, GNU Free Documentation License via Wikimedia Commons





The stretch of coast here is exclusively made up of rocks so we recommend that you come equipped with shoes, however, once you arrive, the sea is wonderful and also perfect for snorkelers.

COAST OF MARINA DI BIBBONA

The oasis of Bolgheri is located south of Marina di Bibbona in the stretch of coastline known as the Etruscan Coast. The beach is easily reachable by the provincial road 39. Once you arrive, walk south for about ten minutes to find yourself in a lovely sandy area that has always been frequented by the LGBTQ+ community.

SAN VINCENZO

Near the oasis of Bolgheri, about twenty minutes by car towards Piombino, you will reach another friendly beach: San Vincenzo. The beach is characterized by pristine nature, a fine sandy beach and crystal clear waters. A place of peace and tranquility where you can practice nudism in the area known as the Eagle's Nest, a place officially intended for naturist practice.

MARINA DI ALBERESE

The Grosseto coast is characterized by splendid beaches surrounded by nature. The beach is located within the Uccellina Park and requires a walk of at least 30 minutes to reach it. The area frequented by the LGBTQ+ community is the one near the Tower and the whole area is much loved by fans of a full suntan.



Elba is the biggest island in Tuscany, a true natural paradise, perfect both for trekking lovers and for those who want to spend a few relaxing days by the sea. The beaches here consist of sand and pebbles, and over the years, some have become landmarks for the LGBTQ+ community and for lovers of a full suntan.

ACQUARILLI

Acquarilli beach is located near Norsi and is one of the most popular and appreciated by the LGBTQ+ community. Many small stones form this beach. While there are no services or refreshment points, you can enjoy 100% nature and practice naturism in complete tranquility.

Previous page:

Sassoscritto beach, Livorno - Credit- Sailko, GNU Free Documentation License, via Wikimedia Commons

Coast of Marina di Bibbona - Credit- Matteo Bechini, CC-BY-SA-4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Marina di Alberese Beach- Credit- Carlo Nisini, CC-BY-SA-4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

View from the drone of the beach of Acquarilli - Credit- Credit- Luca Ferrari. Getty Images via CanvaPro



TIPS FOR A SPARKLING NIGHT LIFE:

ENJOY

RAINBOW PEOPLE'S PARTY

ENJOY Rainbow People's Party is an LGBTQ+ and friends disco night held in Grosseto. The evenings are held every last Saturday of the month in various places in the city and province. The music varies from pop to house, with singers and performers on stage.



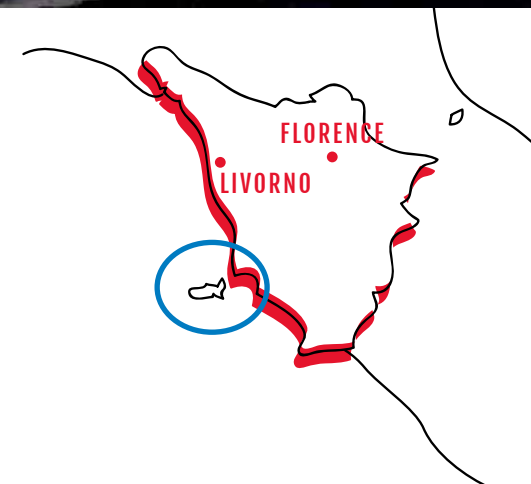
#ENCHANTED

ISOLA D'ELBA

**FEAT.
PAPA' PER SCELTA**



see the movie



NATURAL SPAS LOVED BY THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY AND BEYOND WELLNESS SPOTS IN TUSCANY: 4 FREE SPAS TO REGENERATE

Tuscany is sulphurous land of ancient volcanoes such as Monte Amiata and it's rich in natural thermal springs with waters that regenerate both body and spirit. From the undulating Crete Senesi to the Maremma, there are many places to enjoy a relaxing moment in contact with nature. After having experienced the pampering and comfort of wellness packages, you might be seeking something different: waterfalls, and pools and streams of thermal water where taking a dip is free are all great ways to discover a wilder dimension than a more conventional holiday. The tradition of wellness in Tuscany has its roots in ancient times. The springs were already known at the time of the Etruscans who, like us today, loved to enjoy moments of relaxation in the warm waters of the natural baths. Subsequently, the Romans also appreciated its beneficial and curative properties, leaving behind their traces. The 4 most beautiful free spas in Tuscany, much loved by the LGBTQ+ community are:

CASCATE DEL MULINO

Not far from the Saturnia Hot Springs there are the most spectacular thermal waterfalls in all of Tuscany. It's one of those places that everyone should visit at least once in their lifetime. Behind a historic mill, water pours into natural pools that allow you to enjoy the beneficial powers of these spas while surrounded by the beauty of the landscape. Saturnia is a delightful village in the Maremma in the municipality of Manciano. The hot springs are located just outside the town, near the spa. The sulphurous waterfalls are fed by the Gorello stream that joins the Stellata river. Over time, it has dug the lovely natural limestone pools where you can take a pleasant dip even in winter.

Cascate del Mulino in Saturnia - Credit - Baarssen via CanvaPro



San Filippo hot springs - Credit- UHG1234 - Getty Images via CanvaPro

HOT SPRINGS OF SAN FILIPPO

From the Maremma, we move to the Val d'Orcia to immerse ourselves in the warm waters of the San Filippo hot springs. The waterfalls and pools of these spas are surrounded by woods, creating a dreamlike experience. The most scenic area is the one known as the Balena Bianca, a large and delicate limestone formation. It can only be observed: it's forbidden to touch it, walk on it and bathe in its vicinity, but along the path that runs alongside the hot springs you can find pools where you can immerse yourself for half an hour (recommended duration) and enjoy the place in total relaxation. Entry into the area of the Fosso Bianco stream is allowed from via San Filippo only, the access road to the Rovinati farm.

PETRIOLO THERMAL SPRINGS

From Val D'Orcia, we head to the Ombrone Valley along the course of the Farma river, between the towns of Civitella Paganico and Monticiano. Here, the natural thermal springs of Petriolo are surrounded by greenery, cascading at a temperature of 43 degrees.

The characteristic limestone of these spas has allowed the formation of pools over time that na-

Petriolo thermal springs - Credit- © Raimond Spekking CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons



turally collect the warm thermal waters of the springs where you can relax. The high concentration of sulfur guarantees therapeutic effects for the respiratory system.

SAN CASCIANO DEI BAGNI

San Casciano dei Bagni is a wonderful village surrounded by nature and it's one of the most iconic places in the Valdichiana.

In the village, there are numerous hot springs with 40° C water. In the area, you can find free baths from the Roman era that are still largely usable. You can reach them at the foot of the hill that surrounds the medieval village. The most famous one is made of stone, with a triangular shape. In the immediate vicinity there are also covered baths and a large pool called the caldagna.



San Casciano dei Bagni - Credit- DI Photography - Getty Images Pro via CanvaPro

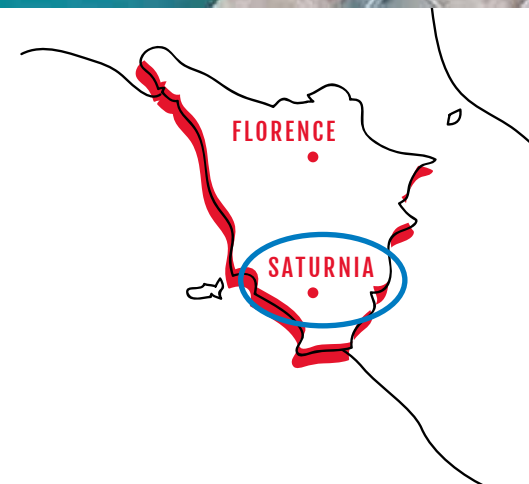


SATURNIA

**FEAT.
MURIEL & ETHAN**



see the movie



A WALK THROUGH THE CENTER TO DISCOVER RAINBOW PLACES AND STORIES

Itinerary of Florence's rainbow past: historic buildings and LGBTQ+ cafes

There's an endless amount to say about Florence as the city has an infinite number of attractions and itineraries to follow. We recommend a walk through the center to discover the unmissable places taking an unusual angle, some less known than others.

We will talk about palace conspiracies, lives, loves and settings such as historic cafes that have united the city and the Italian LGBTQ+ community in the past. This itinerary is perfect either on foot or by bicycle, accompanied by many interesting stories.



1. FIRST LEG

PALAZZO PUCCI AND THE STORY OF THE NOBLE PANDOLFO

We start our walk from Palazzo Pucci, not far from the Duomo. A beautiful historic building from the first half of the sixteenth century, it was built by the

centuries-old Florentine Pucci family. There's a particularly interesting story about one of the Puccis, Pandolfo.

Pandolfo's father, Roberto, played a leading role in the passage of Florence from the Republic to the Principality and this led him to become a key figure for the first Duke Alessandro. Pandolfo, following in his father's footsteps, later became one of the most important court dignitaries of Cosimo I de' Medici, Alexander's successor. His position, however, did not save him in 1541 from being condemned "for the infamous reason of a disgraceful vice", sodomy, a crime committed with the Florentine sculptor Giovanni Bandini.

The arrest and consequent killing of his father Roberto, guilty of having helped to free his son, aroused anti-Medicean sentiments in Pandolfo, resulting in the conspiracy organized to kill Cosimo de' Medici, which went down in history as the Pucci conspiracy of 1559. Pandolfo was identified as the main "conjurante et instigante" and was then killed on January 2, 1560, hanged from a window in the Bargello.

2. SECOND LEG

CAFFÈ GIUBBE ROSSE AND "LA CONTESSA MARIA"

We continue our walk to reach Caffè Giubbe Rosse, an important historic café in Piazza della Repubblica.

Founded in 1897, the café was the meeting place of various historical figures such as Carlo Emilio Gadda, Vasco Pratolini and also Aldo Palazzeschi, a Florentine writer and poet who set his novel "Interrogatorio alla Contessa Maria" here. The protagonist, Countess Maria, is an enigmatic female character described as a devourer of men who some theorize is as a sort of alter ego of Palazzeschi.



Palazzo Pucci and the story of the noble Pandolfo Photo © sailko (Wikimedia Commons)



Caffè Giubbe Rosse and "La Contessa Maria" Photo © sailko - Wikimedia Commons





Casa Buonarroti interior - Sailko, CC SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Younger, Michelangelo's great-grandson, who in addition to being a man of letters and a lover of art, published Rime, a collection of Michelangelo's extraordinary poems. In the publication, his great-grandson made the mistake of turning all the adjectives written in the masculine form to the feminine, effectively nullifying the complex life of Michelangelo. He had to wait for the English literary critic John Addington Symonds, one of the first militants, who rediscovered the works and Michelangelo began to be understood as part of the homosexual liberation movement.

3. THIRD LEG

CASA BUONARROTI AND THE LESSER-KNOWN WORKS OF MICHELANGELO

We continue to reach Casa Buonarroti on Via Ghibellina. We have already talked about his personality, private life and his impossible love, so now we visit the house-museum to admire lesser-known works and the valuable collection of over two hundred autographed drawings by the famous Michelangelo. The idea of creating this building was by Michelangelo Buonarroti the

4. FOURTH LEG

CHIASSO DEL BUCO, A HISTORIC PLACE OF TRANSGRESSION

After finishing the visit to Michelangelo's house-museum, let's head to the Chiasso del Buco alley to imagine life as it once was. In this alley in the sixteenth century, you could find the Osteria del Buco, known for being a meeting place for gay men but also characterized by male prostitution.

Chiasso del Buco today - Opera propria



5. FIFTH LEG

HOUSE OF TOMMASO SGRICCI, 19TH CENTURY POET AND ACTOR

We cross the Arno to reach what was once Tommaso Sgricci's house, in via dei Bardi. Born in Castiglion Fiorentino (Arezzo) in 1789, Tommaso Sgricci was an Italian poet and actor well known for his improvised poetry. Like contemporary hip hop freestylers, Sgricci was famous for his incredible ability to improvise odes, sonnets or even entire tragedies, simply being inspired by a suggestion from the public. Sgricci's career had its successes but, as Lord Byron wrote, he was not "remotely respected in Italy" as he deserved.

The reason for this was his homosexuality. Although at the height of his success, it also cost him his expulsion from the Papal States a few days before receiving his poetic coronation at the Capitol.



Tommaso Sgricci portrait by François Gérard (State Museum of Medieval and Modern Art, Modena) - Pubblico dominio

6. SIXTH LEG

PALAZZO PITTI AND THE TREASURES OF LGBTQ+ CULTURE AT THE PALATINE GALLERY

We conclude the itinerary in front of Palazzo Pitti. Here, you can continue this itinerary with a visit to the Palatine Gallery which houses works of art that will allow you to discover



other aspects of LGBTQ+ culture. From the painting by Rubens titled George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, Henry III of France's passion for mignon as portrayed by Francois Clouet housed in the Palazzo Pitti museum, you will find many interesting insights into Florentine and European LGBTQ+ life in the past.

TIPS FOR A SPARKLING NIGHT LIFE:

PICCOLO CAFFÈ IN FLORENCE

The Piccolo Caffè in Florence is a historic meeting point for the Florentine LGBTQ+ community.

It's located near Piazza Santa Croce and is the ideal place to enjoy great drinks and cocktails, listen to music and enjoy a pre-evening drink meeting new people.

Above all, you'll find young Florentines and off-site students here, but you'll also find tourists who finish off a perfect day discovering Florence here.

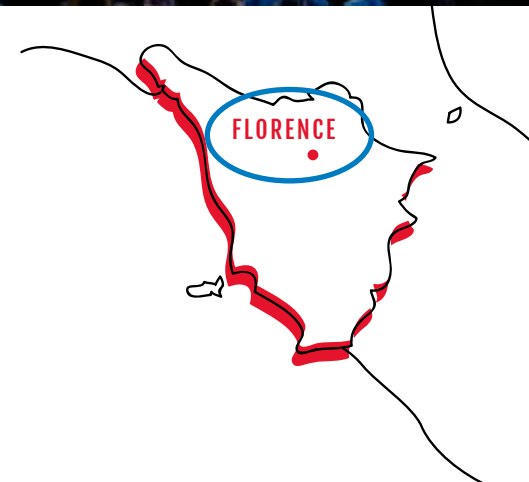


FIRENZE

FEAT.
GAYLY PLANET



see the movie



A WALK THROUGH THE CITY'S RAINBOW PLACES

Pistoia LGBTQ+: Walk in the historic center of the city

P

istoia never ceases to amaze. It's perfect for lovers of both art and traditional Tuscan cuisine. The city has a lot to offer: you can reach the main tourist attractions from the main piazza, and by casting an eye around you'll see there's even more to be revealed.

We recommend a walk through the center of Pistoia that will allow you to discover the places and history of some important historical figures. We will talk about Renaissance artists and street art, one of the best known Roman senators and a monument that we should all visit. This itinerary is perfect for both walking and cycling.



1. DISCOVERING BRUNELLESCHI'S ART CATHEDRAL OF SAN ZENO AND BRUNELLESCHI

We begin our walk from the San Zeno Cathedral, a Romanesque church that dates to before 1000. The interior of the cathedral is divided into three naves with magnificent frescoes



decorating the vaults and walls. Heading towards the Chapel of the Crucifix, we can admire a masterpiece of medieval Italian jewelery: the altar of San Jacopo, in embossed silver foil. The work was created by various artists, including a young Filippo Brunelleschi who, according to some critics, sculpted the two busts of the prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah, a full-length Saint Augustine and a seated Saint John the Evangelist.

Brunelleschi was one of the geniuses of the Tuscan Renaissance and like many artists of his time, he was accused of having

Cathedral of San Zeno - Credit- Alberto Masnovo. Getty Images via CanvaPro

a dissolute life. He was a great friend of Donatello, and some say he was also his lover. Just like Donatello, Brunelleschi never married, and left all his belongings to his adopted son Buggiano.

2. CATILINA: SOMEONE TO KNOW TOWER OF CATILINA

We continue our walk to reach the Tower of Catilina, one of the city's symbolic sites. The tower is located in via della Tomba di Catilina 2, and is a ninth century building made entirely of stone that's about 30 meters high.

Catilina was a Roman politician, soldier and senator born in 108 BC who made history for the conspiracy that intended to overthrow the Roman Republic. The conspiracy was thwarted and Catiline was kil-



Tower of Catilina - Credit- wjarek. Getty Images via CanvaPro

led by the republican army led by Marco Petreio on January 5, 62 BC. The tower owes its name to the fact that Lucio Sergio Catilina is said to have been buried there. Catiline is a very interesting figure in Roman history, he was highly ambitious and attacked for his way of dress. He is one of those people who was accused of being "too effeminate" in those times. Catilina, together with Gaius Julius Caesar, Marco Antonio and Publio Clodio Pulcro were publicly mocked because they were always well dressed and perfumed.

At that time, there were also rumours about adventures with other men. It's no coincidence that the year of Catiline's death is also the year of the most famous scandal in Ancient Rome, when Clodio Pulcro disguised himself as a faustist to participate in the rites of the Bona Dea which were exclusively for women. To date, this is the first known and witnessed case of cross-dressing in history.

Street art work by Blub - Credit- Jonathan Singer. Unsplash



3. THE ART ON THE CITY WALLS

THE WAYS OF STREET ART

Strolling through the streets of the centre to reach the next stop, you will come across street art works of all sizes. In addition to the famous mural by Miilo titled "No Hesitation" located in the Giardino di Cino, there are works by other well-known street art artists, including Blub. Blub's works are fun and recognizable: all the subjects wear a diving mask and seem to pose at the bottom of the sea. Some of his works can be found in via degli Oraf and in via della Nave, and the subjects portrayed range from Dali and Bia de Medici to pop icons of LGBTQ+ culture such as Marilyn Monroe.

Commemorative plaque Pistoia -
Credits- Arcigay Prato Pistoia l'Asterisco



4. AN IMPORTANT MONUMENT

PIAZZA SAN FRANCESCO

Taking the streets from the historic center, we walk towards Piazza San Francesco. Before reaching the square, it might be a good idea to visit one of the many museums that populate the city to find out more about the art and history of Pistoia. Once you arrive in Piazza San Francesco, you will find the first monument in Tuscany created in memory of the LGBTQ+ victims during Nazi exterminations.

The monument was built in 2015, with the collaboration of the Arcigay Pistoia La Fenice association, now known as the Arcigay Prato Pistoia l'Asterisco. It's one of the symbolic places to discover the LGBTQ+ movement in Tuscany.



ITINERARY TO DISCOVER LUCCA'S LGBTQ+ CURIOSITIES, FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

Lucca LGBTQ+: Stories, curiosities and places in Lucca

Lucca is known as the city of 100 churches, but in addition to the religious buildings, there's really a lot to see. Walking through the historic center of the city will allow you to discover fascinating, but also unusual, aspects. In this article, we take you for a walk through Lucca to tell you about a court that condemned homosexuality, Renaissance and contemporary art and, finally, of the new symbols and events that project the city into a future of inclusion. This itinerary is perfect for walking, so you can also visit other points of interest in Lucca along the way.



1. THE COURT OF THE "NEFARIOUS VICE" PALAZZO PRETORIO AND THE COURT OF THE SODOMITES

Let's start our walk from Palazzo Pretorio, to learn about the history of the Office above Honesty. Throughout the High Middle Ages and the early Modern Age, Florence and Tuscany were known throughout Europe as a city of easy morals in which homosexuality was common. In 1420, this widespread thought led San Bernardino to speak out against the sodomy that "afflicted" the region. This was potentially the reason why a unique magistracy was established in Lucca. The Office above Honesty, more commonly referred to as the Court of Sodomites, had the task of repressing this "nefarious vice" that was spreading through the territories of Lucca. According to the Chronicles of Giovanni Sercambi, there were 43 convictions in Lucca in 1556 and 20 in 1579. The seat of this court was the Palazzo del Podestà, what is today the Palazzo Pretorio in via Vittorio Veneto. The palazzo was erected in 1370 as the seat of the court and then, following extension works, it became the residence of the Podestà of Lucca. Today it houses the headquarters of the Serchio River Basin Authority and the Lucca Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts. To learn more, we recommend reading the essay titled "Office above Honest - The control of sodomy in 16th-century Lucca", written by Umberto Grassi.



Palazzo Pretorio in Lucca - Credit- Sailko. CC BY 2.5 via WikimediaCommons





Inside Palazzo Mansi - Credit- Sailko. CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

2. LGBTQ+ ART IN THE PALAZZO MANSI GALLERY

PALAZZO MANSI NATIONAL MUSEUM

We continue our walk and reach the Palazzo Mansi National Museum, one of the most beautiful residences that testifies to the style of houses used by seventeenth-century Lucca merchants. Palazzo Mansi is entirely open to visitors. Inside, you can walk among rooms that retain most of the original furnishings and tapestries. It's also possible to admire the magnificent collection of paintings from the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries that are preserved in the Pinacoteca (painting gallery).

In the rooms of the Pinacoteca, some works are exhibited that are related to the culture of the LGBTQ+ community. Among the many paintings, you can find *San Sebastiano* by Luca Giordano and *Una Maga* by Francesco Furini.

San Sebastiano is one of the historical icons of the LGBTQ+ community, we covered him extensively in the itinerary to discover Versilia. In *Una Maga* by Francesco Furini, already known for works related to queer culture that are visible inside the Palatine Gallery in Florence, you can lose yourself among the languid brushstrokes that are typical of his works. Another artist whose work you can admire is Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, known as Sodoma, whose nickname, according to Giorgio Vasari, derives from his sexual preferences. His work titled *Cristo Portacroce* is on display inside the Pinacoteca.

3. NEW SYMBOLS OF INCLUSION

CORSO GARIBALDI AND THE RAINBOW BENCH

Leaving behind traditional works of art, we now head to discover the new symbols of the LGBTQ+ community. Once out of the Pinacoteca, we reach Corso Garibaldi, where a rainbow bench has recently been inaugurated.

The bench, created on the occasion of the World Day Against Homobitranphobia 2021, was commissioned by various city associations. Among the many was LuccAut, a social promotion association for LGBTQIA+ rights that have been active in the area since 2013, and are promoters of various events involving the local community.

From the square, you can also easily reach several LGBTQ+ friendly bars in the historic center to have a coffee or an aperitivo with friends.



4. THE BEST OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN LUCCA

LU.C.C.A - LUCCA CENTER OF CONTEMPORARY ART

To reach the last stage of this itinerary, we pass in front of some unmissable places while visiting Lucca. Torre delle Ore, Torre Guinigi and Piazza Anfiteatro are along the streets that lead from Piazza Napoleone to Lu.C.C.A., the city's contemporary art museum.

Here, there are temporary exhibitions of the greatest international artists of today, and it's not difficult to find exhibitions related to the LGBTQ+ world. In the past, the museum has hosted an exhibition on Andy Warhol and the American photographer David LaChapelle.

Rainbow bench - Credit- PobladuraFCG. Getty Images via CanvaPro

Lu.C.C.A. ticket office entrance - Credit- Courtesy Lu.C.C.A





TIPS FOR COMICS LOVERS:

LUCCA COMICS & GAMES

If you visit the city at the end of October, don't miss the Lucca Comics & Games event. Over the course of the festival, many fans meet in Lucca, with the city becoming a large space dedicated to comics, animation and games.

Lucca Comics & Games is an event that's much loved by the Italian and international LGBTQ+ community, both because there are cosplay events and competitions, but also because it's a great way to learn about new LGBTQ+ themed comics. If, on the other hand, you visit Lucca at another time of the year, then don't miss the many comics shops in the city.



Lucca Comics - Credits- chripell. CC BY-SA 2.0 via flickr



#NATURAL

GARFAGNANA

FEAT.
CARLY&KEVIN



see the movie



5 STOPS TO DISCOVER THE RAINBOW PLACES OF PISA

Pisa LGBTQ+: historical walk around the city

Pisa is a city that's packed with places to visit and each time you come, there's a whole new experience. The Ancient Maritime Republic is perfect both for those who decide to spend a few hours discovering its beauties, and for those who want to delve deeper by opting for a Here, we recommend a walk through the centre of Pisa that will bring you to discover places that are linked to the LGBTQ+ community, looking at the first Italian Pride, a masterpiece of street art, and places to check out when you decide to visit the city. The itinerary is ideal for walking or cycling.



1. THE FINAL STAGE OF THE FIRST HISTORIC ITALIAN PRIDE

THE LEANING TOWER

You can't say that you've been to Pisa without having seen and photographed the Leaning Tower and the wonderful Piazza dei Miracoli.

The Tower has always been one of the landmarks of the city: for many years it was a meeting place for the LGBTQ+ community who came here to have fun and spend the evening with friends. In 1979, the first historic Italian Pride was completed right here. At the end of the parade, all the people who marched while showing their pride, spontaneously created a circle around the tower. To learn more about the history of that first Pride, we head to our second stop.

The leaning tower - Photo

Piazza dei Cavalieri - Leonid Andronov via Canva Pro

2. WHERE THE FIRST ITALIAN PRIDE, PISA79, DEPARTED PIAZZA DEI CAVALIERI

Piazza dei Cavalieri is one of the most famous squares in the city. In the 16th century, it became the centre of the Order of the Knights of Santo Stefano at the behest of the Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici. Today, the Scuola Normale of Pisa is located here. During the thrill of the sixties and seventies, the square was used as the starting point for marches and political demonstrations. Among these is Pisa79, an event that became a milestone for the Italian LGBTQ+ movement. Pisa79 is considered the first official Italian





Question to the police headquarters for the Pisa79 demonstration of the Orfeo Homosexual Circle - Pubblico Dominio



Palazzo Blu - Luca Aless, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported

Pride as the first manifestation by a homosexual collective authorized by the police headquarters and sponsored by the Municipality of Pisa. According to estimates, there were about 300 participants on November 24, 1979, with the group joined by both the curious and by allies such as feminist collectives. The procession went along the streets of the historic centre, passing from Ponte di Mezzo, Piazza Vittorio Emanuele and Corso Italia, finally ending in the famous Piazza dei Miracoli.

3. IN THE PLACES WHERE ONE OF THE FIRST LGBTQ+ ASSOCIATIONS AROSE VICOLO DEL TINTI

From Piazza dei Miracoli, we now head towards Vicolo del Tinti. You'll find a small street in the historic centre with several restaurants but in the 70s, the headquarters of the Circolo Omosessuale Orfeo was located at number 30, one of the first associations in Italy created to combat violence against LGBTQ+ people. The club was founded by several students at the University of Pisa who came from other Tuscan cities. In the turmoil of those years, the first activism activities began with weekly meetings, leaflets, disco evenings and film reviews.

4. LGBTQ+ ARTISTS PALAZZO BLU

We now arrive at Palazzo Blu, the exhibition space on the southern Lungarno that hosts temporary exhibitions and cultural events.

Here, exhibitions are organized that even feature some of the greatest international artists of today. You'll regularly find paintings, sculptures and photographs by artists close to the LGBTQ+ world. For example, in the past the museum has hosted an exhibition on Andy Warhol and Henri Toulouse Lautrec.



Mural by Keith Haring - Gayly Planet

5. MURAL BY KEITH HARING

We conclude our walk by reaching the famous mural titled TUTTOMONDO by Keith Haring. Haring was one of the most influential LGBTQ+ artists and his works only become comprehensible upon relating them to the struggles for the rights of LGBTQ+ people, especially those who fought against AIDS and the stigma of the disease that abounded during the years of his working life.

TUTTOMONDO is located in Piazzetta Haring in Pisa and is one of the last works of public art created by him before he died. It's a representation of how Haring imagined the future: a world in which one would live in harmony with nature and where the dominant ideals are those of peace and unity.



AREZZO LGBTQ+ : DISCOVERING RAINBOW SECRET

TIPS FOR A SPARKLING NIGHT LIFE: CASTIGO IN PISA

Castigo (also known as ex Colors) is located in the centre of Pisa and is popular among young people.

Gay nights take place on Thursday and Friday during which you can drink cocktails, listen to pop music with live performers or even sing at the top of your lungs during karaoke evenings. To enter, a member card is required.



Arezzo is a treasure chest to be discovered. Piazza Grande, the Basilica of San Francesco and the places where scenes from La Vita è Bella (Life is Beautiful) were filmed are just some of the reasons why you should visit the city. In fact, even while just walking, you can come across snippets and stories that are only revealed to those who know to listen to them.

In this article, we will take you on a walking itinerary through the city taking in beauties, myths and the secrets of the LGBTQ+ past. We will discover the lives of several artists and the stories that hide in ancient vases, ending our walk in one of the meeting places of the LGBTQ+ community in Arezzo.

Photo © Bigtock



1. IN THE HOUSE OF THE FIRST BIOGRAPHER OF ART

GIORGIO VASARI HOUSE MUSEUM

We begin our walk from the Vasari House Museum. Giorgio Vasari was born right here in Arezzo and a visit to the house of the Renaissance painter, sculptor and writer will allow you to learn more about life in those years. The artist was the first biographer of art and thanks to his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, published for the first time in 1550, we are aware of the personal stories of the great artists of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, their works, and the impossible loves between Renaissance artists. The Giorgio Vasari house Museum hosts over fifty paintings by artists trained by Vasari himself and is the perfect place to start a tour to discover the traces of Vasari in the Terre di Arezzo.



Interior of the Giorgio Vasari House Museum - Combusken CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

2. DISCOVERING THE LOVES OF MECENATE

ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE

We now arrive at the Roman amphitheatre of Arezzo. Once you have passed the entrance, you will find the restored bust of Gaius Clinio Mecenate. Of Arezzo origins, Gaius Clinio Mecenate was an important Roman figure, advisor to the Emperor Augustus and protector of several poets including Virgil and Horace, thus originating the term *mecenate* (patron). In his private life, Mecenate had several loves, the most famous of which was Batillo, a



Roman amphitheater of Arezzo - Rimbalzino - Getty Images via Canva Pro

dancer and Roman theatre actor. Their love was known and open enough to have been described by several Latin authors including Lucio Cornuto, Orazio and Seneca.

Even the Emperor was aware of it and referred to the disagreements that used to break out between theatre actors, Tacitus reveals in his *Annals* that Augustus “to indulge his friend Mecenate loose in love towards Batillo” used not to intervene to punish these acts.

3. NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

GAIUS CLINIO MECENATE

Using the same entrance ticket as the Roman Amphitheatre, you can visit the most important Archaeological Museum in Arezzo, named after Gaius Clinio Mecenate.

The museum is spread over 26 rooms, each of which houses artefacts such as coins, kraters, a reproduction of the famous Chimera of Arezzo (the original is kept in the National Archaeological Museum of Florence), jewels and many works that are linked to LGBTQ+ stories and myths. In the third room of the museum, for example, you can admire the wonderful Amazon Krater of Euphronios, probably the most famous Athenian ceramics artist and potter. The Attic red-figure krater represents the struggle between Hercules and the Amazons, the mythological people made up of warrior women who have become lesbian icons. To continue the visit, we recommend you go in search of the works representing Hercules (the bronze statue of Etruscan origin is not to be missed) and reflect on his love stories with the young squire Ila, and his companion in adventure, Iolao.

4. THE NEW MEETING PLACES

CHIMERA ARCOBALENO

Now let's move on to the “Chimera Arcobaleno”: this is the name of the association that has been active in the area since 2009, created to give a voice to gay, lesbian, bisexual and



Courtyard of the Gaius Clinio Mecenate National Archaeological Museum - Sailko - Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported via Wikimedia Commons

Chimera Arcobaleno - Emma Rahmani via baseimage



transgender people in province of Arezzo. The Chimera Arcobaleno association often organizes meetings and evenings, such as the famous WhyNot¿, and is a great place to meet new people in the city.

TIPS FOR A SPARKLING NIGHT LIFE:

WHYNOT¿

Whynot¿ is not only a place to dance, but also a meeting point for gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex communities and for all people who live without prejudice.

The evenings take place every last Saturday of the month at Class 125 in Arezzo. Here, you can also find music and drag queens, but above all a lot of beautiful people who'll become new friends.



5.IN THE PLACE OF THE PRIDE OF AREZZO

PARCO PERTINI

The last stop on this walk is Parco Pertini, the largest public park in Arezzo. Also called Parco Giotto because of the Viale Giotto it overlooks, it's the perfect place to relax after this itinerary, enjoy a refreshing drink and maybe participate in one of the many events that usually take place here, such as the Pride of Arezzo 2021.



Relax in the park - Maksym Azovtsev - Getty Images
Pro via Canva Pro



VERSILIA LGBTQ+ : AN ITINERARY OF A THOUSAND COLORS FROM PIETRASANTA TO TORRE DEL LAGO

Versilia certainly doesn't need much of an introduction. The beautiful stretch of Tuscany goes from Forte dei Marmi to Torre del Lago and is a very popular and well-known area. Art and entertainment have always been part of the lifestyle here. These are combined with the locals' hospitable nature. This mix was probably the main reason that made this part of Tuscany particularly loved by visitors and has had a strong impact in identifying Versilia as a destination for LGBTQ+ tourism in recent decades.

Carnival in Viareggio - Jianxiang Wu - Unsplash



PIETRASANTA, THE CITY OF ARTISTS

Let's start from Pietrasanta, where we are particularly interested in the bond it has established with its most illustrious citizens. The works of Fernando Botero, Giò Pomodoro, Joan Mirò and Pietro Cascella, among many others, have turned the city into an open-air museum. It's impossible to ignore Igor Mitoraj, a Polish artist who settled here in 1983. His sculptures are the result of a passion for the classical tradition and with particular attention to male busts, as in the case of the statue in Via Sant'Agostino 2, now known as Piazza del Centauro.

VIAREGGIO AND ITS CARNIVAL

Let's get back on the road from Marina di Pietrasanta to reach Viareggio. The important city of Versilia is definitely worth a visit with many things to offer. However, Viareggio is above all known for Carnival, so don't miss the Citadel and the Carnival Museum in this itinerary, an excellent way to get to know the event in its entirety and the importance it has had over the centuries for the LGBTQ+ community.

From Viareggio, let's continue on to Torre del Lago Puccini, the undisputed queen of Tuscan LGBTQ+ nightlife.

Giacomo Puccini lived in this hamlet of the municipality of Viareggio for many years and it was here that the great composer found inspiration for many of his works, such as Tosca and Madama Butterfly. In Torre del Lago, there's no shortage of things to see: from Villa Puccini, the beautiful liberty villas in the center, to Lake Massaciuccoli where you can take a boat trip to discover the natural wonders of this WWF protected area.



Piazza del Centauro, sculpture by Igor Mitoraj - Davide Papalini, CC SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Carnival of Viareggio - Credits by Fabrizio Galli

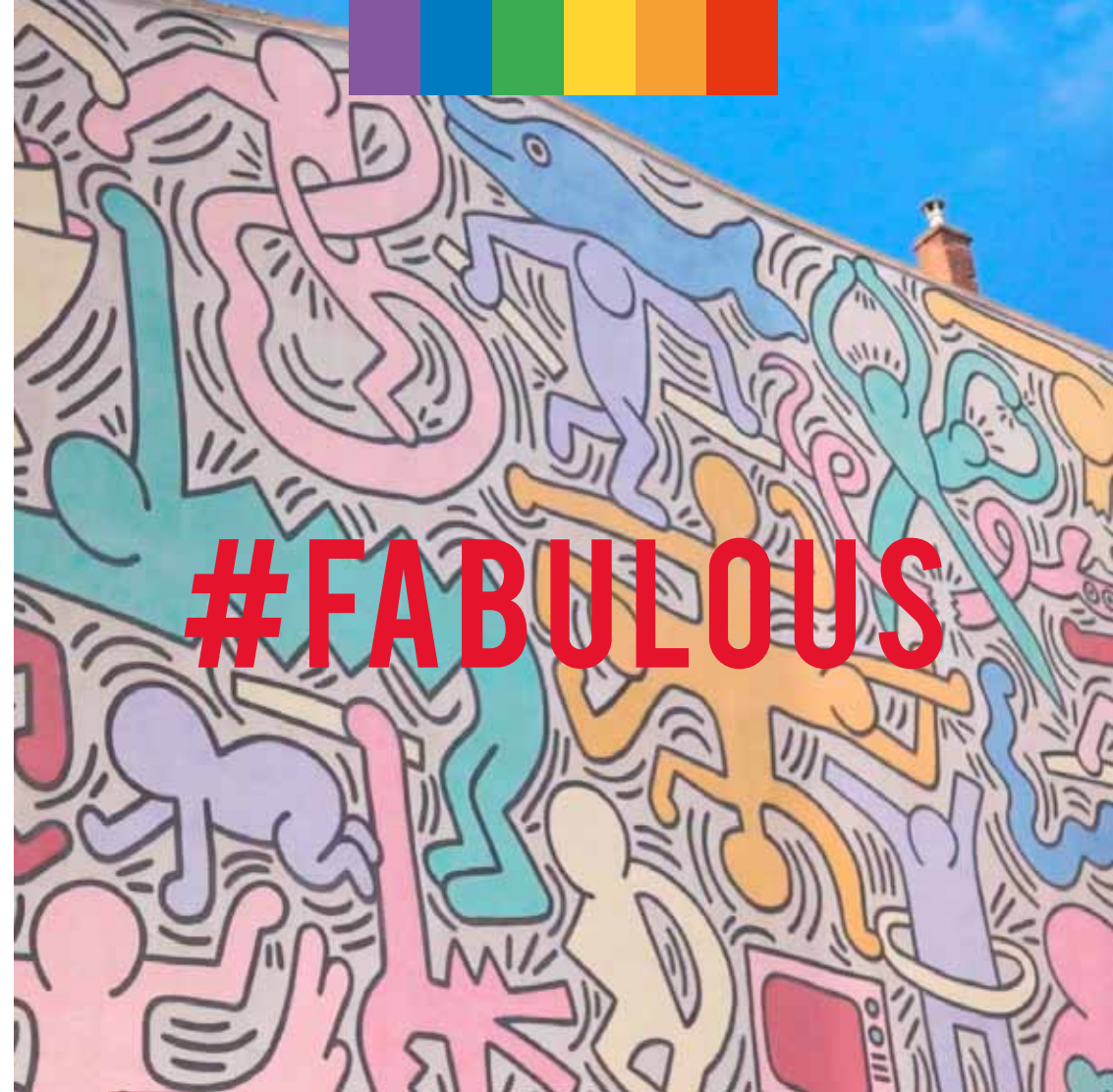
Torre del Lago Puccini - Pinzino



TIPS FOR A SPARKLING NIGHT LIFE:

MAMAMIA IN TORRE DEL LAGO PUCCINI

When talking about gay clubs in Tuscany, we must mention Mamamia in Torre del Lago, the well-known club in Versilia that has continued to make history for over twenty years. Nights out at the Mamamia are great for everyone and in the summer many people of all kinds and ages enjoy the Marina..



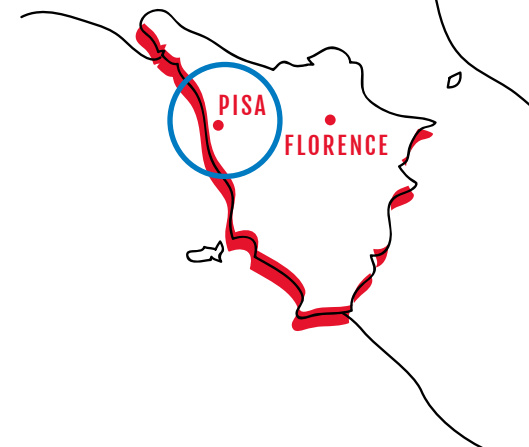
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VERSILIA

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LE PERLE DEGLI OMOFOBI**



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BELOW YOU CAN FIND A LIST OF THE LGBTQ+ FRIENDLY COMPANIES IN TUSCANY WHO SIGNED THE CHARTER OF VALUES FOR INCLUSIVE TOURISM.

Hope to see you soon in Tuscany!

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- **HOTEL SOLE E MARE** Camaiore - <http://www.hotelsolemare.info/> - info@hotelsolemare.info
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- **VILLA PARRI** Pistoia - <http://www.villaparrri.it/> - info@villaparrri.it

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VETRINA TOSCANA

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