

VISITORS' CENTRE PALAZZO ACHILLI - GAVINANA



Palazzo Achilli was built in Gavinana by the Prince of Piombino, Ludovico Appiani, in the second half of the 16th century (according to some documents, the precise date of its construction was 1585). The palace was probably built over a medieval structure, as shown by a tower that was incorporated into the building but which collapsed at the end of the 1800s. When Ludovico Appiani died the palace was abandoned for a long time and fell into serious decay. In the middle of the 1700s, Filippo Achilli, a rich cheese merchant from Rome, bought the palace, by then badly ruined, and restored the side parts which were still stable. On Achilli's death the building was inherited by his son, Domenico, who turned a large room in the basement of the building into a theatre for private performances. This continued until 1913. The last descendent of the Achilli family, a priest, left the palace to the people of Gavinana. It was then used as a monastery by the Suore Crocifissine ('Sisters of the crucifix') who ran a primary school and a nursery there. During the Fascist era the building was used as the offices of the Ente Comunale di Assistenza, and then, with directive n.616 in 1977 it was given to the Commune of San Marcello.



In April 1994 the palace was definitively declared to be the property of the commune, and since 1996 it has been on loan to the Province of Pistoia which has completely restored the complex and turned it into the Ecomuseum's visitors' centre.

The centre contains exhibition areas, workshops, and meeting rooms, as well as a sound library of oral traditions from the Pistoiese mountains. This is the result of a detailed work of research which has brought to light hundreds of songs, poems and rhymes performed by locals and recorded for the library.

In 1530 Gavinana was the scene of a famous battle when Francesco Ferrucci led the army of the Florentine Republic against the troops of Charles V.

These events are commemorated in the Museo Ferrucciano, in the village's central square. Inaugurated in 1931, the museum is a three-storey 18th-century building housing four rooms of exhibits (*info: San Marcello Pistoiese library 0573-621289/ Gavinana tourist info tel. 0573-66360*)

Palazzo Achilli,
Piazzetta Achilli, Gavinana
Open during the summer and by appointment