



The history of the Fattoria di Volmiano from 1427 to 2025, listed in the register of Italian Historical Enterprises



Already by the year 1000, two military watch towers existed on the territory of the estate, “watching” each other. One in the Volmiano locality, the other in the Sorbetole locality, they formed part, then as now, of a sweeping visual panorama between the two main building complexes. In addition to these two imposing Tower Houses, the estate included groups of farmhouses, set in a landscape of woods and olive groves that has come down to us intact.

In the early 12th century, the lands of Marinella di Legri and Monte Morello were owned by the Counts of Guidi di Modigliana, one of the most important feudal families in all of Tuscany, who had acquired their first properties at the time of the Ottonian dynasty, shortly before the year One Thousand. On their lands, these feudal lords built military watch towers and roads. Each road served as connection to some other fortification and in the Valley, north of Monte Morello, this network of watch towers still exists today. Sorbetole looks toward Volmiano, Volmiano looks toward the Tower of the Legri Castle, and from the Castle Tower can be seen the Tower situated on the Collina estate.

The Tower of Volmiano was enlarged by the Cerretani family in the 15th century, when their Castle of Cerreto Maggio burned down. The Cerretani, formerly called “de Cerreto,” were a branch of an ancient Sienese family that had settled in Florence in 1180. In the Land Office statement for the year 1427 made by Paolo di Niccolò Cerretani, residing in the San Giovanni quarter, “Gonfalone del Drago, Popolo di S. Maria Maggiore”, is the first description of the Volmiano estate situated in the Popolo di San Severo at Legri, which was farmed under the métayer system by Jacopo di Piero da Mattiano.

Next to the Tower House of Volmiano, Paolo Cerretani and his wife Lucrezia Martelli had an Oratory built, dedicated to San Giovanni Decollato. The Oratory, of notable artistic and historic worth, is decorated inside with frescoes now attributed to the School of Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio. The patrons had themselves portrayed at the sides of the central fresco, depicting the Virgin and Child Enthroned. The first published article on this Oratory, containing photographs of the Fattoria di Volmiano, is found in the “Guide to the Commune of Calenzano of 1911”. Paolo had a son, Bartolomeo, who wrote the “Dialogo della mutazione fiorentina” [Dialogue of Florentine transformation] in which he explained the changes that had occurred in Florentine society during and after the time of Savonarola in 1520. The Cerretani family was extinguished at the death of Senator Filippo Cerretani in 1763, father of Cassandra, the widow Capponi. Cassandra inherited the Fattoria di Volmiano, which included seven farms. She left in her memory the enlargement of the Oratory, to protect the frescoes, a great fountain and some inventories of the property illustrated by Stefano Zocchi. She died childless on April 27, 1802, leaving the estate and the family name to the sons of her cousin Elisabetta, Angelo and Vincenzo Gondi, who enlarged the property almost to its present-day extent.



One of the most beautiful farms belonging to the Fattoria di Volmiano is Sorbetole. In 1427 the Sorbetole Tower was inhabited by Brunetto di Meglio and his family.

In 1502 his descendants sold the tower house and the farm for 627 gold “grossi” florins to the Florentine nobleman Piero di Braccio Martelli.

The Florentine Martelli family enlarged the building, but in 1575 an episode occurred in which they lost Sorbetole and many other properties. In that year Sorbetole was owned by Camillo di Ridolfo Martelli, who

participated in the conspiracy headed by Orazio Pucci against the son of Cosimo I, Francesco I dei Medici. After having been brought back to Florence from Sicily, where he had fled, Camillo Martelli was declared guilty, and on January 7, 1576, was hanged in Piazza Santa Apollinare, today’s Piazza San Firenze.

The Martelli estates were confiscated, and the Sorbetole and Mattiano farms became the property of the Castle of Cafaggiolo, the cradle of the Medici family in Mugello. In 1627 the grand-ducal administration had a Cabreo, or inventory of the property, drawn up for Sorbetole. From the various olive mills listed, it seems it was just at that time that Sorbetole became one of the little olive mill of this famous estate. In 1629 the Medici exchanged properties with the Carmelite monks of Castellina, who had bought the farm adjoining Mattiano. Sorbetole, exchanged for 1400 scudi and three farms at Vinci, became a small monastery. The Carmelite monks greatly incremented agriculture, building houses, stables and shelters at both Sorbetole and Mattiano, to gather the fruits of the “Poderaio”, as the lay brother who administered the farm was called. In 1808, when the French Government of Tuscany suppressed the religious orders, including the Monastery of Santa Lucia at Castellina, one of the seats of the Carmelites, Sorbetole passed into the hands of the Administration of Public Debt, but on September 5, 1810, Cavalier Vincenzo Gondi Cerretani bought Sorbetole and Mattiano. Under his administration, the Fattoria di Volmiano was extended to include 20 farms. The olive press at Sorbetole was abandoned and Volmiano, closer to the main road, with its big olive press, wine cellar, vat room and granary, became the estate centre. On May 16, 1874, Angelo Gondi Cerretani died and, being the last of his branch of the family, was buried in the Oratory as he had wished. As a fervent patriot, he had had an angel’s wings and the halo of Jesus painted in white, red and green, the colors of the Italian flag. His heir was Oreste Lavagnino, who sold the Fattoria di Volmiano, on June 17, 1880, to Baroness Luisa De Werte –Rattlesambaesen. At her death, the property was inherited by her husband Vittorio Ruglioni, who sold it to Livia Pierina Citernesì Salvadori on July 8, 1929. During this time, the Volmiano building complex was restored, the Fattoria extended toward Legri and the estate, still operating under the métayer system, was cultivated to vineyards and grain. Sheep and cattle of the Calvana breed were also raised, but the greatest importance was assigned to replanting the olive groves.

At the death of its owner, the Fattoria di Volmiano was inherited by his son, Alfredo Citernesì, who had to manage the difficult transition from a métayer system to one of direct management by the owner. At this time, several distant farms were sold and an adjoining one, Loiano, was bought. Then just after the war Alfredo Citernesì, after a trip to England, began raising free-range poultry, as one of the first in Italy to adopt this system. But his most ardent enthusiasm was for the olive trees that he had replanted even after the freeze of 1985, arriving at a total of 20,000 trees at Leccino, Moraiolo and Frantoio. At his death, Alfredo Citernesì left the Fattoria di Volmiano to his daughter Vittoria and his two grandchildren Gerardo and Lapo Gondi. The property has thus returned to the hands of its former owners.

Gerardo and Lapo introduced the company in the organic method in 2012, believing in its values and for. In 2018 a new MORI-TEM crusher with a continuous cycle with oxygen depression. Thanks to this they have also introduced nitrogen containers for the storage of the produced oils. from 2020 they have decided to create two new labels, Laudemio and Fattoria di Volmiano - IGP Toscano Colline di Firenze.