



Provincia di
Trapani

Partanna



Welcome





Partanna is...

Situated on a hill dominating the Belice and Modione valleys, Partanna offers the visitor suggestive views which pass over the surrounding green plains to the faraway maritime headlands. Like all the other towns of the Belice area, Partanna also suffered the

devastating force of the earthquake of '68. Today, however, it is a centre linked to a wine-making and vine growing activity with the production of fine wine, an important and fine olive oil, and a particular type of cheese based on sheep's milk (*Vastedda*). Obligatory stops

include the Castle of the ancient landowners Grifeo (which is home to a modern and suggestive Prehistoric Museum) and the recent archaeological park of Stretto district, where its network of deep Neolithic ditches has given Partanna the title of *City of the Ditch Civilization*.

Grifeo castle



Mother Church Arcade



Stretto District





History

The town already existed in 988, probably as an Arab *casale* (hamlet), *Barthamnah* began its real history with Giovanni II Grifeo who, in April 1139 was given the title of first baron of Partanna by Ruggero II, after Giovanni I, according to the genealogic documents of the casale, had saved the life of the Great count Ruggero I, by killing

the Arab warrior Mokarta during the conquest of Mazara; this episode is represented in a fresco in the arms room of the castle. In the following centuries the town followed the destinies of the noble Grifeo family who greatly influenced the urban development, promoting the construction of churches and monastery

complexes, and from 1627 procured the title of Principality for the town. After the serious damage caused by the earthquake 1968, which profoundly marked the city both from a urban and a social-economic point of view, a new quarter in Camarro district was founded which today has over six thousand inhabitants.

The killing of Mokarta the Warrior



Grifeo Coat of Arms



Grifeo castle





Landscape

Partanna, *safe land* for the Arabs, is a stupendous *balcony over Belice*. It is situated on a luminous hill from which the eye can see as far as the sea: a land of strong chromatic contrasts where the blue of the sky darkens between thick lines of olive trees and vines or is warmed by the colour of the wheat. Spectacular views

can be enjoyed from various parts of the city and from the belvedere-look out points: from *Piazza Barone Adragna*, overlooking the imposing castle of Grifeo, the large valley of the river Modione, presents itself in all its splendour; from *Piazza Falcone e Borsellino*, on especially clear days, the view goes as far as

Pantelleria, and also as far as Castelvetro, Santa Ninfa, and the coastline between Mazara and Sciacca. Another beautiful view can be seen from the church of San Rocco. Further up in Montagna district, along the panoramic road, the Egadi islands, Salemi and Gibellina can be admired.

Belice Valley



Modione Valley



Vineyards





Nature

The territory of Partanna extends between the rivers Modione and Belice. In some areas there are characteristic long canyons called *Valloni* (large valleys), which are semi natural areas with an appearance similar to North African *Oued*, important oases of biodiversity, fundamental for the hydro-geological arrangement of

the territory. The *Riserva di Zangara* is a precious example of original scrub and woodland vegetation which is found inside a gorge, formed by rugged rocks, in the Castello della Pietra locality. Here, where a tributary of the Belice falls from the rocks as a waterfall, a rich Mediterranean vegetation has grown, in

which many shrub and arboreal species of Mediterranean vegetation, numerous ferns and a spectacular *Quercus virgiliana* which grows in the arm of the tributary can be found. In rocky landscapes, the Peregrine falcon, the black throated wheateater, the sparrow, and also the marten make their nests.

Castello della Pietra (Stone Castle)



Quercus virgiliana



Crataegus monogyna





Traditions

In the Christmas period it is traditional to make, on the balconies or outside the house, small votive aedicules, decorated with laurel leaves and containing sacred images of baby Jesus or the Sacred family, to which a novena of prayer is dedicated from the 16th to the 24th of December, with

moving popular laments accompanied by the sound of bagpipes. The tradition of making *altari di San Giuseppe* - the altars of Saint Joseph, during the festivities for the saint has recently been reintroduced. The altars are decorated with bread in shapes symbolising nature, Jesus,

Mary and Joseph, and characteristic *cucciddati*, large doughnuts. To the Virgins, once three poor people representing the Sacred Family, and in front of the votive altar, a lunch of numerous courses, to give thanks following a healing or as auspices for work or a good vintage year.

Altar of San Giuseppe





Religion Remembrance Bonds

The patron saint of the town, San Vito, is celebrated on the 15th June with processions and a historical parade. The people of Partanna are particularly devoted to San Francesco di Paola to whom, two Sundays after Easter, a heartfelt and popular procession, a “vampata” (blaze) and fireworks are dedicated. Another

heartfelt religious tradition is the pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Madonna della Libera which is situated in Montagna district. Not only the people of Partanna, but also the people from the nearby villages, arrive in large numbers on the first Sunday in October to pay homage to the Madonna. The cult affirmed itself in

the XIX century, following a miraculous event when a trader from Palermo, after being robbed and put in chains by bandits was liberated by the Madonna who appeared to him with baby Jesus in her arms. In honour of the Virgin Mary, first a small church rose, which was destroyed in the 1968 earthquake, and then the sanctuary was founded.

San Vito Festivity

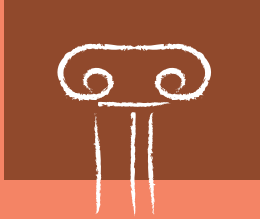


San Francesco Procession



Madonna della Libera Sanctuary





Art

In 1468 the famous Dalmatian sculptor Francesco Laurana set up a workshop in Partanna and made the marble coat of arms of the Grifo family, which is on the gateway of the courtyard of the castle. The baptism fountain now in the Mother church, and the *Madonna dell'Udienza*, in the Carmine church, possibly

finished by a local maestro are also attributed to Laurana. The Mother church is a real treasure chest of art; the rich apparatus of stuccoes (1692-1729) mostly carried out by Vincenzo Messina and his sons Giacomo and Giovanni, including the scenographic and complex *Trasfigurazione* (1717) are interesting. Among the

paintings and sculptures the monumental wooden organ stands out, its design is attributed to Paolo Amato (1678), and it was made by Natale Puglisi (1697). The mural sculpture of the *Caserma dei Carabinieri* (Carabinieri Barracks) and the *Bifrontale per Rocco Chinnici*, in the judicial offices are by Pietro Consagra.

Mother Church, stuccoes



Mother Church, organ



Bifrontal, Consagra





Archaeology

The important presence of Neolithic ditches in Stretto district (5700-4400 B.C.), which might have been used for irrigation purposes, has earned Partanna the denomination of *Città della Civiltà dei Fossati* - City of the Ditch Civilization. A gallery of the same period as the ditches which leads to a pool of water was also probably of cultic use. For

the singularity of the place, the Stretto has been defined *Sanuario delle acque* - Sanctuary of the waters. In the same site, caved tombs, bronze age ceramics and vases of the Partanna-Naro, typology, characteristic of other prehistoric villages in the Trapani area have been brought to light. Proof of the high level of development of the

inhabitants of the site is a extremely particular finding: a drilled skull which carries the signs of a surgical operation. The interesting remains of three huts belonging to the middle bronze age (XV - XIII century B.C.) are visible in the prehistoric site brought to light in the interior courtyard of the Municipality technical office.

Drilled skull



Basin on low pedestal



UTC Prehistoric Site





Monuments

The Grifeo Castle is one of the best conserved of the province. It dates back to the XIV century, even if restoration work and changes have altered its original appearance. It has the solemn appearance of an ancient fortress with battlements and three large wings around a large

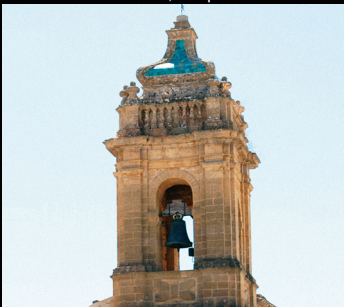
courtyard. The Mother Church (XVI-XVII centuries), whose damaged parts were rebuilt after the 1968 earthquake, has kept its original external appearance with sober lateral bell towers and two spacious loggias (XVIII century). The church of San Rocco (1576) with the elegant and original bell

tower, is a small architectural beauty, internally decorated with stuccoes and paintings. Among the noble buildings on the main street, the palazzo Todaro Molinari, the Monte di Pietà (XVI century) of Baroque style, and palazzo Pisciotta Calandra (1795), of clearly Neoclassical lines stand out.

Mother Church



Church of San Rocco, campanile



Palazzo Todaro Molinari





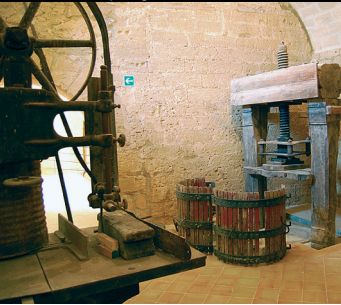
Museums Science Education

The Castle is today home to an interesting *Centro d'Interpretazione e Valorizzazione Territoriale* Centre of Territorial Interpretation and Valuation which groups together the ethno-anthropological Museum and the Museum of Basso Belice: the first holds tools and objects from the farming civilisation of the valley of Belice, the second

exhibits precious prehistoric material, mostly coming from the Stretto district. Of great interest are the bell shaped cups and the large whole vase from the Capo d'Acqua. In the arms room there are seventeenth century paintings from the church of San Nicola da Tolentino and the altar piece with the *Madonna del Rosario tra i Santi Domenico e Caterina* -

Madonna of the Rosary between Saints Domenico and Caterina by Simon di Wobreck (1585). The stables of the castle are also part of the museum and now hold a conference room and the cellar with ancient barrels. The council library has a patrimony of 14,127 volumes, with ancient archives coming from ex-monasteries.

Ethno-Anthropological Museum



Basso Belice Museum



Municipal library





Typical produce

In Partanna plaster, paint, coverings, varnishes and similar for the boat industry, the building trade, for industry and also for the bio-building industry are produced. Particularly innovative is the production of biological paint made up of fruit and citrus fruit extracts, in particular orange

peel. A company supplies terpenes, composites which are different from petrol-chemical solvents as they have a minimal impact on the environment both when used and when thrown away. The orange terpene which is completely biodegradable, is not considered to be toxic waste and does not contain

substances which damage the ozone layer. It is a good natural composition which is an excellent solvent for colours which are added to make the paint. For the preparation of these particular eco-compatible paints, wood oil, lino linseed oil, turpentine essence and lemon oil are used.

Artistic Ceramics



Biological paints



Oranges





Wine and food

Partanna is the *città delle cipolle* - city of the onions which are red in colour, with a sweet taste and large dimensions and a weight which goes from 1/2 a kg to 1kg. The rivers Belice and Modione have given life to a fertile plain which has developed an agricultural and zootechnical vocation. The people of Partanna produce wine, oil from the

renowned *Nocellara del Belice* PDO, delicious cheeses including *la Vastedda*, also a PDO: a round, a stretched curd cheese made from Belice sheep milk, a native race of sheep. It is eaten in slices, preferably dressed with oil and oregano. For the typicality of its produce, Partanna is member of the national associations *Città*

del vino - City of wine, and *Città dell'olio* - City of oil and of the *Consorzio di tutela Valle del Belice* - Protection cooperative of *Valle del Belice*, for the cheese sector. The vegetables are the ingredients for numerous first courses, like pasta with broccoli, or pasta with *macco*, that is to say, dressed with broad beans and wild fennel.

Onions



Vastedda del Belice



Maccu





Shows and events

Regular appointments are the *Mostra Mercato del Bestiame* - Livestock Exhibition Market which takes place on the second Sunday of every month, in which many breeders and producers from all over Sicily participate, and the *Fiera dell'artigianato* - Craft fair in the winter season. At Christmas time, the *Festa d'inverno* - Winter

festival takes place from the 8th of December to the 6th of January Estate partannese - Partanna Summer is busy season of very popular events and displays, with shows, high level musical reviews, many of which take place in the modern architecture of the Open air theatre of Montagna district which has a strong visual, landscape

impact. Particularly important is the *Concorso Nazionale Teatro-scuola Grifo d'oro* - National Theatre-School Grifo D'oro Competition: an event which offers students from Italian schools of any type, the opportunity to put their acting to the test and is an important moment for meetings and exchanges.

Livestock Exhibition Market



Partanna Summer



Grifo d'oro National Competition





Entertainment, sport and free time

Partanna has a good sporting culture and has football fields, and tennis courts in addition to school and private gyms which offer a satisfactory service for the practicing of various disciplines. Of particular importance is the sports centre *Peppino Impastato* which is used for

events and exhibitions. Sports clubs and circles are active and promote events, meetings, martial arts and chess tournaments and car races. A sporting club has had a prestigious role in Sicilian volleyball for many years and an amateur club offers cycling and walking/running

activities. It is possible to practice trekking and excursions in the enchanting territory and pleasant walks can be taken around the town streets amongst elegant and assorted shops, and stopping in the town square which is a meeting place for young and old.

Sports Centre



Piazza Falcone - Borsellino



Piazza Belvedere





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REGIONE SICILIANA
Assessorato BB.CC.AA. e P.I.



Provincia Regionale
di Trapani



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