



Viano Castle opening, viewed at night. Source: Marcello Assandri

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Veiano Castle Opened Up For the First Time in 417 Years

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Today, after 417 years, the castle of Veiano (once Viano), Italy opened its heavy doors to experts coming from seven countries. Prince Landolfo di Napoli Rampolli, whose family has owned the castle for more than 400 years, invited experts from seven countries for a private visit to inspect the castle. The last recorded such occurrence was in 1606! What was inside was not known to academics, scholars, adventurers and explorers. It offered an unprecedented glimpse into the military architecture and perhaps other unknowns of the Renaissance.

- [Huge Lost Medieval and Renaissance Castle Complex Discovered in Italy](#)
- [Unearthing Italy's Hidden Castles 3: Veiano of the Renaissance](#)



Viano Castle, Vejano, Italy. (Google Earth)

Historic Opening to the Forte Cultura Delegation

From September 23rd to October 1st, a delegation of twelve scholars and experts from six European countries have engaged in a specialized tour of Rome and the Lazio region to study and understand its fortified heritage. Organized under the European Cultural Route [FORTE CULTURA](#), advocate of Fortified Monuments in Europe, the initiative aims to foster knowledge exchange with Italian experts and attract new partners to the cultural route.

The participants, who specialize in fields such as architecture, urban planning, monument preservation, museology, and tourism, are delving into Rome's lesser-known fortified structures. While the [Aurelian Wall in Rome](#) has a recognized significance in the city's development, many are unaware of the history of the [Vatican](#) fortress walls and several [Renaissance fortresses](#) in the Lazio region.

Significantly, the tour features the first-ever opening to experts of the privately owned Renaissance fortress, Vejano – La Rocca - although there was a strict agreement of no photos or filming inside the castle.

The goal of the tour is to generate broader interest in significant eras of Italian history, potentially extending this interest across a European cultural route. A detailed printed report will be produced at the conclusion of the tour, documenting the insights and discoveries made.



Photo of the delegation and other visitors, including, center - Prince Landolfo di Napoli Rampolla (center with salmon shirt), Mayor of Vejano, Teresa Pasquali, and Marcello Assandri. (Marcello Assandri)

Coverage of the Vejano Castle Visit by Marcello Assandri

Marcello Assandri has been reporting back on historic revelations from the area over the last week, and was a member of the tour. Here is his report back on the day:

The castle visit was much anticipated in the view that the last visit by military architecture experts goes back to 1609 by the architect Orazio Torriani 414 years ago. So this was a truly historical private tour as the Prince Landolfo di Napoli Rampolla opened his ‘Rocca Borgia’ for a selected number of visitors.

The castle has been in the Altieri family possession since 1670, who bought it from the Orsini who had inherited the Feud of Viano back from the last of the Santacroce family. A contract with an administrative well-tested tool of Roman Law had been applied when the contract between the Orsini and the Santacroce was made on September 12th, 1493. The contract included a clause that in case the Santacroce of the Viano branch were to become extinct, the Feud would return to the Orsini. The Roman law worked perfectly, and in 1615 the Orsini once more became Lords of the Feud of Viano. In 1670, they sold it to the Altieri family that

still owns it to this very day. We are very grateful to the Prince Landolfo di Napoli Rampolla for his hospitality.



Prince Landolfo di Napoli Rampolla (left), owner of the castle at Vejano, with Dr. Hans Neumann, Co-Founder of Forte Cultura of Berlin. (Marcello Assandri)

The list of the experts invited included representatives from: the Lazio Regional Government, Fabio Stefoni, acting on behalf of the Culture Assessore of the Lazio Government, Simona Renata Baldassare, the Mayor of Vejano, Teresa Pasquali, The Co-Founder of Forte Cultura of Berlin, Germany, Dr. Neumann. The Professor of Renaissance Urban Development, Prof. Teresa Colletta, the Curator of the Orsini Archive in Rome, Elisabetta Mori, the history author Patrizia di Ruggero, and special guests from seven European countries.

Vejano Castle Tour Report

We entered and toured the castle at Vejano, which has three sections. The oldest part is carved in the rock and is therefore called a Rocca and not a castle (*castello*). The second section are towers 2 and 3. We are dealing with a triangular shaped fortification.

- [Unearthing Italy's Hidden Renaissance Castles 1: The Borgia and Orsini Affair](#)
- [Unearthing Italy's Hidden Renaissance Castles 2: Bracciano Castle, the Orsini HQ](#)



The main entrance through the outer wall of the castle. (Marcello Assandri)

Inside we found stone carvings of the Orsini, the Medici, the Chigi, the Santacroce and of the Altieri. In one instance, Elisabetta Mori noted that the Orsini carving was that of Virginio Gentile Orsini and therefore the castle must have been erected prior to 1493, the year of the Orsini donation to Giorgio I Santacroce of Viano. This brings back the dating of the construction from 1518 to 1493 at least.

Please note that from 1483 to 1485, the Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere the future Pope Julius II, the Pope who succeeded Pope Borgia, built with Sangallo the Younger the triangular castle of Ostia which is also triangular in shape.

It is probable that the castle of Veiano (Viano) was built by Sangallo the Elder for the brother of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, Bartolomeo della Rovere, who owned Viano for two years before it was sold the son of Pope Cibo (Francesco Cibo) who sold it to the Orsini in 1492. The Orsini then in 1493 donated the Viano Feud to his brother-in-law, Giorgio I Santacroce. The Borgia and the Orsini began hostilities in 1493.

This is how we research military architecture of the Renaissance: archives, photos, history commentaries and field research.

- [Unearthing Italy's Hidden Renaissance Castles 1: The Borgia and Orsini Affair](#)
- [Unearthing Italy's Hidden Renaissance Castles 2: Bracciano Castle, the Orsini HQ](#)
- [Unearthing Italy's Hidden Renaissance Castles 3: Rites and Recreation in the Renaissance](#)
- [Unearthing Italy's Hidden Renaissance Castles 4: Escape Route Rome](#)
- [Unearthing Italy's Hidden Renaissance Castles 5: Castle Complex Discovered](#)

I am testing tours in the Lazio region around Rome to raise awareness of the great cultural heritage that exists there. Therefore, much of the explorations are new and for people who have come to Italy several times and are looking for something fresh from Italy.

We have restructured the Borgia Tower Palazzo and we are running a second pilot tour program, which I am launching personally. If you are looking for a new excitement, we are on new Renaissance ground to explore. If you like adventure and are passionate about Archaeology, Astro Archaeology or Classical Etruscan, Roman archaeology, Vejano is for you to explore.

We invite you to join our one-week tour. We can host up to 8 people. Transportation will be from the International Fiumicino Airport (50 minutes by car away).

If you want to be part from the start to this adventure, join us as we are discovering our ancient origin during the Renaissance.

I thank you for your attention.

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Top image: Viano Castle opening, viewed at night.

Source: Marcello Assandri

By [Gary Manners](#)

References



Gary Manners

Gary is an editor and content manager for Ancient Origins. He has a BA in Politics and Philosophy from the University of York and a Diploma in Marketing from CIM. He has worked in education, the educational sector, social work and personal development. Gary has an interest in societies and social order, people's values and social structures and generally how societies work. He has experienced life in several types of social order, from Liberal Western Democracy (mainly), to Socialist, Communist and even a Buddhist lifestyle in China.