



Tour of Madonie on Sicilian horseback

*In search of the towns
of Petralia, Geraci
and Polizzi.*

*It's the Sicily nobody
has seen,
turning three
extraordinary
thoroughbreds of horse
in its treasure,
and recalling
it was the first
Italian region
with a gift for horses.*



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oble, proud, essential instrument and faithful companion of captains and heroes. Horse, the car of the past, the most important animal in the history of human beings, immortalized in the shout of a king, Richard III of England, that in a desperate rush offered

all he had for one of them. British outstanding scriptwriter William Shakespeare makes him shout during the battle of the two roses "my kingdom for a horse".

Not so British, after all, since the talented man of letters boasted full-blooded origins: they say his native country was Italy. Sicily, to be precise. And Sicily is also the native country of horses, and the venue of the national meeting of ENGEA, the National Institution of Environment Horse Guide. The aim of the meeting was to rediscover the Sicilian gift for horses that is one of the most rooted in Europe. It boasts horse thoroughbreds, which are typical of these places, including the "Sanfratellano" horse, the Eastern thoroughbred and the indigenous Sicilian variety.

The heart of this tradition is among the Palermo tops of the Madonie; it is a land rich in folklore, history and the culture derived from a succession of domination. The French, Spanish, Byzantine, Normans,

Romans and Saracens have left their mark on the language, economy and traditions of the Sicilian people. But they have left a mark on art, above all. And today this area of Sicily offers some itineraries that are hidden but also extraordinary in terms of beauty and intensity. Leave from Castellana Sicula, the most important naturalistic horse center on the island. Petralia rose in the neighborhood: it is divided into Soprana and Sottana and it is called "the pioneer of the Madonie". The Batarlah of the Arabs was the only city, at least until the second half of the 11th century, and the reasons for the splitting are unknown. Petralia Settana, which was domain of the Ventimiglia, Cardona and Aragona, Moncada and Alvarez De Toledo, had a hard life in the beginning, but it enhanced the qualities of its inhabitants. The main churches and monasteries were built in the 16th-17th century, whereas the most relevant aristocratic buildings date back to the 18th and 19th century. Between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the town adorned itself, by renewing its configuration.

The economy was affected by it, factories grew, agriculture was modernized and became a pole of cultural and tourist attraction. The treasure of the mother church of Petralia Sottana keeps valuable works of