

Sorrounding Area

1. Badiola

La Badiola ('Abbey') di S. Maria in Mamma, on the right bank of the Arno, is one of the Badia dei Benedettini di Nonantola's oldest churches in Tuscany. The oldest document relating to the church is of 1125. The people from the castle of S. Mariano, which was near the church, paid tribute to the Badiola. The castle of S. Mariano was destroyed on the orders of the Florentine Republic when San Giovanni was founded. For some time after the destruction of the castle, the Badiola held the double title of S. Maria in Mamma and S. Mariano.

2. Renacci

Renacci was once a villa and large estate owned by the Marquis' Rinuccini, who were patrons of the church of S. Silvestro. It stands on the right bank of the Arno, on a sandy hill and in olden times was therefore called Renaccio or Renazzo ('rena' in Italian means 'sand'). It is positioned on the border between the diocese of Fiesole and that of Arezzo: in Medieval times the church of S. Niccolò at Renaccio belonged to the parish of Gropina in the diocese of Arezzo while the parish church of S. Silvestro at Renaccio belonged, and still belongs, to the diocese of Fiesole.

The villa is hidden in an age-old wood of ilexes and oaks. A short distance from the villa stands the church of San Silvestro and its associated parsonage, ennobled by a slender bell-tower. The construction of the villa dates from 1704.

3. Montecarlo

This locality, on the left bank of the Arno, was called Monte Ortale in olden times. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, a small villa owned by the Marquis Carlo Ricasoli was built there. The Marquis made a gift of the villa to the Franciscan friars from the nearby Ganghereto monastery, near Terranuova. The building of the monastery and the church were due to the Ricasoli family. It was then that the locality, in honour of the donor, adopted the name of Montecarlo. The Franciscan friars took possession of the monastery and the church in 1429. The inhabitants of the castle of Terranuova tried in vain to impede the move, even turning to their influential fellow citizen Poggio Bracciolini.

The church, like San Giovanni nearby was dedicated to St. John the Baptist. In the Baroque period it was transformed, to be turned back to its Renaissance appearance in 1916. Until a few years ago the celebrated Annunciazione ('Annunciation') by Fra Beato Angelico was kept on the second altar on the right. It is now to be found in the museum of the Basilica in San Giovanni.

In recent years the Franciscan community have left the monastery, which is now a community for the cure of drug addicts, run by a Franciscan brother.