

Basic trail - Yellow route

Heading towards Bellosguardo: the favourite hills of the artists and the poets

Via di San Carlo - Piazzetta di Bellosguardo - Via Piana - Via Santa Maria a Marignolle - Via dei Morelli - Via del Ferrone - Via di Soffiano

We walk down Via di Soffiano until we reach **Via del Filarete**, we then head down the narrow **Via di San Carlo**, the only road which climbs uphill from this point towards the hills.

This road is enclosed by dry-stone walls (be careful of cars coming from both directions) that mark out different properties surrounded by gardens and olive groves. At various points the road opens out with views to the south-west over the countryside dotted with villas and when we reach the **Castle of Montauto** we get a stunning panoramic view.



Via di S. Carlo was named after the Archbishop of Milan, Charles Borromeo, in 1646 when the Barnabites received an ancient house in this area as a gift from the Caciotti family.



The Castle of Montauto - This property used to belong to the Bonciani family. It was converted into a villa in the 17th century and features a tower decorated with fourteenth-century corbels.

Shortly afterwards we see the impressive **Piazzetta di Bellosguardo**. This little square is overlooked by the beautiful **Villa Belvedere del Saracino** on the left, also known as Villa Borgherini (No. 6, not open to the public).



Villa Belvedere del Saracino

This villa was built in the early 15th century by the Bartoli, a family of merchants. It was then purchased by Pier Francesco Borgherini, who commissioned Baccio d'Agnolo in 1520 to carry out the extension and decoration project.

While on the right we see **Villa dell'Ombrellino**, which is one of the main architectural sites on these hills (although it is not open to the public). It's fitting that we have a brief look at its history.



The loggia for music performances



The 'umbrella' in the background at the centre

Villa dell'Ombrellino

Formerly known as Villa di Bellosguardo, this building dates back to 1372 and for 400 years it belonged to the Segni family. It got its current name from the iron structure in the shape of a Chinese umbrella, which was built in 1815 by the new owner, Contessa Teresa Spinelli, on the large garden terrace that overlooks Florence.

During this time the villa underwent major renovation work, and then again in 1874 by the Zubow family (who combined it with the neighbouring Villa della Torricella). They remodelled the two gardens, merging them into one single huge romantic park. Villa della Torricella was then knocked down by the new owner, Alice Keppel (a mistress of Edward VII), who built a loggia in its place for playing music. During this time the garden had been full of neo-sixteenth and neo-eighteenth-century statues, however, in 1926 it was transformed into an Italian garden by the great English architect, Cecil Pinsent.

In 1947, it was passed on to Keppel's daughter, Violet Trefusis, and it is now a private residence. Many illustrious guests have stayed here, such as Galileo Galilei, who lived in Villa della Torricella between 1617 and 1631 while he wrote his "Dialogue concerning the two chief world systems".

Recommended detour

Before we head down Via Piana to our right, there is a recommended detour down **Via Roti Michelozzi** (walk through the small square and take the first street on the right). From here, we can enjoy an unrivalled, unique view over Florence's landmarks (with an extraordinary view of the front of Palazzo Pitti). At the end of this cul-de-sac, there is a stunning view of the **Tower of Bellosguardo** (which is not open to the public).



The **Tower** dates back to the thirteenth century (when it was owned by the Cavalcanti family). It forms the core of the current villa which was built by the Marquis Roti Michelozzi in the sixteenth century. It was then embellished and decorated by Poccetti and Francavilla. Between 1920 and 1940, Baroness Marion Von Hornstein-Franchetti turned it into a lively literary circle and a meeting place for aristocrats and intellectuals from all over Europe. Today it is a luxury hotel and surrounded by a beautiful garden, where you can enjoy an unrivalled panorama over Florence.



Florence as seen from Via Roti Michelozzi

Via Piana (which is the road we take on the right from Piazzetta di Bellosguardo) does not vary greatly in height and provides a great view of the Church which was once a chapel of the Monastery of Santa Verdiana a Bellosguardo, built by Pirisini in 1888. We stroll down this road until we come to **Via di Santa Maria a Marignolle** on our right. This is the typical landscape of the Florentine hills: olive trees, fields, dry-stone walls, panoramic views and the peaceful countryside, yet in an area which is so close to the city.



The Church on Via
Piana



Villa I Visibelli on Via dei Morelli



Via del Ferrone

Bearing to the right, we head down **Via dei Morelli**, where we find the sixteenth-seventeenth century **Villa I Visibelli**, which features even older elements. We then continue along **Via del Ferrone** (which gets its name from a farmstead that overlooks the road). This street is lined with farmsteads, meadows and olive tree plantations. We pass by **Villa Strozzi a San Martino** (on our left) and head down **Via di Soffiano** (featuring the interesting monument of the Cemetery of Misericordia, which dates back to 1896). We walk down this road until we get back onto Via del Filarete and then **Via di Soffiano** (which comes from the common Roman name of Sufius, indicating a landowner from this area). This is where we started and now finish our walk.

Technical information

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| Trail distance | 4.8 km |
| Height difference | 85 m |
| Maximum gradient | 19% |
| Average journey time | Walking: 1h 20' - Running: 43' |
| Difficulty: | *** |

Technical and sporting features

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| Road conditions and surface | There is no sidewalk along most of this trail (except for the section on Via di Soffiano). It has many challenging slopes. The road surface is covered in asphalt and the streets are mainly narrow, enclosed between border walls to different properties. Pay attention and always run against traffic. |
| Suitable | Walkers with a good level of fitness Runners with a good level of fitness who can run the whole trail Beginners should walk up the first uphill section (1 km). |
| Type of training | The features of this layout allow you to train your ability to handle fatigue . |
| Footwear | Walking shoes or running shoes |

Directions

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| Ataf Lines | <i>With stops directly at or next to the start of the trail:</i> Line 5, stop Filarete (Rifredi – Soffiano) Line 6 b, stop Filarete (Coverciano - Torregalli) <i>With stops near to one of the points on the trail:</i> Line 42, stop S.M. a Marignolle (P.zza della Calza - Marignolle) |
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Design, creation and coordination

Project

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| Technical and sporting features | Training Consultant: Fulvio Massini, |
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| Photo credits | Villa dell'Ombrellino - for the owners' kind permission: Prelios SGR |
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Maps and Mobile Apps

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| Mobile app | Geoln S.r.l. |