

THE GATEWAY OF THE TWO VALLEYS:

“The Sparavalle” for people who come from the Plains of the Po, lead into the high Apennines. It crosses the ridge which slopes down to the north of Succiso Alp through the two valleys of Secchia and Enza rivers. Here nothing obstructs the view of the higher peaks and the Apennines reveal their impressive north side.

The vastness of the horizon offered by this place and the dividing of the roads leading through the mountain passes of Tuscan Pradarena and Cerreto (Val Secchia) and Lagastrello (Val d'Enza) is the reason for which has been already used in ancient times as a control settlement of the territory.

The last visible vestiges - the ancient gateway of the two valleys - is the Napoleonic fortress, built at the beginning of 1800 on the grounds of an older medieval fortress. The old fort of Sparavalle, which rises to just over one hundred meters from this point can be reached in few minutes walk.

By short-distanced paths from here, by foot, by bike or by car, you can also visit: the country of Cervarezza, the Park of Saint Lucia's springs (source of mineral water and spa), the Cerwood Adventure Park (the biggest in Italy, with acrobatic paths through the trees), the Atelier of protected nature (under construction, is an interactive path to inform on local biodiversity), and then there is Astronomical Observatory of the Amateur Astronomers Group of the Appennino Reggiano. Clearly visible from here and reachable by an easy path (Volpara costs) that runs exactly on the watershed and allow seeing both the valleys and, on a clearer day, the Alps profile.

With about two hours' walk or mountain bike riding you can reach the summit of Mount Ventasso, culminal part of the watershed between the basins of Enza and Secchia. The isolated location and high altitude of this mountain make it a privileged panoramic point: with a glance, the tops of the Apennines ridge, from Corno alle Scale (Province of Bologna) to Orsaro (Province of Parma) are visible. Ventasso Mount is interesting too because of its rock layers and turbidite outcrops (rocks created by sediments deposited in the deep sea by turbidity currents) and is

characterised by the exposure of all its sides to the rays of sun and weather events that determine the extraordinary environmental variability of its slopes, giving rise to a great variety of flora and fauna.

Calamone Lake, or Lake Ventasso, evocative and always different in every season, can be reached with the same time or half an hour by car.