

Pertosa Caves & Charterhouse of Padula

The Charterhouse of Saint Lawrence

UNESCO World Heritage site since 1998





A true crown jewel of speleology, the most significant of Southern Italy, with its origins dating back to 35 million years ago

Situated in proximity of the town Auletta, they were used from man in the Bronze Age and maybe even in the Stone Age as a refuge from danger. Later on, the Greeks and the Romans used them for their rituals and sacred ceremonies, in the Medieval Age the caves gave shelter to the Christians preying away from the danger and then inhabited from monks as a place of worship. Wedged circa 2500 m under the Alburni Mountains of the Cilento, they create a caving scenario unique in the world: galleries, immense caves, "natural halls", breathtaking settings characterized from the mighty

Stalactites and Stalagmites. The uniqueness of this place does not consist only in the particularity of the Karstic shapes, but mostly resides in the fact that in order to visit them it is necessary to go through a little lake originated from a subterranean river. A striking crossing by boat, from the length of about 200 m long, brings the visitors directly to the bowels of Cilento's mountains. Ones in the caves, we have the sensation to find ourselves in an enchanted ambiance, in which only the slow work of nature forged the rock, giving birth to limestone structures by the most various and evocative light games.

"The Angel's Caves"





Recognised in 1998 as an UNESCO World Heritage, the Charterhouse of Saint Lawrence is most surely one of the most beautiful Salerno provinces and makes the town of Padula the leading destination of the religious tourism in Campania, apart from being one of the most stunning Italian artistic heritage. The architectural style is almost predominantly Baroque, in fact there are very few traces left which could testify its origins from the 300th. The estate counts 350 chambers and occupies a surface of 51.500 m² of which 15.000 accommodate only the cloister, the biggest in the world. The Charterhouse of Saint Lawrence, thanks to its extent is second only to the Charterhouse of Grenoble in France. The architectural facility is divided in two zones: in the first one fall within the working places and in the second one we find the

residential area of the monks. The structure, as for all the other Charterhouses, follows the rule of the preach *ora et labora*, pray and work. Because of this, inside of it exist different spaces for their implement: the cloister, the library, where is still possible to admire the pavement made of ceramic tiles coming from Vietri. The decorated Chappell with precious marble, the big kitchen, big cellars, the laundry and the surrounding fields cultivated with the fruits of the Earth for the subsistence of the monks. Despite the emptiness left from the French who plundered at the beginning of the 800th, causing the dispersing of numerous artistic treasures, the Charterhouse of Padula is still today a symbol of monumental architecture and grandioso historical past.



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