

TRAVEL

# My beautiful love affair with Umbria

AUGUST 2, 2017 *by* MICHAEL GRENVILLE

**My beautiful love affair with Umbria is an introduction to this beautiful region giving you a guide to how to spend a luxurious week's vacation here.**



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Umbria's culinary legacy

Quite justifiably many would equate Italy to being one of the most romantic countries in the world. A land of beauty, from landscape to architecture to food and of course the people and their style. Gentlemen Butler plays homage to The Grand Tour where young ladies would travel to educate and develop their cultural knowledge and not forgetting one of England's premier actresses Maggie Smith found herself in "Our House in Umbria"

So, as we sit around the table under the large tree at the end of the garden let's find out a little more about where Lady Charlotte is going off to, on her great adventure for Gentlemans Butler.



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Urbani Tartufi enjoying the taste from truffle hunting

This time we need to hire a classic Italian car, possibly a vintage Alfa Romeo and decide what clothes would be suitable for a week in the Italian countryside, hunting, fishing and shooting, ...think Beretta



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Urbani Tartufi, the quality of culinary expertise cannot be underestimated

And I hear you say where is the backstory, well young kittens get your hot chocolate and afternoon nibbles ready because it's time for a little Ancient History, little did you know that's what I studied for A 'level at school but enough of me, so hear we go get the orchestra to give us some big epic MGM orchestral music for "We proudly present dnnnn dnnn dunnnn "The Umbrians" ....mix through to beautiful countryside and a flowing river and cue narration .....



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – The morning Autumnal mist, over a very famous bridge in Umbria... a test for you

Though there is also archaeological proof of civilization dating back to the Bronze and Iron Ages, things really didn't start getting lively in central Italy until the Etruscans emerged as a people: in Umbria virtually every city and town, large and small alike has traces of ancient Umbrians, Etruscans or Romans. **Umbria is named after the Umbri**, an ancient tribe of peaceful pastoral people indigenous to eastern Umbria and parts of the Marches. However, the first two major tribes to share Umbria in the first millennium before Christ were the **UMBRIANS** and the **ETRUSCANS**.





My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Sleepy town of Torgiano

Although the Etruscans have received more press, the Umbri settled in the region first, as far back as 1000 BC. In the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC Etruscans took over a large number of Umbrian settlements.

Things seriously changed in Umbria in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC when the ROMANS pushed their conquest northwards. At that time Umbrians and Etruscans were content to live rather than resist Roman power and in 90 BC, Umbrians were granted full Roman citizenship.



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – MUVIT Museo del Vino in Torgiano

## THE DARK AGES

After Rome fell the invasion of Barbarians (4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> c. AD) brought destruction, suffering, famine and disease to the region and led to an economic and cultural decline (4). Conditions were perfect for the new Roman cult of **Christianity** to flourish.

## The Medieval Communes

By 1200 most towns had become **free comuni**. Their imposing public buildings can be seen in almost every corner of Umbria. Many important **saints** (Benedict of Norcia – 6<sup>th</sup> c. – patron of Europe) had put Umbria on the mystical map, but it was in the 13th century when Umbria's most famous son, born in one of its most famous towns – St Francis of Assisi – cemented

Umbria's reputation as a centre for spirituality, which continues to this day.



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Stopping for that all important coffee in the sublime Monte Castello di Vibio

**THE PAPAL STATE** – from 16<sup>th</sup> c. until **THE RISORGIMENTO** when Italy became a country (1861)

**Umbria was incorporated into the papal State during the 16<sup>th</sup> c.** Historians of Umbrian culture like to say that time stopped in 1540.

### **MODERN UMBRIA**

The region, whose economy was mainly based on agriculture, experienced a dramatic economic shift at the end of the 19th century with the founding of the Acciaierie di Terni, a major

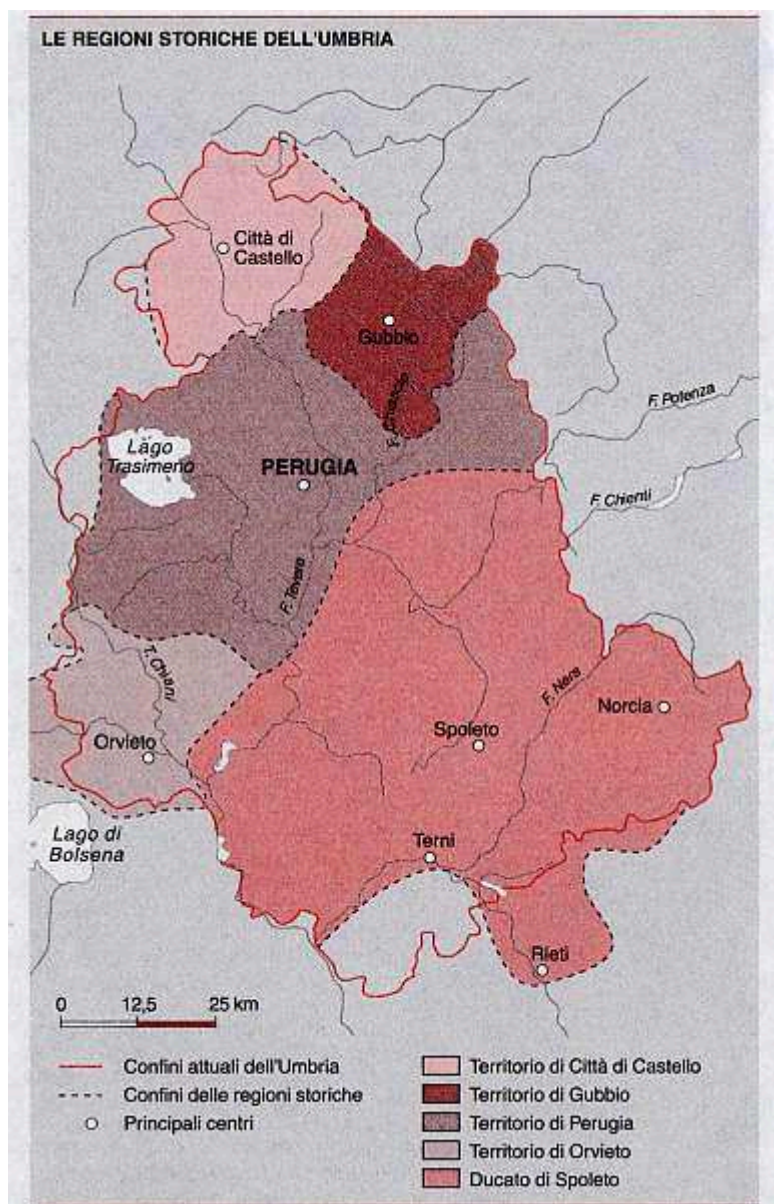


steelwork placed in Terni because of its abundance of electric power due to the Marmore waterfall and its secluded position.



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Stylish luxury shopping in Perugia

The present borders of Umbria were fixed in 1927, with the creation of the province of Terni and the separation of the province of Rieti, which was incorporated into Lazio. During WWII, Umbria was heavily bombed and in 1944 became a battlefield between the allied forces and the Germans retreating towards the Gothic Line. In 1946 Umbria became part of the Italian Republic.



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Map of Umbria

With thanks to Catia Melani for the history and her knowledge.

Lady Charlotte has put together an itinerary for you to spend a beautiful week in the region.

**Day 1** – Take a mid-morning flight to Rome and pick up a vintage Italian Sports car for your luxury vacation. Drive north from Rome and check into the beautifully rustic and medieval looking Castello di Monterone hotel which is just east of Perugia.



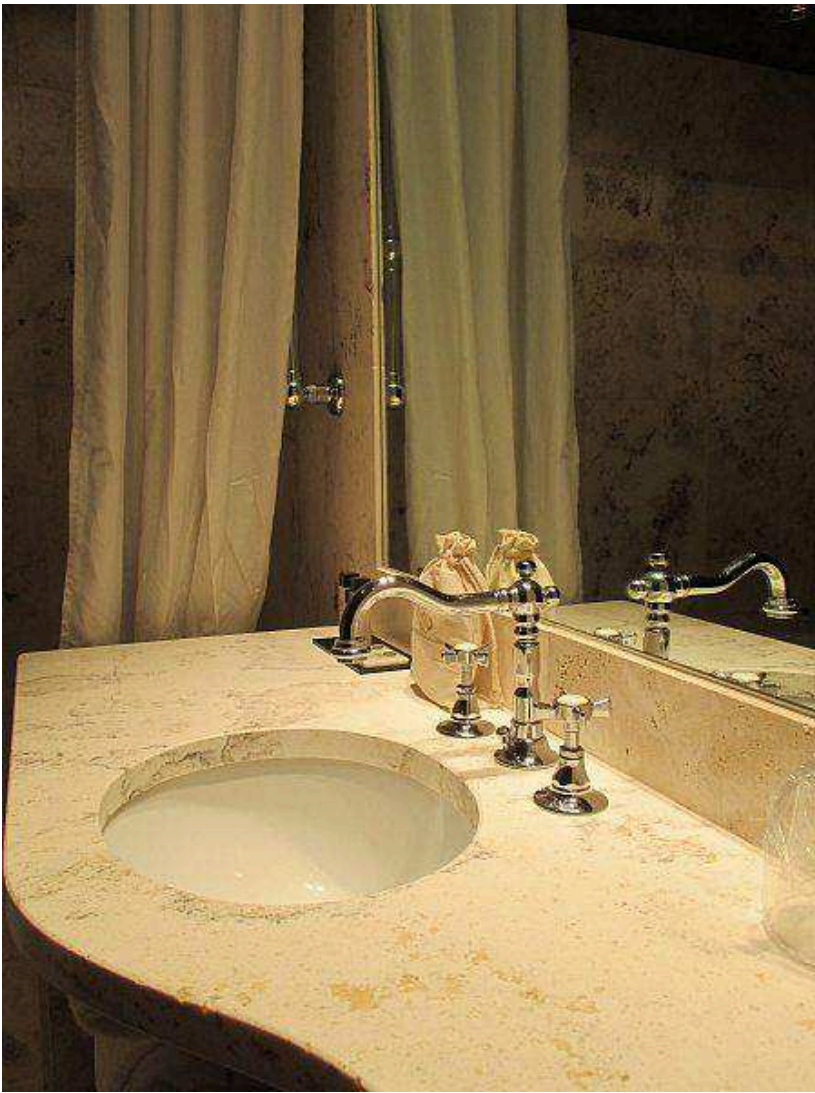


My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Castello di Monterone, looking over the rooftops on a sunny morning

I fell in love with the hotel instantly and though technically not 5 star it has a lot of character, charm and tranquility.



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Castello di Monterone, bedroom



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Castello di Monterone, bathroom

By the time you arrive it will probably be mid to late afternoon so we suggest you relax for hopefully some late afternoon sunshine and go for a walk around the grounds and enjoy an earliesh dinner





and then switch off.



My beautiful love affair with Umbria – Castello di Monterone, wander around the grounds

**Day 2** – After a leisurely breakfast head out for lunch to Torgiano. We recommend a newish local restaurant called L’U winebar cucina umbra .