



POPULONIA

A small medieval village, perched on a promontory overlooking the wonderful Bay of Baratti, Populonia was founded by the Etruscans and eventually was incorporated by the Romans.

Ancient Pupluna flourished as one of the main ports of the region where iron was imported from the island of Elba where it was mined, brought to the Village where there was a smelting center, then distributed all over the surrounding towns. The top of the hill where Populonia is today was the acropolis of the ancient town, still protected by its walls. All around the gulf of Baratti can be found an Etruscan Necropolis that was unearthed at the beginning of the century. It is a wonderful necropolis to visit since it contains numerous tombs spanning from the 7th to the 2nd century BC, the most ancient ones being trenches, then chamber ones and on to the most recent ones of the tumulus type with pseudo-dome roofs, followed still by shrine or chest type tombs.

Here it is possible to admire the colossal Tomb of the Carts, with a 28 meter diameter, and the one of the Funeral Beds.

In the nearby necropolis of Podere Casone there is the Experimental Archaeology Center where the archaeologists of the park introduce adults and children to pottery and stone working using ancient techniques.

The most remarkable archaeological finds from the necropolis are preserved in the Archaeological Museum in Florence but a small collection of wonderful material can be found in the local museum too.

For nature lovers, the bay of Baratti is one of the most spectaculars of the Etruscan coast. The picturesque beach is sheltered by pinewoods and the whole promontory has become a protected area with the creation of a natural park spanning 1295 acres.

On a good day, at sunset, from the top of the 15th century stronghold of Populonia one can see well up the coast and across to the islands of Elba and Corsica.