

An aerial photograph of a village, likely Sanza, with a blue color overlay. The village features a dense cluster of buildings with tiled roofs, a prominent church tower, and surrounding greenery. The text 'SANZA' is overlaid in the top left corner, with the 'A's stylized as house icons.

SANZA

il borgo
dell'accoglienza



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madre
fondazione donnaregina
per le arti contemporanee

“Il progetto di Sanza Museo è a cura della Fondazione
Donnaregina per le arti contemporanee - Museo Madre”

How to reach Sanza

By air

- Salerno–Costa d'Amalfi Airport (approx. 62mi away)
- Naples Capodichino Airport (approx. 104 mi away)

By train

- Nearest stations: Sicignano degli Alburni and Sapri (bus or taxi transfer to Sanza required); Salerno for long-distance connections

By bus

- Regional bus operators Sita Sud and Autolinee Curcio connect to the Vallo di Diano valley, where Sanza is located

By car

- A2 Motorway (Autostrada del Mediterraneo), exit at Padula-Buonabitacolo

Photo credits

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Introduction

To welcome is to create connections. It means bringing together people, places, communities, and opportunities. This is the vision underpinning the pilot project “Sanza: The Village of Hospitality,” selected by the Campania Region as part of Investment 2.1 “Attractiveness of Historic Villages” under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), funded by the Ministry of Culture and the European Union – NextGenerationEU. A project that looks to the future of inland areas by enhancing their most authentic identity.

Sanza represents one of the most significant expressions of that heritage of history, culture, landscape, and traditions that makes Campania unique. Through this program of cultural, social, and economic regeneration, the village now positions itself as a laboratory for territorial innovation, capable of transforming its roots into a driver of sustainable development and growth for local communities.

The project goes beyond the physical restoration of spaces or the creation of new infrastructure. Instead, it builds a network of relationships involving citizens, generations, institutions, businesses, associations, and cultural organizations, fostering dialogue between the tangible and intangible heritage of the area and new forms of hospitality, creativity, and innovation. It is a system that connects the village to its wider context, from the mountains of Cervati to the coasts of the Gulf of Policastro, along a journey that weaves together culture, nature, spirituality, traditions, and community.

Among the project's strategic initiatives is the Tourist Information Centre, conceived as a gateway and a point of reference for visitors. It is within this framework that this guide to the area has been created: a simple yet valuable tool designed to inform, inspire, and accompany those arriving in Sanza as they discover its riches, itineraries, experiences, and deepest identity.

These pages represent far more than a guide. They are an invitation to connect with a community that has chosen hospitality as its vision for the future. This project forms

part of a broader strategic effort to enhance inland areas, which, together with the President of the Regional Executive **Roberto Fico**, we are pursuing with the aim of strengthening territorial cohesion, creating new development opportunities, and countering depopulation.

A future built by valuing cultural heritage, promoting new opportunities for young people, supporting the permanence of local communities, and fostering balanced and sustainable development in inland areas.

Today, the Village of Sanza presents itself as a place where past and future meet, where the visitor is not merely a guest but part of a collective narrative that continues to unfold day by day. In this spirit, the Campania Region renews its commitment to villages and communities that preserve the most authentic soul of the regional territory, wishing all those who browse this brochure to discover in Sanza not just a destination, but an experience of encounter, knowledge, and belonging.

Rosanna Romano

*Director General for Cultural
Policies and Tourism -
Campania Region*

Vincenzo Maraio

*Councilor for Tourism,
Territorial Promotion, and
Digital Transition - Campania
Region*



Welcome

To welcome means opening the doors of a home, but above all of a community. It is in this spirit that the community of Sanza presents itself to those who choose to discover it: not as a simple destination to visit, but as a place to experience, to explore at a gentle pace, to listen to, and to discover in its authenticity.

Our village, set within the extraordinary landscape of the Cilento, Vallo di Diano and Alburni National Park and at the foot of Mount Cervati, preserves a heritage made of history, traditions, landscapes, and human relationships. A heritage that is now being renewed through a vision of development capable of combining the value of our roots with the opportunities of the future.

We welcome you to our Albergo Diffuso; not merely a new form of hospitality, but the story of a village that has chosen to enhance its homes, squares, alleys, artisan workshops, and above all the people who safeguard its identity every day.

Those who arrive in Sanza do not find a traditional accommodation facility, but instead become part of village life, sharing its rhythms, traditions, and authentic sense of hospitality.

We welcome you with the awareness of offering an important opportunity to take part in the cultural, social, and economic rebirth of our village. We welcome you with the certainty that you will appreciate our historical heritage and our vision of sustainable living, aimed at bringing hope to inland areas and building a future founded on quality of life and the enhancement of local excellence.

In these pages, we have sought to tell the story of a journey that is both identity and future. It is an invitation to discover a village that has chosen to make hospitality the heart of its development and its community.

On behalf of the Municipal Administration and all our citizens, I extend a warm welcome to Sanza, with the hope that your stay may become an authentic experience, rich in encounters, emotions, and memories that will endure over time.

Dr. Vittorio Esposito

Mayor of Sanza

A New Way to Welcome

A village worth staying-in, not just passing-by

At the foot of Monte Cervati, in the heart of the Cilento, Vallo di Diano and Alburni National Park, hospitality has taken a new shape: rooted in history, community and the

character of the land. In Sanza life slows down, daily rhythms feel more genuine, and every encounter leaves a lasting trace.

Sanza's *albergo diffuso* turns the village's entire historic center into a place to stay. Guest rooms are set inside restored historic houses, so that all public spaces, all alleyways dotted with workshops, all daily village life and traditions become part of the stay.

In Sanza, you're never just a visitor. You become part of a community that holds onto its past while building its future on its own terms. Hospitality here is a way of life.

Book your stay in the *albergo diffuso*: **borgosanza.it**



The Hospitality of History

Two thousand years of encounters and journeys

Sanza has always been a crossroads — a place of passage, encounter and hospitality. Set between the Vallo di Diano, the Cilento and Lucania, the village occupies a position that for centuries has fostered dialogue between peoples, cultures and traditions.

Shepherds, merchants, monks and travelers have crossed these mountains, leaving traces still visible today in the architecture, the local stories, and the welcoming character of the community.

Walking through Sanza means tracing two thousand years of history: from the ancient Sontini people, to the Basilian monks, to the events of the Italian Risorgimento — the 19th-century movement that led to Italy's unification.

At the entrance to the village, a monument commemorates Carlo Pisacane and his companions, who died nearby in 1857 during a failed attempt to spark an uprising against Bourbon rule — an episode still remembered today as one of the early sparks of Italian unification. The monument reflects Sanza's deep and lasting connection to this chapter of national history.

In Sanza, every stone tells a story, and every place holds a piece of that history.



Monument in honor of Carlo Pisacane

The Hospitality of the Village

A weave of alleyways, squares and wonders

Sanza has kept the charm of a village that time has not erased. Wandering through the historic center means following quiet alleyways, discovering small, intimate squares, and stumbling upon unexpected views at every turn.

From Piazza Plebiscito to the Medieval Tower of San Martino, from noble palaces to ancient city gates, the village is steeped in history and beauty.

Palazzo Eboli, Palazzo Campolongo, Palazzo Bonomo and Palazzo Barzelloni recall the town's period of greatest prosperity, with stone portals, courtyards, old oil mills, and architecture that has kept its character intact.

Every corner invites you to stop, look and listen. The simple pleasure of a village that still tells its story through its spaces and its everyday rhythms.





*"Every stone holds a memory,
every square an encounter."*

The Hospitality of the Soul

*Between art, spirituality
and silence*

In Sanza, beauty is interwoven with spirituality. Churches, convents and chapels hold centuries-old works of art and testify to a long history of devotion.

At the center of this is Monte Cervati, the highest peak in Campania. Here stands the Sanctuary of the Madonna della Neve, a site of pilgrimage and quiet reflection.

From the summit, the view stretches out over the surrounding landscape. Believers and travelers alike come here for the same thing: silence, and a direct sense of connection to the land.



The Hospitality of Nature

Monte Cervati, at the Heart of Sanza

At 1,899 meters, Monte Cervati dominates Sanza's landscape. Its beech forests, chestnut groves, oak woods, pastures and springs make up one of the richest ecosystems in southern Italy. Much of the water that feeds the Cilento and the Gulf of Policastro originates here: the massif is the source of the Bussento, Mingardo and Calore Lucano rivers, whose waters

have shaped the history and economy of the area.

The springs of Varco dell'Abete and Monte Menzano remain a vital resource for local communities today. At the foot of the Bussento springs lies the Passerella dell'Aquila, a nature trail that follows the river upstream through unspoiled wilderness.

Cervati also has a hidden, underground side. The Affunnato di Vallevona, a karst sinkhole over ninety meters deep, is one of the most significant geological features in the entire National Park. A tunnel built in the 1960s provides access to its caves, small lakes and limestone formations. Nearby, the Grotta di Riotorto offers further evidence of the massif's karst activity.

The woods and valleys are home to wildlife of real naturalistic value: Golden Eagles and the rare Red-billed Chough both nest here, signs of an ecosystem that has kept its biodiversity intact.

Water has also shaped the local economy. Along the Bussento, mills and ironworks once thrived, sustaining the area for centuries. Today, the Ponte dell'Abate — a medieval humpback bridge — still marks the historic relationship between the village, the river, and the routes leading to the Gulf of Policastro.



The Hospitality of Experiences

Sanza, a Base for Exploring

Choosing Sanza means being at the center of one of Campania's most varied landscapes. In under an hour, you can reach the Certosa di San Lorenzo in Padula, the historic villages of the Vallo di Diano, the sea of the Gulf of Policastro, the beaches of Palinuro and Marina di Camerota, and the places where the Mediterranean Diet was born.

Mountains, culture, spirituality, sea and local flavors are all within reach. Sanza is an ideal base for exploring the Cilento by day, and returning each evening to the quiet of a village that welcomes you back.



SANZA

il borgo
dell'accoglienza
museo

Sanza Museum: the Village of Hospitality is a cultural hub made up of two parts: “**SANZA MUSEO en plein air**” is an open-air museum, still evolving, featuring site-specific works by five artists of national and international standing: Simone Berti, Diego Cibelli, Mariangela Levita, Giulia Piscitelli and Paolo Puddu. Conceived and proposed by the artists themselves, these first works are placed throughout the town, connecting the lower part of the village with the older quarter above.

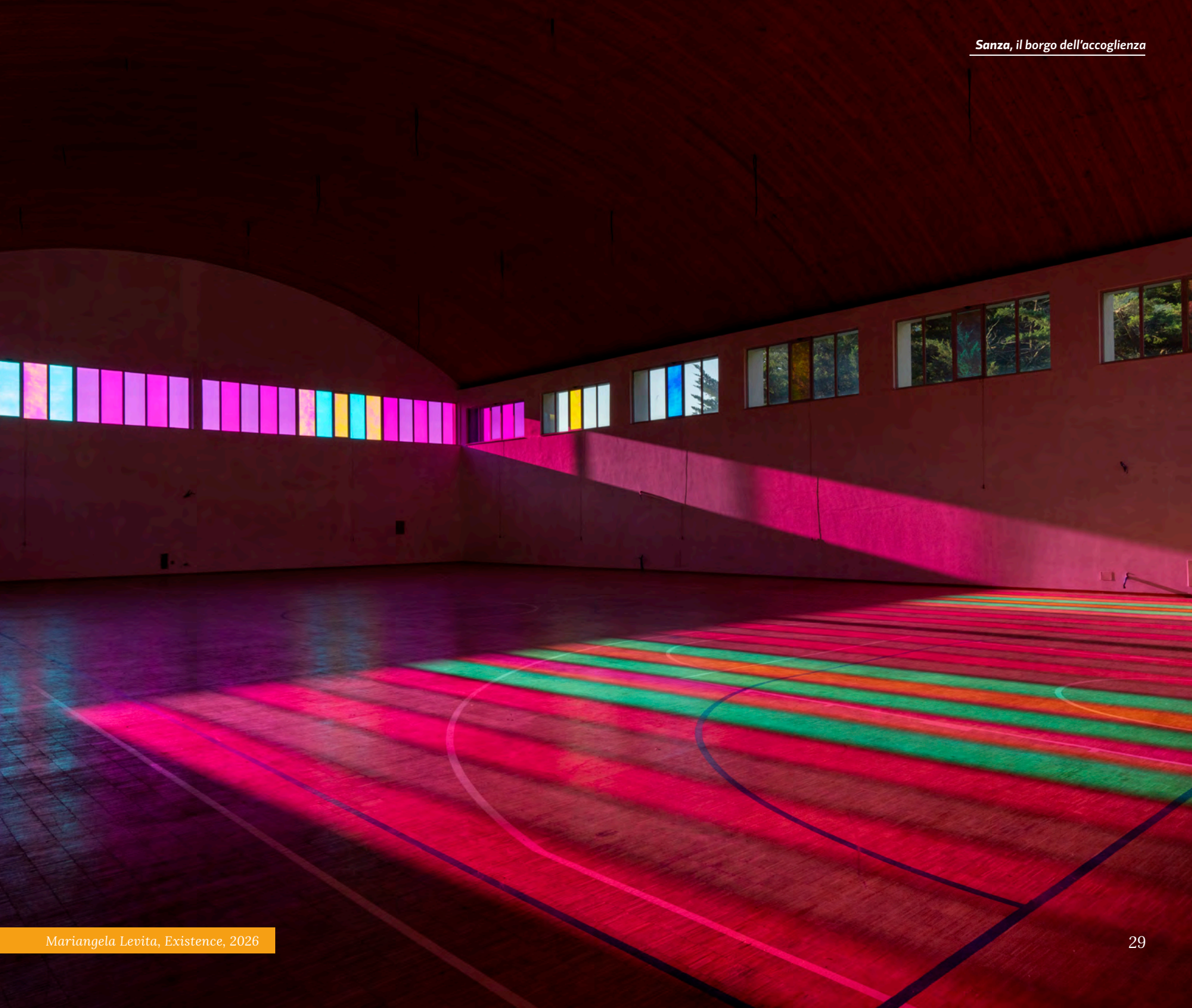
With its growing collection of artworks spread across the village, Sanza offers a place where contemporary art meets the community's history and stories.

The “**Museum of the Community and Territory of Sanza**”, housed within the former Convent of San Francesco, is a multimedia space that uses photographs, videos, 360° images and drone footage to tell the historical and social soul of the village — both its tangible and intangible heritage.

It offers a virtual, almost bird's-eye journey through the village's historical and artistic landmarks, its civil and religious architecture, cultural and religious events, and first-person accounts from the community, bringing together tradition, memory and the present.



Simone Berti, *Rendering FonteSanza (fountain)*, 2026





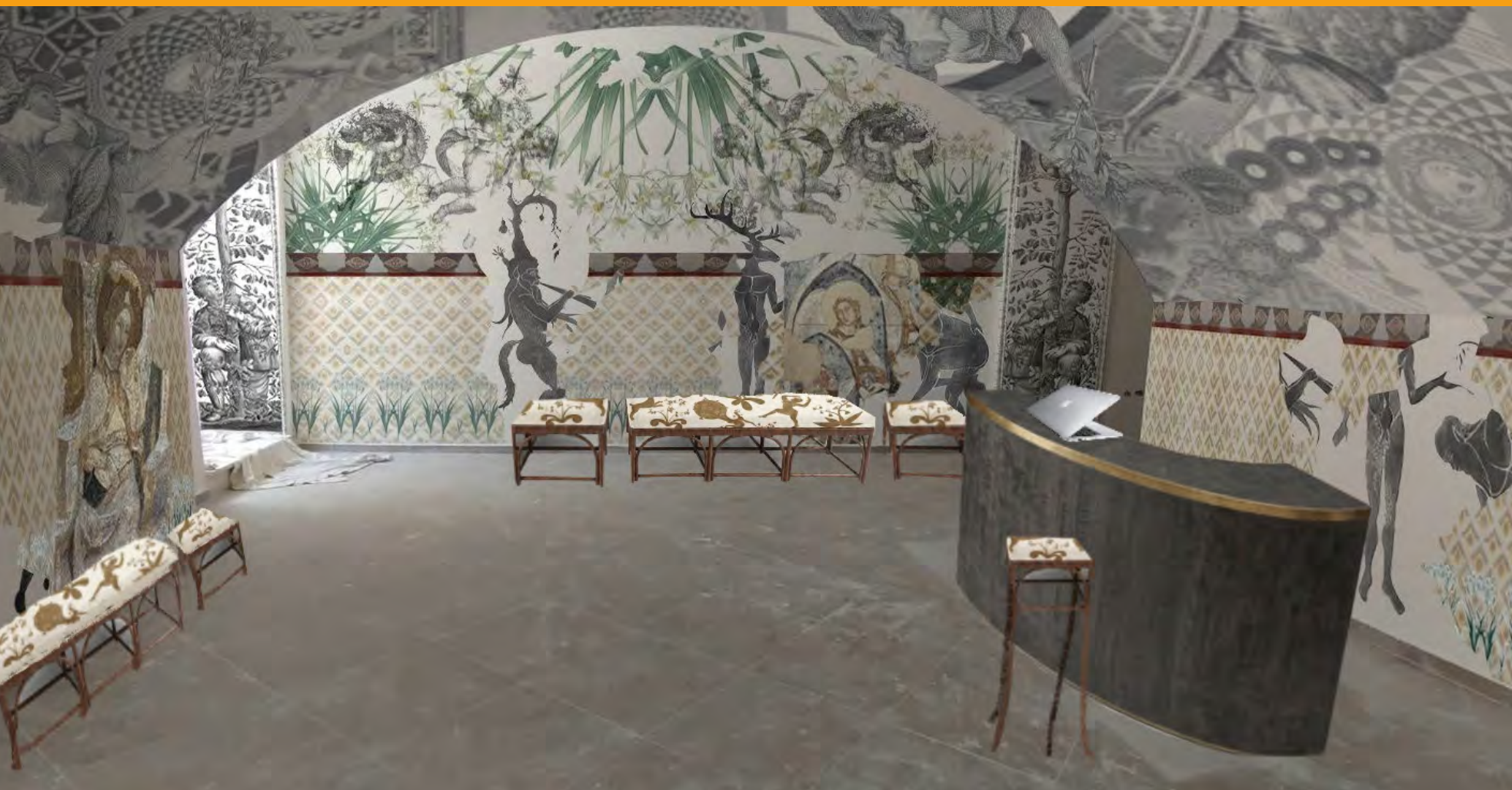
Giulia Piscitelli, Portale Calore, 2026



Sanza, il borgo dell'accoglienza

Paolo Puddu, guardare al cielo, specchiarsi nelle montagne (via del sale), 2026

- 1 Palazzo Eboli
- 2 Chiesa di S.Maria Assunta
- 3 Palazzo Campolongo
- 4 Cappella Madonna della Neve
- 5 Palazzo Fusco
- 6 Palazzo Pappafico
- 7 Torre campanaria S. Martino
- 8 Cappella di S. Brigida
- 9 Palazzo Curcio
- 10 Arco Piazza Ten. Eboli
- 11 Palazzo Bonomo
- 12 Cappella di S.Maria delle Grazie
- 13 Palazzo Barzelloni
- 14 Portale Fico
- 15 Casa Cozzi
- 16 Porta Pungente
- 17 Cappella della Madonna di Loreto
- 18 Antico Serbatoio
- 19 Cappella di Sant'Antonio
- 20 Monastero di S. Francesco
- 21 Museo - Infopoint
- 22 Municipio



Rendering of the museum and info point entrance
(design and drawing by Diego Cibelli)



Diego Cibelli, *Né in cielo né in terra*, 2026
Rendering of site-specific installation (detail)

The Hospitality of the Sea

From Cervati to the Mediterranean

From the peaks of Cervati to the clear waters of the Mediterranean, this is a journey that keeps changing character. In under an hour, the mountain air of the woods

and highland pastures gives way to the scent of the sea — a shift in landscape that few Italian regions can match. Here, the mountains meet the sea directly, shaping scenery of rare beauty.

What sets this destination apart is the way it blends the beauty of the hinterland with the extraordinary richness of its coastline. Swimming here isn't just about sea and sand: it's the thrill of swimming in clear waters with mountain silhouettes on the horizon, landing in bays sheltered by nature, and crossing landscapes where green meets blue.

The Gulf of Policastro opens onto a coastline shaped by small harbors and centuries-old maritime traditions. Sapri, Policastro and Scario sit among coves framed by green hillsides and clear water — well suited to easy swimming and the slower pace



of coastal life. Further north, Palinuro and Marina di Camerota offer some of the best-known coastal scenery on this stretch of the Mediterranean. Here the sea shifts through shades of blue and turquoise. Sea caves, natural arches, tall cliffs and long golden beaches line the coast, offering everything from quiet relaxation to boat trips, snorkeling and diving.

The coastline continues with Pisciotta and Acciaroli, fishing villages shaped by the culture of the Mediterranean Diet. Centuries-old olive groves, narrow alleyways and beaches known for clean water set the scene here, where the pace slows down.

Finally, Punta Licosa stands out as one of the most unspoiled places in Campania. Set within Mediterranean scrubland and tied to the legend of the siren Leucosia, it offers clear water, protected nature, and a marine ecosystem of real ecological value.

From Cervati to the Mediterranean, this is a territory of two souls, each one shaping the other, in a territory where you're never far from either.



The Hospitality of the Table

Flavors, wellbeing and the Mediterranean Diet

L'accoglienza Hospitality in Sanza is expressed at the table too, where mountain and sea, shepherding traditions and coastal cuisine, come together. The clearest example is the Panedda Chiena, the dish that best represents the history of the area. Born as food for shepherds during the transhumance to the highland pastures of Cervati, it encloses the scent of veg-

etables, extra virgin olive oil, and the aromatic herbs typical of Cilento cuisine inside a loaf of homemade bread — a simple dish that says a great deal about how Sanza welcomes people.

Alongside the *Panedda Chiena* stand other local specialties: Sanza bread, made with select flours and spring water; Cacio-cavallo del Cervati cheese; fior di latte mozzarella; and Colline Salernitane DOP extra virgin olive oil.

This culinary journey leads naturally to Pioppi, the symbolic home of the Mediterranean Diet. It was here that American physiologist Ancel Keys developed the studies that made the Cilento diet famous worldwide. Today, the “Museo Vivente della Dieta Mediterranea” tells the story of a culture that goes well beyond food, encompassing lifestyle, social relationships, physical activity and respect for the land. It's no coincidence that the Cilento has one of the highest concentrations of centenarians in the world. Among the stars of this food culture is also the Fico Bianco del Cilento (White Fig of Cilento), an emblem of an agricultural tradition that remains one of the most authentic expressions of the Mediterranean.



The Hospitality of Tradition

A village that comes alive all year round

In Sanza, traditions belong to the present. They live on through community participation and mark the rhythm of the seasons.

From the Bonfire of Sant'Antonio to the Carnevale di Zeza, from the Good Friday Procession to the Feast of San Vito, from the Festival dell'Accoglienza to the pilgrimage of the Madonna della Neve and the traditional Madonna che Corre ("The Running Madonna"), each event is an occasion for gathering and sharing. Festivals, religious celebrations and cultural events tell the story of a community that lives its heritage intensely, turning it into an authentic experience of participation.

In Sanza, you don't just watch a celebration. You become part of it.



Hospitality that Becomes Experience

Albergo diffuso

The albergo diffuso brings together everything Sanza has been and continues to be. It goes beyond a model of hospitality: it's a community project that restores value to houses, traditions, landscapes and people. Here, visitors don't stay next to the village — they live in it. They walk its alleyways, share its rhythms, and discover its history and traditions. Thanks to the vision of the Campania Region, Sanza now stands as one of the most compelling examples of Italian village regeneration, turning hospitality into development for the community and a future for the village.

Sanza is a community, not just a destination. A village that welcomes, a land that tells its own story, and a place that stays with you.



Sanza, Bell Tower of San Martino

“Here, hospitality isn’t the destination — it’s the beginning of the journey into the heart of the Cilento.”





Certosa di San Lorenzo

Silence turned into art

A few kilometers from Sanza stands one of the most significant historical sites in Europe: the Certosa di San Lorenzo in Padula, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a symbol of the Carthusian spiritual tradition.

Founded in the 14th century, the Certosa was built as a place of silence. Here, Carthusian monks devoted their lives to prayer, study and contemplation. Many took a vow of permanent silence, giving up speech for the rest of their lives — a practice they understood as a path of inner listening, through which silence became a tool for knowledge and spiritual growth.

Even today, walking through the cloisters, the monastic cells and the open spaces of the Certosa, that same quality of silence is still palpable — one that feels active rather than empty, and that tends to stay with visitors well after they leave.

In recent decades, the Certosa has opened its spiritual legacy to a dialogue with contemporary art. This is the context for the work of Vanessa Beecroft, a leading figure in the international exhibition *Le Opere e i Giorni*, conceived by Achille Bonito Oliva. The project turned the Certosa into a shared creative space, bringing together more than a hundred international artists invited to engage with the monastic spaces and their symbolic meaning.

Beecroft's installations and performances explore themes of presence and absence, the body and silence, connecting contemporary artistic research with Carthusian spirituality.

It's no surprise that the Certosa is today considered one of the most compelling destinations for mindful wellbeing and silent retreats. In a world dominated by noise, these spaces continue to remind us of the value of slow time, listening, and contemplation.





San Giovanni in Fonti

Where water tells the story of the birth of faith

Among the most significant sites in the area is the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Fonti, one of the rare examples of an early Christian baptistery built directly over a natural spring.

Here, water is the very heart of the place, not just an architectural feature.

Since the earliest centuries of Christianity, the spring has been seen as a symbol of rebirth and purification. Visitors today can still see the water channel running through the baptistery, and see how faith and nature were shaped together as one.

The light filtering through the ancient stonework, the constant sound of water, and the simplicity of the space create a quiet, contemplative mood — one that reveals the deep connection between spirituality and landscape found throughout the region



Sant'Antonio a Polla

A story told in stone and devotion

In the historic center of Polla stands the Sanctuary of Sant'Antonio, a place deeply tied to the religious and social history of the Vallo di Diano.

The building's scale sits alongside a strongly popular character: for centuries, pilgrims, travelers and the faithful have come here to bring their prayers, hopes and wishes.

The interior holds artworks and testimonies that speak to generations of devotion. What stands out most is the balance between the monumental and the intimate — a quality that makes the sanctuary one of the most important spiritual landmarks in the area.

Visiting Sant'Antonio means connecting with a tradition that is still very much alive today, and remains one of the defining features of local life.

Teggiano

Where past and future meet

Walking Teggiano's streets means stepping into one of the best-preserved historic centers in southern Italy, where architectural heritage sits alongside contemporary art and grand historical reenactments.

Among the highlights is Michelangelo Pistoletto's *Terzo Paradiso*, an installation symbolizing the encounter between nature and artifice, past and future. Set within the town's historic center, the work invites visitors to reflect on the relationship between humanity, environment and memory, offering a distinctive way to read the territory.

Every summer, Teggiano relives one of the most notable chapters of its history with "*Alla Tavola della Principessa Costanza*," one of Italy's most important historical reenactments. For a few days, the historic center becomes an open-air theater: ladies, knights, musicians, artisans and historical processions bring the Renaissance back to life, drawing visitors into a mix of performances, feasts and age-old traditions.

It's a journey through time that makes Teggiano a stop worth making for anyone wishing to see history, art and culture through the places that shaped them.



Teggiano, "Il Terzo Paradiso" by Michelangelo Pistoletto



The Caves of Pertosa-Auletta

Journey to the center of the earth

The Caves of Pertosa-Auletta offer a one-of-a-kind experience in Italy.

They are, in fact, the only caves in Italy crossed by a navigable river. The visit begins aboard a small boat that carries visitors into the heart of the mountain, along a route carved by water over millions of years.

The silence, the constant temperature, the reflections of light on the walls, and the slow flow of the river turn the exploration into an almost initiatory journey.

Monumental chambers, limestone formations, stalactites and stalagmites create a scene that seems to belong to another world.

The caves tell the geological story of the area, and also something more: the long relationship between humans and nature, between time and transformation. Visitors often leave with the sense of having passed through a space that belongs to a different order of time altogether.





Oasi Cascade Capelli di Venere

Where water becomes wonder

Among the natural sites within reach of Sanza, the Oasi Cascade Capelli di Venere (Waterfalls) holds a special place. Located in the Casaletto Spartano area, along the Rio Bussentino, it offers one of the most breathtaking landscapes in Cilento and in all of Campania.

Here, nature has created a small masterpiece of harmony: water flows over rocks covered in moss and ferns, forming waterfalls and cascades that seem to belong to a fairy-tale landscape. The place takes its name from the *Adiantum Capillus-Veneris*, a delicate fern that grows spontaneously along the damp rock walls, its sinuous form evoking the flowing hair of the goddess Venus.

The sound of the water, the deep green of the vegetation, and the light filtering through the trees create an atmosphere of rare beauty, offering an immediate sense of wellbeing and calm.

Walking the trails of the oasis means immersing yourself in a more intimate side of Cilento, where nature invites you to slow down, observe and listen.

For those staying in Sanza, the Capelli di Venere Waterfalls make an ideal stop to round out the region's natural landmarks. After the peaks of Cervati, the springs of the Bussento, and the landscapes of the National Park, the oasis offers a fresh perspective on the relationship between water, biodiversity and landscape — confirming the extraordinary range of experiences this territory has to offer.



San Giovanni a Piro

José Ortega and the town of resilient art

Overlooking the Gulf of Policastro and sheltered by the woods of Cilento, San Giovanni a Piro holds a notable story that unites art, freedom and civic commitment.

This is where José Ortega, a Spanish artist forced into exile during the Franco regime, lived for many years. In this small southern Italian village, he found a new home and a community willing to welcome him.

His works, scattered throughout the town and gathered in the Ortega Museum, speak to the value of memory, freedom and human dignity. But they also tell the story of the meeting between an international artist and a community that turned hospitality into cultural dialogue.

Walking through the streets of the village, this connection to Ortega is still visible today. Art here is an integral part of this land's identity.

Perhaps this is the clearest message Ortega left behind: culture flourishes where communities are able to welcome others. And Cilento, always a land of encounters and exchange, continues to tell that story through places like San Giovanni a Piro.

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