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ENCHANTED BY PUNTA ALA AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Visit Punta Ala and be amazed by its crystalline sea, never ending fine-grained sand beach and leafy pinewood. Despite presenting itself as a functional and exclusive seaside resort, it also boasts ancient fortifications, striking panoramas and wild coves in the immediate surroundings. Cala Violina - the undisputed queen of Tuscany's beaches – is less than 10 km away!

With all due respect to other seaside resorts, the province of Grosseto has without a doubt Tuscany's most gorgeous beaches and crystal clear waters; **Cala Violina** – the undisputed queen of Tuscany's beaches – marks the beginning (of the northern end) of the astonishing and wild **Maremma coast**, one of the most unspoiled areas in the region. However, less than 10 km southwest of this romantic little cove – past the hamlet of **Pian d'Alma** – you will see the signs for another famous seaside resort

that boasts a modern shopping center, a well equipped marina and a never ending sandy beach: we are talking about **Punta Ala** of course, perfectly located between the Tyrrhenian Sea and a beautiful Mediterranean pinewood.

Known as **Punta Troia** until the 1900s, it changed its name to Punta Ala (from aviation jargon) due to the Italian aviator **Italo Balbo** who had purchased some properties in this area. The tourist center developed in the 20th century, particularly in the 70's; it was during that period that the **Punta Ala Yacht Club** (the home of **Luna Rossa**) was also established and the place became renowned for its sailing events and international regattas. While presenting itself as a functional and exclusive beach resort, Punta Ala was located on the border between the Principality of Piombino and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany; constructions such as the **Hidalgo Tower**, the **Medici Fortress** and the **Appiani Tower** were all built to protect the coast from pirate attacks and today continue to give the landscape an ancient twist.

Look around for the **Chiesa della Signora della Consolata** (a very peculiar church built in the 1960's with copper and wood), enjoy the sun on a beach lounger or choose the shade of the pinasters... You don't want to spend the rest of your vacation on the same beach? Then reach Cala Civette or Cala Violina by bike or foot, otherwise contact your favourite Florence car rent and head to Le Rocchette beach (situated between Punta Ala and **Castiglione della Pescaia**).

Curiosities

Punta Ala has been used as a film location for many Italian movies:

in 1975, **Luciano Salce** filmed here some scenes from *L'anatra all'arancia* starring **Monica Vitti** and **Ugo Tognazzi**, **Alberto Sordi** chose Cala del Porto and Villa Lorenzini to film some scenes from the movie *In viaggio con papà* (1982). In 1998, **Giovanni Veronesi** chose the Punta Ala Castle to shoot some scenes from *Viola bacia tutti*, starring **Asia Argento** and **Valerio Mastandrea**.

Cala Civette beach

This beach is located north of Punta Ala, beyond the promontory surmounted by the **white tower of the same name**. If you want to get there, you have two possibilities:

1) if you come from Punta Ala, you'll have to walk along the bank of the river Alma and cross it at its mouth; after more or less 300 meters, you will see Cala Civette, probably the most wild beach of the **Gulf of Follonica**. Close to this cove are also some Etruscan tombs from the VII-VI centuries b.C.. The whole burial area is called **Necropoli di Poggio Tondo**; however, you can currently see only four graves: **Tomba del Tamburo**, **Tomba del Carro**, **Tomba del Cippo** and **Tomba delle due Porte** .

2) If you come from Cala Violina just head south from the beach towards Cala Civette.

Le Rocchette beach

Le Rocchette beach lies south of Punta Ala and can be reached by taking the SP158/SS322 (**Strada Provinciale delle Collacchie**). It owes its name to the Rocchette Fortress, a medieval complex which stands on top of the nearby hill. Along this beach are many refreshment spots, a very good restaurant, camp sites and toll car parks; the seabed slopes gently and is very suitable for **divers** and **snorkelers**.