



17 OCTOBER 2013



CATERINA POMINI



13347

## ***BARGA, GIOVANNI PASCOLI'S ADOPTED HOME, A STONE'S THROW AWAY FROM LUCCA***

***Included in the province of Lucca, Barga is a town of rare beauty; besides being considered one of Italy's Most Beautiful Villages, it is also a paradise for foodies, walkers and nature lovers. Not far from Barga, the Italian poet Giovanni Pascoli purchased Villa Cardosi-Carrara, where he was inspired to write “The Clock at Barga”.***

*“To my corner, where I hear nothing but the rustle of wheat sheaves, the ringing of the hour travels through the wind, from the hidden mountain village: a soft sound, like a bewitching voice...”*

Situated on a hill named *Colle Remeggio*, not far from the city of [Lucca](#), Barga is so beautiful that it has been included on the list of [Italy's Most Beautiful Villages](#) and awarded the Orange Flag by the [Touring Club Italiano](#)

. A stone's throw away from this town, in the hamlet of **Castelvecchio**, the Italian poet **Giovanni Pascoli** purchased *Villa Cardosi-Carrara*, where he was inspired to write the poem “**The Clock at Barga**”, included in the famous “**Songs of Castelvecchio**”.

### A little bit of history

Archaeological findings have shown that the Barga area has been inhabited since prehistoric times; long before the **Lombards** built there their own *castello* in the High Middle Ages, the town was a **Ligurian settlement** and later a **Roman colony**. In the 11th century, Barga was ruled by **Matilda of Canossa** and had broad privileges; that being said, the town experienced significant economic development only when it came under the dominion of Lucca. In the second half of the 13th century, **Barghesano di Bonaventura** invented the spinning wheel, this gave a boost to silk production and trade, inducing a lot of merchants to migrate there; Lucca – increasingly alarmed by the growing power of Barga – imposed steep duties on all exported goods and eventually destroyed the town in 1298. Barga flourished once again in 1316 thanks to **Castruccio Castracani** who took the decision to rebuild it; the town was attacked several times by [Pisa](#) and Lucca until, in 1341, it voluntarily gave up its autonomy to [Florence](#) and was later annexed to the **Kingdom of Italy**.

### Main attractions in Barga

The **Cathedral** (*Collegiata di San Cristoforo*) – which dominates the historic centre and the surrounding hills - is surely the most important historic building in Barga; built before the year 1000, it was subjected to further modifications until its completion in the 16th century and that's why it shows both Romanesque and Gothic characteristics.

The **Arringo** – the large lawn between the Cathedral and the *Palazzo Pretorio* – was the official meeting place of the Medieval community (from here you can enjoy spectacular views over the **Pizzorne Mountains**, the **Apennines** and the **Apuan Alps**!). With its 16th-century façade, the **Church of the Holy Cross** is the oldest building in Barga after the Cathedral and surely deserves a visit. Other buildings and places of interest in Barga and its immediate surroundings are: the *Conservatorio di Sant'Elisabetta* (an old Poor Clares convent housing a hospice), the **Santissima Annunziata Church**, **Porta Reale**, **Porta Macchiaia**, **Teatro dei Differenti**, **Palazzo Balduini**, **Palazzo Pancrazi** (the town hall), **Palazzo Angeli**, **Palazzo Mordini**, **Palazzo Bertacchi-Cordati**, **Piazzale del Fosso** and the **Parish Church of Santa Maria a Loppia**.

As mentioned at the beginning of the article, about 5 km from Barga you can visit **Casa Pascoli**, or rather Villa Cardosi-Carrara. The museum enshrines the original furnishings, the library and the poet's manuscripts and, next to the house, you can also see the chapel where Pascoli and his sister Maria are buried. [Casa Pascoli](#) can be visited daily, with the exception of Mondays and Tuesday mornings; the ticket also includes access to the **Barga Civic Museum**.

### Curiosities

Most people don't know that **Barga has a strong connection to Scotland**, how come? Towards the

end of the 19th century – following the demise of the silk industry – many *Barghigiani* emigrated to this country in search of fortune. In the beginning, many of them were humble street traders; however, over time, they intermarried with the Scots and opened their own restaurants, cafes and ice-cream parlours. These successful businesses created wealth that was brought back to Barga and used to build beautiful villas outside the historic centre; today, this Medieval hilltop town has the feel of a sunny Scottish burgh, a **Celtic supporters club** and an **annual fish and chips festival**!

Need a car rental? Find further information at [Florence car rent](#) –