



From Siena: on highway 223/E78, take the exit Civitella Marittima and follow the direction to Roccastrada, than to Ribolla.

From Grosseto: on highway SS1, take the exit Giuncarico and follow the direction to Ribolla.



COMUNE DI ROCCA STRADA



# RIBOLLA a mining walk



## ROCCA STRADA TOWN HALL

## 8, Corso Roma

**+39 0564 561111**

**Cultural Office 0564 561230**

**p.martini@comune.roccastrada.gr.it**

Public Library 0564 561242

**[biblioteca@comune.roccastrada.gr.it](mailto:biblioteca@comune.roccastrada.gr.it)**

**Porta del Parco Archeologico e Tecnologico  
delle Colline Metallifere Grossetane  
Mining History Research Centre  
3, Piazza della Libertà - Ribolla, 0564 578033  
portaparcoribolla@virgilio.it**

## LAYOUT

**Massimiliano Marcucci - Patrizia Martini**  
Pictures and text by Giuseppe Orfino

Some pictures are from the book  
"La miniera a memoria" (Effigi, 2004)

**www.comune.roccastrada.gr.it**  
**www.ribolla2004.it**



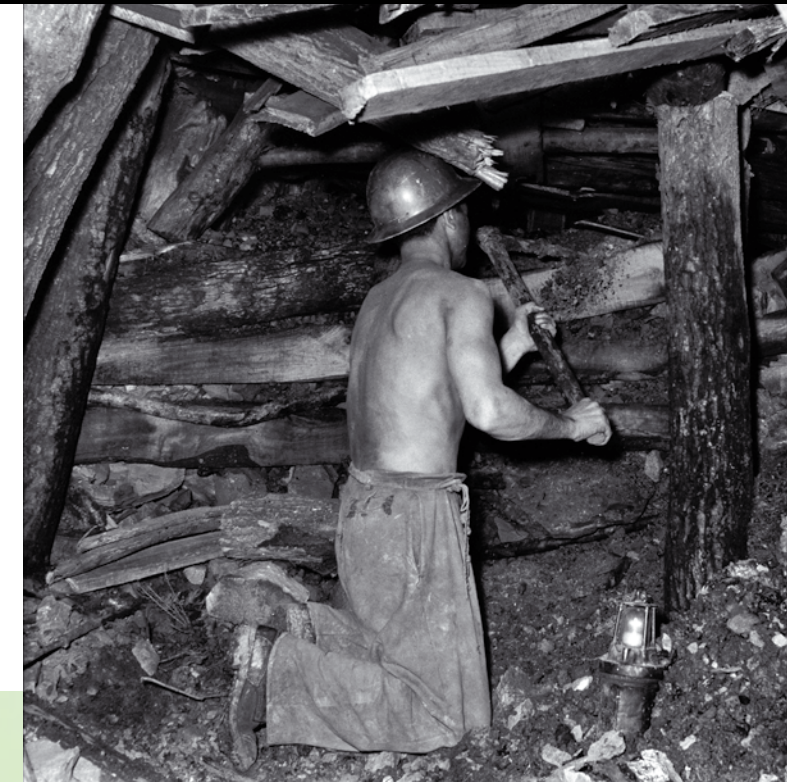
© PORTO FRANCO

REGIONE  
TOSCANA



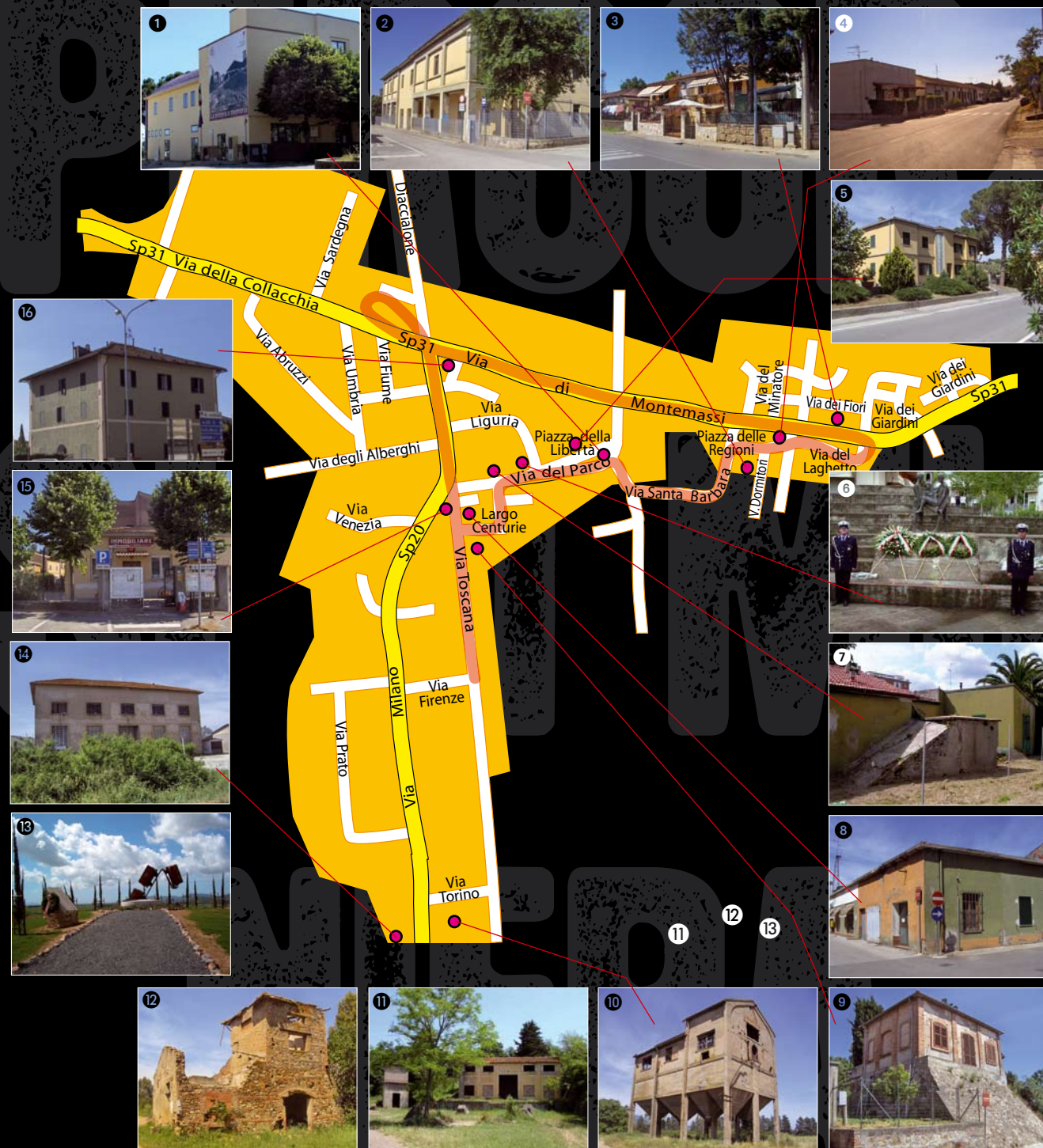
R I B O L L A      A      M I N I N G      W A L K

The history of Ribolla begins when natural deposits of brown coal were discovered along the river Raspollino, around the year 1835. The first mines were dug during the Thirties and Forties in the Nineteenth century, during the government of Leopoldo II di Lorena. The first settlement, which then will develop into the mining town, was built around the mining shaft named "Ribolla". The train track built in 1892 allowed increasing the production of the mine while decreasing transportation expenses. Nevertheless the main development and population increase of Ribolla occurs in the Twentieth century, in particular in the year 1924, when the Montecatini Company becomes the only owner of the mine. The increasing energy demand during the First and the Second World War determines the need to push the production of the mine, which in 1942 reaches 270 thousand tons of coal. This production increase is in turn parallel to the manpower increase. In 1947 more than 3700 men are employed in the mine. Right around this period, when people are attracted to the mine looking for employment opportunities, the Montecatini Company starts laying-off the mining workers. The social condition in town becomes so critical and desperate that the miners are engage in a severe strike, also known as the "the five months fight". This fight, against the extremely long working hours and poor working conditions, however, does not bring to a positive result. The newly hired manager, Dr. Padroni, determines that the mine is not productive any more and that significant measures need to be taken in order to reduce the operational costs. Even the technique used for the exploitation of the mine is driven by cost rather than envi-



ronmental safety. The working conditions and personal safety of the mining workers are getting worse and worse until the morning of May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1954 a tremendous explosion takes the lives of 43 miners and destroys the Camorra mine. The court case, begun shortly after the explosion, ends in 1958, when the judge dismisses all the charges against the managers and owners of the mine. The fate of Ribolla becomes clear in 1959, when all the mines are shut down. After a brief decommissioning, any trace of what used to be the primary motivation of life for the population of Ribolla suddenly disappears. The only reason that saved Ribolla from becoming a ghost town was the opening of new chemical and industrial plants in the nearby towns of Gavorrano, Boccheggiano, Scarlino and Piombino.





## HISTORIC PLACES

1. The Movie theatre. Built with the contribution of the mining workers around the Forties, this was the place where the social life of the inhabitants of Ribolla took place. The movie theatre hosted happening nights, opera, and musicals famous during the forties and fifties. In 1954 it was used as funeral home for the 37
2. Dorms (today primary and secondary school). Built during the forties, they offered a place to sleep and to eat (room and board) to the mining workers who came from outside town. Beginning late sixties, they have been utilized as primary and secondary school.
3. Camerotti (nowadays houses) The first dorms were built during the First World War by the Société Générale des Lignes en Italie, owner of the mine during that period. The dorms, also known as "camerotti" (large common rooms) were designed to provide a place to sleep for the miners who came from out of town.
4. Rooms and bathrooms for the mining workers who came from outside town. These were built during the thirties.
5. Company houses (today residential houses).
6. Miners Memorial Monument, by Vittorio Basaglia, 1984
7. Discenderia Ribolla. Miners used this inclined plane for ramps to pull wagons up over rough ground.
8. Lampisteria. Mining lamp storage
9. Mining shaft named Ribolla and mining winch (nowadays house)



10. Cernita. Here the brown coal was selected and shipped via train to the train station of Giuncarico. The new cernita was built to replace the old wooden cernita.
11. Mining shaft 10. It is the most modern mining shaft in Ribolla. Built in 1951, it reached a depth of 333 meters
12. Mining shaft 9, named "Camorra". The mining shaft number 9, that reached a depth of 300 meters, was excavated near the farm named Camorra in 1948; this mining shaft assumed the name of the farm shortly after.
13. Nearby Camorra mining shaft, Monument by Emilio Trabella (Zonin)
14. Electrical Cabin and suburbs named Reparto
15. Hospital (nowadays house and office)
16. Montecatini headquarters (nowadays house)