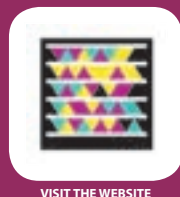


## WHEN VAL DI LUCE WAS CALLED VAL DELLE POZZE

Abetone was already famous as a popular "health resort". Yet, the more modern, even futuristic, ski facilities should have risen – according to the plan of Lapo degli Uberti Farinati, the first mayor of the recently created municipality – on the Modena side, specifically in a "completely isolated, almost hidden" valley "completely devoid of roads and even trails. Nevertheless, the report continued, the valley lent itself well to the task, being "steep but not wild, with a wide flat bottom". However, it was outside the borders of Tuscany, and belonged to the municipality of Fiumalbo. What could be done to connect the valley to Abetone in order to make the ski resort its own? With the purchase of the land and the construction of a tunnel two miles below Mount Gomito, the engineer, Mr. Farina designed a plan that envisaged a grand hotel and a villa (buildings made in the local stone that still stand mid-valley), a horse racecourse on ice, an ice rink, a ski lift system, broad ski runs, garages, parking, and anything else needed, including a high tower at the top with a floodlight to illuminate the complex. Work began in the second half of the 1930s. When the war began to go wrong, they were abandoned. Only its picturesque ruins remain in the modern Val di Luce resort (the name was changed to make it more attractive).



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ITINERARIES OF ART AND HISTORY

## ABETONE AND ITS SKI AREA



**AGENZIA  
PER IL TURISMO**  
ABETONE PISTOIA  
MONTAGNA P.S.E.



Intervento realizzato all'interno delle azioni previste dal progetto interregionale (L.135/2001 art. 5) "Valorizzazione comprensorio sciistico tosco emiliano" cofinanziato da Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri - Dipartimento per lo sviluppo e la competitività del turismo - e dalla Regione Toscana

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# ABETONE AND ITS SKI AREA



The village of Abetone results from the building of the road to Modena, and which began with just a few dwellings and the customs house on the border between the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Duchy of Modena. As Repetti wrote in his *"Dizionario"*, the name is derived from the huge fir tree that was cut down precisely in order to open up the pass. The sport of skiing, however, came much later when the village had already earned some fame as the center of the Boscolungo resort, also attracting important guests to Abetone like Giacomo Puccini, who bought the villa "Lo Scoglietto". The first clumsy, pioneering attempts to ski were made by a member of the Cini family, using two wooden boards that came from Norway, in



the first decade of the twentieth century. Thus began the sport of "sky", as this word of foreign derivation used to be spelled. Some began to use the skis with a certain self-assurance that soon became a skill. During the Fascist era, when Edda Ciano and his entourage stayed in the best hotels that had sprung up there and spent their nights at the poker table, some thought was given to the idea of creating a ski resort. In 1936, under the auspices of the Fascist regime, Abetone was made a municipality. There is a picture from that time,

with some loggers posing during a break from their work – each indicated by his distinctive nicknames: Palle, Poggetto, Chiappetta, and Mister. Palle was Alfredo Colò; next to him is an easily recognizable boy of 12-13 years with an ax in his hand; it is his son Zeno Colò. Thus, then began the Abetone dynasty of champions that would explode after the Second World War, with Zeno Colò (winner of the 1952 Olympics, world champion at Aspen), Vittorio Chierroni, Celina Seghi, Paride Milianti and others. Today

Abetone is the biggest ski resort in Tuscany, with a network of multiple ski runs, large accommodation facilities, and all modern tourist means as well as efficient snow removal from roads and parking lots. Not long ago, a book was published that recalls how, up until the last war, the necessary job of clearing snow from the roads in order to ensure that the mail coach reached the pass was contracted to the women and children living along the road and in the nearby villages. The men were away in the forest, making charcoal and doing other jobs. Cleaning the road with a wooden shovel provided a small but necessary addition to the meager household income.

