



QUARTU SANT'ELENA

Quartu Sant'Elena is of ancient Phoenician and Roman origins. The mild climate, the fertility of the land, the abundance of fish in the sea and the opportunities for wildfowling offered by the wetlands near Quartu has throughout history attracted many settlers. The name Quartu derives from the milestone along the Roman road connecting Cagliari in the south to Santa Teresa di Gallura in the north, which passed through the centre of the town.

Owing to Quartu's proximity to Cagliari in just a few years it has grown to become the third largest town in Sardinia. Despite its rapid growth Quartu Sant'Elena has succeeded in conserving traditions that go back a thousand years. Still today, in some of the oldest quarters of the town, bread is still made at home industry level and the patience and love with which sweets in a wide variety of shapes are decorated is still alive.

Ancient rites are repeated year after year at the feasts of San Giovanni Battista, Santa Maria and the town's patron saint, Sant'Elena. It is on these occasions that the splendid traditional costumes of the women are decorated to an incredible degree with objects in gold filigree produced by local goldsmiths who keep Quartu's ancient tradition in this art alive.

In Quartu one should visit the house-museum Sa Dom'e Farra, an ancient agricultural house where thousands of agricultural and household implements are preserved. Good paintings are kept in the parish church.



Of notable interest are the twenty-six kilometres of coast, starting from the beach of Quartu that faces the Golfo degli Angeli and is a continuation of Poetto, the beach of Cagliari.

Along the panoramic road to Villasimius a lovely place to stop is the cove Cala Regina, with its Spanish tower and the Mari Pintau beach.

The inland Sette Fratelli Park (named from the seven peaks that rise above it) is characterised by springs waterfall, gorges and cliffs hidden in the forest and the Mediterranean scrub which offer exciting trips in search of the now rare red deer. The most interesting area for nature-lovers is the Molentargius wetland where over half of European birds species are represented. A large colony of flamingos has been nesting there since 1993.