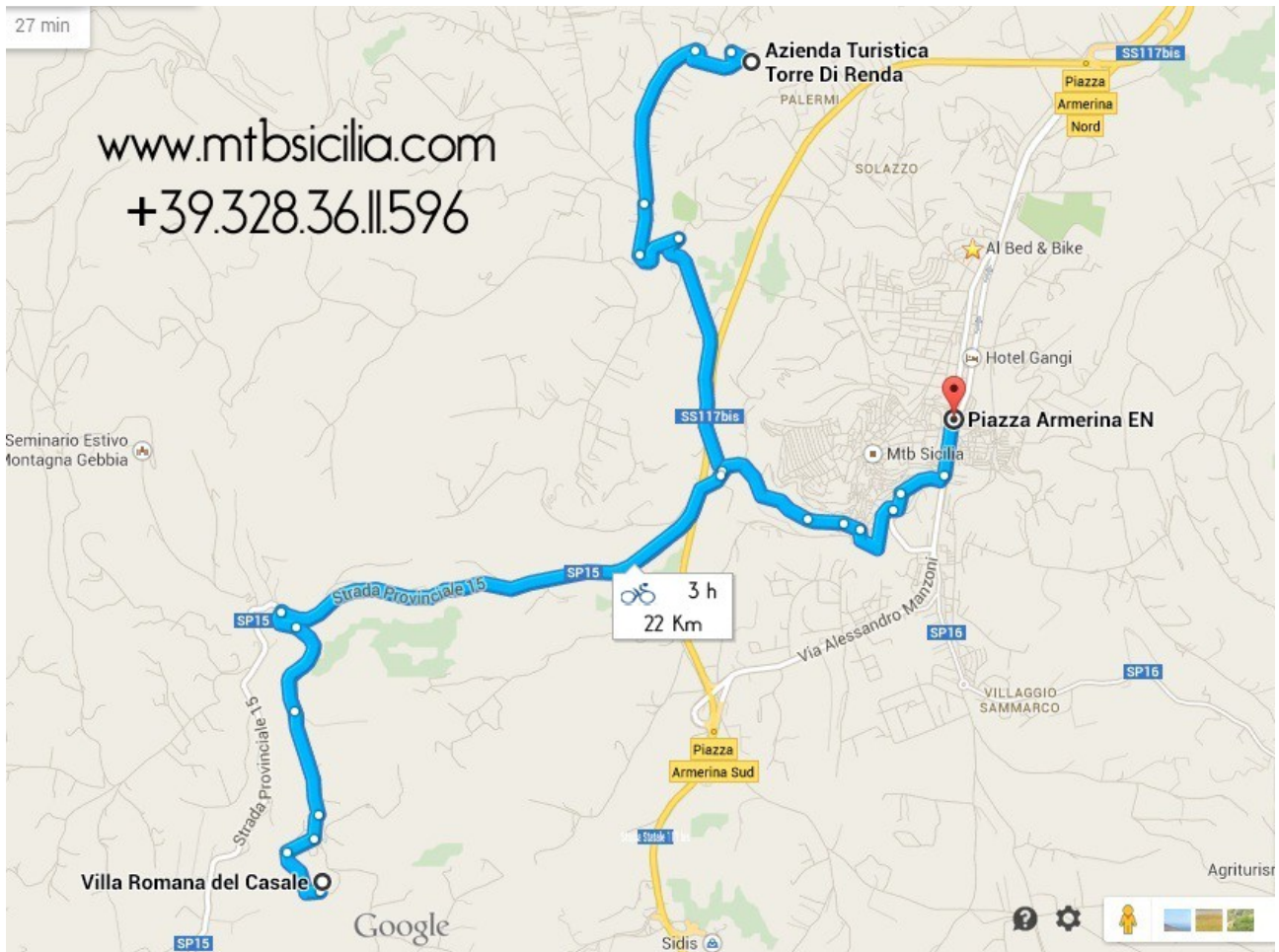


The Villa Romana del Casale, Piazza Armerina

"There are places through history, where time has left its voice and truth its mystery. In the heart of the Mediterranean, near the town of Piazza Armerina, lies the valley of Casale in which skilled workers wrought in stone, a testimony to all of classic humanity. While the wind of time buried its remains, there appeared on the squares of the mosaic a story in which was sewn the echo of infinite days. It composed the semblances of memory and sings to posterity the song of Ulysses, of Ambrosia, the song of hunting and harvesting, of giants and that of the empire while never forgetting human destiny, that in its most significant expressions remains a mystery..."The Villa Romana del Casale was built between the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth century AD amid a system of large estates that belonged to powerful Roman families that went to hunt or spend holidays there. Certain intellectuals believe the villa to have belonged to a member of the hierarchy of the Roman Empire (a Consul), while others maintain that it belonged to the Emperor M. Valerio Massimiano, known as Herculeos Victor. Inhabited during the Arab domination, the villa was partially destroyed by the Normans. Afterwards, a spate of mud originating from the Monte Mangone, submerged it almost completely. The first archaeological excavations at a scientific level and promoted by the commune of Piazza Armerina, were carried out in 1881. The excavations were resumed again between 1935 and 1939, and finally, with the intervention of the Sicilian region, the entire complex was unveiled in the 1950s thanks to the efforts of the archaeologist Vinicio Gentili. The morphology of the land determined the planimetry of the villa: a residential area can be distinguished around the large central peristyle, onto which the basilica faces. An area of representation with an elliptically shaped peristyle (Xistus) and the large trefoil room (Triclinio) and a complex of baths also look onto it. The porticoed entrance yard acts as a hinge between these three parts. The mosaics were created by various groups of skilled North African workers who mediated an Alexandrian and Syrian legacy. Without a doubt, what will most appeal to visitors are the magnificent mosaics on the floors of all the rooms. They are so rich and varied that there are none of a similar calibre the world over. Despite the fact that nothing can give us a fixed idea of the admirable mosaic decoration of this fantastic, singular, and mysterious villa, and that one cannot describe in words that which is beautiful seen only through one's eyes, we would like, nonetheless, to offer the visitor a description and a key to understanding the immense tapestry of floor mosaics that form an inestimable gem in the history of art.



USEFUL INFORMATION

Difficolty – Easy

Km 22

Travel time 3,0 h