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# EXPERIENCES IN THE LANDSCAPE

Between villas and castles in the Italian-Slovenian  
cross-border area

Edited by Luciano Pezzolo and Lia De Luca

  
CIERRE  
edizioni





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*Editorial office*

Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici dell'Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

*Translations*

Lexis Sas di M. Cristina Matteucci & C. s.a.s.  
and Mario Della Rocca for italian-english

*Graphics and layout*

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Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici dell'Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

Dorsoduro 3484/D 30123 Venezia (VE)

Tel. + 39 041 2347261, [segreteria.dsu@unive.it](mailto:segreteria.dsu@unive.it)

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via Ciro Ferrari 5, 37066 Sommacampagna, Verona

tel. 045 8581572

[edizioni.cierrenet.it](http://edizioni.cierrenet.it) • [edizioni@cierrenet.it](mailto:edizioni@cierrenet.it)

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# Index

<i>A landscape of cultures</i>	7
Itinerary of Slovenian Coastal Castles	11
Kozlov rob and Ravne Mansion in the Pivka area	45
The Venetian Villas' itinerary	49
Castles, Culture, Nature and Traditions of the Friuli Hills	81
Suggestions for a Visit	117
<i>Bibliography</i>	123



# A landscape of cultures

**Luciano Pezzolo**

Until the half of the 1980s, the great majority of human sciences scholars considered landscape as a naturally produced canvas that had to be woven and painted by people, but people were in a certain way excluded from it. Landscape, in this vision, was an original one. It did not require inhabiting, cognition or human representation to exist. Of course, it could be altered by human beings, but it was not, by itself, a socially produced space. Thus, the great majority of landscape history publications dating from before the '80s focused on the cultural features of landscape, with a description of the natural environment.

Despite this landscape perspective (that has both natural and cultural layers, with the former that were more rooted) still characterises many studies on landscape, works with a different orientation have proposed an alternative perspective. Landscape has been identified as intrinsically socio-cultural in its production, its cartographic reproduction and its use. Landscape, thus, is nowadays conceived intrinsically also as a product of the social mindscape, by borrowing a term proposed by Zerubavel (1997). Its connection with the cognitive and mnemonic scope, and thus the major conscience issue, is thus evident.

Landscape is obviously a touchstone to remind of both the visual-factual and sensual-emotional approaches. This function is not a by-product of landscape but it is integrated into its definition. While the new landscape culturalism emphasises our experience and empathy commitment to the world, and suggests a landscape education that acknowledges the importance of sound and smell, sight is still

privileged in comparison to the other senses. Though, landscape and memory cannot be separated.

The idea of landscape, despite the difficulties due to its variety of meanings, is at the same time a physical object and its cultural perception by populations: this is the most widespread and accredited meaning, in particular after the cultural movement that preceded and followed the definition and progressive application of the European Convention on Landscape (signed in 2000) promoted by the Council of Europe: "Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" (art. 1). Such idea "applies to the entire territory" and "covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas", it includes "land, inland water and marine areas". It concerns "landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as every day or degraded landscapes" (art. 2). The meaning of landscape, in a physical sense, is thus ascribable to a big, three-dimensional architecture, made of natural and artificial elements with own forms and functions; it is made by human beings and nature; and it is continuously changing. Landscape is also culture, in a double sense: since it is perceived by human beings in the present, through the lenses of the contemporary culture and the settling that remained from the past; and since it is physically built by human beings in the depth of the past and thus it contains the material and immaterial traces of human beings, nature and their interrelation history.

The contributions collected in this work aim at proposing an approach, if not of course complete, at least multi-sensory. The natural environment, the products of human beings and the aspects of gastronomic culture represent elements that unite to give shape to a real landscape of experience. This was the meaning of the project, funded by the European Community, done in collaboration with scientific institutions and local administrations of Veneto, Friuli Venezia-Giulia and Slovenia, to give a tool in order to better understand, and I would say, taste, the features of an area, that goes from the Venetian one to Slovenian Istria, passing through the Friulian hills, that offers an extraordinary variety of landscapes and, as a result, of sensations.

# ITINERARIES



# ITINERARY OF SLOVENIAN COASTAL CASTLES

**Darko Darovec**

## Tour of the Line of Defence and the Popular Smuggling Heroes on the Border

**T**he origin of the castles, fortified settlements, towers and outposts that dot the hills of the hinterland of the Istrian peninsula dates back to the troubled centuries of the Middle Ages or shortly thereafter. The Middle Ages was generally a period of constant conflict for dominance between large and small lords and towns, and in this respect Istria was no exception. Following this stormy period, in the late Middle Ages the situation gradually stabilised when the territory of Istria became a place of intersection and conflict between only two superpowers. In fact, the part of the territory with the coastal cities had been within the sphere of influence of the Republic of Venice since the 12th century, having established itself as a commercial superpower and critical hub in the traffic flows between Europe and the Mediterranean. On the other hand, in the 14th century the Habsburgs, who were just then adding the territories between the Danube and the Adriatic to their empire, began to take possession of the lands in the Istrian hinterland. It is precisely at this border location that a series of smaller fortifications scattered across the picturesque landscape have been preserved to this day, and despite the cold bora winds they still spark the visitors' imaginations. Especially when one considers that the great heroes of folk tales comparable to legends like Robin Hood, who acquired their greatness through the cunning and fearlessness with which they solved everyday problems, travelled stealthily along the impervious hill roads.



The border between the Venetian Republic and the Holy Roman Empire in the area of Socerbo, Osp, Prebene, Gabrovica and Kastellec. ASVe, *Provveditori alla Camera dei Confini*, b. 234/6.

## 1. OSP

### Castle and cave with lakes and climbing gym

Near the town of Osp, below the sheer cliff face, lies the Osp Cave, home of the source of the Osp River.

A castle-fortress once stood at the entrance to the cave, of which only the ruins of the surrounding wall remain today, testifying to the fact that the inhabitants of the village found shelter from enemy attacks in the cave. The cave had been used as a shelter since prehistoric



times, and then during the Ottoman invasions and the wars between the Republic of Venice and Austria it was turned into an actual fortress. The area surrounding the fortress is an archaeological site and therefore an area of high archaeological potential. The area contains finds from prehistoric, Roman, medieval and modern times.

The inhabitants of Osp have always called their fortress “*Grad*” (castle). But should we believe the popular tradition that talks of walls in the cave built by the Turks and not by the Venetians or the locals in Koper? Or perhaps the Turks really did throw boiling oil from the walls of Osp Castle onto the attackers, which would mean that they had conquered the castle, although there is no record of this? It is also possible that the Turks, returning from their devastating sackings in Friuli and the territories of today’s Slovenia, took shelter in the castle-cave of Osp in front of the population who strenuously defended their homes. In fact, the population impoverished by the Ottoman raids repeatedly intercepted the looters on their return from their raids, and thus on several occasions managed to take back some goods or men.

Perhaps this is how they awaited the Turks during their countless sackings in the vicinity of Osp. Faced with the impoverished and enraged inhabitants, the Ottomans might have taken refuge in a shel-



Photo: Milko Matičetov, Slovenski etnografski muzej (SEM), 1949.

ter they had learned of in previous raids, when it was the locals who sought protection there.

Or tradition refers to the events of the beginning of the 17th century, when the so-called Uskok War or War of Gradisca was raging in Istria. At that time, the conflicts between Venice and Austria were dominated by the Uskoks of Senj, who, in the interest of Austria, plundered the Istrian territory and whom popular tradition, also in other parts of Istria, remembers as Turks and sometimes even as French.

In 1616, the Austrian army together with the Uskoks burnt down several Istrian villages belonging to Venice, including Osp.

Due to the lack of concrete historical sources on the time of construction of the walls in the cave, we can say that Osp Castle played an important role on several occasions in the past. This is also confirmed by what happened in the war between Venice and Austria in the years 1508-1516.

At the beginning of October 1511, in the face of Austrian supremacy, one by one all the Venetian strongholds defending Koper's territory on the eastern border, including Osp, surrendered. Shortly afterwards, the captain of the Slavs, Pasqual Ingaldeo, leading a group

of 10 horsemen and infantrymen, recaptured Osp. However, for the Austrians the place was clearly of such importance that they besieged it again. At the end of the war, Pasqual Ingaldeo brought Osp back to the bosom of the Venetian Republic in the name of the doge. This was undoubtedly the merit of Zaneto de Otto, who in 1517 was promoted to corporal of Lion Castle (*caporalato de Castel Lion*), mainly for the reason that together with four comrades-in-arms he reconquered the castle of Osp from the enemy, as testified by some documents kept in the archives of Venice.

Throughout these difficult times, Osp Castle was mainly a refuge for the population. Thus in 1606 the chief magistrate and captain of Koper said: "The fort of Osp is very good, located in front of the cave, about 100 paces long and 80 wide, with abundant water, which springs from holes in the mountain and flows in the middle of the cave. At the entrance is a wall that closes off the opening to the



Osp, a cave with the remains of a wall.  
«Slovenske novice» (Slovenian News), 2021.

cave. The place is defended by three canons (*falconets*), three trestle arquebuses (*arcobusoni di cavaletto*), 13 muskets (*spicardam*) (a type of weapon similar to a catapult), three slings (*codette*) and four lances (*arme d'hasta*). A soldier permanently stands guard; he defends the village, the food, the wine and the oil, which the inhabitants have deposited in the fort in the face of danger. In case of danger, all the villagers and their livestock find shelter in the cave”.

### Cave with lakes

From the spacious cave measuring 20 m high and 40 m wide, tunnels lead to pleasant water basins or lakes. In 1955, a cavity measuring 1607 metres long and 54 metres deep was discovered at the end of the galleries. In 1981, speleologists from the Jamarsko društvo Dimnice association in Koper organised the first excursions into the cave. The horizontal cave with a watercourse in the Osp basin is a natural site of national interest.



### Excellent climbing gym

The village is topped by a horse-shoe-shaped cliff. It is about 500 m wide and over 200 m high. Together with Mišja peč, it represents one of the most important climbing areas in Europe. The Osp wall is a semi-circular overhanging wall that originated as a result of the collapse of the roof of a pre-existing cave, and is an emblem of Osp. Today it is an excellent climbing gym. Thanks to the mild Mediterranean climate, climbing is possible almost all year round. Thanks to this pleasant climate and the large number of routes of varying degrees of difficulty, Osp is Slovenia's top climbing destination. The Osp cliff offers many challenges to lovers of verticality and it is no wonder that it attracts climbers from both the local region and the rest of the world.

Hotels, flats and rooms:

[https://kraji.eu/slovenija/osp\\_osapska\\_stena\\_jama\\_grad/photos/slo](https://kraji.eu/slovenija/osp_osapska_stena_jama_grad/photos/slo)



^ Osp. Mišja peč, Climber Jure Golob in the new route Martin Krpan 9a in Misja Peč, 2001 (Wikimedia Commons).

< Osp, cave castle during heavy rains. Photo by Stefano Pizziga, 2012 (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/stefanopizziga/8738171421>).

## 2. SOCERB

**The castle that dominated the (hostile) site and attracted many adventurers**

*Access: Koper - Kastelec - Socerb*

*From the castle's walls visitors can enjoy a beautiful view of the Gulf of Trieste from Grado to Savudrija, of Trieste and the Istrian hinterland.*

Socerb has had a troubled yet rich past. The fortress was built on the ruins of an Illyrian hillfort, while the village was first mentioned in a document by Ulrich of Weimar in 1040. Socerb Castle once controlled the sensitive border area and the important trade and transport route and was therefore subject to repeated assaults. Over the centuries, the Venetians and the people of Trieste have fought for it. The name derives from the patron saint of Trieste and martyr Saint Servulus. The strategic location near the main road ensured control over the



Socerb Castle. Photo: D. Podgornik, 2019.

lively trade between the hinterland and the Venetian cities. In medieval times Socerb was a fortification with stable mercenary troops. It was governed by a castellan from the town's nobility, a corporal and 12 soldiers. The term *castellan* originally meant any inhabitant of the fortress, but later meant a nobleman of Koper, who performed military service and had to live in the fortress. In the second half of the 14th century, the local nobility no longer wished to live the warlike life of knights, as they were offered better sources of income. The inhabitants of the village of Socerb had to take on the additional defence of the fortress. The costs of paying the garrison of soldiers were also financed by the surrounding villages.

The last time the Venetian city of Koper took possession of Socerb was in 1463 following the war with its Habsburg neighbour, Trieste. The Venetian spoils of war were impressive: together with the fortifications of Mokovo (Muhograd, Castrum Mocho) and Novigrad na Krasu (Castrum Novum), symbolic centres of landed gentry and above all holders of rights to the collection of taxes, they controlled all revenues and trade routes from the inland to the competing Trieste. In the Latin text of the peace agreement that the people of Trieste had stipulated with the Venetians at the time, in the list of lost fortifications and their territories, Socerb is not mentioned as a castrum, but as a fortification with a cave



Socerb Castle. Photo: D. Podgornik, 2019.

(Bastita vel Crota Sancti Servuli). The prosperous location of Socerb, constantly visible to the political authorities of the competing Trieste, had acquired a special symbolic significance. It was made clear to the competitor that it was under constant surveillance by the enemy. This balance of power evidently led to more military showdowns. The tensions between the superpowers (Venice, the Habsburgs, the Pope and Spain) were used to resolve neighbourhood disputes, leading to the war between Venice and Austria (1508-1516). The area around Socerb was the expected site of military conflicts. In the first battle it was occupied by mercenaries in the pay of the Habsburgs. The people of Trieste paid the locals who defended it so well afterwards that they managed to preserve it until the end of the armistice. Only about ten years later, in 1521, the peace of Worms was signed and with it the border was established, based on which the fort was assigned to the Habsburgs. However, in the peace agreement they forgot about the villages that were under the rule of the lord. The villages were united with the centre of the domain, Socerb, only in the second half of the 16th century.

The properties that the two sides wrangled over for a hundred years fell into the hands of third parties: administratively they were subordinate to Carniola (Kranjska). It was only after the peace agreement that the fort became a seignior, which encompassed some of the territory of the old Trieste countryside and the villages taken from the Rašpor captaincy. Moreover, the seignior assumed all administrative and legal functions, including the right to administer justice at a regional level. Compared to other seigniories that were landed earlier, Socerb had very small estates, as it was subject to Venice until 1521. The expenses of the military garrison present in the fortress at the time of the domination of the Serenissima were borne by the seven villages as well as by some coastal towns and captaincies. For military merits as commander of the army, the Trieste captain Nicholas Rauber was given possession of the castle for life and his heirs administered it for three years after his death. He died in 1540 and the castle then passed to Martin Cusman for a short time. Socerb and its respective villages were also the scene of fighting, destruction and raids during the war between Venice and Austria in 1615, when the area was defended by

the local lord Benvenuto Petazzi. The blurred conception of the border and the symbolic significance of the boundary established by the fortresses is evident in the Teresian land register. The feud of Socerb was paid a tribute in the form of wood and other timber by some of the farmers who lived in towns belonging to Venice, Podpeč and Podgorje, while the Venetian village of Dane had actually abolished the payment of tributes due for grazing land owned by the feud of Socerb, since it was customary from ancient times, as it was written in the revenue estimate.

Let us take a look at the development of the building itself. There are a number of documents from the Middle Ages with requests to renovate the building and restore the wells. This latter petition recalls the vital function of the fortress, as the supply of water was crucial in the settlement of the military garrison. At the beginning of the modern period, when the powers of the fortress were extended to include administrative functions, the original fortress was enlarged with living quarters since the seignior – being situated on the border – had assumed more and more administrative powers and therefore the constant presence of an administrator paid by the lord was required in the castle. The fortress was expanded with the addition of rooms for residential use and later with stables. The concept of the castle became a symbol of the functions and rights arrogated by the lordship in the eyes of the subjects, although these functions were never really “performed” within the castle. In the Teresian land register it was reported that the farmers brought wood to the castle. When in 1622 the property was acquired by the previous pledge holders of the castle, the Petazzi family, the sworn master builder estimated the value of the castle building (walls, towers etc.) to be 3,800 florins, which proves that the Socerb castle was relatively small. The description of the buildings in the Teresian land register proves that the “castle” or stronghold was not inhabited, as only the value of the building next to the Socerb cave was estimated, which was worth “only” 1,000 florins including all the furnishings. The seignior also owned stables and a farmstead (Mayerhof) in the Cotishiat pasture. The value of the farm buildings was estimated at half the value of the house. Outside the walls there was also the small church of St Ulrich.



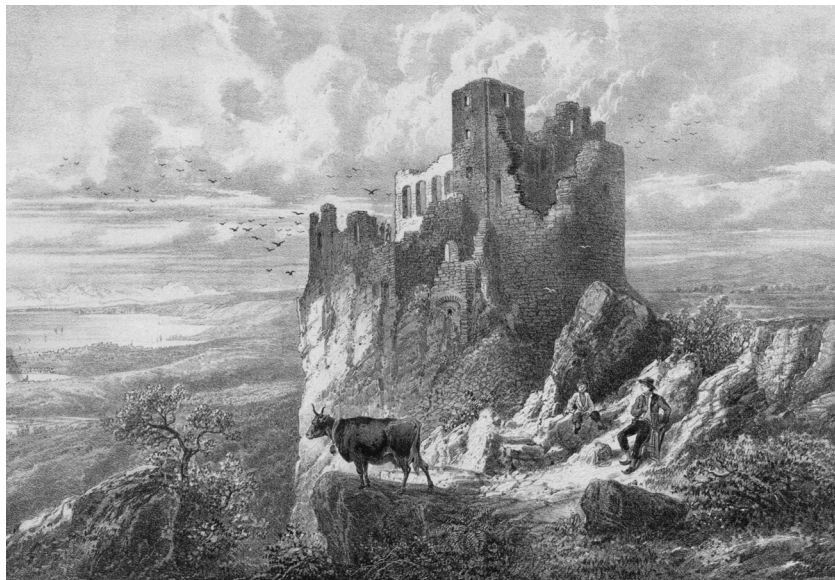
Socerb Castle (Valvasor, 1679).

In addition to paying tribute from the mansus and other rights of all kinds enjoyed by the lordship or tenant of the land, the farmers also had to provide days of free labour. In the 18th century the subjects

of Socerb were not too “busy” with their share of free working days. They were obliged to bring the wood from the forests belonging to the seignior to the administrator of the estate, and since the work was due every year, they received 8 coins for it. They were also obliged to cut the grass, as there was livestock on the property. In lieu of bread and wine, which according to the old custom belonged to the mowers, they received 24 livres from the lord or the farmer or the administrator of the lord’s land. Unlike others, the landed seignior also “saved” on custodial costs, as the farmers were required to guard the offenders locked in the lordship’s dungeon. They also took on the function of messengers, as they alone had the responsibility of conveying communications to neighbouring villages and within the boundaries of the regional court. Moreover, since in the late Middle Ages the defence of the castle rested on the peasant troops, their obligation to provide military aid with one man per farm was also recorded in the Teresian land register. Their duties also included helping with the reconstruction of the castle and transporting the materials needed for it, but it is already clear from the documents that this kind of free labour was almost forgotten and only recorded only for the reason that was already in the *urbarium*. The peasant “army” or peasant military service was an institution that controlled the border during the advent of the plague.

The main economic income of the seignior came from taxes on bars and sales taxes, but the lord, Count Joseph Salvai, complained at the time of the Teresian estimate of income that a trial for witchcraft and a public execution by the executioner of the regional capital were extremely expensive. The latter charged higher prices for his work than the regional rate and his expenses were so high that the income was rapidly decreasing. Of course, such trials were rare, especially in Socerb.

In the 18th century, the Salvai barons acquired seigniorial rights and land use rights from the Petazzi family. In spite of the renowned wine from the surrounding vineyards, which accounted for almost a tenth of all the income of the seignior, the people in the service of these barons did not manage the estate well. Due to huge debts amounting to 75% of its value they were forced to sell. In 1768 the property was bought for 70,000 florins by Count Antonio Montecuc-



San Servolo (V. Scusa, 1864).

coli. The Carniolan administrative authorities complained about the new administrator, saying that he was not carrying out the duties of the lordship properly. Following the fire that destroyed the castle in 1780, Montecuccoli took very little care of the property. Even before the castle was supposedly struck by lightning there probably wasn't much left of it: on military maps, the work of the best military cartographers the monarchy could offer, the ruins of the castle are not even mentioned in 1784. They only surveyed the hill above Socerb, which they considered to be of strategic importance, since from it they could observe "everything that moved outdoors, as far as the sea".

In 1907 the property was acquired by the Trieste baron Demetrius Economo. Enthusiastic about the new romanticism that raged at the beginning of the 20th century, from 1924-1925 he renovated the castle according to unknown conservation plans. The current appearance of the castle is very different from what was described by Valvasor. However, we have to be aware that the representations in Valvasor's time were

intended to take us back to the glorious past, and castles were sometimes described in a rather idealised way.

The legend of the Christian martyr of Trieste is linked to Socerb Castle and its surroundings. The Christians Eulogius and Clementia had an only son Servulus (Servilius), beautiful in body and even more so in spirit, who decided to dedicate himself to prayer as a boy. Around the age of 12, responding to God's call, he left his parents and withdrew to a nearby cave where he stayed for a year and nine months, after which, again inspired by God, he returned home. On his return to the city, his way was blocked by a large snake, which Servulus drove away by making the sign of the cross and blowing at it. When he returned home and shortly after his father's death, he began to

perform miraculous healings. By making the sign of the cross, with the laying on of hands and exorcisms, he first healed a young possessed man, then a widow's son, then the mason Didymus, who had been injured at work, followed by many others, so a multitude of people began to gather around him. The governor of the city of Trieste, realising the exceptional influence that Servulus exerted on the population, sent soldiers to take him away. He ordered that he be tortured with beatings,



San Servolo, martire, Diocesi di Trieste.

his flesh torn with hooks and his body doused with boiling oil. Since the torture did not cause Servulus any harm, the torment only causing him pleasure, by order of the Triestine prefect Junilus they sprinkled him with urine to expel the magical power from him. When this also failed, he was led out of the city and killed. That night, helped by other Christians, his mother Clementia collected the body of her son and gave him a decent burial. The Greek name of the unfortunate mason miraculously healed by Saint Servulus suggests that the well-known legend may have a much older origin, presumably from when the area was under Byzantine influence or when the memory of Byzantine power was still alive in this area.

Faced with persecution, Servulus is said to have taken refuge in the cave near Socerb. In the late Middle Ages this legend was widespread in the Trieste area, although perhaps veined with biographical motifs of other saints. It is an indisputable fact that over the centuries the idea that the martyr Saint Servulus lived and hid in the cave near the castle of Socerb has spread and been preserved.

The worship of the saint is very ancient and probably spread very early in Trieste and soon afterwards to Venice, since the first monastery near the doge's palace was dedicated to the saint, and the first preserved document dates back to 819.

In the past several stories were linked to the castle, some to the alleged espionage and smuggling of the owners. In fact, sources draw attention to one of the members of the influential and respectable Petazzi family, who lived in the second half of the 16th century. He was accused of plotting with the chief magistrate of Koper and of concubinage with a Venetian woman named Maria. Subsequently, the family played an important role in the second war between Venice and Austria, and at the end of hostilities they retook the castle and associated lands from the State Chamber.

Because of the cave that had become famous among travellers due to the picturesque descriptions of Valvasor in his *Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* and because of its proximity to Trieste, Socerb Castle was the destination of many visitors, including many English speakers, especially naturalists, who travelled to the Trieste and Slovenia Karst region.

### 3. ČRNI KAL

#### The lost pearl of the Venetian line of defence

*Access: in front of the village of Črnotiče, turn left on the dirt road through the forest to the small square. Ascent to the fortress: leave your car in the dirt car park. Proceed five minutes on foot following the mountain path.*

*On the wall near the fortress there is a path to climb.*

The ruins of the fort above Črni Kal, which the population calls a castle (*grad*), are particularly picturesque since the fort was erected on an exposed 30-metre-high wall, completely separated from its surroundings and only accessible by a drawbridge more than four metres long. While the castle has fallen into disrepair, the name Ancient Castle (*Stari grad*) was retained among the local population. Until the end of the 18th century, military strategists believed that it was



Črni Kal, a village with a church tower, the remains of a medieval castle on the wall above it. Photo by D. Podgornik, 1990.



Črni Kal, remains of a castle on a cliff. Photo by Dušan Podgornik, 1990.

possible to shoot at the surrounding villages from there. The fortress rises above the village of the same name. The village was certainly inhabited before 1254, when, at the end of the war against Trieste, the entire defence complex including Črni Kal passed to the Municipality of Koper.

The village of Črni Kal was located on the road that the people of Koper had built in 1361 in the Rižana valley to Klanec. Thanks to incentives, the presence of inns and cheap or abolished taxes, extremely lively traffic and commerce developed on the road.

The castle of Črni Kal was located on an important road connecting the Adriatic coast and the interior and in the border area between the spheres of influence of Venice and Austria. For this reason, its position was of strategic interest, as was that of Socerb, although the fort of Črni Kal was never as important as that of Socerb. Yet in the second half of the 15th century the Venetians complained that the castellan, the holder of the military functions who was supposed to live there, had moved elsewhere. When after the first war between

Venice and Austria ownership passed to the latter, the seat of the landed seigniory became Socerb. All important responsibilities were also transferred. Particularly noteworthy is the fortified cave where the inhabitants of the village took shelter, which was very exposed because it was on the route taken by all the military groups moving towards Istria. For this reason, the villagers suffered heavy losses during every military conflict in this area.

The rare testimonies preserved about the castle of Črni Kal usually refer to military events. Thus the fortress and the place are mentioned in connection with the first war between Venice and Austria. Following an attack in the immediate vicinity of Venetian Koper, the Habsburg leader Christoph Frankopan feigned a withdrawal but left troops hidden in Črni Kal who organised an ambush on the Koper residents who had pursued them into the valley, killing or capturing them all. In October of the same year, 1511, probably in the same battles, the emperor's followers destroyed the fortress of Črni Kal. Črni Kal also played a particularly important role a hundred years later, during the Uskok War (1615-1617). Together with



Slovenski etnografski muzej, 1949.



Črni Kal, remains of a castle connected by a bridge. Photo by D. Darovec, 2006.

Socerb, it was the main outpost for the Habsburg soldiers, as from the castle they were able to control the entire valley and monitor the movements of enemy troops.

It was from this fortress that Count Petazzi was to target the enemy troops returning to Koper via Osp from both battles of this war that took place in northern Istria.

The period from the beginning of the 15th century to the first half of the 17th century was marked by rumours of war. Fear of looting was an integral part of the daily life of the inhabitants of Istria. Therefore, under the fortress of Črni Kal, as well as in Gradin, they had set up a camp hidden from the raiders, where the inhabitants of the area deposited their goods.

There is a tavern in the village.

Valvasor himself listed the camp of Črni Kal as one of the “town wonders”, listed in a separate “book” of the famous Glory of the Duchy of Carniola. Of it he writes: *“Man exploited the advantages offered by nature and built camps at a suitable height. Among these camps, the best representation is the camp near Črni Kal in the Socerb domain, belonging to Count Petazzi. This is where the renowned, precious marzemino (Marcamin) wine is cultivated. This unusual camp stands on a rocky outcropping above the sea. On this mighty rock, which resembles a mountain, there is a large opening. In it they have placed the camp, which has no roof but is nevertheless perfectly sheltered. In fact, it is covered by a large rock, a stone cap, and therefore does not need a roof at all. One wonders why they positioned it in such a difficult place to reach. People climb over a rather long, high wooden bridge. When the bridge is lifted, it is no longer possible to reach the camp. Only hunger can drive away the people who took refuge there”*, Valvasor concluded. Even before the Second World War, the wall with the lines of fire was still clearly visible, closing off the entrance to the cave and recalling Roman fortifications.

#### 4. PRELOCCA (PREDLOKA)

##### The Glagolitic literature between Est and West

*Access: San Sergio - direction Cristoglie - left to Prelocca.*

In several places in Slovenian Istria there are tiny inscriptions in the oldest and most distinctive Slavic alphabet, which have been preserved in this area over the centuries. This is the Glagolitic alphabet created by Cyril and Methodius in the 9th century. It was used both for writing religious texts, such as the forms required for various Catholic ceremonies like marriage, and for ecclesiastical registers where births, marriages and deaths were recorded. This script was also used for the first printed books, and in the countryside there are many inscriptions on the walls of churches. It is particularly interesting that this alphabet survived even though the official Church had forbidden it. The only official language of religious rituals was Latin, chosen to hinder and control possible heretical thoughts that could only be discovered with greater difficulty if expressed in languages that theologians and doctors of the church did not understand.

In Predloka we find epigraphs on a rather valuable church inventory, on a stone case by the stonemason Benko of Socerb from 1466, and on a small slab set into the wall of the bell tower. The latter one reads: *milezim gospodni č. n.u sektembra miseca I. 3.* (probably the date of completion, ed.). Near Koper there is graffiti in Sv. Petar, in Gažon, where there is a small inscription on a stone case, in Korte, Pomjan, Puče, Koštabona, Sv. Anton, Gračišče and Zanigrad. Particularly rich in short inscriptions and epitaphs is the church in Hrastovlje.

Much longer Glagolitic texts have also been preserved, such as the missals of Šmarje and Krkavče. The Glagolitic alphabet was used by the Istrian reformers who considered it important to announce their mission in national languages.

Of particular interest to visitors are the inscriptions in Črni Kal, not so much for their aesthetic value as for their symbolic value, since they are found on the houses in the village. They underscore the vitality of writing in the daily life of the simplest, often illiterate population. This is why the inscriptions are part of the luxury that the own-

ers of the houses could afford, who themselves probably only knew how to read their surname on their house. In fact, it was customary for the master of the house to “sign” the building stones.

Various circumstances tell us about the symbolic value of this alphabet. The illiterate local population expressed difficulties and fears in their own language and writing, and so in the church of Saint Roch in Boršt an inscription referring to plague (*kuga*) has been preserved. It reports that brother Jerolim Vučonovič was the parish priest at the time of the plague. Furthermore, various testimonies of the daily tribulations of the population have been preserved: one of the missals contains magic formulas against various adversities such as locusts and caterpillars that had destroyed the harvest, something that this part of the Istrian land already made hard enough. The population hoped that such formulas would save them from the adversities that endangered their crops, which provided the food they needed to survive.

As far as the spread of the alphabet alone is concerned, of great importance is the activity of the Franciscan monastery in Koper, of Tertiary or Gregorian friars, who arrived in the city in 1467. As holders and custodians of knowledge, over the centuries the friars have taken care to keep the Glagolitic tradition alive.

Numerous important legal and administrative texts have been preserved, including descriptions of borders or tributes owed by subjects as recorded in the so-called *urbaria*, the registers of fief ownership. Many texts written in Glagolitic come from the aforementioned Koper monastery.

## 5. PODPEČ

### Visiting the sentry

*A marked and partially protected mountain path leads to the tower.  
10 minutes on foot.*

*Suggestion for a stop with a short tasting of farmer cuisine.*

Among the points chosen for the itinerary, Podpeč stands out for being one of the most important security outposts and lookouts. A sentry was stationed in the tower at all times to report any unusual movements. He also had to take care of the maintenance and safe-keeping of the weapons there. The defence of the tower was organised on two levels. Like all camps in Istria this one was also walled in. Fister claims that the tower of Podpeč is the work of an expert master stonemason. The Renaissance battlement crenellated with merlons and in particular the cannon firing lines and other architectural elements attest to the skill and experience of the workers.

The entrance to the tower was slightly raised and therefore more difficult for the invaders to access. Drinking water was available in the rock shelter, of particular importance in the event of a prolonged siege. Because of the difficult access to the fortified places, the besiegers



Podpeč, tower castle and cave. Photo by D. Darovec, 2020.



Podpeč, tower. Photo by D. Babič, 2021.

counted on the fact that the besieged would have to surrender due to hunger and thirst. The steep access to the cave from the top of the cliff was the greatest weakness of the camp. Although the tower had to be built so as to be independent of the camp, it was of the utmost importance for the security of the camp itself.

Podpeč was situated on one of the routes that connected the territories of the coastal towns with the heart of Istria, which in the 12th century slowly came under the rule of the Counts of Gorizia. In the 14th century the Counts of Gorizia were politically oriented towards the Habsburgs. During the war with King Sigismund in the 15th century, Hungarian soldiers camped at Trstenik, above Rašpor, and from there set out to attack the holdings in Friuli and Istria. The captain of Rašpor then proposed to the Venetian senate that the Istrians organise a defence against Hungarian attacks in the village of Podpeč (*ad villam Popehii*). The captain pointed out that the village had a strategic location and was well fortified. Groups of brigands were also advancing in Istria along the road to Podpeč.

Even the Venetian inspector general Morosini, who travelled to Istria in 1556, was enthusiastic about the organisation of this military post. The fortress above the hollow of the steep karst ridge, completed by the camp in the cave below, had impressed him greatly. Even though the cave was smaller than the one in Osp, he estimated that it could accommodate up to fifty families in case of danger. Despite the steep path leading up to it, the inspector believed that the villagers could easily store their crops there. The strategic role of this place is evidenced by the fact that they continued to maintain a guard posted.

Boldù's description, written in a climate of impending war at the beginning of the 17th century, also points in this direction. The cave was closed by an iron door and the tower permanently housed a sentry. The cave was accessed by a steep path, so narrow that only one person could pass at a time. The weapons described by Boldù at the beginning of the 17th century seem to be slightly better than those of Osp, because the soldiers also had two pieces of state-of-the-art weaponry, the carabiners, and 13 arquebuses, the use of which was more complex and above all slower. Two copper cannons (*falconets*) also testify to the special nature of the place, as they were better than those in other castles in the Istrian hinterland. While the fortification was located on land that was not easily accessible, it was also equipped with 6 lances. Although the end of the Uskok War also meant the end of direct military threats, the tower probably continued to be used as a weapons depot and they continued to occupy it, as they kept a guard there.

*It is possible to visit the tower by prior arrangement with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Piran.*

## 6. ZANIGRAD

*Access: Hrastovlje - left for Zanigrad*

A small defensive complex is hidden in the vicinity of the village, which stands on the rock of the Karst ridge. It is rather hard to reach and hidden from the view of visitors looking for it among the coloured rocks. The village of Zanigrad, known in the past as *Villae Xuonigradi*, is located in the southern part of the Čičarija (*Podgorski Kras*), not far from Zazid and Hrastovlje. A dirt road leads to the village. Today the village is in a state of abandonment.

There is little historical information about this castle. After the peace of Worms in 1521 and the loss of Mokovo, Socerb, Novigrad and the village of Črni Kal, refuges in places that were difficult to access had become relevant again. These fortifications, which also served as storage space for all the villagers' movable property, included Zanigrad and Črni Kal.

After the loss of its military importance, the name of the castle of Zanigrad (as it is referred to by the locals) was no longer mentioned in the reports of the Venetian inspectors of the 16th century, although this does not mean that it was no longer in use by the villagers.



Zanigrad, bell tower and St Stephen's Church. Photo by Darko Darovec, 2020.

Legend has it that a treasure was buried near the village. However, to this day, no one has ever found it. Next to the church, on 26 December, St. Stephen's Day, the horses are blessed.

## 7. HRASTOVLJE

*Access: Podpeč - Bezovica - Predloka - Hrastovlje*

*The visit ends with a traditional meal in the tavern*

*Visits to the interior of the walls and the church are possible by prior arrangement with Mr Rihter Rozani calling +386 31 432 231.*

Hrastovlje is one of the most impressive stops on our itinerary. The picturesque little church stands on a hillock above the village. While visitors are immediately impressed by the exterior of the church and are transported back to the past by its shadow creeping behind the walls, the moment they step inside and enter the church the wonder transforms into amazement. In an instant visitors find themselves back in the Middle Ages, where if they concentrate, they can hear the farmers at work in the fields depicted on the walls and feel the terror of the inhabitants fleeing from the horses of the Turkish raiders, or those who seek aid and shelter within the little church from the deadly scythe mercilessly wielded by the implacable plague.

For the local population, since ancient times the partly natural and partly man-made hills have represented a kind of refuge. The chapel, together with the sacred artefacts, was the most precious treasure of the village, and often the only masonry building, and because of its value it was protected by walls, even if sometimes only in the form of a timber stockade. The population not only entrusted their fate to the buildings, but also to the divine protection symbolised by the sacred place. Researchers claim that many walls built around churches could not stop assaults by themselves. While the wall surrounding the church is related to the defence against Ottoman attacks, it was only completed after the worst attacks by marauding Turks. The function



Hrastovlje. The Church of the Holy Trinity with remains of the medieval walls. In the background, a view of the Karst Edge with the tower in Podpeč, and below it, in the Šrkljevica sub-district, the remains of the Zanigrad walls. Photo by D. Darovec, 2021.

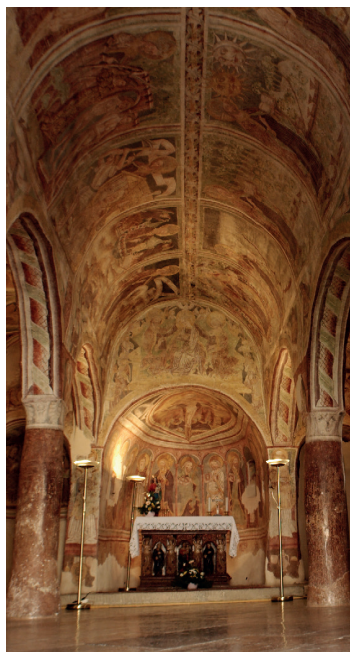
of defence was all too often linked solely to protection against Turkish robbers, and it was often forgotten that every group of “unemployed” soldiers who roamed the territory during and after the war represented an equal threat and danger to the population. These groups also forcefully appropriated goods and food, which often was more valuable to farmers than any other possession.

The fortress of Hrastovlje met all the criteria of the church-fortress; located on a small rise, it made access more difficult. In the Middle Ages, churches, as the largest and best-built buildings in the village, among other benefits offered the possibility of being used as a granary, i.e. as a “treasury” where the wealthiest villagers kept everything of value. Frequently, one of the towers, the most spacious and multi-storied tower with wooden partitions, served as a granary and treasury.

The church also housed another important treasure that had a special social role. It reminded the illiterate population to always live a moral life, repeatedly reminding them of the brevity of life, the un-

predictability of death and the divine punishment personified in war, pestilence and extreme weather. As the small church was not sufficiently defended, they built a wall around it ending in two watchtowers. Researchers assume that they kept weapons in one of them.

In 1589 Buona described the defence wall of Hrastovlje as damaged and in need of urgent repair, as his report sought to convince the local authorities to make urgent investments in their territory. He also emphasised that the village and the fortified church were private property and therefore it was the duty of the owner to keep the fortification in good condition. Furthermore, the Buona report detailed the weapons in the fortress. In fact, Hrastovlje was sold by the Carniolan nobleman of the Neuhaus family to the medical doctor Leandro of the Koper Zarotti family, who acted as health commissioner, also mentioned on the church portal. Naldini, who evidently held the Koper nobility in high esteem, reported that the doctor acquired the Hrastovlje property with gold coins. Thus the last property still belonging to foreign noblemen passed into the hands of Koper nobility.



Interior of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Hrastovlje with painted walls with stories from the Bible and everyday life, late 15th century. Photo by M. Božič, 2021.

There is a tavern in the village: Gostilna Švab

Information: +386 5 659 05 10; +386 41 688 156

Opening hours: Wednesday to Sunday from 12 noon to 10 pm.

The tavern is open all year round.

## 8. KUBED

### Stretto tra i piedi dei giganti

*Access: Hrastovlje - Kubed*

Kubed was mentioned in 1067 by Henry IV in a deed addressed to the Bishop of Freising, by which he granted villages in the territory of the dioceses of Trieste and Koper. It is also mentioned in the deed of donation from the Bavarian Margrave and Duke to the Patriarch of Aquileia in 1102. Manzuoli uses the term castle (*kaštel*) for all villages in the Koper hinterland with a military role. A military garrison of peasants was stationed in the fort until the end of the Uskok war. The village developed under the walls. As the fortification was located in the narrows above the connecting road and on a point from which the other fortresses could be observed, it was certainly part of Venice's information system. From a military point of view, it was important because it served as a rear fortification for others situated near the border. The first information about the peasant garrison dates back to the first war between Venice and Austria, when captain Civrano resided there together with his mercenary units, the *stradioti*. During this war the fortification was somewhat destroyed and some time passed until the inspectors convinced the Venetian authorities that it was worth repairing. Still in 1556 the Venetian inspector general Morosini found



Church of St Florian, Kubed. Photo by D. Darovec, 2020.



Kubed, tower, detail. Photo by D. Darovec, 2020.



Kuber. A settlement, a fortress, a castle built on a rock mound, which could accommodate up to 200 horsemen. The headquarters of the Koper rural defence. Photo by D. Podgornik, 2007.

it without a defence tower, partially in ruins and without a guard. The inspector suggested rebuilding it because it was spacious and could hold up to 200 soldiers and 50 knights. Of course, the number of soldiers within the walls only reached this level when wars were raging at their most intense. Being an important strategic stronghold, after this reconstruction the castle was included in every financial spending plan and was thus gradually renovated. The walls were still well preserved long after the end of the Uskok War. Today a good part of the walls is preserved together with the defence tower, which has been converted into a bell tower. In the 17th century, after the withdrawal of the soldiers, a church was also built behind the walls. When the peasant fortification lost its original military function due to a change in military techniques, the population began to build their own dwellings within the walls, using those walls as one side of their homes. This way they did not have to destroy the fortification above the cliff in order to use its detritus as building materials for their dwellings. This fate befell more than one fortress.

### How they built Kubed Castle

In ancient times, the configuration of the terrain alone and the constant hostilities between peoples did not dictate the need to build defensive fortifications here to protect against enemies. But once they did decide to build fortifications, they started looking for the best builders. They heard about some giants who were said to be the most capable. They sent for them (since they lived far away, somewhere in central Istria) and told them that they wanted to build an entire defensive fort at Kubed, and a large watchtower at Podpeč, on the high cliff, from which they could watch for incoming enemies. The two giants, one named Mirdaj and the other Dajmir, accepted all the projects. They asked them to prepare the material for the construction; for the mortar, fresh eggs were needed in addition to sand and lime. So many were needed that ten carts with manure baskets collected them from all over Istria. The giants got the water they needed to make mortar from the Rižana River. As there was not enough room in one place for the two giants, each built on his own side: Mirdaj in Podpeč and Dajmir in Kubed. They only had one mason's hammer that they passed back and forth across the valley when needed. When Dajmir needed the hammer he would say, "Brother, pass me the hammer", and then later Mirdaj would say, "Brother, give me back the hammer". They were so big that for lunch alone they each ate two roast rams and drank a hundred litres of wine. After lunch, Dajmir sat on the nearby Škarpinc Hill and soaked his feet in the Rižana River. Mirdaj sat on Kolk Hill and bathed his feet in the clear waters of the Rakovec River. When the work was done, they asked to be paid, but the rulers came and wanted to chain them up to force them to continue working in the country overseas. The giants became furious, took their compensation and disappeared, and no one ever saw them again. The castles they had built remained and the people were grateful to them for having safe shelters from enemy attacks. These giants would go on to build all the castles in Istria and then take shelter in Cičarija and somewhere deep in Istria. It is said that they are still hiding around Motovun.

In Gračišče, less than a kilometre away, on the main road is the Jakomin tavern (Gračišče 3), which serves mainly game and pasta dishes.

## 9. GRADIN

### Hidden beauty

*Access: Rižana - Kubed - Gračišče - Lukini - before Sočerga turn left to Tuljaki - Brezovica pri Gradinu - Gradin*

The hidden fortress of Gradin was inaccessible from three sides, while the fourth side was protected by walls and two towers. Both towers along with part of the walls have been preserved to this day.

From the hill it stands on there is a magnificent view of the upper Mirna, the Petrapelosa valley and the Karst ridge, so the visitor immediately forgets about the dozen minutes of pleasant walking on the path leading to it.

It is very likely that it was part of the defensive complex on the border between the Venetian Republic and the Austrian Habsburgs. The first, lower tower controlled the entrance, while the second presumably served as storage. Due to the constant incursions of dangerous Ottoman and Uskok knights, they soon built higher walls.

Over the years it has had several different owners. In 1028 Emperor Conrad II donated the fief of Gradin to the Patriarch of Aquileia, who in turn incorporated it into the Diocese of Novigrad (Cittanova). In the 13th century the fief belonged to the Lords of Momiano, while in 1420 it came under the rule of Venice.



Remains of two medieval walled towers near the village of Gradin. Photo by D. Darovec, 2007.

## 10. GLEM

### The renovated tower

Glem is an old village on the ridge below Boršt near Marezige that offers its residents and visitors a grand view of the area rich in natural beauty and valuable cultural heritage.

In the past, the surroundings of the village were all terraced with vineyards and olive trees, while higher up there were pastures and meadows. The village is best known for its tower, which in the past served as a lookout point for the entire valley where the two largest tributaries join the Dragonja river, Pinjevec and the upper Dragonja. Until fifteen years ago the large ruins of the castle's stone walls were still visible. The Glem tower, also known as the castle (*grad*), was purchased and then renovated by the architect Viljem Šantavec.

Glem Castle was part of the Venetian defence line, which protected the Dragonja ford against Turkish incursions. The shape of Istrian villages was most influenced by their defensive function. This led to the development of many military posts with high watchtowers called castles (*kašteli*); among them was the defence tower at Glem. The 13-metre-high tower has four floors and a basement. Along the open connecting stairs are the living spaces: the entrance gallery, the work and rest areas and a central living space at the top of the tower. Light beams enter through fire and observation slits and from open spaces in the floors. Contemporary architecture coexists with history. And finally,

an extract from the description written by Count Paolo Naldini of Koper (1700): "In the village of Glem, where a high tower has stood since ancient times, they recently renovated the old church because it was too small to accommodate the many people who come here to venerate the Virgin Mary, patroness of the church, which also bears her name".



Glem, the restored tower and entrance of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Photo by D. Darovec, 2021.

# KOZLOV ROB AND RAVNE MANSION IN THE PIVKA AREA

**Dragica Čeč**

## Kozlov rob

**T**he naturally protected location of the Kozlov rob castle and its strategic position near important trade routes, which suggest an early Middle Age origin of this fortified structure erected on top of the homonymous hill, were the reasons the military strategists of the first half of the 17th century still considered it the most important fortification in the region despite the changes in warfare since its construction. Archaeological excavations revealed a few objects that might be interpreted as evidence of the existence of a fortification at the same place during Roman times, but remains of any earlier structure would have been destroyed by mediaeval redevelopments. During the Middle Ages, the strategic castle and the extensive landed estate were owned by the strongest feudal lords in the region, the patriarchs of Aquileia, who also leased out the Tolmin manor. After a short period under Venetian rule, the manor, together with the castle, passed into the hands of the Hapsburgs, who also leased the manor out. Following a change in their ownership policy and the sale of the manor in the mid-17th century, the latter was soon (in 1651) bought from the original owners by the renowned and extensive noble family of the Gorizia region, the Coroninis, who retained its ownership until the abolition of serfdom. Given that from the second half of the 16th century onward, the living quarters of the fortified complex on the butte had probably been used only by the manager and his employees, the women's apartments at that time must have already fallen into ruin.

The castle complex also comprised outbuildings (stables) and, from the 16th century onwards, two large water reservoirs. In fact, sufficient water supply was a serious difficulty for the elevated fortification, especially in the event of fires, which were not infrequent; the financing of fire damage restoration at the castle complex was always a subject of negotiation between owners and lessees. Nevertheless, even during the turbulent 16th century the castle preserved the monumentality that it garnered from its over 14-metre walls and four corner towers. The fortified complex also included a church dedicated to St. Martin. There was a small military crew stationed at the castle at all times, a practice that survived into the 1630s. Besides numerous remains of weapons, archaeological excavations yielded several precious objects made of ceramics and glass, as well as shells, suggesting that the castle was also inhabited by wealthier residents leading luxurious lives. There are also indications of it being used by the local population as shelter during wars and Ottoman incursions. The Coronini family abandoned the unapproachable fort, which another fire partly damaged towards the end of the 1630s, and erected a new mansion in the town of Tolmin, which was more prestigious and more in line with the lifestyle of the nobility of the period. Still, at least some of the 18th century owners are known to have used that new mansion only as a summer residence. As the Kozlov rob castle repeatedly incurred damage from earthquakes and fires likely caused by lightning, the local serfs were also required to bear the burden of its restorations, as evidenced by their complaints during the great revolt of 1515, which swept over this manor as well.

Another extraordinary find of the latest archaeological investigations was barrel roof tiles that used to cover the early mediaeval castle, as this typical Mediterranean roofing became more widespread in the Tolmin area only in the second half of the 19th century.

### **Ravne Mansion in the Pivka area**

Amid a grove off the main road to Rijeka, Croatia, near the turn for the villages of Šmihel and Narin to the south of Pivka, lies a well-rounded Baroque complex with a central mansion, a park, a gra-

nary, and stables, one of the rare comprehensively and well preserved castle complexes in Slovenia – the Ravne estate. It comprises three large buildings: the former dwelling house of the nobility, featuring a prominent stone portal and a balcony; the onetime castle granary; and, located a bit further away from the mansion, the stables as the only building renovated according to the original 18th-century designs. Since 2004, the stables have been boarding Lipizzaner yearlings, which undergo their basic training in the pastures surrounding the mansion before returning to Lipica to start their dressage.

It is believed that the first turreted building at this site was erected as early as the 14th century, in 1313, by the patriarch of Aquileia, but it must have been unfortified, as it fell into ruin in 200 years' time. From 1340 to the beginning of the 17th century, the estate is believed to have been owned by the noble house of Raunach, which also owned the fort of Šilentabor (Ger. Schillentabor) and administered the Prem manor. In 1617, Ravne was bought by the Trieste patrician Carlo De Leo, who built here a two-storey (5 by 5 metres in plan) Renaissance mansion with a banquet hall, and laid out a park next to it. He also erected a granary and, in the vicinity of the mansion, an ornamented column. In the first half of the 18th century, Ravne passed by marriage into majority ownership of the Counts of Hohenwart and was restructured into a gorgeous Baroque residence with a mansion park and gardens sometime after 1745. In 1755, with the deed of assignment, the Hohenwarts ceded the mansion to their young son Georg Jacob, holder of the highest functionary positions in the province. Although there is good reason to believe that the mansion mainly served him as an occasional residence, Georg Jacob created a library in it with an impressive collection of over 800 titles, to which he was strongly and personally attached. From his period survives a cookbook, probably written for his own chefs. Of Georg Jacob's many sons, the one to inherit the Ravne mansion was the one who cultivated an extraordinary interest in natural science, Franz Joseph Hannibal Hohenwart, author of guidebooks to the Postojna Caves and to the collections of the Provincial Museum of Carniola in Ljubljana. Since he died without issue, the mansion was inherited by his nephew Karl Sigmund von Hohenwart (later Minister-President of Cisleithania), who entrusted

one of his own sons with the estate's administration. There are tales preserved in the local memory about the latter's widow, who redeemed the estate when her two sons sold it against her will soon after their father's death. She disinherited them and since managed Ravne herself, proving to be a very careful, conscientious mistress, but also very parsimonious. She sold the estate before her death. Although the new owner's interests were primarily of economic nature, the mansion library, probably thanks to the estate steward, was carefully looked after until the death of the latter after the Second World War when the building was nationalised and committed to other uses entirely. Initially hosting teacher training courses, it was later the seat of a school of agriculture, the students of which also tended to the mansion's park; ultimately it was converted into an apartment house.

The Renaissance granary was enlarged and restructured contemporaneously with the mansion, towards the end of the 18th century. Despite the post-war conversion of its second floor into several small residential units, the original economic purpose of this building is still evidenced by the small windows on the ground and first floors. One of the features that has also been preserved unchanged is the picturesque stone spiral staircase in the eastern part of the granary.

In earlier times, stairs led from the mansions' terrace to large vegetable and flower gardens that opened beneath. Nowadays, the two-storey building houses five apartments connected by large semicircular corridors and a colonnaded staircase that have not lost their grandeur. The spacious and lofty chambers decorated with stuccowork have been partitioned. Before the discovery of electricity, the entrance was illuminated by torches. On either side of the portal there were metal sconces each holding a relief-decorated vessel filled with flammable liquid, which shed a romantic light on the doorway in the evening.

# THE VENETIAN VILLAS' ITINERARY

**Lia De Luca**

**W**e propose an itinerary that reaches some of the most beautiful villas of the Province of Venice. The route is different from other ones, because it does not concern just the Riviera del Brenta, already widely dealt with as touristic destination, but passing by the Riviera (Villa Foscari, Villa Widmann, Villa Pisani) it moves away from it and following the road to Treviso makes a stop in Stigliano and Noale, then goes slightly back to make a stop in Salzano, and lastly reaches the public parks in Mirano, offering a visit that does not limit itself to the 18th century villas, but integrates them with interesting previous buildings and with examples of safeguarding and reuse of historical gardens. All the above in a nearly circular route 50 km long, through various towns of the Province of Venice, that despite the intense anthropization still keeps glimpses of great fascination.

For those who wish to reach the Friuli castles, we suggest the stop at Alvisopoli, interesting example of intent of a making of an agrarian utopia.

You can start the route from each of the points proposed here; in this case we start from Villa Foscari in Malcontenta.

Departing from Fusina, reachable from Venice by ferry, you can travel along via Moranzani for 5 km to reach Villa Foscari. The most trained ones can rent a bike in Fusina. There is also a bus line that connects Fusina to Malcontenta, allowing to reach the small village in 15 minutes.



View of the north facade of Villa Foscari, courtesy of La Malcontenta Srl.

## 1. Villa Foscari known as Malcontenta

Via dei Turisti, 9, 30034 Mira VE

<https://www.lamalcontenta.com/index.php/it/>

Thanks to canalizations and reclamations, the Foscari transform the area that lies north of the Sant'Ilario monastery, by then in ruins, building the famous villa called Malcontenta. Designed by Andrea Palladio around 1560 for the Nicolò and Alvise Foscari brothers, with frescoes by Battista Franco, the villa hosted many famous celebrities. In 1574, Henry III, on his way to France to be crowned King, was received with great pomposity, though he stayed for a very short time. The villa was enlarged at the end of the 17th century with two buildings with porticos in such a way to form a wide square. After the fall of the Venice Republic, the villa survived changing fortunes. In 1848-49, it was occupied by the Austrian troops sieging

Venice, and the park and the outer structures were destroyed. The Foscari abandoned the villa and the farmers occupied it, so the building became a farmhouse and a granary. The inner decorations were torn off and the walls were painted. In 1926, the building was acquired by the Landsbergs, Brazilian lords, who dealt with the restoration and the new furniture, still kept today in the building. In 1974, the architect prof. Antonio Foscari bought the building and paid for the restoration of the facade, while the Institution for the Venetian Villas arranged for the restoration of the remarkable inner decorations. The villa, the way it is visible today, corresponds to the 16th century design and making by Palladio. The building, facing north and surrounded by the river bight, is cubical, elevated from the ground by an eleven feet base, and two side stairs allow the access to the advanced pronaos, where eight big Ionic columns sustain the fronton crowned by the gable. A wide window characterises instead the facade facing the garden, surrounding the big inner hall with light. The villa's four floors feature many windows that articulate the composition, thanks

View of the south facade of Villa Foscari, courtesy of La Malcontenta Srl.





Central hall of Villa Foscari with the frescoes and the large window on the south side, courtesy of La Malcontenta Srl.

to the play created maintaining the same shape, but with different sizes. At the ground floor, accessible through the base, are found the service rooms, the kitchen and the basement. Today, the villa is open to the public for the visit of the piano nobile with the wide central hall and the two symmetrical flats of three rooms, made by Palladio for the Foscari brothers.

### Fun Food Facts

The “gold” of the Venetians was salt, with which they obtained the supplies they needed. Salt circulated as a currency and it could be swapped with anything. Where fish and salt were abundant, the salting technique was used, an effective way to store food. Other ancient storing methods were marinade, *carpionatura*, pickle, in oil, drying and smoking.

From Villa Foscari, follow first via Malcanton, and cross (taking a lot of care) the National Route 309 Romea, then you can continue along via Seriola Veneta sinistra, turn right to via Risorgimento, then left to via Valmarana, then take the bridge over the Naviglio del Brenta and turn then right to via Riscossa at the end of which, after crossing, taking a lot of care, via Nazionale, you will find yourself in front of Villa Widmann. The whole route is about 6 km long.

A bus line connects Malcontenta to via Padana, where it is necessary to change line to continue to Villa Widmann. The travel time depends on the connections, it takes anyway about 40 minutes.

## 2. Villa Seriman-Widmann, alla Riscossa in Mira Porte

Via Nazionale, 420, 30034 Mira VE

<https://villawidmann.servizimetropolitani.ve.it/visita-la-villa/>

The villa was built by the Serimans, noble family of Persian origin, at the beginning of the 18th century. Probably the architect was Andrea Tirali. Around half of the 18th century, the property was acquired by the Widmanns, rich family of acquired German nobility, that obtained in 1646 the sought-after title also in Venice, when the Republic was desperate for money for the Candia War against the Turkish. In fact, by paying 100,000 ducats it was allowed to various middle-class people and merchants the access to the Great Council, and thus to the nobility. On 19th August 1646, «Gioan Paolo e Fratelli Widmann con suoi figlioli e descendenti»



Villa Widmann, picture of the hall with the splendid frescoes and the gallery, courtesy of San Servolo Srl.



Villa Widmann, view of the portico, courtesy of San Servolo Srl.



Villa Widmann, view of the garden with statues, courtesy of San Servolo Srl.

were registered in the Golden Book. The residence in Mira was widened and restored according to the French rococo style. An important party hall was obtained, and decorated by Giuseppe Angeli. The decoration of mythological scenes with the fresco technique in the party hall, probably dated 1762, results lively and full of colour. The ceiling displays the Widmanns glory. Among the famous guests stands out Bishop Carlo Rezzonico, later Pope Clemente XII, whose niece married Ludovico Widmann. Carlo Goldoni was also a guest of the Widmanns. In 1883 the villa was sold at auction in Dolo and was acquired by Francesco Somazzi. After many transfers of ownership, in 1901 it came back to the Widmanns as it was acquired by the last descendant of the family, Elisabetta Maria Adriana Widmann-Rezzonico, who married Pietro Foscari. Gabriele D'Annunzio, a friend of Pietro Foscari, was a guest in the villa during a tour of the Riviera. In 1946, Elisabetta gifted her son Ludovico Foscari with the building and he then sold it in 1970 to the Costanzo couple, owners of the *maglificio del Veneto*, who lived at the villa for about fifteen years, putting into place a lot of modernizations. The large colonnade annex and the guesthouse are very nice. Today, the villa is owned by the Metropolitan City of Venice and it has become a museum. The villa has an almost cubic shape with the south-facing facade characterised by a small hall with Tuscan columns and arched fronton crowned by three decorative vases. Of 18th century style is the shaping of the windows of the piano nobile, as well as the four attics and the elegant wrought iron balconies. On the inside, the wide central hall

with balcony and wholly frescoed is charming. As already mentioned, the ceiling displays the Widmanns glory, while the walls display the Abduction of Helen and the Sacrifice of Iphigenia. The wide garden stretches for beyond 16,000 sq. m among hornbeams and old roses boulevards, features many 18th century statues, a stone and wrought iron gazebo, and a romantic pond with bald cypresses. In front of the villa, on the opposite side of the river, is found the Barchessa Valmarana, also accessible, continuing along via Valmarana without crossing the Naviglio.

### Fun Food Facts

An event that influenced the Venetian cuisine happened on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1432, when Piero Querini and his crew of 47 mariners disembarked in Norway, namely in the island of Rost, archipelago of Lofoten, where they got in touch for the first time with the codfish, that dried became stockfish, easy to be stored and transported. Codfish, above all in the whipped recipe, is one of the delicacies of the Riviera del Brenta cuisine.

Carry on along via Nazionale, turn left to via don G. Minzoni following the road that flanks the canal for about 2 km, crossing the town of Mira Taglio. Carry on along Riviera S. Trentin always along the canal until number 5, where is located Palazzo Contarini – Pisani with its park open to the public.

A bus line along via Nazionale connects the two villas in 5 minutes.

### 3. Palazzo Contarini-Pisani, known as dei Leoni

Riviera Silvio Trentin, 5 - Mira Taglio

<https://www.comune.mira.ve.it/index.php?area=4&menu=3&page=555&lingua=4>

Built in 1558 on behalf of the Procurator of Saint Mark Federico Contarini, it has a cubic shape, and there is an arcade on the north side. On the south side there is a staircase with on the sides two *marzocchi*, two lions, copies of the originals moved to France. The palace today lies in front of the Mira-Lanza factory, while in the past in front of it there was the Palazzo Contarini by Longhena. In 1574,



View of Villa dei Leoni facade towards the river, courtesy of the Municipality of Mira.

after stopping by at Malcontenta, Henry III, future King of France, stopped-over at this villa, too. In the second half of the 17th century, the building was acquired by the Pisanis. In the turmoil period of the French dominion, the villa hosted Carolina Murat, sister of Napoleon. In the 19th century, it was owned by the Polish soldier Gorzkowski, buried with his wife in the chapel until half of the 19th century. The palace was acquired then by the Homeros and the Collaltos, and nowadays is owned by the Mira Municipality. Until the 19th century, the big hall at the ground floor was decorated by Tiepolo frescoes made in 1754, that bear witness to the visit to the villa by Henry III. The frescoes have been moved to France in 1893, sold and now exhibited in the Jacquemart-André museum in Paris.

The villa can be visited only by appointment, while the wide park that surrounds it and that is used as public garden is open all days. As well as the English landscape garden, it hosts inside a memorial of the fallen of the War.



Villa dei Leoni Central hall, courtesy of the Municipality of Mira.



Villa dei Leoni Music room, courtesy of the Municipality of Mira.

From Villa Contarini-Pisani, flanking in part the Naviglio del Brenta, one reaches Villa Pisani Museo Nazionale in Stra, crossing Mira and Dolo. In a route about 10 km long, one can admire many other villas on both sides of the Naviglio. We suggest to choose the route based on one's own interests, since it is possible to take quieter backroads, more immersed in the countryside, or else to take the main busier road, that crosses the towns. A bus line connects the centre of Mira with Stra in 40 minutes, roughly.

Villa dei Leoni view of the garden, courtesy of the Municipality of Mira.



### Fun Food Facts

The 16th century cuisine was all based on tricks and the mix of flavours. The perfect dish had to enclose all tastes: sweet, salted, sour, bitter and spicy. Meat and fish were seasoned with abundant spices and sugars, for this reason the century was called “the brown epoch”. The most rare and refined food was poultry such as ducks, capons, and small birds, considered as the top cuisine. A massive use of sugar and spices was possible in Venice thanks to the continuous and profitable trade with the East, that brought abundantly the precious products. *Species* comes from Latin and means “special goods”. The spices were not used for preservation: to this purpose salt was used. The out of reach cost of spices made them a privilege of elites. The *spezieri* from Venice invented new tastes mixing with expertise various spices and created the “Venetian little bags” ready for use and sought-after anywhere.

## 4. Villa Pisani

Via Doge Pisani, 7, 30039 Stra VE

<https://www.villapisani.beniculturali.it/>

In 1720, the Alvise and Almorò Pisani brothers of the Pisani da Santo Stefano branch made demolish the previous building and started the project by Count Girolamo Frigimelica Ruberti (1635-1732), architect and librarian of the University of Padua, very interested in the subjects of the Roman and French architecture in vogue at the time. Due to the high costs, only the garden was made according to the directives of Frigimelica with the turret, labyrinth, exedra, stables, some portals and the entrance to the Belvedere. The villa itself was erected few years later by Francesco Maria Preti (1701-1774) from Castelfranco, who followed the general orientations of Frigimelica expressing himself in a much soberer way, thus anticipating the neoclassical style of the following decades. The Pisanis conceived the villa as a place of representation and as such they used it until the end of the Republic. Ermolaio I aka Alvise Pisani, supporting France, in 1797 hosted Napoleon at the villa, and in 1807 was the one who sold it to Napoleon for 937,000 Francs. Apparently, Napoleon stayed at the villa for one night only, and



View of Villa Pisani river side, thanks to the Direzione Regionale Musei Veneto-Museo Nazionale di Villa Pisani di Stra, image by concession of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e del turismo.

then he sold it, on 29 November 1807, to the Viceroy of Italy Eugenio Beauharnais and his wife Amalia. The villa got its name changed in Eugenia, and Giovanni Francia, who had dealt with the management of the property on behalf of the Pisanis, was confirmed as administrator. The French dominion did not last long, because in 1815 Veneto was handed on to Austrians and the villa went under the power of the Venice's *Intendenza dei reali palazzi*. Agostino Baroni, son in law of Giovanni Francia, was named caretaker of the palace. The building was often visited by the Viceroy Ranieri, natural sciences enthusiast. The villa kept its representation role and hosted many famous characters in the 1825-1837 period, then the visits became scarce because of the social turmoil. In 1848, due to the serious uprisings, the villa lots were used to host military contingents. In 1849, the villa was temporarily used as hospital. After the troubled time, it started again to host famous characters, among which the Empress of Austria Maria Anna Carolina,



Villa Pisani Room 107  
- room used by Viceroy  
Eugene de Beauharnais - early  
19th century, thanks to the  
Direzione regionale Musei  
Veneto-Museo Nazionale di  
Villa Pisani di Stra, image by  
concession of the Ministero  
per i beni e le attività culturali  
e del turismo

very attached to the building. In 1866, Veneto joined the new born Kingdom of Italy, but the property, not included in the crown estate, was auctioned twice in 1874 and 1882, without success. A long decline phase began, and the adjacent lots were rented out to private citizens. In 1882, the government declared it national monument but did not provided the needed funds for the restorations. A decadence, spoliation and destruction period started. Nearly nothing was left neither of the ancient historical garden nor of the furniture. In 1909, a portion was rented out to the Institute for hydrotechnical research of the University of Padua, in 1913 the current pool connecting the villa to the stables was built, but as it was not adhering to the scientific needs of the institute, it was useless for the experiments. The pool has become an integral part of the garden, and is still today a flagship of the visits to the villa. In 1918, the structure was given to the *Magistrato alle acque* (the Venice Water Authority) and an array of various uses started.

In 1934, the villa underwent a moment of light restorations, since it had been chosen to host the meeting between Mussolini and Hitler. The event sparked a lot of interest. In 1938, the *Azienda per la Villa Nazionale di Strà* (an institution for the promotion of the villa) was established, institution that did not last long, permanently abolished in 1947, year in which the structure was transferred to the Exchequer, that entrusted the management to the local authority. There was not a cultural interest in the exploitation of this kind of buildings. The botanic pauperization continued until 1990.



Villa Pisani view of the pool and stables. Thanks to the Direzione Regionale Musei Veneto-Museo Nazionale di Villa Pisani di Stra, image by concession of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e del turismo.



Villa Pisani view of the north facade with the large lawn and the pool. Thanks to the Direzione Regionale Musei Veneto-Museo Nazionale di Villa Pisani di Stra, image by concession of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e del turismo.

Villa Pisani aerial image of the labyrinth. Thanks to the Direzione Regionale Musei Veneto-Museo Nazionale di Villa Pisani di Stra, image by permission of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e del turismo.

In the 70s, the villa was in a semi abandon state, with infiltrations and damages also to the main building. From the 90s, after a long sensibilization work of the public opinion by the *Ente per le ville venete* (an institution for the promotion of the Venetian Villas), the interest for this kind of historical buildings grew. The villa acquired the current aspect and became National Museum, open to the public, and as well as a permanent collection, it hosts exhibitions and cultural initiatives.

The facade features a three-story ashlar central body and is characterised by four monumental telamons at the ground floor, that support the protruding balcony of the piano nobile, a work by the sculptor Bonazza. From the balcony, eight huge Corinthian semicolumns that support a trabeation decorated with putti and festoons, rise up. All of it is surmounted with an ornated tympanum. The two-story wings are characterised by Ionic lesenes and completed by a trabeation and, on its top, there is an attic crowned by a balaustrade and statues. The rectangular drawing made of two inner courtyards, separated by a more elevated central body, represents an unusual order for the Venetian villas. An elegant colonnade separates the two inner courtyards, sustains the dance hall of the piano nobile and allows an easy access to the park. The villa includes 168 rooms and covers an area of 15,000 square metres.

### Fun Food Facts

The Catholic Church with the Counter-Reformation helped the spread of fish, because attacking the cuisine excesses and imposing fast or without meat days, forced chefs to create new and always various recipes to make peasant dishes tasty. So, in Veneto was born the renowned fish cuisine appreciated still today and available in various recipes and variants. The many restaurants of the territory span from the *trattoria* to the gourmet restaurant, with many price differences; keep in mind how much you want to pay before choosing where to eat.

The facade facing the park is characterised by windows of the same proportions that in the central body at the piano nobile are characterised by arches with keystones. The almost 10 ha. wide park has been done over trying to recreate the constitutive inspiration. The labyrinth was maintained faithful to the original plan by Frigimelica. High shrub hedges characterise a few km routes with a tower in the centre featuring a Minerva statue. The stables, planned in 1719 by Frigimelica, are the background to the garden since they are exactly in front of the villa.

Only 550 metres away from Villa Pisani is found the Footwear museum in Villa Foscari. Just follow the villa perimeter towards the Stra town centre along via doge Pisani until the intersection with the via Roma bridge.

## 5. Villa Foscari

Via Doge Pisani, 1/2, 30039 Stra VE

<https://www.museodellacalzatura.it/>

17th century building of Palladian style remodelled during the neo-classical period. There lived the Procurator of Saint Mark and then Doge Marco Foscari, friend of Gaspare Gozzi, hosted in the villa in 1773. It also hosted Francesco Maria III, Duke of Modena. It had two colonnades, one used as guest house and the other as stables. In the 19th century, the two flights of steps on the facade were demolished. Initially, it belonged to the Bernardis then to the Foscari and to the Negrellis, today to the Rossis. The guest house is older than the villa and it still preserves its decorations. Used by the Foscari as stables it then became a mill, then in an abandon state the Negrellis sold it to the Luigino e Diego Rossi brothers, footwear industrialists. The building was restored retrieving the 17th century architecture on the outside and making two flats inside. Today, the villa hosts receptions and events. It hosts the Footwear Museum, where are exhibited beyond 1,500 luxury women's shoes.

### Fun Food Facts

Very important in Venice were the *fritoleri*, those who sold *fritole*, delicious sweets that are very appreciated still today during the Carnival.

*Frittelle alla veneziana* recipe (Zucchi, 1998, p.141)

Ingredients: 300 gr. of white flour, 250 gr. of sugar, 50 gr. of raisins, 30 gr. of pine nuts, 3 eggs, milk, 1 small glass of rum, 20 gr. of brewer's yeast, lard or oil for frying, salt. Dissolve the brewer's yeast in a cup with some lukewarm milk, a pinch of salt, one of sugar and two spoonsful of flour. Let the mix rise in a warm environment. Let soften the raisins in a small glass of rum. In a bowl, mix three beaten egg yolks with seventy grams of sugar, a pinch of salt, and flour and milk needed to obtain a creamy mix. Let rest the mix for about two hours in a warm place and away from drafts that could interrupt rising. Fry the mix pouring it with a spoon into a frying pan with plenty of hot lard or oil. Dry the *fritole* with a perforated spoon when they are brown, place them on paper towel and serve them either hot or cold after sprinkling sugar onto them.

View of Villa Farsetti from the south garden, courtesy of the Municipality of Santa Maria di Sala.



Leaving behind Villa Pisani, turn left to the strada regionale 11 Padana superiore, then at the intersection with via Barbariga turn left, then carry on straight up north for about 11 km and after crossing Caltana you will reach Santa Maria di Sala. This territory is characterised by the *graticolato romano*, the centuriation of the Padua territory, implemented during the first B.C. century. It is a huge chessboard that involves the current municipalities of Mirano, Pianiga and Santa Maria di Sala in the Metropolitan City of Venice, and Massanzago, Vigonza, Villanova di Camposampiero, Borgoricco, Cadoneghe, Campodarsego, San Giorgio delle Pertiche, Santa Giustina in Colle and Camposampiero, in the Province of Padua. It is possible to plan various routes within the centuriation, based on one's own interests, the one we suggest is the shortest to reach Villa Farsetti.

Travelling from Strà to Santa Maria di Sala by bus is possible by taking the line that goes from Padua to Ponte di Brenta, and once there, changing line with the one that goes to Treviso, getting off at Santa Maria di Sala. The route can vary depending on the traffic and the connection time, it lasts about 1 hour and 10 minutes.

## 6. Villa Farsetti Santa Maria di Sala

Via Roma, 1, 30036 Santa Maria di Sala VE

<https://www.comune-santamariadisala.it/hh/index.php>

Owned by the noble Venetian family of Farsetti from 1710, the Sala land and buildings were initially included in one of the quadrilaterals of the Roman centuriation that still characterises the territory. In 1733, Filippo Vincenzo Farsetti inherited the property and started a remarkable improvement plan. Farsetti preferred becoming abbot to the political career, to have time to dedicate to his great passions: botany and ancient arts, spending almost all of his reserves. In his venetian stay, he had collected many gypsum casts of the most famous Greek and Roman sculptures. In 1745 he opened to the artists and scholars' public his collection, visited also by Canova, and was praised by Winckelmann and Goethe. The work for the Sala villa starts in 1758, thanks to the obtainment of 42 ancient columns coming from Rome and used at the ground



Villa Farsetti north side, courtesy of the Municipality of Santa Maria di Sala.

floor, of various finish and value, but of the same size, acquired thanks to Pope Clemente XIII Rezzonico. The Sienese Paolo Posi, active in Rome, was entrusted with the project. After demolishing the previous buildings, a new building, facing south and parallel to Cavin di Sala (road that follows the centuriation separating the property) was raised. The villa features a high central part and lower and lined up wings, of rococo inspiration. Posi dealt also with the drawings for the botanical garden buildings (not existing today) to the west of the building. From 1769, due to health reasons, Farsetti had to neglect the works, not completing the plan. Today, the villa is in good standing, while the former botanical gardens have been replaced by a wide park, open to the public. Antonio Farsetti, last heir of the Salas, died run into debt in Petrograd in 1807. Dalmatian Count Demetrio Mircovich bought villa Farsetti making it blooming again after an abandon period. He was the one who offered it as first seat of the new Municipality, offering the guest house along Cavin di Sala. Owned by the Santa Maria di Sala Municipality, the villa today hosts some offices among which the library and various cultural events.

From Santa Maria di Sala, turn right to via Noalese to reach Stigliano after about 3 km. The castle of the same name lies to the right, passing beyond the Stigliano town centre. Even in this case, less busy though slightly longer routes are possible along the Roman centuriation. A bus line connects Santa Maria di Sala to Stigliano in about 15 minutes.



Villa Farsetti Oval room on the ground floor, courtesy of the Municipality of Santa Maria di Sala.

### Fun Food Facts

During 16th century feasts, at the table, before starting to eat, tablemates washed their hands in big golden or silver basins, then it was a succession of *servizi di credenza* (cold dishes) and *servizi di cucina*, (hot dishes). Each service included 8-12 courses, with 2 or 3 services per kind, usually they reached a total of 40-60 courses. Unlike the Middle Age, when meals started with strong meat courses, in the 16th century feasts started with a light cold dish, similar to our starter meals. There was a wide choice of fresh salads and fruit, alternated with cooked wine-soaked meat dishes or similar with spices or sugars, always served cold. Truffles and oysters were much appreciated. Fresh cheese was available, much appreciated, as well as the aspic, known as *geli* of various colours.

## 7. Castello di Stigiliano

Via Noalese, 7, 30036 Stigiliano VE

The Roman castle was erected as lookout post and permanent shelter of the centuriated territory. Protected by the Empire militia, served as shelter for the inhabitants and the Roman villas found in the terri-

tory known as *decumano* (*cardo maximus*). After the Empire fall, the Stigliano castle survived along with apparently *the Castrum Ulverii* and its coeval Castelliviero. With the spread of Christianity, Zeminiana, the centuriated parish church near the castle, developed. With the fall of the Roman Paduan judiciary, such authority was at least partly replaced by the Zeminiana *Archipresbiterio*. The Stigliano territory went under the spiritual and temporal power of the Treviso Bishop, and the change was officially recognised in 810 by the Emperor Charlemagne. In 1158, the *Avogaria noalese* was born, feud of the Tempesta, joined by the Stigliano one. In the first decades of the 13th century, the Bishop had to sell the castle because of debts. It was a period of big conflicts and the castles changed hands by fight or betrayal. After the defeat of Ezzelino da Bassano in 1249, there were fifty years of peace for the territory, until in Padua the Carraras took power, at the beginning of the rivalry with Venice. On 31st March 1296, the Treviso Bishop assigned also the Stigliano castle to Artico Tempesta. The Tempesta defended their property taking up arms. The 14th century was a fight and betrayals period, that brought to the dominion of Venice on the territory. One by one, all the Padua area castles surrendered. The last to surrender was right Padua, that fell into enemy hands on 22nd November 1405. Stigliano joined the Mirano's *vicaria*. After the *capitano* Giacomo da Scaltenigo there were not famous castle lords; it could be that the Cesenas nobles lived there (already lords of Feltre and Valdobbiadene). It is possible that the Cesenas sold cheaply their estate. In any case, the castle was auctioned by Venice with the order that it had to be demolished, as it results from a decree dated 30 June 1520. In that year, the Venetian nobles started to buy territories on the mainland, and Stigliano went to the Priulis da Cannareggio family. The Priulis transformed the castle into a noble dwelling, with various interventions that brought to the demolition of the towers. Only the corner tower of the original structure survived, being transformed into a dwelling house. The Venetian nobles changed the frescoes, too, part of which is attributable to Paolo Pino Veneziano, writer and painter, active in Venice and Padua between 1534 and 1565. On 20th March 1555 from Poland came the kingly procession of Queen Bona Sforza, and the Priulis received her in Stigliano with celebrations. The castle was famous for its luxury locations

and often hosted famous characters. In the 17th century, the Veniers bought it. The new owners changed the building restyling also the frescoes, and they built the *Oratorio gentilizio* dedicated to Saint Mark. The building has an octagonal plan form with a bell tower and stands on the ancient vegetable garden. In Stigliano, the Veniers were followed by the Fracassos. A member of the latter was also Giuseppe Fracasso, scholar, born in 1767, who died in Stigliano on 20th May 1853. The castle changed hands again many times, until becoming a restaurant. Today the complex is closed and on sale.

The villa structure, simple but massive, is characterised by the corner tower shape, that has kept the traces of the barbicans and the piano nobile openings due to the subsequent interventions. The main body of rectangular shape is characterised by many windows and stone walls. Thanks to recent interventions, aimed at stressing and recreating the castle image, the main facade, with little arches and Ghibelline battlements has been concluded. Important works on the inside changed the villa into a restaurant and a hotel. An important portal in Istrian stone gives access to the courtyard, surrounded by the villa's Renaissance porch. We suggest a visit to the castle hoping that the owners will promote the cultural and touristic importance of the real estate.

### Fun Food Facts

A much-appreciated feature of the 13-14th century cuisine were sauces, called *sapori*, of various kind, used to flavour meat. Much used were also the cold aspics, always flavoured in various ways. In the 14th century, lunch would already finish with *frittelle*, fried and well sprinkled with icing sugar, filled with various ingredients. At the end of the meal caramelised seeds similar to sugared almonds were offered. Fruit was used as base for the various sauces.

From Castello di Stigliano carry on along via Noalese until Noale (about 4 km). Or you can turn to one of the various backroads (for instance via Asolo) and heading north you will reach the town centre.

A bus line connects Stigliano to Noale in 20 minutes roughly.

## 8. Rocca dei Tempesta, Noale

Via Ca' Matta, 8, 30033 Noale VE

<https://www.comune.noale.ve.it/c027026/zf/index.php/musei-monumenti/index/dettaglio-museo/museo/2>

The Bishop of Treviso assigned the Noale feud to Tiso *detto* Tempesta, of Lombard origin, for war merits. In 1158, the *Avogaria noalese* was erected on the ancient Roman fort; to that, the Stigliano feud was joined, too. In the 12-14th centuries, the fight between Guelphs and Ghibellines saw the Marca territories fighting against Padua. The Tempesta in Noale were the defenders (*advocati*) of the feudal rights of their lord, the Bishop. They dealt with the administration and had many privileges. It was a period of continuous conflicts on the territory. The fight brought Frederik II, Holy Roman Emperor, to Italy, in 1236 and 1248. Vicenza was destroyed while Padua surrendered. Apparently, the Emperor passed with his army also by Mestre and Noale, where the *podestà* was a certain Nicola. The Obizzi d'Estes mustered a big army and defeated Ezzelino in Cassano d'Adda on August 1249. The *Avogaria* of Noale was assigned again to the Tempesta. Citadels, for-



The Rocca di Noale, courtesy of the Municipality of Noale.



Another view of the Rocca di Noale, courtesy of the Municipality of Noale.

tresses and castles were built along the whole course of the Muson river. Meanwhile, Artico Tempesta, Lord of Noale, sought support among the enemies of the Venetians and of the Paduans. In 1287, he hosted in Noale Agnese da Camino and Clemenza, the wife of Charles of Anjou. In 1296, on 31st March, the Bishop of Treviso assigned to Artico Tempesta also the Stigliano castle. The Tempestras defended their property through armed conflict. After a century of war, all the castles in the Padua territory surrendered. The last to surrender was right Padua, that fell in the hands of the enemy on 22nd November 1405. The *decumano* territory was split between Noale, Camposampiero and Padua. On 30th June 1520, a law of the Venice Senate ordered that all the castles, citadels and towers be sold and dismantled. Noale was sold more than once, it was assigned to the Rossis, the Campagnaros and then to the Sorgatos who called Carpaccio to paint one of the altarpieces. The Rocca became seat of the Noale's *podesteria* until 1763, when it was definitively abandoned by the Venetian rulers, who moved to the Palazzo della Loggia. After the Napoleonic dominion, in 1819 the Rocca was designated as cemetery, remaining as such until 1983. Today, after a significative restoration, it is open to the public for special occasions and for the historical reconstruction of the Palio di Noale. The outer trench has become a nice canal that surrounds the Rocca remains, allowing a pleasant walk on its sides.

### Fun Food Facts

In the 18th century, customs created elsewhere spread also in the Veneto region, it was unthinkable holding a sumptuous banquet without a French cook and a foreign wine.

Middle-class lunch featured two courses of 4-8 dishes. New rules came: the hot-cold division, the order in the service (first, the soup dishes and lastly, dessert, coffee and *rosolio* at the end of the meal). The kitchen furnishings became smaller and more personal. People no longer washed their hands at the table, but used instead a moist tissue.

The most widespread dishes were rice above all in soup, *antremé* (a light break), *fracassé* (a poultry or fish stew), *fricandò* (a stew, often a veal one). Poultry was still used, but peacock dishes replaced the turkey ones. Herbs became a common way to decorate and flavour dishes. Much appreciated were oysters, meatballs and offal. Today, it is still possible to savour in the local taverns delicious *cicchetti*, especially great meatballs, nerves and whipped codfish.

Going through the charming historical centre of Noale, you will pass by Piazza XX settembre, turn right to via Felice Polenzani towards Salzano. Follow the strada provinciale 35, just after passing by Noale, after the canal. If you are by bike you can avoid crossing the dangerous roundabout by turning to the right and using the subway that takes straight to via Villaterga. Carry on along via Villaterga until the Salzano's industrial estate, where it changes name to via Roma. After reaching the centre of Salzano, following via Roma the Filanda Romanin Jacur, seat of the Salzano Municipality, is on the right side just. The route is about 5 km long. Even in this case less busy alternative routes are possible, we suggest to choose the route based on one's own interests.

## 9. Villa Donà Romanin Jacur, Salzano

Via Roma, 166, 30030 Salzano VE

<http://www.filandadisalzano.it/>

Agricultural property registered in the 17th-18th century cadastres of the Most Serene Republic of Venice, then villa, then area of intense production with the spinning mill at the end of the 19th century, and lastly historical garden that becomes public garden, this is the story of the Villa Donà in Salzano. In the first months of 1633, Chiara Badoer married Gerolamo Donà, at the end of that summer the woman committed suicide; this was the first sad episode of the presence in Salzano of the Donàs di Santa Fosca, one of the branches of the Donàs delle Rose. Girolamo Donà *fu* Andrea, husband of Chiara, was a distant cousin of Doge Leonardo who in 1606 led the Venetian Interdict. The villa was left in the hands of the heirs Donà di Santa Fosca until 1770, when, though married but without children, Nicolò in his will let it all to his wife Marina Nani. Most probably, the wife Marina sold it to Marco *fu* Antonio Donà, maybe the latter was a relative. In the Nani's will dated 1786, there is no mention of Salzano. In 1805, the estate of Marco Donà was assigned to Polo di Pietro Donà of the San Stin branch. Apparently, the property size was apparently the same. In 1806, the Municipality of Salzano was born, and the Venetian nobles losing power lost also the great majority of the land ownerships. Those who benefited from the sales were the wealthy families from the mainland. In 1837, when Polo Donà *fu* Pietro died, the San Stin branch died out, and the ownership was assigned to the nephew, Count Lorenzo Fietta di Paderno d'Asolo. In the 19th century, in Salzano beekeeping and mulberry cultivation spread. In 1847, came to Salzano Moisè Vita Jacur, tycoon from Padua of Jewish origin, owner of a bank, and one of the founders of the *istituto* Assicurazioni Generali. Jacur bought the villa and an extensive number of fields. In 1854, he created an English landscape garden around the building. Moisè obtained to give his name to the grandsons born from the marriage of one of his three daughters with Moisè Salomone Romanin. In 1871, Moisè Vita Jacur made available to his grandson Leone Romanin-Jacur the money needed to create a big and modern spinning mill equipped with steam machinery to process silk. Thus, the new building still visible today was

erected behind the villa. With the building of the huge spinning mill, all the annexes were modified. The 1929 crisis, that came to Italy in 1930-35, slightly affected the spinning mill that carried on with the production. Unfortunately, the silk trade started to be in decline, replaced by artificial fibres. Italy was still one of the greatest producers in Europe of silk cocoons, but the scientific and genetics research came to a stop, as well as the technological innovations in the field. In 1936, the Salzano firm joined forces with one based in Mels (hamlet of Collaredo di Monte Albano in the Friuli region) owned by Achille Lorenzon from Treviso. The Romanin-Jacur family is not clearly present anymore, as a direct consequence of the anti-Jewish laws and persecutions of the Fascist regime. The owner Michelangelo Romanin-Jacur and his wife Lea Treves de Bonfigli escaped from Padua, changing their names and fleeing to Treviso, left after the 1944 bombings. The children were sent away to Lausanne in Switzerland; one of them was Leo Romanin-Jacur, future chemical engineer and heir of the spinning mill.

The villa's long northern facade preserves the 18th century look, characterised by arched windows and by a trifora at the piano nobile and at the upper floor, with stone balconies with retained balusters. The eastern wing features a shape lobed by the chimney that protrudes and rises above the eave line. The southern façade, the one immediately visible from the street, features a more sought-after scenic effect, with the introduction of a majestic centre front structure without gable. All the arched windows of the piano nobile are enriched with balconies and retained stone balusters, and the pattern of the centre trifora is repeated at the second floor, too. The villa was surrounded by wide romantic gardens that stretched above all to the east and to the west of the complex. Recently, the western wing has been restored, while the pond, the greenhouse and the icehouse have been lost. Though it is undergoing several restoration interventions, almost the entire complex has been preserved. Today the villa is owned and is seat of the Salzano Municipality, and the wide garden has been converted into a public green area open to visitors with a play area for children. The spinning mill is seat of the Museum dedicated to the sericulture.

Follow via Roma heading east, go through the Salzano centre, at the roundabout turn to the right to viale della Rimembranza, at the intersection with via Circonvallazione/SP35 turn to the left. At the

roundabout take via Parauro and carry on until Mirano. Passing by the hospital (to the left), turn right to via Belvedere to reach the park entry.

A bus line connects Salzano to Mirano centre in about twenty minutes.

### Fun Food Facts

In 1585 was *Bailo* Francesco Morosini working in service in Constantinople who got the Venetians acquainted with coffee. One of the first caf  s that opened in 1720 was owned by Floriano Francesconi and was called *Alla Venezia Trionfante* (Triumphant Venice) then changed into *Florian*. Caf  s spread as luxury places to meet and gossip. From then on, coffee became a custom, where taste counted less than savouring it in beautiful small cups in an elegant room. The other beverage likewise spread and famous was chocolate, Aztecs drank it dark, but in Europe its success was due to the vanilla aroma and to sugar. Only few historical luxury premises are left, but the countless bars found anywhere in the territory are still places to meet and exchange information. A good coffee can be savoured any time of the year basically anywhere, while a good chocolate can be savoured in winter in the pastry shops of the various town centres.

## 10. Villa Bollani, Molin, Memmo, Erizzo known as “Belvedere”

Via Belvedere, 14, 30035 Mirano VE

<https://www.comune.mirano.ve.it/it/page/il-castelletto>

17th century villa that represents an important instance of integration between architecture and gardens. It is currently owned by the Municipality of Mirano that has relocated several public offices to the manor house, and a theatre to the stables. It has a nice English landscape garden full of water effects thanks to the Muson river. There is a wide islet with an elaborate neogothic tower and false grottos. The gardens, joined to the one of the nearby building villa Morosini, have become a public park open all days, while the islet can be visited at fixed hours.



Villa Belvedere facade and park, courtesy of the Municipality of Mirano.

The 18th century Villa Morosini, embedded in the park, has a cubic shape with a stairway access. The triangular fronton crowned by statues is held by the wide loggia at the first floor. In the park, shaped by pleasant pedestrian routes, there are several benches and a playground.

### Fun Food Facts

Country cooking was based mainly on *puls*, ancient polenta of Roman origin, made with various poor flours until the introduction of corn from America. The common soup was based on beans, chickpeas and black-eyed beans, before the import of American beans. When potatoes spread, new recipes were created, such as gnocchi.

Polenta is today a much-appreciated side dish, served often with octopus with sauce or with small shrimp as starter. A seared polenta slice is often combined with salted codfish.



Villa Giustinian Morosini and portico, courtesy of the Municipality of Mirano.

At the end of the visit to Mirano, if you are travelling by car and you decide to carry on towards the Friuli castles, we suggest a stop at Alvisopoli in Fossalta di Portogruaro. Take the A4 motorway at the Spinea toll booth, 7 km far from Mirano, drive along the motorway towards Trieste for about 80 km, take the Portogruaro exit, then take the road to Fossalta di Portogruaro, after about 8 km you will reach Alvisopoli.

If you have chosen to take the bus you can go back to Venice with the direct bus that links the two towns.



Villa Belvedere, view of the Castelletto at the centre of the artificial lake, courtesy of the Municipality of Mirano.

If you have to go back to Fusina to take the ferry or the car, you can take the road that passes by Olmo di Mira, Oriago and Malcon-tenta, 16 km long. Going back to Fusina from Mirano by bus requires taking the bus line bound for Venice, and changing line in Mestre, Rizzardi stop, taking the line bound for Fusina. It takes about 1- and one-half hours.

### 11. Alvisopoli, Fossalta di Portogruaro

<https://cortinofratta.it/listing/il-bosco-di-alvisopoli/>

<https://cortinofratta.it/listing/i-luoghi-del-nievo/>

Alvise Mocenigo, Venetian noble of Enlightenment training, rich and unscrupulous, in 1790 obtained the management of all the family properties, about 10,000 Friulian fields between Cordovado and San Michele al Tagliamento, and started to conceive the idea of creating a city in the middle of this huge property, made of swampy and malarial land, after having reclaimed it. A settlement, with a modern factory. He joined agriculture and industry. He started widely beet-root farming (the English ban made difficult to place cane sugar on the market) and beekeeping. The city featured a manor house, centre of the village created between 1803 and 1805, surrounded by a lush park, a church dedicated to San Alvise, two side colonnades, two stables with a porch, a house for administration, a mill, a printing press, and three long buildings where the farmers resided. There were also a school, a boarding school, a pharmacy and a tavern, useful for the hosts of the periodical fairs that Alvise had brought to the city. The project was made in neoclassical style by Giovan Battista Bal-estra, active in Rome and friend of Canova. With highs and lows the dream became reality, surviving for few decades in the 19th century. After Alvise's death in 1815, the complex was given to his son Alvise Francesco who started rice cultivation. The complex has been ceded to the *Istituto autonomo case popolari di Venezia*, (the local institution for social housing) to make new lodgings. The park has been restored and given to the Municipality of Fossalta di Portogruaro and WWF. Alvisopoli, though suffering the ravages of time, remains as precious

historical witness of a fascinating Enlightenment utopia. Nearby, it is possible to visit also Villanova Santa Margherita, built in the 20th century by the Marzottos as ideal city. In Fratta, a restore and environmental intervention has been aimed to recover the traces somehow connected to Ippolito Nievo's quotations. Also, in Fratta there was a castle where Carlino Altoviti spent his childhood and youth. During archaeological excavations, few remains have been found in the castle; today the small town seems overlooked by a manor house, recently restored, seat of the Museo Nieviano and that hosts a multi-purpose cultural centre. In the castle site, the restoration works have been concerned with the creation of a park, an open-air theatre and a garden that hosts ancient tree and floral species found in the territory in the Middle Ages.

There is not a real signalled cycling route that connects the various stops proposed in this itinerary, but it is possible, thanks to the many dedicated Websites or to the guidebooks on sale, to create one's own route connecting the many existing cycle lanes of the area, that are, though, not always well signalled, with the dirt roads that often cross the fields or flank the back canals. By bike, if both kinds of roads are lacking, we suggest to use the backroads, surely less busy.

By car you can drive along the main road, all the locations are well connected and on site there are parking facilities.

As said above the various places can be reached also by local bus, in this case we suggest to consult in advance the timetable and arrange for the trip, keeping in mind also the travel times and the museums opening hours. Various hotels are found throughout the area in case you want to split the visit into more days. Check opening hours on the villas' Websites before getting there. The public parks mentioned in the itinerary are open all days. The stretch along the Brenta Riviera, including some of the locations proposed, is accessible also by boat.

If you come from Venice you can reach Fusina by ferry and from there, rent a bike and start the itinerary from Villa Foscari in Malcontenta. Bikes have to be booked in advance, it is easy to find information on the net about this service.

### Fun Food Facts

*Saor* is a typical Venetian way to flavour food, above all fish.

Small fish *in saor* (Zucchi, 1998, p.75)

1 Kg. of sardines or other small fish (soles, surmullets, etc.), oil, flour, 2 big white onions, 1 glass of wine vinegar, salt.

Clean and wash the sardines or other small fish, cover them with flour and fry them in a frying pan with abundant steaming oil; when they are golden, let them dry on paper kitchen towel.

Chop onions, brown them in the olive oil until they turn translucent, then add the vinegar.

Put the fish in a container suitable for brine, either a glass one, with the top, or a terracotta one, alternating it with onion soaked in vinegar; the last layer must be onion. Sprinkle some more vinegar on the surface. Close the jar and let rest at least for one day before serving.

Keeping it in a cool place, it will last about a week.

# CASTLES, CULTURE, NATURE AND TRADITIONS OF THE FRIULI HILLS

Comunità Collinare del Friuli

In the heart of Friuli lives an ancient land, where elegant castles can be seen from the top of rolling hills. Where nature walks arm in arm with history, suspended between the Alps and the sea, ancient fortresses and historic churches watch travellers from above. Rural villages, intriguing natural landscapes and enchanting paths blend with breathtaking views. Nature, culture, history and sport are skillfully combined in this land filled with diversity.

In this context, the Interreg V-A Ita-Slo 2014-2020 project MER-LINCV has been included, which aims to increase the attractiveness and visibility of the cross-border region through sustainable models that encourage the formation of new proposals for the sustainable enhancement of cultural heritage (castles, palaces, villas) and ecotypes of planned landscapes, such as vineyards, gardens, parks, with the use of green technologies.

**Comunità Collinare del Friuli**

**Piazza Castello, 7 - 33010 Colloredo di Monte Albano**

Tel.: +39 0432 889507

[www.friulicollinare.it](http://www.friulicollinare.it) - [www.tourismfriulicollinare.it](http://www.tourismfriulicollinare.it)

**Pro Loco Consortium of the Friuli Collinare area**

**Piazza Castello, 7 - 33010 Colloredo di Monte Albano**

Tel.: +39 0432 889507 , [cons.proloco.collinare@gmail.com](mailto:cons.proloco.collinare@gmail.com)

[www.prolococollinarefvg.it](http://www.prolococollinarefvg.it)

for visits to the castle contact:

**ProLoco Colloredo di Monte Albano**

Via I.Nievo, 21 - 33010 Colloredo di Monte Albano  
[www.prolococolloredo.it](http://www.prolococolloredo.it)

**PromoTurismoFVG**

*Integrated Destination Management Organisation of the Autonomous Region  
FVG for Tourism and Food and Wine*  
[www.turismofvg.it](http://www.turismofvg.it)

**Pro San Daniele Tourism office**

Via Roma n° 3 - San Daniele del Friuli (UD)  
Tel.: +39 0432 940765, [info@infosandaniele.com](mailto:info@infosandaniele.com)  
[www.infosandaniele.com](http://www.infosandaniele.com)

**I.A.T. Majano Tourism office**

Via Ciro di Pers, 1 - (Sala "Ciro di Pers") – 33033 Majano (UD)  
Tel.: +39 0432 948455 int. 2, [iat@comune.majano.ud.it](mailto:iat@comune.majano.ud.it)

**Fagagna Tourist information and reception office**

Piazza Unità d'Italia, 3 - 33034 Fagagna UD  
Tel.: +39 00432 812162, [ufficioturistico@prolocofagagna.it](mailto:ufficioturistico@prolocofagagna.it)

**Forgaria nel Friuli Tourist information and reception office  
Albergo diffuso**

Piazza Tre Martiri, 4 – 33030 Forgaria nel Friuli (UD)  
Tel.: +39 0427 809091 , [info@monteprat.it](mailto:info@monteprat.it)  
[www.monteprat.it](http://www.monteprat.it)

**Osoppo Tourist information and reception office**

Piazza Napoleone I, 5 – 33010 Osoppo  
Tel.: +39 0432 899350/ 389 4983088, [iatosoppo@gmail.com](mailto:iatosoppo@gmail.com)  
Infopoint Treppo Grande  
via Caterina Percoto, 2, 33010 Vendoglio di Treppo Grande  
Tel.: +39 347 3603017, [infopoint@comune.treppogrande.ud.it](mailto:infopoint@comune.treppogrande.ud.it)  
Open from July to October: Saturday 9.30-12.00 a.m. and 2.00-4.00 p.m.  
Sunday 9.30-12.00

### COMUNITA' COLLINARE DEL FRIULI CONSORTIUM

The Consorzio Comunità Collinare del Friuli is a voluntary consortium of 15 municipalities, established in 1967 and based in the municipality of Colloredo di Monte Albano (UD). The associated municipalities are: Buja, Colloredo di Monte Albano, Coseano, Dignano, Fagagna, Flaibano, Forgaria nel Friuli, Majano, Moruzzo, Osoppo, Ragogna, Rive D'Arcano, San Daniele del Friuli, San Vito di Fagagna and Treppo Grande.

The main purpose of the Comunità Collinare is to act as a main reference for the territory with both the management of functions and services included amongst its aims. With particular attention paid to the human, social and economic development of its community as well as the planning of territorial interventions included among the objectives of the Consortium.

### STRADA DEI CASTELLI E DEI SAPORI (THE CASTLE ROUTE AND FLAVOURS)

Since the time of the Roman Empire, this morainic amphitheatre has been a crossroads and key area for the control of the roads leading from Italy, then as now, to the Danube in Europe. From the initial first watch-towers, in the centuries of the Middle Ages, it evolved to increasingly imposing castle complexes. The need to control the transit routes, which were travelled by those who, from East to North, aspired to penetrate the Po Valley, led to a wise dislocation on the territory of the fortified strongholds: a monumental heritage still consistent today, despite the numerous losses suffered in the past due to wars and natural disasters.

The "Strada dei Castelli e dei Sapori" (The Castle Route and Flavours) is a route that winds for about 90 kilometres through gentle hills and small villages in the Friuli Collinare area. It connects the castles, villages and historic villas with the production and tasting places of San Daniele del Friuli prosciutto, Fagagna cheese, San Daniele del Friuli trout and other typical flavours of the territory. Walking along the circuit means getting in touch with the culture, history and lifestyles of these places in a highly suggestive environmental and naturalistic context. What follows is a suggestion, an open itinerary to be covered on foot, by bike, motorbike or car, which offers the possibility of countless variations. Our journey starts from the castle of Colloredo di Monte

Albano, whose massive profile with the clock tower is among the most famous images of the entire region. In its rooms, once frescoed by Giovanni da Udine, a pupil of Raffaello, stayed the writer Ippolito Nievo, who wrote here the "Confessions of an Italian". In the 17th century the poet Ermes di Colloredo, who gave literary dignity to the Friulian language, also lived here. In the municipal territory of Colloredo di Monte Albano, there are also the castles of Caporiacco and the Torate, the latter a legacy of the ancient castle of Mels. It is advisable to climb to the top of the tower to enjoy the view of the morainic amphitheatre. A detour of a few kilometres leads to the nearby town of Cassacco where you will find one of the best-preserved castles in the region.

In the Middle Ages, it did not have strategic importance and therefore it was only touched by the bloody events of battles that affected most of the forts of Friuli. For this reason, its authentic castle-like appearance remains substantially unchanged. Continuing towards Treppo Grande, you reach the locality of Zegliacco. Here you can admire, in a panoramic position, a castle-villa with the annexed historical village. The route is characterised by a succession of wooded hills, wetlands (the Pozzôns) and lush meadows.

Once in Buja, you can climb its highest hill, called "Monte". Inside the historic village of San Lorenzo, there is the ancient parish church of the same name, one of the oldest and most illustrious in Friuli. Inside it, there is a complete collection of frescoes dedicated to the Madonna, the only one of its kind in the region. To the east of the hill are the remains of the medieval castle.

Continuing northwards we reach Osoppo, where at the top of the hill there is the Fortress, a National Monument since 1923. Witness to various battles over the centuries, the fort is currently characterised by the presence of medieval and Renaissance remains, as well as trenches, tunnels and walkways dating back to the First World War. From Osoppo, deviating from the straight road that leads to San Daniele del Friuli, you can enter the vast meadows where the clear Bârs springs spring, an area of environmental interest where you can also practice trekking and gliding. On the horizon tower the four mighty towers of the castle of Susans, whose current features date back to the first half of the 17th century. Its origins are however more ancient. From

Susans, you continue to Cimano and through a winding tourist road, you reach the top of Monte di Ragogna, from where you can enjoy a unique view of the morainic amphitheatre and the Tagliamento river. From here numerous forest paths lead into the woods. At the other end of the mountain, on a rocky peninsula overlooking the Tagliamento, stands the castle of Ragogna, entirely restored, whose current design dates back to the end of the 15th century.

In the nearby town of Villuzza is one of the most popular and well-liked beaches of the Tagliamento River. After a short stop on the shores of Lake Ragogna, you reach San Daniele, where you can admire the church of Sant'Antonio with frescoes by Pellegrino, the Guarneriana Library and the Portonàt by Palladio.

Taking the panoramic road to Fagagna, after not even four kilometres, two obelisks suggest a detour to the right to reach the castle of Arcano Superiore. Magnificently preserved and still inhabited, it has some mystic for the isolated site on which it stands. It was the scene of a mysterious event that occurred in the seventeenth century, which saw Francesco d'Arcano kill his wife, who was later found walled up at the beginning of the twentieth century during restoration work.

Travelling down the panoramic road towards Fagagna in the direction of Caporiacco, overlooking the ancient Via del Sale (Roman road that connected Concordia Sagittaria and Venice to Salzburg), you will find the Casaforte La Brunelde. This historic dwelling was a watchtower during the Lombard era and throughout the Middle Ages and was later transformed into a fortress (16th century) and a hunting lodge (19th century).

Once you reach the centre of the village of Fagagna, you can climb to the top of the hill passing in front of the sixteenth-century Community House and the medieval "iron" door. The remains of the walls and a tower transformed into a bell tower bear witness to the presence of a 10th-century castle. Descending from the hill in the direction of Udine, you can admire an imposing well-preserved manor house, the castle of Villalta, whose first records date back to the 12th century. Going up the hill north, you reach Moruzzo, whose castle, currently a private residence, has undergone many transformations over the centuries. The site offers a breathtaking view of the plain. In the nearby hamlet of Brazzacco remain the ruins of the 14th-century upper castle and the tower, known as Sant'Andrea, of

the lower one. From here you can reach the entrance to the motorway or relive a new emotion backwards among hills, castles and flavours

## PLACES TO VISIT...

### Susans Castle

On top of Susans Hill, in the middle of an enchanted landscape, stands the castle with four mighty towers. The manor took on its present appearance in the first half of the 17th century, but its origin is much older. It was probably the seat of a Roman castrum, and then later used as a medieval fortress. The first official acts date back to 1031. In 1511, like most of the castles in the area, it was the scene of bloody fights between pro-Imperial and pro-Venetian factions, which led to the famous “Shrove Thursday” peasant uprising. The castle of Susans was destroyed and rebuilt several times and was built, more or less in its present form, on a different site from the one previously occupied by the medieval fortress.

In the second half of the 17th century Count Fabrizio di Colloredo transformed it into an elegant residence following the lines of the architectural tradition of the Medici court where Colloredo grew up and worked. From the castle, you can enjoy a spectacular view of the Tagliamento Valley and the mountains of Carnia on one side and the whole Friulian plain on the other.

For information:

Castle of Susans

33030 Susans of Majano (UD)

Tel. +39 0432 948090 email: [info@castellodisusans.com](mailto:info@castellodisusans.com)

[www.castellodisusans.com](http://www.castellodisusans.com)

\*Information and visits

Secretariat of the Consortium for the Safeguarding of the Historic Castles of the FVG

Tel.: +39 0432 288588

[www.consorziocastelli.it](http://www.consorziocastelli.it)

[info@consorziocastelli.it](mailto:info@consorziocastelli.it)

## Castle of Villalta

Among the most evocative castles in the region, the fort of Villalta boasts an ancient history and is immersed in a natural setting of extreme beauty. The castle of Villalta, dating back to the X-XI centuries, was destroyed several times and then rebuilt due to the bitter fights both for its strategically important position and for the turbulence of its feudal lords. Nevertheless, it has not lost its original configuration of fortified work, with the high tower, the walls provided with Ghibelline battlements, drawbridges and loopholes. Lugubrious legends hovered over the castle and for many decades the Counts of the Tower were banished from it. They came back into possession only after the fall of the Serenissima (1797).

For information:

Via Castello 27 - 33034 Villalta di Fagagna (UD)

Tel. +39 0432 800171, email: [info@castellodivillalta.it](mailto:info@castellodivillalta.it)

[www.castellodivillalta.it](http://www.castellodivillalta.it)

## INTEREST

### *The legend of Geneva and Odorico*

Ginevra di Strassoldo was a beautiful girl and, although still very young, had been betrothed to Federico di Cuccagna. When the time came for the wedding, Ginevra declared her love for Count Odorico di Villalta. Ginevra's father, loving her very much, consented to the marriage with the Count, thus breaking the agreement with Cuccagna. It was 1344 when Ginevra and Odorico were married. Having arrived at the gates of the castle of Villalta, Guinevere was imprisoned by Frederick of Cuccagna who, feeling betrayed, had besieged the manor and banished Odorico. However, Frederick was unable to use violence on Ginevra, since, according to legend, the young girl turned into a marble statue. Odorico, however, managed to take back the castle and kill his rival. When Odorico found a stone statue that resembled Guinevere in a room in the tower, he embraced her in tears and the statue took back its human form. The happiness of the couple did not last long, however. Odorico went off to war and never returned. Guinevere never stopped waiting for him, so much so that, it is said, even today on full moon nights you can still hear the moans of the beautiful but unfortunate girl.

### Castle of Colloredo di Monte Albano

Coming from Udine after taking the long straight road, built in the sixteenth century for scenic reasons only, you can gradually see the current profile of the manor, called “the castle of writers and storytellers”. Here, in fact, lived and expressed their creativity the seventeenth-century poet Ermes da Colloredo and the great nineteenth-century writer Ippolito Nievo, who wrote *Confessioni di un italiano*, the author and traveller Stanislaw Nievo. The origins of the Castle of Colloredo di Monte Albano date back to the fourteenth century and, from the earliest times, it was a typical example of a “residential” castle, built for defensive purposes at the centre of the feud as a stable and secure residence. After the feudal struggles that characterized the entire course of the sixteenth century, the owners dedicated themselves to embellishing the old residence with the sumptuous elegance of the Renaissance. The decorations of Giovanni da Udine, a pupil of Raphael, for the famous studio of the castle date back to this period: today you can see interesting fragments with stuccoes and paintings with zoo-anthropomorphic figures. Before the 1976 earthquake, the castle consisted of a central nucleus, three towers and two wings. A triple circle of walls with an elliptical perimeter can still be seen. Today, while waiting for the reconstruction of the whole complex, you can see the tower with the clock and the west wing, where the Comunità Collinare del Friuli is located.

For information:

ProLoco Colloredo di Monte Albano

Via Ippolito Nievo, 21 - 33010 Colloredo di Monte Albano (Ud)  
[proloco.colloredodimontealbano@gmail.com](mailto:proloco.colloredodimontealbano@gmail.com)

### Castle of Rive d'Arcano

The Upper Arcane Castle, magnificently preserved and still inhabited, has some magic for the isolated site where it was built. It originally stood near the little church of San Mauro, on the banks of the Corno. For defensive and strategic reasons it was later rebuilt in the place where it still stands today. The structural extensions probably date back to the 13th century. From the XII century, it certainly belonged to the Tricano family, hereditary marshals and gonfaloniers of the Patriarch of Aquileia.

The castle still has its suggestive medieval appearance, with its Guelph crenellated curtains, the characteristic double tower and the mighty keep with an elegant row of late Romanesque mullioned windows at the top.

For information:

Castle of Arcano Superiore

Località Arcano Superiore, 25/C - Rive d'Arcano (UD)

Tel. : +39 3475988074 - [info@castellodiarcanosuperiore.it](mailto:info@castellodiarcanosuperiore.it)

[www.castellodiarcanosuperiore.com](http://www.castellodiarcanosuperiore.com)

## INTEREST

### *The ghost of Brunelde*

In the surroundings of Fagagna, overlooking the ancient Via del Sale, there is the “Brunelde” fortress. The origins of the “Brunelde Domus Magna” are very ancient; in the Lombard era and then throughout the Middle Ages it was a watchtower, and then it was transformed into a fortress (16th century), then a hunting lodge (19th century). It is said that the ghost of Marco d'Arcano-Moruzzo, killed by the Venetians in 1420, still roams the rooms of the casaforte. At that time the homeland of Friuli was surrendering to the advance of the Venetian troops. Before the castle of Fagagna was conquered, Marco d'Arcano gave his son Pileo a rich treasure with the task of hiding it as best he could. Pileo immediately thought of hiding it in the nearby casaforte, but after completing the mission he was unable to return to the castle. Instead, his father Marco was taken prisoner and later beheaded. Legend has it that in Brunelde there is still a ghost who, holding his head under his arm, watches over his treasure. Today, the casaforte is an elegant historical residence.

Information and visits:

Casaforte d'Arcano, La Brunelde

via Giovanni Mauro d'Arcano 2 - 33034 Fagagna (Ud)

[info@labrunelde.it](mailto:info@labrunelde.it) - [www.labrunelde.it](http://www.labrunelde.it)

### Castle of Ragogna

The castle of Ragogna (VI-XVIII centuries) is located in a magical isolated place, surrounded by greenery, on the rocky promontory overlooking the Tagliamento river in the stretch between Ragogna and Pinzano. The first historical information dates back to the 7th century: Paolo Diacono speaks about it in the *Historia Langobardorum*, mentioning the Longobard fortresses involved in the battle between Avars and Longobards in the year 610. The following documents on the castle of Ragogna date back to the XII century, at the time of its feudal lords, the Eppestein, dukes of Carinthia. Currently, the castle complex has been recovered and is the site of various events: you can admire the walls, which originally surrounded the entire hill, some towers, the residential Domus now rebuilt.

Information and visits:

Castello di Ragogna

Frazione di San Pietro - 33030 Ragogna (UD)

Tel.: +39 0432 940310 - [consultavolontariatoragogna@gmail.com](mailto:consultavolontariatoragogna@gmail.com)

Tel. +39 0432 940310 -

[consultavolontariatoragogna@gmail.com](mailto:consultavolontariatoragogna@gmail.com) Visite

Guided Tours by appointment. Free entrance, open from May to October on Saturdays and Sundays.

### Fort Col Roncone - Rive d'Arcano

The fort in Col Roncone was part of the defensive line of the Middle Tagliamento. After the transfer of ownership from the military property to the municipality of Rive d'Arcano, the site was recovered and transformed into the Tagliamento Fortress Museum. Built between 1911 and 1912, it was the base of several military exercises. In the period between the two wars, the Fortress was used as a storehouse for military material transported from the barracks of Udine until the winter of 1944-1945 when it was occupied by the partisans. The recovery project allowed for a "new" use of the spaces while respecting the historical-architectural characteristics of the building. On the ground floor, there are two conference rooms and an extraordinary permanent exhibition on the fortified architecture of the Great War in Friuli.

For information:

Comune di Rive d'Arcano

Tel. + 39 0432 809711, sindaco@comune.rivedarcano.ud.it

www.comune.rivedarcano.ud.it

### **Fortress of Osoppo**

The complex of the fortress of Osoppo, restored after the earthquake of 1976, is a powerful set of defensive works, galleries, ditches, trenches, madhouses. It was an ancient Celtic settlement, then Roman oppidum (fortress square). After 1420, the fortress became the focal point of the defence of the “state of earth” of the Serenissima. It was strenuously defended against the emperors by Gerolamo Savorgnan in 1514. Occupied, then, by the French in 1797 and 1848 - during the struggles of the Risorgimento - the fort, held by a group of Italian volunteers, resisted for seven months against the Austrians who wanted to regain it.

For information and guided tours

Osoppo Tourist information and reception office

Piazza Napoleone, 5 33010 Osoppo UD

Tel.: +39 0432 899350, Mob.: +39 389 4983088

iatosoppo@gmail.com

Always visible as based outside. Guided tours by appointment.

## HISTORY, ART, CULTURE

### Historical notes

Since prehistoric times, the territory of the morainic amphitheatre, rich in ponds of water and game, has been largely exploited by men. Its elevated position on the rest of the plain, sheltered from enemies and natural disasters, made it a privileged site since Mesolithic times.

Always placed in defence of the extreme eastern border of the Peninsula, Friuli Collinare has seen several times the threat of invasion by the barbarian or nomadic populations (the historical one of 610 by the Avars, against whom the Longobards proudly resisted, perched in their fortifications). These events led Friuli Collinare to develop, starting from the Roman period, a dense network of military bulwarks, castles, villages and villas defended by walls and made independent by a series of wells for water supply. In addition to these, you can visit numerous historical parish churches and fortified churches, many of which are enriched by precious frescoes, such as San Giovanni dei Templari in Majano, San Lorenzo in Monte in Buja, San Martino in Rive d'Arcano.

### SAN DANIELE DEL FRIULI

Lying on top of a hill, San Daniele del Friuli is an important cultural and commercial centre of the area. The town has played a strategic role in the history of the far north-east of the Peninsula. Once third for military importance after Aquileia and Cividale, flourishing “free market” since 1139, it has developed a strong cultural vocation. A true “salon city”, dedicated to art and literature. Refined historical palaces, eighteenth-century villas chosen as homes by the Patriarchs of Aquileia, the white Palladian-inspired cathedral and the Biblioteca Guarneriana, with its precious illuminated manuscripts, are just some of the pearls of this elegant town. San Daniele del Friuli is also known for its gastronomic specialities, first and foremost raw ham.

### Guarneriana Library

The Guarneriana Library is one of the first public libraries in Italy and the first in Friuli. Founded in 1466 by Guarnerio D'Artegna, it includes numerous illuminated works, a rare edition of Dante's *Inferno* of the 14th century and numerous printed editions of the 16th century. Among the oldest manuscripts, the most prestigious is the so-called Byzantine Bible. This codex has a halo of mystery regarding its provenance and its miniatures are an interesting mixture of Western and Levantine elements. The Guarneriana was visited by illustrious figures such as Foscolo, Nievo and Carducci.

For information:

Civic Library Guarneriana

via Roma, 1 e 10 - 33038 San Daniele del Friuli

Tel.: +39 0432 946560, [info@guarneriana.it](mailto:info@guarneriana.it)

[www.guarneriana.it](http://www.guarneriana.it)

### Church of Sant'Antonio Abate

This 14th-century church is made of Istrian stone and decorated on the facade with a splendid rose window with a Madonna and Child in the centre. Inside it preserves the most beautiful cycle of Renaissance frescoes in Friuli, by Martino da Udine, better known as Pellegrino da San Daniele. For the richness of these works, it is attributed to the nickname of Piccola Sistina del Friuli.

For information:

Pro San Daniele Tourist Office

Via Roma n° 3 - San Daniele del Friuli (UD)

Tel.: +39 0432 940765

[info@infosandaniele.com](mailto:info@infosandaniele.com)

[www.infosandaniele.com](http://www.infosandaniele.com)

### Museum del territorio

The Museum del territorio of San Daniele del Friuli is located in the seventeenth-century cloister of the old hospital, formerly a Dominican convent. The museum exhibits precious art exhibits: archaeological finds, goldsmith work, ancient coins, glass, ceramics, terracotta, paintings. It is divided into three main sections: archaeology, sacred art and ethnography. The archaeological section presents finds from discoveries and excavations carried out in the area, which make it possible to follow the evolution of life in the area from the period between the 8th and 11th centuries B.C. to the medieval period.

For information:

Museum del territorio

Via Udine, 4 - San Daniele del Friuli (UD)

Tel. +39 0432 954484 , [museodelterritorio@san-daniele.it](mailto:museodelterritorio@san-daniele.it), [info@infosandaniele.com](mailto:info@infosandaniele.com)

[www.museosandaniele.it](http://www.museosandaniele.it)

### Scriptorium Foroiuliense

The Scriptorium Foroiuliense is a cultural association founded in 2012, dedicated to the teaching of Ancient Calligraphic Art and located in the seventeenth-century former Convent of the Dominican Fathers of Madonna di Strada. The Cloister of the Scriptorium consists of a central square-shaped open area, surrounded by a stone arched portico where is located the *Opificium Librorum*, which can be visited by appointment. Courses of ancient writing are organized: Onciale writing, Gothic writing, Cancelleresque writing (Diplomatica) and Beneventana writing, according to the ancient art of the Amanuensis. The Prefilatelico Friulano Museum, inaugurated in 2018, and the Library of Writing, mainly made up of the Fondo Ascoli, a documentary heritage on handwriting in the modern age which is rare and unique. Visits by appointment only.

For information:

Scriptorium Foroiuliense

Via Udine 2 - San Daniele del Friuli (UD)

Tel. +39 0432 1636721 - [segreteria@scriptoriumforoiuliense.it](mailto:segreteria@scriptoriumforoiuliense.it)

[www.scriptoriumforoiuliense.it](http://www.scriptoriumforoiuliense.it)

## **FAGAGNA**

Ranked among the most beautiful villages in Italy, Fagagna is a place of ancient origin located in a natural setting of particular beauty, on the last circle of morainic hills. The castle complex, which once stood on the hill, included the castle, the patriarch's palace and the vassals' residences. Today only a few traces remain. Among these is a keep transformed into a bell tower next to the small church of S. Michele Arcangelo. Going down from the hill of the castle you come to the Palazzo della Comunità, once the administrative and judicial seat. Through an ancient paved street, via Cecconaia and Vicolo Morc-jùte, you reach the Town Hall on the town square. Noteworthy is the parish church of Santa Maria Assunta, presumably dating back to the 10th century and the small church of S. Leonardo with its 15th-century frescoes. Among the many historical palaces are Casa Asquini, Casa Volpe, Palazzo Vanni degli Onesti and Villa Orgnani Deciani.

## **“Cjase Cocèl” Museum of Peasant Life**

An interesting Museum-Laboratory that presents the living conditions of Friulian farming families in the first half of the last century. The reconstruction of the interior of the house and its productive functions are matched by other exhibition spaces that illustrate the economic and social context in which the peasant company operated. This is perhaps the most lively, true and complete museum of rural civilisation in the region. All the rooms of Friulian memory have been recreated, from the kitchen with the fogolâr, to the bedroom and the barn. The smells are striking: of stables because of the presence of animals, of must because wine is made, of coal in the forge, the smell of bread in the oven and flour in the mill. There are the lace-makers, the

spinner, the miller, the blacksmith and a glass of wine waiting for us at the tavern. This review, conceived in a dynamic and involving way, allows us to take a fascinating “journey” back in time, getting to know also original aspects of the history of the village, such as the important role played by the School of Lace, founded in the late nineteenth century by Countess Cora Slocomb of Brazzà.

For information:

Museo della vita contadina “Cjase Cocèl”

Via Lisignana 22 - 33034 Fagagna (UD)

Tel.: +39 0432/801887 , [cjasecocel@gmail.com](mailto:cjasecocel@gmail.com), [cultura@comune.fagagna.ud.it](mailto:cultura@comune.fagagna.ud.it)

[www.museocjasecocel.it](http://www.museocjasecocel.it)

## INTEREST

### *Cora and the Queen's lacemakers*

Born in New Orleans, USA, in 1860, Cora Slocomb married Count Detalmo di Savorgnan di Brazzà in 1887. Her first years of marriage coincided with the enterprises in Africa of her brother-in-law Pietro di Brazzà, with the foundation of Brazzaville and the exploration of the Congo. Cora, American, full of initiative, used to frequent artists and men of letters from all over the world, here in Friuli learned to know the locals and discover their poverty. She realized that above all women had to endure the discomfort of poverty and submission. He created the first Cooperative School for spindle lace. Soon six other schools were established, employing more than a hundred women workers. The lacemakers of Brazzà and Fagagna soon became famous also as “the queen's lacemakers”, thanks to the regular orders that came from Queen Margherita of Savoy and were appreciated all over the world, especially in the United States. They won the gold medal at the world exhibition in Chicago in 1893, Paris in 1900, London in 1904 and other prestigious awards.

## FORGARIA IN FRIULI

A vast plateau, located between 600 and 900 metres above sea level, made up of Mount Prât, which in turn lies at the foot of the majestic Mount Corno, dominates the entire hilly arch and the entire Friulian plain.

In the past, its strategic position as a “mountain overlooking the hill” was used for defensive purposes and the area is rich in ancient fortifications. Inside the Cultural Park of Castelraimondo, which overlooks the confluence of the Arzino Stream into the Tagliamento River, there are remains of pre-Roman and Roman buildings and the first case of Celtic-type fortification recognized in Italy, the so-called *muris gallicus*, has been identified.

Between the thirteenth and fourteenth century, on the lowest peak of the hill, there was also a castle, later destroyed, built by the Patriarch of Aquileia to oppose the nobles of the rival castle of Flagogna. The perimeter of the walls, the entrance portal and the remains of the church are still visible. The presence of these remains, together with a network of marked and mapped trails, makes this area particularly suitable as a starting point for easy excursions to more inland destinations in the Alps.

## Albergo diffuso di Monte Prât

The Albergo Diffuso is a horizontal hotel, which offers not only a room but a real home, equipped with every comfort. The reception is located in a central position with respect to all accommodation. The idea of using the farm buildings located in the area of Monte Prât as houses for tourists was spontaneously born among the inhabitants of Forgaria nel Friuli. The buildings on the plateau (the oldest is dated 1775) were built of local stone, with the stable on the ground floor and the house on the upper floor, and were used as a summer residence. In the summer and until late autumn, livestock moved with the population to the Monte Prât plateau. After the 1976 earthquake, the “Monte Prât Conservation Park” was created, with clear guidelines on the characteristics of the built and renovated houses. In this context, the Albergo Diffuso Forgaria Monte Prât was born.

For information:

Albergo diffuso of Monte Prât

Piazza Tre Martiri, 4 - 33030 Forgaria nel Friuli (UD)

Tel. : +39 0427 809091

info@monteprat.it

www.monteprat.it

### **Museum Casa della Manualità rurale “Geis e Riscjei” di Cornino**

The Casa della Manualità Rurale “Geis e Riscjei” occupies the restored and enlarged premises of the former Latteria Sociale Turnaria di Cornino. On display are rakes and baskets, tools and panniers, documents, testimonies and objects related to rural manual skills and ancient crafts. Entering these rooms means taking a dip into the past, learning stories of women and men, knowing their labours and their work.

For information:

Via Muris, Cornino - 33030 Forgaria nel Friuli (UD)

Municipality of Forgaria nel Friuli

Tel. : +39 0427 808042

www.comune.forgarianelfriuli.ud.it

Tourist information and reception office Forgaria nel Friuli

Tel. +39 0427 809091, info@monteprat.it

### **Cultural Park of Castelraimondo**

The archaeological site of Castelraimondo, dating back to pre-Roman times, is located in Forgaria nel Friuli, on a stretch of the hill between Forgaria and San Rocco. It is the result of twenty years of research that has brought to light an extraordinary example of an alpine site. The findings, which can be dated between the 4th century B.C. and the 14th century A.D., make it possible to reconstruct and explain its history, from which it emerges that over a long time a fortified village, a Roman fortress and a medieval castle have followed one another. A Permanent Exhibition of the finds found during the excavation of the archaeological site is housed inside the Council Chamber of Forgaria. On display are coins, fibulae, various tools, fragments of ceramics, jewels, weapons. Of particu-

lar note is a unique object called Lynx (Frullo or Cercaspiriti), a musical instrument buzzing in rotation, made of bone, dating back to the fourth century BC and belonging to the magical-rite sphere.

For information:

Piazza Tre Martiri, 4 - Forgaria nel Friuli

Tel.: +39 0427 808042 (Municipality)

[www.comune.forgarianelfriuli.ud.it](http://www.comune.forgarianelfriuli.ud.it)

## MUSEUMS

### Spazio Brazzà di Brazzacco

The Brazzà space includes the two museums “Pietro di Brazzà Savorgnan” and the artistic museum “Štěpán Zavrel”.

### Pietro di Brazzà Savorgnan” Historical Museum

The private museum, recalls the life and work of the explorer Pietro di Brazzà (1852-1905), founder of Brazzaville in Congo, and the deeds of his family and descendants.

### Štěpán Zavrel Art Museum

The museum celebrates the Bohemian Master of Art Štěpán Zavrel (1932-1999), cosmopolitan and “enchanted traveller”, who inspired and animated the renewal of illustration for European children by promoting the culture of the image and the illustrated book. More than two hundred works are on display in the museum, in a historical and educational itinerary, documenting an extraordinary ethical journey of dreams and poetry.

For information and reservations:

Brac Castle

Via del Castello, 15 - Moruzzo

Tel. : +39 345 39 11 907

[info@castellodibrazza.com](mailto:info@castellodibrazza.com)

[www.castellodibrazza.com](http://www.castellodibrazza.com)

Open upon reservation

### Museum of Medal Art in Buja

The building that houses the museum is located in the charming historic village of San Lorenzo in Monte and is near the millenary Pieve. Donations, acquisitions and archaeological recoveries constitute the heritage of the Museum of Medal Art and the City of Buja. It is divided into two sections: the first is dedicated to the history of Buja, which houses archaeological finds from different periods that reconstruct the historical route of Buja, the second is specifically dedicated to the Art of the Medal and intends to represent a tribute to this skill and its specific forms of expression. The Museum houses several sub-sections, including the section “Masters and Engravers of Buja”, interesting and significant works with which the artists of Buja have founded an artistic and cultural heritage that has ensured the identification of Buja as a “City of Art of the Medal”. Another section is the thematic collection “The earthquake in the medal - a homage to Friuli”, unique of its kind, dedicated to the earthquake that devastated Friuli in 1976.

For information:

Piazza San Lorenzo, località Monte di Buja

Tel.: +39 0432 960151, 0432 960963

Comune di Buja - Ufficio Cultura e Sport

Tel.: +39 0432 960151 (7) int.211

[amministrativo@comune.buja.ud.it](mailto:amministrativo@comune.buja.ud.it), [info@comune.buia.ud.it](mailto:info@comune.buia.ud.it)

[www.comune.buia.ud.it](http://www.comune.buia.ud.it)

### Art Gallery of Majano

The Pinacoteca di Majano houses paintings and sculptures from the collections of the Pro Majano, the Municipality and private individuals. The initial room is dedicated to the great masters and collects works by internationally renowned artists who have exhibited in Majano during the prestigious exhibitions organized since the '60s. Among these are Cascella, Sassu, Dalì, Matta, Guttuso and Ziveri. The corridor and the lower floor instead host works that can be traced back to the Majano Prize created by the Pro Loco in the 70s. The visit to the Pinacoteca ends with the section dedicated to Sebastian Matta's Araucana. The Pinacoteca also contains numerous works by artists from the region and the municipality.

For information  
Pinacoteca di Majano  
via Ciro di Pers, 1 (at the Art Space “Ciro di Pers”)  
33030 Majano (UD)  
Tel. +39 0432 948455 - Int. 260  
iat@comune.majano.ud.it

## INTEREST

### *The Araucana of Crazy Sebastian*

Sebastian Matta was one of the most important artists of the 20th century. Born in Chile in 1911 and European by adoption, he has exhibited in major museums around the world. Starting from the second Surrealism, he found a personal way of expression combining the fundamentals of the artistic movement led by Salvador Dali with the use of original painting techniques often close to Pop Art.

L'Araucana consists of a series of lithographs made in 1979 to illustrate the epic poem with which Alonso De Ercilla describes the conquest of the territories of present-day Chile by the Spanish. It is a dramatic narration of the end of the Araucans, a proud and pure people, overwhelmed by economic interests and the thirst for power of the invaders, the Europeans who came from the sea.

## Hospitality of St. John of Jerusalem (St. Thomas of Majano)

The hospitality of San Tomaso di Majano was founded at the end of the 12th century by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem (later the Knights of Malta), during the Crusades, as shown by the original founding parchment of the “Portis” in 1199. It was an important stage of the Via del Tagliamento on the ancient Via di Allemagna, which connected Europe as far as the Baltic countries with the Adriatic ports.

The hospitaes formed an efficient European network, organized on the “Benedictine Rule of Hospitality”, ensuring in full feudalism free hospitality, care and assistance to wayfarers and pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land, Santiago de Compostela or Rome through the Romea and Francigena routes. They constituted the first important experimental institution of the free hospital service. The complex of

San Giovanni, almost completely restored, with the Prior's House and the church of San Giovanni, is an exemplary witness to the essential function of the Via d'Allemagna, the preferential "historical corridor" of communication and cultural exchange between nascent Europe and the Mediterranean as far as Jerusalem.

For information  
Associazione "Amici dell'Hospitale"  
amicidellhospitale@gmail.com  
hospitalesangiovanni.wordpress.com

### **Museum of the Great War of Ragogna**

The Museum dedicated to the events of the Great War in hilly Friuli is housed on the second floor of the Cultural Centre of Ragogna. The didactic path is aimed at describing the war events, which can be traced back to the Great War, that took place in the surrounding territory. The fortification project, the first years of the conflict, the battles of the retreat of Caporetto, the battle of the Tagliamento, the defence of Monte di Ragogna and the breakthrough of Cornino, the year of the occupation, the imperial-regio entrenched camp, the reconstruction, the recovery of memory are just some of the themes displayed in the numerous panels, accompanied by historical and current images that are largely unpublished. The illustrative material is accompanied by a well-arranged collection of period objects, made up of finds mostly found on the former battlefields.

For information:  
Gruppo Storico Friuli Collinare  
Tel.: +39 0432 954078, Mob. +39 348 0134637  
info@grandeguerra-ragogna.it  
www.grandeguerra-ragogna.it  
Free entrance

### **Antonio Cerutti” Civic Museum of Ragogna**

The Civic Museum was founded on the initiative of Antonio Cerutti and his archaeological group, which led to the discovery of a series of archaeological finds that became the first nucleus of the museum's collection. The renovated layout is located on the ground floor of the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Ragogna. The naturalistic section deals with the geomorphological analysis of the morainic amphitheatre of the Tagliamento, of which various aspects are taken into consideration. There is also a description of the ecosystem of the Tagliamento and Lake Ragogna, illustrated through educational panels, habitat reconstructions and dioramas. The archaeological section includes material dating back to the Ancient Neolithic period, from the Roman period (5th-century knight's fibula), some bas-reliefs from the Longobard period (7th-8th century), the anthropomorphic stoup of S. Remigio (11th century), medieval finds from the Castle and a lapidarium.

For information:

Via Roma, 23 - Ragogna

Tel. : +39 0432 943434 / 957255

[protocollo@comuneragogna.it](mailto:protocollo@comuneragogna.it)

[www.comune.ragogna.ud.it](http://www.comune.ragogna.ud.it)

### **Museum of the Treppo Grande Furnaces**

The Museo delle Fornaci in Treppo Grande represents a compendium of the kiln civilization in Friuli Venezia Giulia. This exhibition is a permanent exhibition that collects material and immaterial evidence of the long history of the furnaces in the region. The exhibition itinerary describes the various phases of clay extraction, the methods of moulding and drying brick materials, but above all, it tells about the technological turning point in the historical firing of bricks. Inside the Museo delle Fornaci di Treppo Grande, a didactic section explains the operation of the Hoffmann kiln, which is a very complex machine-building. You can load a kiln for firing and you can put to dry the bricks in “gambetta”, you can stack the bricks or learn how to “build” an outdoor brick kiln.

For information:

Museo delle Fornaci

Via G. B. Gallerio 3, Vendoglio di Treppo Grande

Tel.: +39 0432 960147

Mob. :+39 389 5843143 - 340 4770506

ippovia.cormor@gmail.com

### **Itineraries Between Ancient Villages and Peasant Houses**

- Rural village and old iron beat (Andreuzza) of the XVII century, Casa Elti and rural village (Saletti) with two quadrilateral courtyards – Buja.
- Casa Ponta with “L” shaped plan and loggias (locality Zeglianutto) – Treppo Grande.
- Casa Basso (locality Vendoglio) – Treppo Grande.
- Rural village of Santa Margherita del Gruagno (medieval village with the ancient parish church, perhaps of pre-Roman origin) – Moruzzo.

### *An itinerary in Sacred Art*

- Pieve di San Lorenzo, with pentagonal bell tower and frescoes from the 14th-15th century (Monte di Buja) – Buja.
- Church of San Giovanni dei Templari with frescoes of the 13th and 14th century (San Tomaso) – Majano.
- Church of Sant'Antonio Abate with frescoes by Pellegrino da San Daniele from the XV-XVI century – San Daniele del Friuli.
- Parish church of San Martino with original structures from the early Middle Ages – Rive d'Arcano.
- Parish church of Saints Peter and Paul with 16th-century frescoes – Vodnjan.
- Parish church of San Vito di Fagagna with tombstone slab carved with the figure of a Latin cross in interlacing, dated to the ninth century – San Vito di Fagagna.
- Church of the Madonna di Tavella with low Roman relief of the 1st century AD. (Madrisio) – Fagagna.

## ENVIRONMENT, NATURE, LANDSCAPE

The “aganis” (anguanas), aquatic nymphs typical of Alpine mythology, during the full moon nights, lay on the meadows of the hills large white sheets to attract the wayfarers who, dazzled by the brightness, ended up finding death in the swamps”. So says an ancient folk legend. Today those hills still exist, while the marshes and meadows have been transformed, for the most part, into cultivated fields. What remains is the beauty of the landscape and the richness of nature that surrounds it, with Lake Cornino, Lake Ragogna, peat bogs and some marshes, now protected natural areas, to recall the myth of the aganis.

### The Tagliamento River

The hilly territory is lapped to the west by the Tagliamento, the last natural torrential river in Europe. It is the most important river in the Region: for centuries it has been the main axis of communication between the heart of the Alps and the upper Adriatic, marking the life of the communities that border it. The middle course of the Tagliamento is the most intact stretch from a geomorphological point of view and the most striking from a landscape point of view. Noteworthy is the Plain of Osoppo and the narrow Pinzano, with the nearby territories of Forgaria nel Friuli, Ragogna, San Daniele del Friuli and Dignano. Rich in Biodiversity, numerous protected species nest in its wide loops.

## NATURE RESERVES AND PROTECTED AREAS

### Cornino Lake Regional Nature Reserve (Forgaria nel Friuli)

The regional nature reserve of Lake Cornino covers an area of 487 hectares and contains a variety of environments that accompany the course of the Tagliamento, defined as the “king of the Alpine rivers”. The lake, with its crystal clear and emerald waters, is set in a basin of glacial origin. Its length slightly exceeds 140 metres, while its depth is 8 metres. The underground water circulation is such as to allow a rapid water exchange, giving the lake the particular transparency

and the very low-temperature variations of its waters (9 -11 °C). The visitor centre is the main reference point of the reserve. From here several itineraries depart and data on the various aspects of the territory and the activities taking place are provided. Most of the initiatives are connected to the Griffon Vulture Project (*Gyps fulvus*), started in the 1980s, which led to the creation of a nesting colony. The area is suitable for birdwatching, as it is home to many other birds, including nocturnal and diurnal birds of prey, such as the Kite, the Eagle and the Eagle Owl.

For information:

Visitor Center

Via Sompcornino 81, 33030 Cornino (UD)

Tel. +39 0427 808526, [centrovisite@riservacornino.it](mailto:centrovisite@riservacornino.it)

[www.riservacornino.it](http://www.riservacornino.it)

### **Naturalistic oasis of the “Quadris” (Fagagna)**

Located northwest of the centre of Fagagna, the oasis is classified as a protected natural area and is included in the European Natura 2000 network as a Site of Community Importance (SCI). The area, once marshy, owes its name to the puddles artificially originated from the excavation of clay and covers an area of 100 hectares. Characterized by a complex mosaic of natural environments, you can see submerged plants, floating plants and shreds of hydrophilic woodland with willows, black alder and farnias. An experimental station for the reintroduction of the white stork has been set up here and houses a colony of hermit ibis. Currently, the oasis is home to about eighty white storks and 20/40 young ones are born there every year. The hermit ibis is an animal of the same family as the storks and is at great risk of extinction despite being a protected species for years; in Fagagna the colony now has about 150 individuals. In the Oasis are also present (the only ones in Italy) some specimens of konik horses, direct ancestors of the tarpan, Euro-Asiatic wild horses now extinct.

For information:

Via Caporiacco, 33034 Fagagna (UD)

Tel. +39 338 7175877, [info@oasideiquadris.it](mailto:info@oasideiquadris.it)

[www.oasideiquadris.it](http://www.oasideiquadris.it)

## INTEREST

### *Ibis Hermit*

The Ibis hermit was one of the first animals to become a protected species: it was, in fact, the Archbishop of Salzburg, in 1504, who issued a decree prohibiting anyone, except nobles, from killing these birds. However, this decree was not very effective, as the Ibis hermit soon became extinct in Austria, as well as in the rest of Europe. Currently, the hermit ibis has disappeared from most of its original habitat and in the wild, only a few isolated colonies remain in Morocco and Syria, with a very small number of specimens.

## Lake Ragogna and San Daniele del Friuli

The only intermorenic lake in the Region, which belongs to the territory of two municipalities, has been included in the list of SCIs - Site of Community Importance - thanks to its naturalistic peculiarities (it is the only site in the north-east where the water chestnut lives). It has an extension of 23 hectares and a maximum depth of about 10 metres. The water supply of the lake comes from Monte di Ragogna and, in periods of drought, from the Repudio torrent which, thanks to a hydraulic work, allows to maintain the level of lamination of the water mirror. Located along the route of some species of migratory birds, it proves to be a suitable area for birdwatching. There are also several species of dragonflies and fish living here.

For information:

Via del Lago, 33030 Ragogna (UD)

Comune di Ragogna Via 25 Aprile 2, 33030 Ragogna (UD) tel. +39 0432 957255

Pro San Daniele Tourist office

Via Roma n° 3 - San Daniele del Friuli (UD)

Tel. +39 0432 940765 - [info@infosandaniele.com](mailto:info@infosandaniele.com)

### **Magredi Di Coz (Flaibano)**

The Magredi of Coz extends over an area of about 10 hectares and represent a residual strip of a large area of stable grass, preserved until the late 70s, in the territory of Flaibano. In the area, a biotope of floro-vegetation and fauna interest, various species of birds nest. The site has a pleasant resting place.

### **NATURAL BIOTOPES**

Biotopes are protected areas of limited size established to protect habitats that are still intact and avoid alteration or destruction. Inside them, there are geological elements that favour the presence of the floristic and faunal species that distinguish the habitats themselves. There are numerous

botanical species included in the Red List of plants of Italy, species at risk of extinction, as well as endemic species and relicts of the Ice Age. The fauna is also well represented, there are rare hawks and marsh tortoises, various species of dragonflies and butterflies, the skunk and the badger.

### **Swamp of Fontana Abisso (Buja)**

The site represents one of the last testimonies of the vast peat bogs and marshes once present in the morainic amphitheatre of the Tagliamento. They are areas that have survived agricultural reclamation and cultivation. In the site, there is an abundant presence of hygrophilous species of considerable importance at a national and regional level, also in consideration of the differences in vegetation between the different wetlands that characterize the site.

### **Torbiera di Casasola (Majano)**

In the municipality of Majano is located the peat bog of Casasola, one of the largest in the region. It preserves naturalistically intact micro-environments with species of relief, endemic and Pleistocene glacial relicts. In the central and deep part of the site, the ponds are populated by hydrophytes. Among them is the Bladder Grass, a carnivorous plant that leaves its prey on its leaves without escape.

### **Prati di Col San Floreano (Rive d'Arcano)**

An authentic naturalistic oasis in the Biotope “Prati di Col San Floreano”. It is an area of about 35 hectares, located in the municipality of Rive d'Arcano in the area between the San Floreano hill and the provincial roads that connect Fagagna with San Daniele del Friuli and Majano. This area, especially thanks to the presence of botanical species included in the Red List, contributes to the maintenance of biodiversity within the regional territory.

### **Cascata del Rio dell'Acqua Caduta (San Daniele del Friuli)**

The Rio dell'Acqua Caduta drains the waters of a nearby peat bog. At the confluence with the Rio della Palude, the watercourse makes a jump of about ten metres, forming the only waterfall still active in the area of the Tagliamento morainic amphitheatre.

### **Orchid Country (Osoppo)**

About 30 different species of wild orchids grow and have been surveyed in easily accessible sites. During the flowering period, from April to June, these sites can also be visited with the support of botanical guides. Since 2014, the Municipality of Osoppo has decided to call itself “Orchid Country”. The beautiful wild orchids can be observed along three dedicated nature trails starting from the San Rocco Hill, with signs and explanatory panels.

### **Other areas of interest**

Other areas of interest include the Sorgive dei Bars (Osoppo), an area that constitutes a precious reservoir in the centre of the Region, the Lazzacco peat bog, where you can find the skunk and the marsh tortoise, and the Monte di Ragogna, which with its 512 metres of height is considered the highest hill in Italy.

## CYCLOTURISM

The hilly Friuli, nestled in the heart of a landscape that unravels between gentle slopes, is characterized by small towns connected by a dense network of dirt and asphalt roads. A real paradise for bike lovers.

### **I like bike: the cycle routes of the Friuli Collinare area**

The hilly Friuli, characterized by a landscape that flows lightly among soft hills, lends itself to the development of cycling tourism. A widespread road network makes an area rich in castles and gastronomic excellence easily accessible. The variety of landscapes and the presence of widespread attractive resources favour a strong vocation and particular attention to the welcome of cycling enthusiasts.

Friuli Collinare offers 16 circular routes of average length, about 35 kilometres, which allow you to enjoy its beauty. The overall development of these routes is over five hundred kilometres. Along the routes identified thanks to the “I like bike” project, sites of historical interest are reached: castles, villas, churches and sanctuaries, military fortresses and industrial archaeology buildings, but also areas of naturalistic and environmental interest, such as lakes, ponds, peat bogs, river areas and naturalistic oases.

For information and to download maps:  
[www.tourismfriulicollinare.it](http://www.tourismfriulicollinare.it)

### **In@nature: Cormôr Valley Horseback Trail**

The Horseback Trail is part of the wider Alpe Adria Cycleway that connects Grado to Salzburg. It is a 30 kilometre long, stage itinerary on dirt roads between gentle hills and the Cormôr stream. The ups and downs of this picturesque hilly landscape are within everyone's reach. You can immerse yourself in these fairytale landscapes by bike, mountain bike, on foot or horseback.

This project is connected to an area of Slovenia bordering Italy and situated between Bovec and Tolmin, where another waterway, the Soča river, combines landscapes surrounded by emerald greenery and where ancient culture and food and wine traditions are still in use.

For information:  
[www.vallecormor.com](http://www.vallecormor.com)

## MOUNTAIN-BIKE

*Off-road cycling school on the plateau of Forgaria Monte Prat*

This initiative is part of a wider project of enhancement of the territory, thanks to the meeting with the cyclo-cross world champion Daniele Pontoni. On the plateau, there is one of the most complete and suggestive networks of off-road trails, suitable for all levels of difficulty, already frequented by many fans. The Italian Cycling Federation has officially recognized this structure of learning and training to off-road cycling. Every year courses are offered for children and adults, to offer even non-experts the opportunity to learn while having fun.

For information:  
Mont of Bike cycling school  
[www.montdibike.it](http://www.montdibike.it)

And also for athletes and cyclists:  
We Like Bike - [www.welikebike.it](http://www.welikebike.it)  
Sportland - [www.sportland.fvg.it](http://www.sportland.fvg.it)  
Collinbici - [www.collinbici.com](http://www.collinbici.com)  
Ciclovía Alpe Adria - [www.alpe-adria-radweg.com](http://www.alpe-adria-radweg.com)

## HIKING AND WALKING

### **On the pilgrims' routes - The ancient Via del Tagliamento**

The Via del Tagliamento is part of the ancient Via d'Allemagna that connected the Baltic countries with the Adriatic ports and in particular with Venice, and from there by sea to the Holy Land, or on foot to Rome and Santiago de Compostela. About 35 kilometres, along the course of the Tagliamento river, walking in the footsteps of medieval paths, from Venzone to the ancient hospitale of San Giovanni di Gerusalemme to San Tomaso di Majano. Today, after about four

centuries, pilgrims cross this territory again. The ancient hospitale of San Giovanni di Gerusalemme, one of the oldest surviving complexes of the European medieval hospitaller network, awaits them for a regenerating stop before resuming the journey. The pilgrimage is known to be a metaphor of man's life; it is the rediscovery of the world at the natural speed proper to man, that of walking, the only one that makes it possible to observe nature from within nature and study history from within history, makes solidarity and mutual encouragement natural, makes communication simple and rich cultural exchange.

For information: Associazione "Amici dell'Hospitale"  
Piazza San Giovanni 11 San Tomaso di Majano (UD)  
amicidellhospitale@gmail.com  
www.hospitalesangiovanni.wordpress.com

### **WALKART, the Art of Walking**

The Comunità Collinare del Friuli was the leader of the project "WalkArt, the art of walking" financed within the Interreg V A Italy-Austria 2014-2020 programme for the rediscovery of the ancient pilgrimage routes between Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia. The project was born from the idea of rediscovering and enhancing the ancient pilgrimage routes and their varied natural and cultural heritage, to create a new cross-border, sustainable and alternative tourist offer to mass tourism. Within the project several paths have been enhanced, one of which is the Via del Tagliamento. The project has also made it possible to furnish the ancient Hospitale di San Giovanni with beds and a welcoming kitchen, as well as equipping the conference room.

For information: [www.walk-art.eu](http://www.walk-art.eu)  
Free app on Google Play Store and Apple Store

### **The paths of the Great War**

In autumn 1917 Friuli Collinare was the scene of one of the most important battles of the First World War: the defence of Monte di

Ragogna and the breakthrough of Cornino. The fortifications of Monte di Ragogna, the Austrian bunkers, the Historical Museum, the paths immersed in nature are ideal for an unconventional excursion. The historical itineraries include four routes, of variable length and commitment and adequately marked, which touch the most significant points of the war chessboard.

For information and guided tours: Gruppo Storico Friuli Collinare  
Tel. +39 0432 954078 , [info@grandeguerra-ragogna.it](mailto:info@grandeguerra-ragogna.it)  
[www.grandeguerra-ragogna.it](http://www.grandeguerra-ragogna.it)

### I Tròis

The tròi was a path, a mule track, a communication route of primary importance when the territory was inhabited and exploited from an agricultural point of view. It penetrated the territory in a capillary way, connecting the villages, the stables with the dairies, the houses with the schools and the churches. Now that the paved road has made them no longer indispensable, the troi can be seen as authentic works of poor art. The sanding of the stones and the “dry” joints of the walls, pavements and steps resist time more than concrete.

#### *The throne of Meni (Flagogna - Forgaria nel Friuli)*

Educational and hiking trail, “nature trail” that follows ancient paths used by the locals for agricultural activities. It develops for about 4 kilometres with an altitude difference of 187 metres crossing interesting areas from an environmental and landscape point of view. The path can be covered on foot or by mountain-bike and has equipped rest areas. Explanatory panels provide brief suggestions and indications on the surrounding environment.

For information: Associazione Forno Cooperativo  
e Latteria Turnaria di Flagogna  
Tel. +39 0432 477177 , Mob.: +39 333 6477281

### The tròi dal ors (Monte Prà - Forgaria nel Friuli)

The easily accessible path through a charming beech forest. The tròi makes use of an ancient road, bounded by characteristic dry stone

walls, once created by man to transfer the cattle to the mountain pastures. Along the path, during the hottest hours of the day, you can observe the flight of griffon vultures.

For information: Forgaria nel Friuli Tourist information and reception office - Albergo diffuso

Piazza Tre Martiri, 4 - 33030 Forgaria nel Friuli (UD)

Tel. +39 0427 809091, [info@monteprat.it](mailto:info@monteprat.it)

[www.monteprat.it](http://www.monteprat.it)

## GOLF

### Udine Golf Club

The Udine Golf Club, 18 holes, protected by the shadows of centuries-old oaks, beeches and wild cherry trees, follows the curves of the Fagagna hills. Founded in 1970, it was affiliated with the Federation in 1972. Currently, the race track is a Par 72. Technically challenging, it develops over a length of over 6300 meters, respecting the morphology of the morainic hills where it is located. Also important are the interventions that have led to a complete restyling of the Club House and the construction of a new beautiful driving range.

For information: ASD Golf Club Udine

Via dei Faggi, 1 - 33034 Fagagna - Udine

Tel.: +39 0432 800418, [info@golfudine.com](mailto:info@golfudine.com)

[www.golfudine.it](http://www.golfudine.it)

## ... AND TASTE

### San Daniele Prosciutto DOP

What makes it unique is the air. On these hills, where the mild currents of the Adriatic meet the sparkling ones of the Carnic Pre-Alps, there is a special microclimate that determines the way the meat dries, in particular the gradualness, which, together with the trade and the

care of the people, leads to the goodness of Prosciutto crudo di San Daniele DOP. The typical processing technique of San Daniele del Friuli, inherited from a centuries-old tradition, has been maintained and handed down by ham makers through generations. A strict specification, in addition to regulating the specific production phases, strictly forbids the addition of preservatives and any type of additive. The prosciutto of San Daniele DOP appears in the recipes of refined dishes, but it is also perfect on its own, asking for nothing more than a slice of good bread and a good wine. This is how it is served in the many prosciutti of San Daniele del Friuli and at “Aria di festa”, a historic event that is renewed every last weekend in June.

Consorzio del Prosciutto di San Daniele  
Via Ippolito Nievo 19 - 33038 San Daniele del Friuli (UD)  
Tel.: +39 0432 957515, [info@prosciuttosandaniele.it](mailto:info@prosciuttosandaniele.it)  
[www.prosciuttosandaniele.it](http://www.prosciuttosandaniele.it)

### The smoked trout of San Daniele

Included in the list of traditional regional products, the trout of San Daniele del Friuli is smoked cold or hot, without the addition of additives, using non-resinous hardwoods and aromatic herb berries. The ancient process widespread in Carnia of smoking trout, according to an artisan and family formula, has inspired the transformation and packaging of this fish. The Tagliamento provides the farms in the hills with abundant, fresh, clean and oxygenated water. At the base there is the fundamental principle of sustainable, non-intensive cultivation, which sees a low quantity of fish reared in abundant running water, aimed at maintaining as much as possible the naturalness of the entire production process. The extreme care applied during the phases of artisanal processing then guarantees the quality of the final product.

### The pestàt

It is a sausage typical of the Fagagna area. It is composed of all the scents of the garden, which are ground, mixed with a certain amount of fine lard and sausages. Traditionally, it was made in families when pigs were slaughtered to preserve the aromas of the garden in winter and use

them as a base for various dishes. Included in the regional list of traditional food products, it has become part of the Slow Food Presidia.

### The cheese of Fagagna

Since 2006 its production area has been limited to the municipality of Fagagna, where the first dairy was established in 1885. Only raw (unpasteurised) cow's milk is used for its production. The diet of the cows, which are mainly Pezzate Rosse and Frisone Italiane, is based on the use of fodder produced on the farms in the area, derived from mowing stable meadows, rich in spontaneous flora, which guarantee the hay a unique and ancient scent, which passes from milk to cheese. The minimum maturing period is 60 days for the "fresh" (with a soft and delicate taste); 5-6 months for the "mezzano" (with a full and strong taste) and 10-12 months for the "vecchio", tasty and slightly spicy.

For information:

Arc Agri-Food Fvg - Agri-Food & Bioeconomy Cluster Agency  
Piazza Castello, 7 - 33010 Colloredo di Monte Albano (UD)  
Tel: +39 0432-954495, [info@parcoagroalimentare.it](mailto:info@parcoagroalimentare.it)  
[www.parcoagroalimentare.it](http://www.parcoagroalimentare.it)

### Snails

Among the gentle slopes of the morainic hills are bred the "Cajs di Coloret", the snails of Colloredo, according to the most natural possible system that distinguishes the product brand chiocciola metodo Cherasco. A long history accompanies this shellfish, already consumed in prehistoric times, bred and cooked at the time of the Greeks and Romans (Apicius in his "De Re Conquinaria" describes four recipes with Cocleas), at times despised, at times renowned dish, is now considered a niche product for our region.

The shop is in the municipality of Colloredo di Monte Albano  
via Ermes di Colloredo, 3  
[www.chelumaca.com](http://www.chelumaca.com)

# SUGGESTIONS FOR A VISIT

Francesco Mezzalira

## VISIT TO SLOVENE ISTRIA

### Strunjan Natural park (Krajinski Park Strunjan)

A few kilometres from Izola, the Strunjan peninsula is partly protected as a natural reserve. It includes the Stjuza lagoon, an important bird sanctuary, a well-preserved rocky coastline and salt pans. A path leads up to the top of the cliffs, which at Cape Ronek (Rtii Ronek) have a famous, scenic flysch wall with a characteristic stratification of marl and sandstone. The area is also interesting for its Mediterranean vegetation.

Useful information about the reserve at: <https://parkstrunjan.si/it/il-parco/>

### Dragonja river Natural park (Naravni park reke Dragonje)

The Dragonja river, which partly marks the border with Croatia, is the longest river in Slovene Istria and is an interesting natural environment for hikers and cyclists, who enjoy the coolness of the trees and the scenery created by waterfalls and running water. The river is fed by several springs, and after 29 kilometres it flows into the sea at the Sečovlje salt pans. Part of the Dragonja river is protected as natural park.

A tour of the Dragonja Valley: <https://visitkoper.si/it/esperienze/po-dolini-reke-dragonje-k6/>

More information at the following link: <http://revitas.org/it/itinerari-turistici/bellezze-culturali/%20saline-di-siccirole-valle-del-dragogna,37/valle-del-dragogna,83.html>

### **Skocjan Natural reserve (Naravni rezervat Škocjanski zatok)**

The Skocjan Natural Reserve protects and enhances an area of extraordinary geological, natural and scenic interest, so much so that since 1986 it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This is the area in which the Reka river, after a 55-kilometre surface course over the impermeable flysch formations, where it meets the limestones of the Karst, enters a grandiose system of caves, some of which can be visited thanks to equipped trails. The cavity is introduced by two vast collapse dolines (Mala Dolina and Velika Dolina) connected by a natural rock arch that is what remains of the vault of the initial section of the caves. The calcite concretions, stalactites and stalagmites of the caves are extraordinarily fascinating, but also of great interest, also from a naturalistic point of view, are the underground aquatic environments, which earned the Skocjan Caves their inclusion in the list of protected areas of the Ramsar Convention, as the first underground wetland in the world. There is a notable presence of the rare *Proteus anguinus*, a blind troglobite amphibian. The caves are frequented by various species of *Chiroptera*, including the *Miniopterus* and *Vespertilio capaccinii* (Bonaparte, 1837). Downstream of the Skocjan caves, the waters of the Reka river, after a further 34-kilometre-long, largely unexplored underground passage, re-emerge on Italian territory near Duino, under the name of Timavo.

For information on the Skocjan Caves Park: <https://www.park-skocjanske-jame.si/it/>

### Sečovlje salt pans Natural park (Krajinski park Sečovljiske Soline)

The Sečovlje salt pans can be reached from Portorož (5 km) along the road leading to the Croatian border. The salt pans on the coastal plain have been producing salt since Roman times, with sea water flowing into evaporation ponds. Today, only a small part of the salt pans has remained in operation for educational purposes; the entire southern part has been abandoned since the 1960s. The management of the salt pans on the Slovenian coast and the collection and storage of salt played a very important economic role in the past, employing hundreds of salt workers, whose often dilapidated storage houses remain today as evidence of that time. In addition to their historical and landscape interest, the salt marshes are important for the conservation of biodiversity and interesting for the naturalistic observations they offer. The vegetation is characterised by halophytes (plants adapted to the high salinity of the water) and in particular by glasswort (*Salicornia patula*), while the fauna includes various species of birds related to the marshes, such as the black-winged stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*), which finds its northernmost nesting site on the eastern Adriatic coast in Sečovlje. A visitors' centre and a Salt Museum (*Muzej Solinarstva*) provide an insight into the characteristics and interesting history of this special environment.

Sečovlje salt pans Natural park website: <https://www.kpss.si/it/intro>

## SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITS TO THE VENETIAN AREA

### WWF Oasis of Valle Averte

Part of the Venice Lagoon is the Valle Averte Nature Oasis, managed by the WWF, which organises guided tours. This is an area of about 200 hectares, including marshes, canals, reeds, wet meadows and hygrophilous woods with black alder and great ash, of great naturalistic interest, so much so that in 1989 it was recognised as a wetland of national interest under the Ramsar Convention. The oasis offers a sample of the different littoral environments, characterised by salt,

brackish or fresh water and areas with different depths of the basins. Along the shores of the fishing valleys and salt marshes grows the typical vegetation of saltwater-friendly species such as glasswort and sea-lavender. Many bird species can be observed, for which the Oasis offers nesting, wintering and stopover sites during migration. Nesting bird species include the black-winged stilt, marsh harrier, bittern, common tern and night heron. In spring, several species of waders are observed, such as sandpipers, redshanks, common sandpipers, spotted redshanks and curlews. There is also a population of European marsh turtle and a colony of buffalo introduced in the area in past years and now naturalised.

Valle Averso Oasis website: <https://www.wwf.it/dove-interveniamo/il-nostro-lavoro-in-italia/oasi/valle-averso/>

### WWF Oasis of Alvisopoli

The Alvisopoli Oasis, managed by the WWF, is interesting because it offers, in a small area of 4 hectares in the municipality of Portogruaro, in the Province of Venice, a forest environment that maintains the characteristics of lowland forests, which have now practically disappeared from the entire Po-Venetian plain. The conservation of this strip of nature has been possible because the area was the park of the adjoining Villa Mocenigo until 1940. The area is characterised by an oak-carpine forest with English oak and white hornbeam, together with common elm, manna ash, field maple and southern ash. The shrub component consists of bushes of common hawthorn, common spindle, wayfaring tree and privet. In the undergrowth the common primrose, the wild violet, the irita violet and many other species bloom. The presence of particular species such as the *Prunus padus* and the adder's-tongue is remarkable; there are also glacial relicts such as the *Daphne mezereum* and the great Solomon's seal. The presence of streams and wetlands allows the reproduction of the European water turtle, the yellow-bellied toad, and the Lataste's frog. At the water's edge one can observe the grey heron, the little egret and the kingfisher. The woodland environment is frequented by the great spotted wood-

pecker, the green woodpecker, the long-tailed tit, the sparrowhawk and many other bird species.

For the visit to the Alvisopoli Oasis: [https://www.arpa.veneto.it/rete-ea/retedamb\\_area.php?id=42](https://www.arpa.veneto.it/rete-ea/retedamb_area.php?id=42)

### **On the river Brenta by boat (the Burchiello)**

Starting from Padua you can reach Venice (or from Venice to Padua) by river, with a cruise on the Burchiello, along the river Brenta. This is an extremely pleasant one-day cruise (but you can also choose shorter, half-day trips) that allows you to enjoy the natural world of the river from the water and to visit, during the scheduled stops, some of the most interesting villas on the Brenta Riviera: Villa Pisani in Stra, Villa Widmann or Villa Barchessa Valamarana in Mira and Villa Foscari “La Malcontenta”. *Burchielli* were the comfortable boats with which Venetian nobles reached their homes inland. The ten-metre difference in height between Padua and Venice is overcome thanks to a system of locks that allow a boat to descend or ascend, respectively, like a “water lift”.

For information on cruises: <https://www.ilburchiello.it/>

On the villas of the Riviera del Brenta: [www.rivieradelbrenta.biz/ville\\_venete](http://www.rivieradelbrenta.biz/ville_venete)



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**Luciano Pezzolo** is professor of early modern history at the Department of Humanities of Ca' Foscari University of Venice. His main fields of interest are economic, financial, and military history from the late Middle Ages to the 17th century. Among his main publications: *L'oro dello Stato. Società, finanza e fisco nella Repubblica di Venezia nel secondo '500*, Venezia 1990); *L'economia d'antico regime*, Roma 2005; *Una finanza d'ancien régime. La repubblica di Venezia fra XV e XVIII secolo*, Napoli 2006.

**Lia De Luca** worked for the Interreg Italia-Slovenia project MerlinCV: Multisensorial experiences linked to the castles and villas of the cross-border region for excellence in tourism. She graduated in history from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice with a thesis on *An Urban Centre in Venetian Istria – Conflicts and jurisdiction in 18th century Albona* (supervisor: Claudio Povo). She earned her PhD in European social history from the Middle Ages to the contemporary period with a thesis on *Venice ad immigrations in Istria during the 16th and the 17th century* (supervisors: Giorgio Politi, University of Venice; Egidio Ivetic, University of Padua). She worked for the project Shared Culture 2007-2013, "Strategic Project for the knowledge and availability of shared cultural heritage," financed in the framework of the Cross Border Cooperation Programme Italy-Slovenia. Her research interests focus on legal anthropology and social history, particularly on the Venetian Stato da mar in the modern age.

**The idea of landscape**, despite the difficulties due to its variety of meanings, is at the same time a physical object and its cultural perception by populations. The contributions collected in this work aim at proposing an approach, if not of course complete, at least multi-sensory. The natural environment, the products of human beings and the aspects of gastronomic culture represent elements that unite to give shape to a real landscape of experience. This was the meaning of the project, funded by the European Territorial Cooperation programme, done in collaboration with scientific institutions and local administrations of Veneto, Friuli Venezia-Giulia and Slovenia, to give a tool in order to better understand, and taste the features of an area, that goes from the Venetian one to Slovenian Istria, passing through the Friulian hills, that offers an extraordinary variety of landscapes and, as a result, of sensations.

This project is supported by the Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia Cooperation Programme funded by the European Regional Development Fund. This project aims to promoting the cross-border tourism region. In order to exploit the untapped potential of the cultural, natural and gastronomic heritage in the Italo-Slovenian cross-border area, the project will develop innovative, integrated and thematic tourism products focussing on sustainable tourism. Budget: 2.583.296,29€ Budget FERS: 2.195.801,84€

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