

Savudrija/Salvore **16**

Villa Cesare

Valfontane **17**

A LITERARY ITINERARY FULVIO TOMIZZA



ITINEARY 5

Savudrija/Salvore - Vilanija/Villania
- Materada/Matterada [22 km]

18
Sv. Petar
San Pietro

19 Sv. Marija na Krasu
Madonna del Carso



Vilanija/Villania

Petrovija/Petrovia

Matterada 5 km

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ITINEARY 5: Savudrija/Salvore - Vilanija/Villania - Materada/Matterada [22 km]

17. ALBERI-VALFONTANE

The Itinerary continues towards Monte Rosso, passing through the hamlets of Alberi and Valfontane. In the latter, a few steps away from some old farmhouses, surrounded by greenery, stands the little old church of San Lorenzo, which dates back to the 1200s. The front is decorated with hanging arches. The outdoor circular abse is covered in thin slates. The small bell gable dates back to the 16th century

Back on the Alberi – Crveni Vrh (Monte Rosso) road, continue towards the tourist complex of Crveni Vrh (Monte Rosso). After the Kempinski hotel, a field track will lead you to the Sv. Petar (San Pietro) site.

LA COSTIERA DI SAVUDRIJA/SALVORE (LA COS'CERA)

The sun was rising when they passed through Salvore. Further on, mother pointed to the coast, towards a rocky barren hill where she was herding sheep as a young girl, when Grandpa Gregorio still owned his own estate. At that time she would catch the train every morning at sunrise to bring the milk to Pirano, carrying the pots on her shoulders. „Not like today on cart and boat“. (La quinta stagione, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Milano 1987, p.p. 40-1)

18. SV. PETAR/S. PIETRO

San Pietro is located on the remains of a pre-historic castelliere, of which there are very few traces due to ground erosion. The first mention of the church dates back to the beginning of 13th century, when it was transferred from the Patriarch of Aquileia, to the Convent of Saint Nicholas in Venice. The church was deconsecrated in the first half of the 19th century.

In Salvore, where the shore softly meets the sea, a family decided to sell an ox. They led animal tethered by the horns, along the bay all the way to the slaughterhouse in Pirano, a journey even more convoluted than the one my mother was taking with her milk pots. Salvore and Pirano face each other, separated by less than three miles of sea. In the cattleyard the ox could still smell the fragrance of his own pastures, while listening to the death groans of his mates, as they came under the blow of the ax. When the animal sensed that it was his turn to die, he gathered all his energy and broke



through the fence. Chased, he went for the sea pointing his nose towards the opposite shore. His horns were breaking the waves like a shark fin, his nostrils spraying water like a whale. (...)On the other shore farmers were gathering to watch the strangest fish that had ever swam in the sea and that was getting closer unperturbed. The brass tipped horns were standing out. The owner was sent for. All together they helped the ox out of the sea and over the rocks. The owner took him home and gave back the money for the sale and let the animal die of old age.

(I rapporti colpevoli, Tascabili Bompiani, Milano 2009, pp. 187-188)

Between Salvore and Madonna del Carso there is a karstic area, unsuitable for agriculture. In the past the locals preferred sheepfarming. Even today it is not unusual to see shepherds with their flocks along the way.

From San Pietro continue on the track until you join the Parenzana trail. Follow it to Valica (Valizza) entrance/exit.

The church in Valizza, dedicated to Saint Jerome, was built in 1746 as part of the estate of the Furegoni family from Pirano. The facade is embellished with the coat of arms of Girolamo Fonda, bishop of Nona and Traù who had the church built. Inside the church, there is a precious wooden sculpture of the penitent St. Jerome, which represents one of the finest examples of wooden sculptures of the first half of the 18th century in Istria.

From Valica (Valizza) continue to the hamlet of Barboi where you will take the woodland trail which will lead you to the Marija na Krasu (Madonna del Carso) graveyard.

The Madonna del Carso area is another place close to Fulvio Tomizza's heart, as among the several hamlets scattered in the Madonna del Carso territory there is Mandulia, where Fulvio Tomizza's maternal grandparents settled.

When my maternal grandparents broke away from the Grabar family line, which had come down from the hills between Trieste and Fiume with their flocks, they pawned the very shirt on their backs to become owners of a small farm in Mandulia

(I Raporti colpevoli, Tascabili Bompiani, Bergamo 2009, p.129)

19. SV. MARIJANA KRASU/MADONNA DEL CARSO

In the middle of Madonna del Carso, right on the main road, you can see church of Beata Vergine delle Grazie built in the 16th century. Worth mentioning is the bell tower with the conic spire and four pinnacles on the edge of the cornice and the belfry, with its outline decorated in white stone. Nearby there is also a Baroque style palazzo, belonging to the Sossa family.

Nonna Cecilia ruled over another parish, the Madonna del Carso one, frozen in time. The village territory spreads over rocky terrain as far as Vardizza and, on the opposite side it reaches the sea of the Cos'cera promontory. She was brought to Madonna del Carso as a young bride at the age of eighteen, and stayed there well into my childhood.

On that high plain there were fewer fields than dry walls, but nevertheless olive trees and vines grew opposite the wood, which was carved by the rails of the Trieste-Parenzo train, covered with white rocks, where the sheep grazed the scanty grass, and the vipers coiled on rocks which retained water in winter. There, every village was the property of a landowner who would spend the summers with his family in the biggest house of the village, the one with most decorations and a well, and sometimes even a private chapel. Their residences would have unusual plants like pine trees, or cypresses, normally only reserved for graveyards. Also there would be stables and canopies designed by architects and hovels that pre-existed the grand estates. This was the second place of my childhood, memory of which is never clear enough and remains more fleeting than the one I have of Materada.

(I Rapporti colpevoli, Tascabili Bompiani, Bergamo 2009, p.125)

FROM SV. MARIJA NA KRASU/MADONNA DEL CARSO TO POTÒCO AND RETURNING TO MATERADA/MATTERADA

The itinerary is coming to its conclusion and in order to go back to Materada, take the woodland trail just after the football pitch in Marija na Krasu (Madonna del Carso) and continue eastwards to the Vilanija (Villania) quarry.

VILANIJA / VILLANIA QUARRY

Throughout Istria there are many quarries renowned for their karst stone. Some of them have been in operation since Roman times. The limestone strata in Villania range from a few centimetres, to several metres deep and the stone colours vary from pale orange, to light and darker ochre, to pink-grey.

Once in Villania, continue along the road towards Petrovia for 400m. On the left an off road track of about 1km will lead you to the Potocco stream. At this point there are two options: either to go back to Materada (where the itinerary started) or to continue to Umago. For Materada, turn left towards Juricani (Giurizzani) and continue to the Church of Materada. Otherwise follow the stream to Petrovia and then turn right to Umag, finishing the Itinerary on the new promenade.

Down the white track, he was like someone hurrying to the last mass to catch at least the good part after the offertory. However, few from the area would come to the church dressed in their best and with their own legs. The few true believers preferred the nearer parish of Madonna del Carso where they felt closely related also in the use of the language that turned from Croatian to a hint of Slovenian.

(...) Across the wooden bridge over the Potòc, on the left stretched the wood with grass snakes and green lizards but no vipers. There were few junipers, but the wood was humid enough to grow mushrooms and cyclamens. At the top of Montenudo, a family of shepherds had a vegetable garden fenced with reeds.

(...) Up there the soil was again black, bleached by the sun between the rows of vines and the furrows in the maize on the sides of the other hill. On the top there was Vrh, with its three stone clad houses and the big oak tree towering over them.

(La miglior vita, Rizzoli Editore, Milano 1977, p.15)

(...) The first winter roses were flowering in the woods. The primroses and violets followed but nobody picked them to fill a glass to place on the window sill. The first wild asparagus were also coming up, but with urgent work in the vinyard, he did not have the time to go. His only option was to go foraging with the evacuee fellow.

They covered the Babizza area, bending down at every bush and bramble. The other man did not know what he was looking for and didn't recognised them up even when the paler green shoots were sticking up straight from the ground, near the mother plant.

They found themselves in a part of the wood covered with high grey boulders, which looked like massive cattle, sprauled out in a never ending sleep. There they found dark thick bruscandoli coiled around other plants like snakes. (La quinta stagione, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Milano 1987, p.158-159).