

# A LITERARY ITINERARY FULVIO TOMIZZA



## ITINERARY 2

Petrovija / Petrovia – camp. Punta Finida  
– Umag / Umago [ 15 km ]

**9**  
Umag / Umago

**4**  
Petrovija / Petrovia

Rožac / Rosazzo

**8** Seget / Seghetto

Đuba / Giubba

**7**  
Sv. Pelegrin / S. Pellegrino

**6**  
Sv. Ivan / S. Giovanni  
Della Corneta

**5**  
Kamp / Campeggio Finida

[ Bay of Buso / Val Buso ]

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Babići / Babici

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Lovrečica / S. Lorenzo

# A LITERARY ITINERARY FULVIO TOMIZZA



## ITINERARY 2: Petrovija/Petrovia-camp. Finida-Umag/Umago (15 km)

### 4. PETROVIJA / PETROVIA

*Petrovia could be called a real village: houses joined together forming lanes. It also had electricity.*

*(La quinta stagione, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Milano 1987, p.33)*

The first mention of Petrovia dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century when it was called Betantia, but the place developed properly only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of Dalmatian people fleeing the Turks. The Venetians, who at the time ruled those territories, helped the Dalmatians to settle in the Istrian villages depleted by the plague.

*Either the insight of the Venetians or the mercy of God helped choose the only site in the world that would feel like the natural substitute of their own abandoned villages, for those people running away from the Turkish violence.*

*(...) The few who survived the bouts of plague, and still could not believe they actually have survived, called the newcomers Novi. Therefore those who had fled without documents or forgot to go to the Registry, were re-christened Novak. Soon after, whole new villages namde Novàki, and then Radini...Martincici, Matelici, Babici appeared.*

*(Il sogno dalmata, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Milano, 2001, pag. 19)*

In 1647, the newcomers commissioned a church consecrated to St. Stephen. The design was simply rectangular with a belltower at the side. The village of Petrovia developed around the square. Among some minor buildings the residence of the Counts Marcovich stands out.

In the second novel of the *Istrian Trilogy*, Tomizza introduces the village of Petrovia, halfway between Giurizzani and Umago.

The *Girl from Petrovia* is the ideal progression of the first novel *Materada*. While the first novel is set at the time of the London Memorandum in 1954 and shows the main character Francesco Koslović torn by the dilemma whether to stay or to leave, in this novel the action takes place after the difficult choice has been made and is set in the refugee camp of Padriciano, on the Krast above Trieste where the Istrians evacuees have found their first accommodation. Through the story of Valdo Stepancich, a farmer from Petrovia, we become aware of the deep sense of uprootedness experienced by the Istrians and of their difficulties in

adapting to life in the huts. We also learn the story of Giustina, the unfortunate girl from Petrovia, who is one of the few people who decided to stay. Although she does not follow her fellow villagers in the exodus, she nevertheless pays them a visit at the refugee camp. Her main motive is to meet up with Vinicio, the young man whose child she is carrying. In the camp, she meets the people she knows and finds hospitality for the night in Vinicio's family hut. She confides only in the priest, her cousin, who consoles her and promises to speak to the young man. Confused and overcome by shame and discomfort, Giustina leaves the camp to return home, driven by the need to find the comfort of the places of her childhood. While she wanders through the fields of the Karst she does not realise that she had crossed the border and dies mowed down by a burst of gunfire from the guards.

*The Poor little girl from Petrovia! She still knows nothing about good and bad. She saw her people leave while she stayed put. Now that she has managed to get over here and see where we've been put up, she wonders why, given that we are the same people, wearing the same clothes as we wore over there, why we couldn't get together in a room of the Dom perhaps with a red star painted on the ceiling. With the same wine on the table and our women clad in black; and Elio playing the usual polkas and the young men dancing in the same way...*

*(La ragazza di Petrovia, I grandi tascabili Bompiani, Milano 2015, p.p.173-174)*

### 5. FROM PETROVIA TO THE SEA AT PUNTA FINIDA AND S. LORENZO

From the square in Petrovia, proceed in the direction of Umag along a road of local family houses, and after about 100 meters turn left towards the hamlet of Makale (Maccalè). Soon after the road becomes a country lane and runs alongside well-tended vineyards and the centuries-old oak wood of Veliboško (Boscognade). The vineyards and olive groves belong to the locals, but some vineyards are part of the renowned Coronica, Cuj and Fiore wineries. You will encounter the hamlet of Stanzia Lacoti and, after about 1 km of tarmac road, the village of Kušiči (Cussici). Another country trail will take you through a wooded area to the village of Dolinci (Dolinsi). After the village the last stretch of the trail reaches the main Umag – Novigrad (Umago – Cittanova) road. Cross the road and after approx. 50 m you will reach the Finida campsite in the bay of Buso (toponym).

*I was running through the woods of Boscogrande along the vineyard where the young branches were tied in a shape of a high arch, that resembled slender yokes. I knew instinctively that such shapes belonged to the San Lorenzo area. As I ran I was sending silent greetings to the Lakoti's vineyard, where the flowers on the hazel trees were fluttering like tassels on a baldachin, to the Sitari cane field, to the barley fields, almost blue against the wheat, the*



*sudden luxuriant untouched clumps of trees belonging to the counts Lazarich, who were sending the wood to Venice and would let the people have the stumps if they were prepared to pull them out themselves.*

*(La quinta stagione, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Milano 1987, p.12)*

*Now the earth beyond the thick hedges that line our roads was coming to life. Spreading the odour of leaves and grass. The farms in our part of the country aren't large: farmers have one field here and another there; they rarely measure more than two acres or, at most, four and are all surrounded by hedges or shrubs. Passing through those plots of vines and wheat and corn and alfalfa, amidst clumps of olive trees, I recalled all the faces of people – some living, some dead – who used to meet there with their scythes and plows and barrels on harvest days, before the war...*

*(Materada, Northwestern University Press, 1999 – translation by Russell Scott Valentino; p 16)*

*As a student, I would go to swim by myself even on weekdays, cycling for five kilometres through Cipiani and Zaccighni to the glistening sea of Finida. If the tyres on the bike were flat and I couldn't find any of my friends and family, who would lend me theirs, I would walk for an hour along those little white lanes, where the hedges and the dry walls were covered in white dust.*

*(Alle spalle di Trieste, Bompiani, Milano 1995, p.161-162)*

\* All these villages belong to the [San Lorenzo](#) territory, which was already inhabited in Roman times. San Lorenzo was named after the church with the same name in the middle of the village. The church was probably built on the remains of ancient walls and it hosts the oldest organ in Istria, built by Gaetano Amigazzi from Verona in 1733. The organ was originally destined to be installed in the church of S. Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, but in 1876 it was transferred to the nearby village of Daila, and from there, in 1910, it was moved to San Lorenzo.

Among the hamlets in the area, there is [Babici](#), which, like several other places, owes its name to the families who were living there. One of the best known members of the Babic family was the young antifascist student Ante, who died in 1944. The Open University in Umago was named after him. The central building in Babici is the Dom – the Culture Centre. Today it is used by both the local brass band *Naša sloga*, founded in 1923, one of the oldest in Istria, and, from 1993, the *local Italian Community*.

## 6. SVETI IVAN / SAN GIOVANNI

The stretch of coastline with the adjacent woods and countryside behind the village of San Giovanni is generally called Finida. The etymological root could be the latin word *finis* meaning limit, border between land properties. On the way to Umago there is the hamlet of San Giovanni della Cornetta, which has been inhabited from the Bronze Age up to the present day. The local church is consecrated to St John and, from certain romanesque-gothic details, could be dated back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is a single aisle church, and above the altar there is a wooden altarpiece of Madonna with Child, with the saints John the Baptist and Paul. The building has been restored few times during 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 7. SV. PELEGRIN / SAN PELLEGRINO (GIUBBA)

Located in an idyllic setting on the very shore of Punta Rosazzo, the little white stone church, consecrated to the Deacon and martyr St. Peregrine, patron saint of Umago, is dipped in history and legend. There are documents mentioning the church dating back to 1106. According to the elders, during the spring tide, on the rocky shoreline under the church, they could see the footprint of the Saint, as a proof his presence and spreading of the Gospel between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century. Probably this was also the place where he suffered martyrdom, killed by the sword of emperor Diocletian's soldiers.

*At that time I was twenty and was back home for my first holiday from university. One Sunday I cycled all the way to San Pellegrino's little church, where they were celebrating Saint Peregrine, the patron saint of Umago, among the few pine trees near the sea. When I arrived, the raffle was already over. The first raffle of our bumpy postwar period, which attracted people from nearby towns...*

*(La casa col mandorlo, Oscar Mondadori Milano, 2000, p.18)*





Continuing along the cycle path along the main road in the direction of Umag, on the left, there are beautiful olive groves property of the former cement factory located on the shore of Punta delle Vacche. (Toponym)

*In Umago new Hotels were sprouting up. And also a huge cement factory emitting a long trail of yellow smoke, which for years indicated the exact direction of the wind. The smoke was unfairly blamed for causing a long spell of fruitlessness in the olive trees. Eventually the flowers remained on the branches and the olives production increased by twenty percent.*  
(La miglior vita, Rizzoli Editore, Milano 1977, p.212)

Take a right turn at the sign for Rožac (Rosazzo), after 1 km you will reach the hamlet of Šeget (Seghetto) dominated by the imposing mansion of the De Franceschi family.

## 8. SEGET / SEGHETTO

The imposing palazzo of the De Franceschi family still dominates the tiny hamlet of Seghetto and conveys the long and distinctive story of the dynasty. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, in this territory, large estates, which would revolutionize and modernise agriculture, were established. This process was largely due to the De Franceschi family, one of the most important in Istria, who introduced cutting-edge knowledge and expertise in agricultural practice. Their estates were always perfectly maintained. In their palazzo, besides large stables, vast wine-cellar, an olive press and the coach-house, there was also an important library, which is today, sadly, fragmented in several archives around Italy and Croatia. Nevertheless, it still is an important source of reference for

describing and understanding this area in precise historical context. The De Franceschi in their palazzo also had a family chapel dedicated to Saint Costanza, where a precious oil painting of St Lucia could be admired. The family had to leave their estates after the upheaval of the post-war years and because their properties were nationalised.

*The tenant farmers of Seghetto carved up the palazzo among themselves and would light the fire with the pages of leather bound tomes clenched between their knees. They forced Signor Marco to take care of the chickens if he wanted to survive.*

(La miglior vita, Rizzoli Editore, Milano 1977, p.188)

To continue towards Umag, return to the main road, and take the cycle path. Pass by a commercial area on the left and further on the graveyard of S. Pietro Damiani on the right. After the graveyard, take the first street on the left which leads to the sea. Turn right and continue towards the historical centre.



GRADSKA KNJIŽNICA UMAG  
BIBLIOTEKA CIVIKA UMAG