

ITALO ZANDONELLA CALLEGHER

# **The Dolomites ‘Alta Via’ N.4**

*or ‘Alta Via di Grohmann’*

**As created by Toni Sanmarchi**

High Mountain Paths  
from ‘San Candido in Pusterìa’  
to ‘Pieve di Cadore’



**Front Cover:**

From the small Sorapiss lake,  
dusk over the Tre Sorelle

**Inside cover 2**

The overhanging bow of the Spigolo Giallo di Lavaredo

**Inside cover 4**

The Torre Siorpaès with the Cimon di Croda Liscia  
(to the right) in the Cadini di Misurina

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TOURISM, RURAL TOURISM AND

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## General notes

"*The Alta Via n. 4*" is dedicated to the great Viennese mountaineer Paul Grohmann, who was the first man to conquer, just after the middle of the last century, the giant Dolomite peaks on this *Alta Via*: The *Tre Scarpèri*, the *Croda dei Barànci*, the *Cima Grande di Lavaredo*, the *Cristallo*, the *Sorapiss* and the *Antelao*".

Toni Sanmarchi wrote the above in the preface of his guide "*Alta Via di Grohmann n° 4*", published by Tamari di Bologna in 1972 and again in 1976, although it has to be said that Paul Grohmann's expeditions in this area of the Dolomites started well before that, in 1942 to be precise (see Dalle Marmarole al Sorapiss in "The Italian Alpine Club's monthly magazine" n°1-2, 1946, from page 3 to page 9), when he studied and found that it was actually possible to cross through the "Banco di Sorapiss", in other words along what is certainly the most challenging stretch of what would become the *Alta Via n° 4*. The name originated from a list of dolomite routes put forward by Mario Brovelli and which also appeared in an article in "*Lo Scarpone*" on 1st September 1966. It was only later that Sanmarchi created a description of this superb route that leads to the historical town of *Pieve di Cadore*, beginning from flat ground at *San Candido in Pusteria*. This *Alta Via*, just like its other famous sister trails, features long treks divided into various daily walks. Refuges and fixed bivouacs (even a tent and a sleeping bag) offer comfort at the stop off points.

The *Alta Via di Grohmann* runs exclusively in the upper dolomites, where the trail follows mule-tracks and paths that are nearly always in good condition, signposted and sometimes equipped. It is a route that demands a good level of hiking experience rather than mountain climbing experience, as it isn't particularly difficult. Only the *Rifugio Vandelli-Bivacco Comici* stretch (*Colli Neri* is equipped with a fixed rope) required some climbing experience.

To suit the tastes of more experienced hikers, some alternative variants to the classic route are suggested. These are hikes of a more technical nature and thus more gratifying.

This *Alta Via* crosses some of the most famous mountain groups in the Alps, making this trail very interesting in terms of beautiful Dolomite structure and historical importance.

Some of the stretches on *Rondói-Barànci*, amongst the *Cadìni di Misurina* or in *Sorapiss*, have retained a certain sense of remoteness and silence; here the hill-walker can find the primitiveness and wilderness of the mountain that those who seek solitude and peace love so much.

Belluno District Administration's Tourism Sector, which we have to thank for this publication, does its best to promote "local mountains" and to supply hikers with information that is as up to date as possible.

We feel obliged to point out that German authors have changed the original route, adapting it to their own personal taste, for general tourism needs and that of their guidebook users. In some cases the original Italian route has been drastically altered, with odd diversions which render the *Alta Via* excessively long: ten days instead of six, with some stretches being reduced to only one hour per day! It's true that this would be more relaxing and enjoyable, and ideal for holidays, but we have preferred to stay faithful to "the old days", even if this means that some stretches may seem a bit severe in length.

In comparison with *Toni Sanmarchi's* guide, published in two editions, at this point 30 years' old and now unobtainable, we have also made some changes and minor updates to the original route. During the last few years, things have changed somewhat, both morphologically and as a result of interventions carried out by the organisations responsible for maintaining and equipping the various stages of the route. Having said this, nothing has been taken away from the originality of the work and the idea; if anything, there has been a willingness to improve on and to further define it, respecting the memory of *Toni Sanmarchi*, alias "*Captain Barancio*".

## ■ Recommended period

The *rifugi* (refuges) normally open towards 20th June, so if you want to book a place in them you should plan your trip on the *Alta Via* after this date. Normally the route is practicable until the end of September. Once this was the ideal month for enjoying stable weather, visibility and clearness, and above all because it used to be less crowded. Nowadays, however, much has changed and autumn is not always sunny and dry. Keep in mind that as a general rule, the huts close on about the 20-25th September. Therefore, after this date, it is indispensable to bring a tent and a sleeping bag or rely on the fixed bivouacs spread out along the route and the spartan, winter season shelter offered by the CAI (Italian Alpine Club) refuges.

In the middle of the summer season it is advisable to book places in the huts well in advance, especially those in the area of *Tre Cime di Lavaredo*. Out of respect for others' needs, you should cancel as early as possible if you are unable to honour your booking, even if you have already paid.





***The Tre Scarperi at  
the beginning of the  
Alta Via 4***



## Useful advice for hikers

### ■ Precautions - Equipment

The network of paths used by the “*Alta Via*” allows hikers to access various zones within the dolomite groups where they can experience extraordinary walks at altitude. As the paths can be very tiring at times and conducted above 2500 metres, experience, good equipment, sure footing, absence of vertigo and good physical condition are indispensable to ensure safety. Often dangers are undervalued in the mountains: a rapid change in weather, an unexpected storm, a premature snowfall, an icy patch of ground, fast-moving rivers....can all turn a pleasant, light-hearted trip into a ordeal, even on well-marked stretches of path. Good self-control can be indispensable. A fundamental condition for trekking along the *Alta Via* paths is good weather! Therefore you would be advised to find out weather conditions first from the available sources (Arraba weather station, TV, Radio etc.). Finally, hikers should be equipped with a good mountain kit (nowadays thousands of products of various styles, colours and technical speciality are available on the market), with several changes, warm, waterproof clothing, good quality climbing boots and socks, as well as all those other little bits and pieces that a good hiker's experience advises.

It is a good idea to carry some medicine and first aid equipment with you, especially painkillers, Vitamin C, supplements, plasters, gauze, bandages....

**Never forget to bring water.** If an accident does happen (a slip, twist, fracture, injury from falling rocks, lightning strike, illness, vertigo etc.), try not to panic and follow the indications in the following chapter where possible.



## Alpine rescue services

(by Fabio Bristot, President of the 2nd Zone, Belluno Delegation)

In this section, the C.N.S.A.S. (National Corporation of Alpine and Speleological Rescue) of the 2nd Belluno Delegation Zone would like to explain to the *Dolomiti Emergency* members what the institutional aims of our organization are – in other words, what the Alpine Rescue is and what it does.

At the same time we have tried to offer some information and useful advice that might seem trivial at a first glance and is normally taken for granted, as well as providing a basis for further research. This is to help people understand how our structure is organised and improve knowledge of Belluno Alpine Rescue's work.

Although not yet perfect, this piece of work is a first step towards promoting a culture of the mountains, built on safety and prevention and also on a few procedures to adopt in case of necessity.



### ■ What is the C.N.S.A.S.?

The National Corporation of Alpine and Speleological Rescue is a special section of the Italian Alpine Club whose members, all Volunteer Technicians, have the specific task of rescuing people who are injured or in danger both in an efficient and quick way. This can include the recovery of bodies when necessary and searching for people who are lost in difficult to get areas, (not always at altitude) and which require the work of personnel specialised in both mountaineering techniques and mountain rescue.

The recently passed Italian Law No. 74/201 officially recognises the work of the C.N.S.A.S. as a function of public activity and public service.

As a result of this official legislative definition, Alpine Rescue has strong links with the Italian National Health Service and in particular with Pieve di Cadore's S.U.E.M. 118 Emergency Service,

with which a strong working synergy has been created in the last fifteen years. Over the years, this relationship has become stronger and stronger up to the point where it has been institutionalized by means of a specific convention and operative protocol within the various intervention sections.

The C.n.s.a.s. Technical Staff guarantee 24 hour, all year round (particularly in the summer months) service and organize on-going training and drills in the mountains with or without helicopter help, on snow, avalanches and ice falls, search and rescue, evacuation from cable cars, first aid techniques and general logistic problems (radio and communication, operation planning etc.)

Both Law 74/01 and in particular Law 298/02 entrust C.n.s.a.s. staff with the task of primary rescue in the mountains, in caves and in hostile or difficult to reach environments. The C.n.s.a.s. is also responsible for rescue coordination when there are other State or Civil Protection organisations involved, except in the case of large emergencies or calamities.

### ■ Where does the C.N.S.A.S. operate?

The C.N.S.A.S. normally operates in so-called hostile environments and in all inaccessible areas of the district. This does not only mean – as is commonly thought - cliff faces or vie ferrate (equipped paths), but also and above all snowfields and glaciers, ice falls, avalanches, cable cars, ski slopes, caves, ravines, gorges and gullies, rivers and all other types of environment not necessarily at high altitude (hills, woods, etc.), which, due to difficulty of access and movement, or in particular weather conditions, require the work of qualified personnel expert in all mountaineering and speleology techniques and rescue.

## Prevention

Aside from the above factors, which require a strong presence in the area in order to guarantee the primary rescue of people, the C.N.S.A.S. also has a precise obligation to guarantee accident prevention.

For this reason, the brief notes below aim to supply some points to consider. Although the advice may seem obvious, experience year after year shows that it is not always heeded.

### ■ Basic rules for improved safety in the mountains and other hostile environments

- Never undervalue the dangers and risks associated with any type of activity connected to the mountains and to hostile environments in general (mountaineering, speleology, skiing, mountain biking, hunting, mushroom picking, delta plane flying and parachuting etc.): the rapid changes in weather, the difficulty of the route, walking time, etc.
- Good mental and physical condition, adequate preparation and training for the task to be undertaken are essential
- Avoid attempting routes that are beyond your technical ability and physical and mental preparation.
- Never walk alone; whenever possible be accompanied and/or advised by qualified organisations (Mountain Guides, C.A.I. and C.N.S.A.S. Stations).
- Obtain adequate information about the route's features and difficulty as well as the area in general. Study all necessary information in advance regarding destination or route, using the appropriate guides and maps.
- Always leave precise information about where you are going and which route you intend to take, using visitors books in refuges and bivouacs when appropriate.
- Find out the weather conditions in advance, especially the local forecast.
- Bring adequate footwear and clothing: avoid wearing training shoes and shoes with smooth soles; bring warm clothing, anorak and a change of underwear.

- Bring a head lamp, energy giving food (light and easily absorbed by the body) and extra fluids (preferably water with maybe added saline integrators).
- Bring a small first aid kit.

## ■ **Basic rules on how to behave in the event of an accident**

- Stay calm and don't act impulsively.
- Evaluate the general situation (environment) and the specific situation (the accident). Try to identify actual and possible dangers.
- Immediately adopt measures to avoid and prevent further risks.
- Call S.U.E.M. 118. immediately for help. If this isn't possible use the following intermittent visual signaling method: - 6 times a minute – once every 10 seconds - pause for 1 minute, then repeat the operation until you are sure you have been seen. Or use any other system to mark your presence.

## ■ **How to alert S.U.E.M. 118/C.N.S.A.S.**

To request an intervention by C.N.S.A.S. Belluno throughout the Belluno province, you must always dial 118 and follow the advice below.

### **General instructions to follow when you call 118**

- Supply precise information about the injured person/s (name, surname, residence) and the telephone number from which you are calling.
- Give details on the location of the accident or visual references that can help identify the spot easily.
- Give a brief summary of the accident, stating the time at which it happened.
- Specify the number of injured and their condition.
- Describe the weather conditions, especially visibility.
- Highlight any obstacles in the area with particular reference to power lines and cables, chair lifts and ski lifts and any other overhanging cables that could get in the way.

- Give any other information that could help the intervention (people present, particular difficulties etc.)

### **Interventions for injured persons or persons in a situation of danger**

- As for previous point 1.
- Supply the exact location of the accident or where the injured can be found (mountain group, slope, path, via ferrata, valley, gully, ledge, crest, gorge, etc).
- Communicate the presence of any other people who were present at the accident and, in particular, whether they are able to collaborate (Mountain Guide, C.N.S.A.S. Personnel, others etc.).

### **Interventions for missing or lost persons**

- As for previous point 1
- Specify date and time of departure.
- Describe the method of transport used (i.e. Car: number plate, model, colour etc.).
- Indicate destination and chosen route and/or probable or possible fixed objectives (hill walking, climbing etc.).
- Give the number of companions and their hill-walking or mountaineering abilities and experience.
- Describe clothing (paying attention to colour and material) and what supplies they have with them.
- Inform of any problems – psychological, physical, family, social etc.
- Communicate information already given to other organisations (including C.N.S.A.S.).
- Supply any other useful information regarding the subject(s), location and general environmental conditions.

### **Interventions in cases of avalanche**

- As for previous points 1 and 2.
- Give the exact or presumed number of people swept away or buried.

- Specify the brand and model of A.R.V.A. apparatus and/or other technology.
- Identify the presence of any witnesses able to give a precise account of what happened:
  - If a visual-auditory- A.R.V.A. search has been carried out;
  - Provide a brief description of the avalanche (size and characteristics) and the exact point where the people were swept away and/or disappeared ( right, left, above, below etc.);
  - subjects already extracted and their position;
  - other information and particulars that can help the intervention. (f.b.)

Keep in mind that the Refuges located along the Alta Via n. 4 are equipped with public telephones; in addition, all refuge managers are able to supply assistance in the correct and quick sending of requests for help to Mountain Rescue.

## ■ International mountain rescue signals

International mountain rescue signals are still the same today as they were in the past, and often the only means possible in the immensity of the mountains is sending an visual or acoustic signal 6 times per minute, at regular intervals, and then every 10 seconds. Pause for a minute and repeat the same signal until you receive a response. This is done three times in a minute at a distance of 20 seconds in a visible or audible way. By audible we mean shouting or whistling or any other perceptible noises; by visual signals we mean waving handkerchiefs, items of clothing or mirror signals; at night you can use a torch or, if possible, a fire (obviously with caution, especially if you are in a wooded area). Throughout the last few years the ever more frequent use of helicopters by Mountain Rescue has made new signalling methods necessary. Colourful sleeping bags or anoraks spread out on the ground or marks in the snow can help you be located from above. The SOS rescue sign can be made with letters that are about 2m long using contrasting stones placed on the ground, or footprints in the snow.

In order to be seen from above, i.e. by a helicopter, you need to make the following signals with your arms or with lights at night:



Lift and spread  
out both arms;  
Green light

**Yes, to the pilot's  
questions;  
Land here;  
Help is needed**



Lift and spread out  
left arm  
Right arm pointing down  
Red light

**No, to the pilot's  
questions;  
Don't land here;  
No help needed**

When giving the helicopter instructions to land, keep the following in mind: with the arms outspread, remain still at the edge of the landing place; where possible the area surrounding the landing place should be clear of obstacles up to a space of 20x20 metres.

**TAKE NOTE!** Don't move away until the rotor blades have stopped: you are an important fixing point for the pilot. Any items of clothing laid on the floor to help the pilot should be held down with stones to protect against the strong airflow given off by the helicopter's blades!

## Route signs

Along all the routes, the hiker can find three types of signs at all the main points:

- a) Red triangle with the Alta Via number inside (in this case 4); this type of sign is a little less common than the following;
- b) Path sign consisting of two horizontal red stripes with a white stripe in the middle on which you can find the path number



in black. Along paths that require more frequent signs, in between those above, you can find simple red or red and white signs.

c) Wooden chart signs on fixed poles (old types in metal).

The coordination of signposts on the busy network of alpine paths in the Veneto Region is constantly under control, sector by sector. Where the triangles, path signs and tables are found to be in poor condition (unfortunately also as a result of vandalism!) and thus difficult or impossible to see, the hiker should pay careful attention to the indications set out in this guide. Nevertheless an attentive walker should not have problems of orientation if they constantly refer to a good map or put into practice information given by refuge managers along the route.

# Technical details

## Itinerary

Recommended Period:	<b>from the end of June until the end of September</b>
Departure Point:	<b><i>San Candido in Pusteria</i></b> <b><i>(or Tre Scarpèri refuge)</i></b>
Arrival point:	<b><i>Pieve di Cadore</i></b>
Walking Days:	<b>6</b>
Length of route:	<b>about 85 Kilometres</b>
Refuges on the main route:	<b>11</b>
Bivouacs on the main route:	<b>1</b>
Refreshments on the way:	<b>2 (<i>Misurina, Passo Tre Croci</i>)</b>
Longest stretch:	<b>the last one, 7.30 hours</b>
Shortest stretch:	<b>the fourth, 4 hours</b>
Total time required (excl.variants):	<b>36 hours</b>
Difficulty:	<b>from E to EEA</b> <b>(some equipped, climbing routes)</b>
Total Gradient in ascent:	<b>about 4500 metres</b>
Total Gradient in descent:	<b>about 4800 metres</b>
Maximum Gradient in ascent:	<b>1230m, from <i>S. Candido</i></b> <b>to the <i>Locatelli Refuge</i></b>
Maximum Gradient in descent:	<b>970m, from <i>M. Trànego</i> to <i>Pieve di C.</i></b>
Maximum height:	<b><i>Forcella della Neve</i>, 2624 metres</b>
Minimum height:	<b><i>Pieve di Cadore</i>, 880 metres</b>
Mountain ranges involved:	<b>8</b>
Refuge opening periods:	<b>from about 20 June - 20 September</b>
Signposts:	<b>good everywhere</b>

**Recommended maps (in order of use):** - Tabacco Map 1:25.000,

- n. **010** ***"Dolomiti di Sesto"***,  
for the stretch from *San Candido* to the *"Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio"*;
- n. **017** ***"Dolomiti di Auronzo e del Comèlico"***,  
for the stretch from the *"Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio"* to the *Passo Tre Croci*;
- n. **03** ***"Cortina d'Ampezzo e Dolomiti Ampezzane"***,  
for the stretch from *Passo Tre Croci* to the *"Rifugio Pietro Galassi"*;
- n. **016** ***"Dolomiti del Centro Cadore"***,  
for the stretch from the *"Rifugio Pietro Galassi"* to *Pieve di Cadore*.

***From the S.  
Candido collegiate  
church towards I  
Baranci***



# Itinerary

The "Alta Via delle Dolomiti n° 4", or Grohmann, which winds from San Candido in Pusteria to Pieve di Cadore, can be divided into five distinct parts, corresponding to the main mountain ranges crossed:

*Tre Scarpèri e Róndoi-Barànci;  
Tre Cime di Lavaredo and Patèrno;  
Cadini di Misurina;  
Sorapiss and Marmaròle;  
Antelao.*

**SAN CANDIDO-INNICHEN** is situated near where the *Rio di Sesto* flows into the *Drava*, the latter originating from springs gently bubbling up to the surface between rocks hidden among the greenery, and starts its long journey towards the Danube and the Black Sea. The village is in a pleasant area, between pastures and imposing forests and dominated by the great dolomite crags of *Rocca dei Barrànci* and the *Punta dei Tre Scarpèri*.

*San Candido* is an important border railway station on the international line that connects Austria to the Alto Adige region and the Brenner Pass. It is also an excellent summer and winter resort. Here you can find alpine guides, mountain rescue and other public services. Numerous hotels, restaurants and bed & breakfast. Hospitals. Chemists. Banks. Tennis courts and swimming pool.

## ■ Historic buildings to see in San Candido

**Saint Candido and Corbinian Romanesque style collegiate church.** Founded in 1769, but previously built in the XIII century on the ruins of a church destroyed by fire. It is one of the very few notable Romanesque monuments in the region. (Tyrol art is mainly Gothic). The bell tower dates back to 1326.

**Parish Church.** This church has a fine Romanesque-Tyrolean bell tower. Dedicated to Saint Michael, it was reconstructed in 1726 on the previous one, destroyed by fire in 1701.

**Twin church at the entrance to the village.** This building is a copy of the Holy Sepulcher church. Georg Paprion, who was a rich property owner from San Candido, built it in 1653 on his return from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Inside you can see wood sculptures from the XVI and XVII centuries.

***In Val Campo di  
Dentro-  
Innerfeldtal***



# Description of the waks

## Day one

### ■ From San Candido-Innichen to the Tre Cime di Lavaredo “Antonio Locatelli” and to the Auronzo Refuge

From *San Candido-Innichen* (1174m), the more determined can walk along the SS n.52 road towards *Sesto-Sexten*; others can get there by car. After about 3.5 kilometres you meet a fork on the right; we are in the area of *Alte Säge* (Old Saw-mill) situated at 1259m; you can find a chart and refreshments are available.

Take the tarmac road to the right marked 105, which goes into the *Val Campo di Dentro-Innerfeldtal* for about 4 kilometres, among pastures and woodland until you meet a barrier at 1509m ; parking compulsory. You follow the path up the hill and after about four sharp bends you enter into a spectacular meadow oasis where you can see the *Rifugio Tre Scapèri-Dreischuster Hütte* (1626m); 20 minutes from the car park; 2 hours on foot from *San Candido*.

The *Val Campo di Dentro-Innerfeldtal* is a protected area.

The refuge is situated at the edge of a large meadow, halfway into the enormous valley. It is owned by the Bolzano Section of the *Sudtiroler Alpenverein* and has about 60 beds. It offers the same services as a small hotel and is also open in the winter. Tel. 0437-7 66 10.

From the refuge you follow the route marked 105 (one part is also marked 10 and 11) via the small track, which cuts through the plateau. After having passed the *Val Pra Brusà-Kohlalpltal*, which is on the right, and ignoring the path which goes up it, you continue steadily south up to where the track ends at a fork at a height of 1693m. Turn to the left (south east; signpost 105), towards the scree at *Mont Mattina-Morgenkopf*, then climbing on steeply through the remote valley of *Rio di San Candido*. After a hard climb up a steep slope you arrive in a hollow filled with small mugo pine trees.



Passing the stream at a height of 2086m and reaching a saddle, you zig zag up another steep slope and arrive at a second fork at a height of 2285 metres. From here, you continue left on the 105 (the right path isn't sign-posted) until you meet the path sign 11 that arrives from the west i.e. *Passo Grande dei Ròndoi*. Here the path forks. It is recommended that you go left towards *Torre di Toblin*, but you can also continue right on the variant (actually this was the original track but is now a bit neglected), climbing easily until you reach the *Passo dell'Alpe Mattina-Gwengalpenjoch*, an immense panoramic balcony on the *Tre Cime di Lavaredo*. From the *Passo dell'Alpe Mattina* you return without problems onto the normal trail.

If you followed the left path, after having passed in the shelter of the graceful *Sasso (rock) di Sesto-Sextenerstein*, you arrive easily at the *Forcella Toblin-Toblinger Riedl*, finally reaching the *Tre Cime di Lavaredo "Antonio Locatelli"-Dreizinnenhütte* refuge at 2405 metres where you can enjoy a wonderful view of the north walls of the *Tre Cime*.

**3 hours** from the *Rifugio Tre Scarpèri*;

**5 hours** from *San Candido*.

Situated near the *Forcella di Toblin*, in sight of the *Tre Cime di Lavaredo*, the hut is owned by the Padua CAI Section (tel. 049-8 75 08 42) and is named after the gold medallist Antonio Locatelli. It is open from 25th June to 25th September and offers the same services as a hotel (more than a small hotel). It has 150 beds and you would be advised to book on 0474-97 20 02 or on 0474-71 03 47 (the manager)

Winter apartment which sleeps eight





***The Tre Cime di  
Lavaredo,  
north face***



From the *Rifugio Locatelli* there are two ways to reach the southern area of the *Tre Cime di Lavaredo* and the *Rifugio Auronzo*:

- a- by the path at the eastern side of the hollow, below the north walls of the *Tre Cime*, passing along *Patèrno's* slopes towards the *Forcella* (saddle)*Lavaredo*. This route, although very attractive, is always a bit crowded by all types of walker, therefore not recommended;
- b- by crossing over the aforementioned hollow towards the southwest as far as the *Forcella Col di Mezzi* and from here to the *Rifugio Auronzo*. Even today, this trail offers incredibly remote and deserted surroundings, quite magnificent, with a continuous view of the southern walls of the *Tre Cime*.

Here we are only going to describe the lesser-used route b), leaving out a) as the route is already quite logical and well used.

From the *Rifugio Locatelli* follow the 105 path that continues towards the southwest and descends to *Pian da Rin* where the *Rienza* springs that flow from the *Isarco* can be found ; 15 minutes; (there is a chart). Here there is a split with the 102 path, which descends to the right (west) via the *Val Rinbon* as far as *Lago* (lake) *di Landro*.

From the springs you continue left, climbing up the tortuous, jagged edge of the *Grava Longa*. After having crossed a plateau in a south-western direction and passed by some small lakes and a shepherd's cottage, you cut towards the south climbing up to the *Forcella Col di Mezzo* (2315m), from where you reach *Rifugio Auronzo* (2320m) using the fine path that cuts into the steep, south slope of the *Croda* (crag) *del Rifugio*.

**1.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Locatelli*.

**4.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Tre Scarpèri*.

**6.30 hours** from *San Candido*.

The Auronzo or Cadorina CAI Section owns this big building, situated in a dominant position and connected to Misurina via the controversial but very popular tarmac road.

Before being named "Auronzo" the refuge was called *Rifugio Longères* after the nearby saddle. After it was destroyed during the First World War, it was rebuilt in 1925 and took on the name of *Rifugio Principe Umberto* and was blessed by don Piero Zangrando, the "Chaplain of the Tre Cime". In 1946 it became the *Rifugio Bruno Caldart*, after the mountain guide from Auronzo, who was killed on the *Cima Piccola* in 1944. It is open from 1st June to 30th

September and at the weekends in February and March. It offers self-service restaurant facilities and has 82 beds. It is always advisable to book on tel. 0435-3 90 02 or the manager on 0435-6 26 82.

Winter apartment with 2 beds.

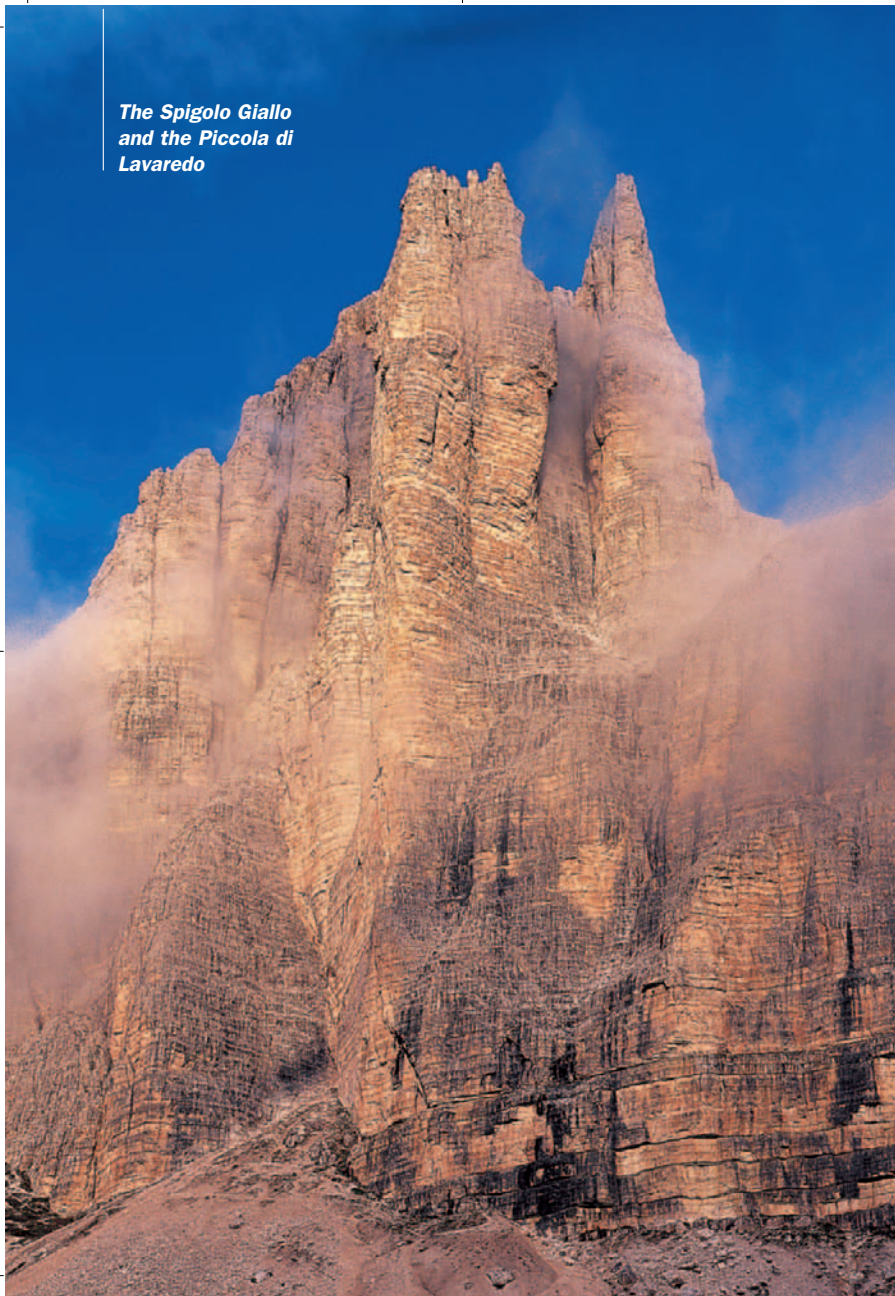
## Variant I

### ■ From Dobbiaco-Toblach to the Tre Cime di Lavaredo Refuge and the Auronzo refuge

This route is long and a bit tiring but is set in fantastic surroundings, ideal for those who really want to experience "something new".

From *Dobbiaco-Toblach* you go along the *SS (Strada Statale) 51* Road by car for about 5 kilometres until just after the sand quarry, near the area of the *Ferrara Vecchia-Schmieden Rume* ruins. The place is not easily identifiable but it is a bit before the *Cimitero di Guerra* (war cemetery). From the road (there is a bilingual chart), parallel with a grassy-marshy plateau, the path marked 9 starts, crossing over the flats and then climbing up the very steep *Fosso Mèsule-Moeslegraben*, twisting clearly to the left. A bit further up from the plateau, two paths on your right branch off, which you ignore. After completing a short, easy rock climb and a crumbly slope (where once there was a fixed rope, now removed as it was no longer usable) you arrive at a pretty double waterfall at a height of 1488 metres. After passing the stream, the path continues along the crumbly hillside and enters in to a detrital gully then serpentine upwards again. A bit further on, having left the old trail which crossed the gully directly, you continue along the new and more secure path to the right (orographical left), which is well marked and wide and zig zags down a slight slope leading you to small saddle at a height of about 1829 metres. Here the path bends decisively to the left (east) and traverses the steep grassy hillside on a ledge overhanging *Fosso Mèsule*, on a wide and secure path. After climbing through woodland you reach an attractive clearing where the *Capanna* (cabin) *dei Pegorari* is situated at about 2060 metres (in 1989 they were just ruins with no means of shelter). Passing through

***The Spigolo Giallo  
and the Piccola di  
Lavaredo***





sparse woodland you reach a second clearing with spectacular views of the eastern walls of *Cima* (peak) *Piatta Alta-Hochebenkopf* and *Cima Bullköpfel*; 200 metres to the left of the clearing there is a small shepherd's shelter.

The path continues to the right, crosses the clearing among beautiful pine trees, goes along some big rock faces via a ledge, climbs steeply for a bit, finally bringing you to a romantic grassy basin where you can see the little *Lago* (lake) *dell'Alpe di Mezzo-Mitter Alpanse* (2222m); 2.30 hours to here from the road. The path (actually just tracks in the grass, with a lot of signs and signposts) cuts across diagonally towards the *Forcella del Lago-Luechelescarte*, which you reach between the *Cima Piatta Alta* and the *Cima Bulla* at a height of 2545 after a few twists; here there is a chart and a book for hikers to sign.

From the saddle you go down over gravel and grass as far as a water-filled basin then on to a second basin; descend further through mugo pines, until the fork at a height of 1895 metres. Leaving path 9, which descends to the Rifugio Tre Scarpèri, you take path 10 southwards, which goes up through the great rocky valley as far as *Passo Grandedei Ròndo-Grosseswildgrabenjoch*, (2289m); from here, first by ascending an easy rocky gully with a fixed rope, then over gravel, you arrive at the *Torre dei Scarpèri-Schwalbenalpenkopf* plateau. Then you traverse the deserted *Alpe Mattina*, reaching the *Alpe Mattina-Gwengalpenjoch* pass (2446m). You finally arrive at the Rifugio Tre Cime di Lavaredo "Antonio Locatelli" situated at 2405 metres.

**8.30 hours** from the Strada Statale 51 up to *Ferrara Vecchia*.

***The small lakes of  
the Piani-  
Bodenseen on  
VARIANT II of the  
Alta Via 4***



## Variant II

### ■ From Sesto-Sexten to the Tre Cime di Lavaredo refuge and the Auronzo refuge

From *Sesto-Sexten in Val Pusteria* (1316m), you drive along the SS 52 *d'Alemagna* by car, towards the *Monte Croce Comèlico* pass, as far as *San Giuseppe di Moso-Moos* (1339m), where the road to *Val Fiscalina-Fischleintal* branches off to the right; follow it as far as the car park near *Dolomitenhof al Piano Fiscalino* (1454m). From here you take the compact dirt road (no cars allowed), which takes you to the *Capanna di Fondovalle –Talschlußhütte* (1548m) in half an hour, then on to the fork at *Val Sassovecchio-Altensteinertal*; here there is a big chart. Continue to the right (the 103 to the left leads to the *Rifugio Zsigmondy-Comici*) on the 102, which goes into the *Val Sassovecchio-Altensteinertal*. Once you have conquered a very steep ramp where you can find water, you carry on at the bottom of the *Alpe dei Piani-Bodenalpe*, which is full of rubble and is overlooked by the dominant east spur of *Patèrno*. After a final short ramp and a long curve towards the southwest, a bit further on from the *Laghetti dei Piani-Bödenseen*, you go upwards again along a grassy hillside with views of the *Tre Cime* peaks, until you reach the *Forcella di Toblin* and the nearby *Rifugio Tre Cime di Lavaredo "Antonio Locatelli"* at 2405 metres.

**About 3 hours** from the *Val Fiscalina* car park.

From the *Rifugio Locatelli* to the *Rifugio Auronzo* see route b) from Walk One

**1.30 hours.**

**4.30 hours** from the *Val Fiscalina* car park to the *Rifugio Auronzo*.

### ■ A short trek to the Lavaredo refuge and Forcella Lavaredo

Following the military road, which from the *Rifugio Auronzo* crosses through scree south of the *Tre Cime* and immediately passes alongside of the *Madonna della Croda Chapel*, a relaxing half hour walk takes you to the isolated, hospitable and privately-owned *Rifugio Lavaredo* (2344m) which is situated on the *Piani* (planes) *di Lavaredo* just a bit below the saddle of the same name. The refuge,



***From the Tre Cime towards the Rifugio Locatelli-Dreizinnenhutte with the Sasso di Sesto on the right and the Torre dei Scarperi on the left***



which is more “alpine” than the others nearby, is open during the summer and offers the same services as a small hotel, all set in a family and informal atmosphere. It has about 40 beds.

From the refuge you reach *Forcella Lavaredo* (2454m) in a very short time, either following the war track or one of the numerous short cuts; from the saddle the view of the majestic *Tre Cime* and the great circle of the *Dolomiti di Sesto* and *Auronzo* hits you right between the eyes.



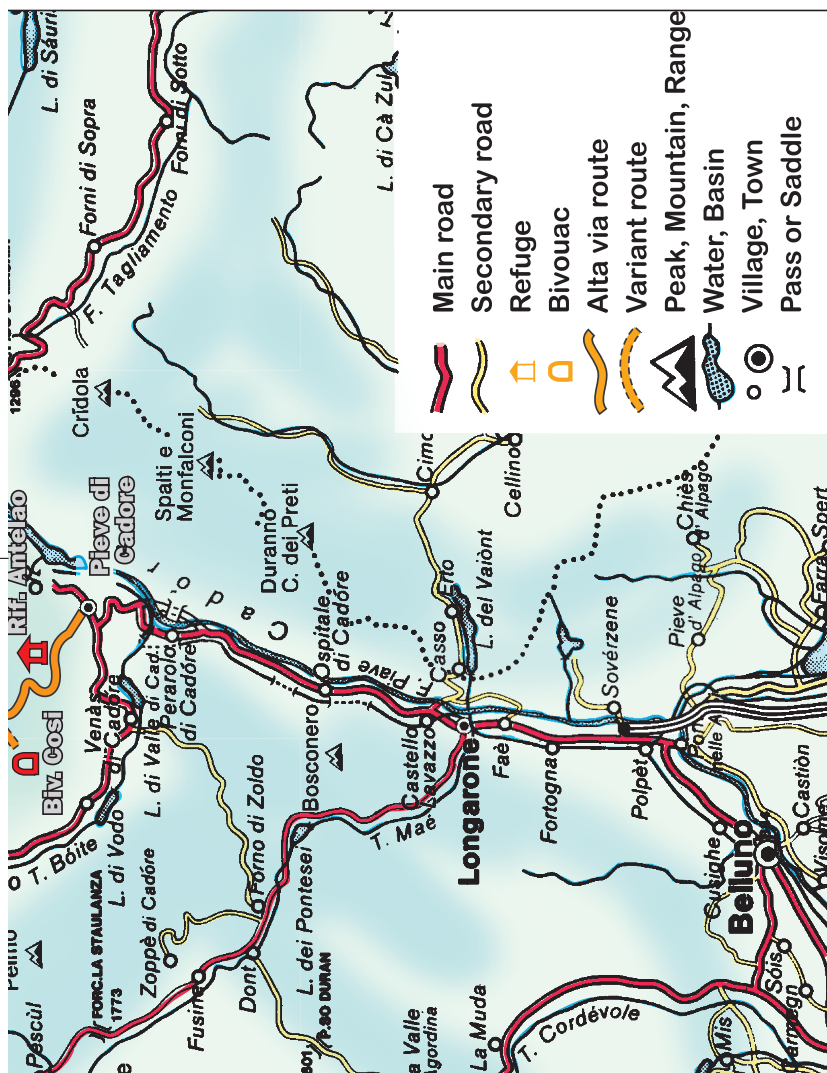
## Day two

### From the Auronzo Refuge to the Fratelli Fonda Savio Refuge and to the Città di Carpi Refuge

From the *Rifugio Auronzo* (2320m), the 117 path goes down towards the southeast and takes you easily on to the crest of *Monte Cianpedéle* and then on to a saddle. Here, an extremely interesting war path starts, made by the Alpine troops in 1915-16 and restored in 1955 by the Trieste “XXX Ottobre” CAI Section, who dedicated it to the mountaineer A. Bonacossa. From the above mentioned saddle the path climbs a bit and passes below the summit of *Monte Ciampedéle*; then continues along the edge of the crest with a few exposed parts, although these are relatively easy.

At the other end of a war tunnel – which you can avoid if you follow the outside path - you arrive at a saddle from which you descend along a ledge, then a dihedron equipped with a fixed rope and lad-





ders, until another ledge that cuts across the walls of the *Cima Ciadin di Rinbianco*. After walking along a steep hillside you reach a ridge and immediately after, the *Forcella di Rinbianco* (2176m). This is a bit rocky at the north end and gravelly and grassy at the south.

From the saddle the path carries on along flat ground beneath the *Torre Wundt* then, after having arrived in a valley, leads to a rocky spur from where you go up to the right via extremely steep shelves with the aid of some fixed ropes. Shortly after you are at the *Passo dei Tocci* (2367m) where you can find the *Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio* at 2359 metres.

**3 hours** from the *Rifugio Auronzo*.

The refuge is dedicated to *Piero, Paolo* and *Sergio Fonda Savio*, brothers from Trieste, who were killed in the Second World War. It is situated on the *Passo dei Tocci* and is owned by the "XXX Ottobre" Trieste CAI Section. It offers the same services as a small hotel and is open from the 15th June to 15th September. It has 28 beds. It is strongly advised to book the refuge directly on 0436-3 90 36 or by calling the manager on 0474-67 85 97.

Winter apartments with 3 beds.

To reach the *Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio*, the *Rifugio Città di Carpi* and the *Col de Varda* Refuges you are spoilt for choice. There are actually three very interesting routes: two of them practically form a big circle around the branch of the *Ciadin di San Lucano* and make up the "*Sentiero attrezzato* (equipped path) *Durissini*". The third is the logical continuation of the "*Sentiero Bonacossa*", situated to the west of the *Cadini di Misurina* group but unfortunately has the disadvantage of "skipping" both the heart of the *Cadini* as well as the *Rifugio Città di Carpi*, resulting in the Alta Via being shortened.

All three of the routes can be considered important in their own right, therefore are all described.

### ■ To the Col De Varda Refuge via the "Sentiero Bonacossa"

From the *Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio* you take the 117 path that heads towards the bold and unique *Torre del Diavolo*, passing below

the western walls of the *Ramo del Nevaio*. After reaching the *Forcella del Diavolo* (2380m), the path drops down along a steep rocky gully, which you overcome with the aid of some metal ladders and fixed ropes. Arriving in *Ciadin de la Neve* you traverse it north-westwards until reaching the opposite edge of the basin. From here you climb up towards the *Forcella di Misurina* (2395m), which can be reached via a trail that is equipped with ladders and ropes, along narrow ledges, steep gullies and a few small rock climbs. The path then descends directly and easily over gravel until you reach the *Rifugio Col de Varda* (2115m), where you meet a small road from *Misurina*.



*Superb Dolomite maniero in the heart of the Cadini di Misurina*

**1.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio*.

**4.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Auronzo*



■ **To the Città di Carpi refuge via the “Sentiero attrezzato Durissini” eastern part, across the Forcella della torre.**

From the *Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio* you take the path that descends steeply, with the help of some fixed ropes, into *Ciadìn del Nevaio*. After crossing this towards the east you zig zag your way up, staying on path 112, along a very steep, grassy hillside until you reach the *Forcella della Torre* at 2400 metres. From here you go down into *Ciadìn Deserto*, you cross this keeping to the upper part and then you go back up along the switchbacks that lead to the *Forcella Sabbiosa* (2440m). After having passed some little wooden bridges with the aid of a fixed rope, go down the opposite grassy slope for a bit; then quickly on to the *Forcella Ciadìn Deserto* at about 2400 metres. From the saddle, carry on descending for a couple of hundred metres passing under a natural cavern, go up another few hundred metres and, crossing over a grassy hill towards the scree, you enter into the *Ciadìn de le Pèrè* (pèrè=stones) skirting it in a large circle. Climb up to a little grassy saddle, called *Selletta Alta di Maràia*, after going beyond this walk towards the extremely green *Ciadìn di Maràia* where you can find the *Rifugio Città di Carpi* at 2110 metres.

**3.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio*.

**6.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Auronzo*.

■ **From the Città di Carpi refuge via the western part of the “Sentiero attrezzato Durissini” (equipped path), crossing the Forcella del Nevaio.**

Take the 116 path from the *Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio* and climb up the hillside overlooking the *Passo* (pass) *dei Tocci* over gravel and boulders. A good deal further up, traverse to the left, reaching and entering into the *Ciadìn del Nevaio* enclosed between two impressive ramparts. Trudge through the middle part of the *Ciadìn* until you are below the saddle, which is easily seen higher up. Two metal ladders help with the climb up to the *Forcella del Nevaio* (2624m) (not to be confused with the *Forcella della Neve* which is 150 metres lower down and in the south west) where two sheer towers rise up



straight from the ground. Fantastic view.

Along a crumbling path and with the help of a fixed rope, you briefly descend to the *Forcella Verzi* (2550m) narrow and rocky, from which you go into a wide rocky gully that ends on the *Ciadìn de le Père*. Fixed ropes and a few iron ladders aid descent. Once you have met up with the fork where you can see the trails coming down from the *Forcella della Neve* and the “*Sentiero attrezzato Durissini*” starting from the western section (*Ciadìn Deserto*), you follow the path which goes directly south until you reach the *Rifugio Città di Carpi* at 2110 metres.

**3.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio*.

**6.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Auronzo*.

The *Rifugio Città di Carpi* is situated just above the *Forcella Maràia* and is dedicated to the memory of *Capitano Manfredo Tarabini Castellani* from the *Cadore* battalion, awarded the Gold Medal for Bravery, who was killed in action in Greece in 1940. It is owned by the Carpi CAI Section and offers the same services as a small hotel from 25th June to 10th September. It has 27 beds and you can book by telephoning 0435-3 91 39 or the manager on 0435-3 91 17.

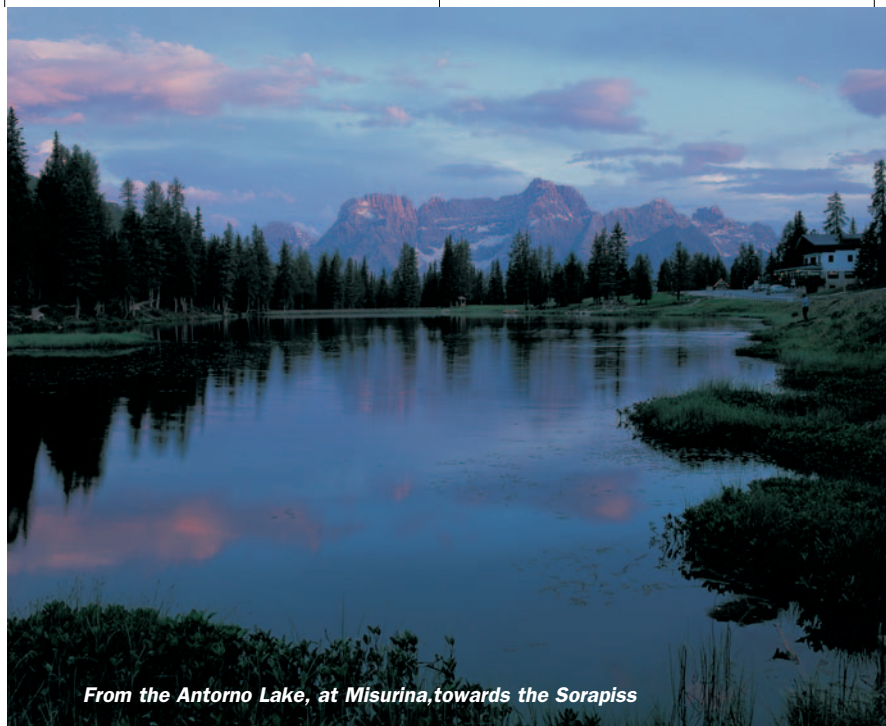
## Variant III

### ■ To the north east Cima Ciadin via the “Ferrata Ruggero Merlone-Celestino Ceria”

This variant involves a *via ferrata*, which goes over the west face of *Cima Ciadin* along quite an exposed trail. There are a lot of ladders and fixed ropes. For expert mountaineers only.

From the *Rifugio Fratelli Fonda Savio*, in about 20 minutes, you reach the start of the *via ferrata* climbing up the *Ciadin del Nevaio* along the western part of the marked “*Sentiero attrezzato Durissini*”. The *ferrata* runs along a sheer rock pillar, which is marked by black stripes on the left and a couloir to the right. You climb up some big steps vertically to the stripe on the right, and then traverse to the right on a ledge sticking out from the rock face, climbing, still on the *ferrata*, vertically for about 150 metres. After turning around a rock pillar to the right, you climb a small rock face, arriving at the secondary summit, a bit to the north of the actual peak; gradient of about 250m.

**2.30 hours** for the climb; descend by the same way.



*From the Antorno Lake, at Misurina, towards the Sorapiss*

## Day three

### ■ From the Città di Carpi Refuge to the “Alfonso Vandelli” refuge

From the *Rifugio Città di Carpi* (2110m) follow the path marked 120 that descends southwest and then north west after having climbed up the nearby *Forcella Maràia* (2101m) to the south. The path descends through pastures and tree-filled fields, until a fork with the south branch of the 120. Carry on to the right (north west) still on the 120. After a while you meet the military track, which connects *Maràia al Col de Varda* with *Misurina*. Go along this track towards the northwest, then west below the *Col de Varda*, until you reach a fork. Follow the little road to the right (north) that shortly

after, beyond two large bends, leads to the chair-lift station and to the *Rifugio Col de Varda* (2115m) from where you can enjoy fantastic views, especially of the *Marmaròle*, the *Sorapiss*, the *Cristallo*...

Privately owned and open in the summer and the winter with restaurant services. It has 21 beds. Book on 0435-3 90 41.

From the *Rifugio Col de Varda* you can also get to *Misurina* by chair lift. However, on foot, from the nearby fork you take the little road to the left that descends gently, curving through the woods, to arrive at *Misurina* (1752m), at the southern tip of the lake.

**2 hours** from the *Rifugio Città di Carpi*.

**MISURINA** is the largest natural lake in the *Cadore*, having a surface of about 12 hectares. It is 600 metres long with a width that varies from 100 to 300 metres and has a maximum depth of 9 metres. The lake is enclosed between two terminal moraines; probably in ancient times it also covered the marsh, which can still be found at the edge of the water. As with the rest of the Alps, it was the growth in mountaineering that discovered this wonderful area, which for centuries was just a precious pasture ground for animals from *Auronzo* and *Dobbiaco*, with famous never-ending arguments, sometimes even violent rows, between shepherds and valley-dwellers.

Up until about 1880 there were only a few barns and some rough shelters near the lakeshore. Then the first small hotel was created, sheltering behind the *Col Sant'Angelo*, which in 1885 was operative but with only 7 rooms and 10 beds. In 1889 the hotel was expanded and the number of beds was increased to 14. Only in 1889, on the initiative of a few rich people from *Cadore*, the *Grande Albergo Misurina* was built, with 100 bedrooms, sitting areas, verandas, bathrooms etc. It cost half a million lire, which in those days was a fortune. Immediately afterwards other hotels and inns popped up due to the ever increasing demand by visitors.

In spite of this, the great dolomite mountaineering pioneer *Adolf Witzenmann*, in his research on the *Cadini*, recommended sleeping on the hay in a little cottage belonging to the guide "Pacífico Zandegiacomo Orsolina" known as *Cicco*, and then eating in his sister's kitchen. *Witzenmann* was a true mountaineer and loved the mountains in their simplicity, not sophistication, which is in the heart of all ardent mountain goers! The development undertaken by *Misurina* was extremely quick, in spite of poor means of communication. Just think that in 1905, on the last part of the road, just before the lake, travellers still had to get out of the stagecoach and push it if they wanted to arrive at the hotel in time for lunch!

***The Dito di Dio  
(God's Finger) over-  
looking the little  
lake of Sorapiss***



From *Misurina*, follow the *SS 48b* road in the direction of *Auronzo* (south) that, after having skirted the lake, goes down to *Bivio* (fork) *Dogana Vecchia* (1647m); from here there is a great view of the *Sorapiss*. At the fork you follow the *SS 48* to the right to *Cortina* crossing through ancient woods until you arrive near the *Passo Tre Croci* at 1805 metres.

**1.30 hours**, about 6 km, from *Misurina*.

**3.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Città di Carpi*.

A bit before the pass, at a height of 1791m (there is a chart) the path 215 branches off. At the beginning this is a small road that quickly turns into a path, heading towards the eastern slopes of the *Zimes de Marcudira* and *Orte*. Once you have passed two big gullies, walk upwards to a woodland plain where you start to traverse an old and extremely beautiful wood of pine trees and larches. Emerging from the wood you climb up steeply for a bit, then carry on along flat ground up to where the path gets narrower and is actually cut into the rocks, helping yourself along with the aid of metal handrails. Finally, after a long traverse half way along the hillside, you reach the *Rifugio al Sorapiss "Alfonso Vandelli"* at 1928 metres.

**2 hours** from the *Passo Tre Croci*.

**5.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Città di Carpi*.

The *Rifugio al Sorapiss "Alfonso Vandelli"*, owned by the Venice CAI Section, is situated in a majestic basin north of the *Sorapiss*, next to the lake of the same name. The refuge was built by D.O.A.V. in 1891 with the name of *Pfalzgauhutte*. Twice destroyed by avalanches, it was rebuilt and opened in 1966 and was dedicated to the Venice Section's president, Vandelli, who promoted the rebuilding. It is open from 20th June to 20th September, has the same services as a small hotel and has 60 available beds; winter apartment with 7 bunks. Book on 0435-3 90 15 or the manager on 0435-40 05 47.



## Day four

### ■ From the “Alfonso Vandelli” refuge to the “Emilio Comici” bivouac

This trail takes you over rocks and crags. It is a bit difficult but a lot of fun. It is made safe and practicable by the “*Percorso alpinistico attrezzato Alfonso Vandelli*” (equipped mountaineering path) on the northern prow of the *Tre Sorelle*.

Via a good path marked 243, you go up the slope at the back of the *Rifugio Vandelli* in the direction of the *Tre Sorelle* (south), deviating to the left towards a hollow, then on to a slanted rock plate. The “*Percorso alpinistico attrezzato Alfonso Vandelli*” begins here. You overcome a narrow chimney with the help of a metal

*On the equipped trail  
of the fourth day's  
walk*



***The Tre Sorelle del  
Sorapiss***





ladder, carrying on to the left over rocks that are a bit exposed although protected by fixed ropes. After this there is a difficult narrow chimney and a crumbly and exposed ledge. A few fixed ropes help with the crossing up to the large central couloir (watch out if there is snow, risk of falling stones). Having crossed this with the help of a fixed rope, you go along a ledge, which cut into the western rock face of the *Croda del Fogo*, climb slightly for about 40 metres. You cross a gap with the help of a fixed rope, then you descend for a short while, then climbing up again to the left until you arrive at another gap (fixed rope). The path then goes along a kind of balcony for about 30 metres, then a difficult stretch, although equipped, for about 60 metres, which leads on to a wide ledge, which breaks off shortly after. First follow the ledge, helping yourself with a long stretch of fixed rope, and then scrambling over rock you reach another obstruction. A final stretch with fixed ropes takes you out of the equipped route.

At this point you follow a large and easy ledge that, after having cut across a large amphitheatre, carries on between narrow chimneys and small rock faces until you come out on to a wide ridge, on the north east side of the mountain. Go down this long and easy slope as far as a small grassy valley. After having entered into the thick of mugo pines, traverse south along a ledge, arriving soon at the lower part of the *Busa del Banco*. After crossing a grassy gully you descend to the left and arrive at the “*Emilio Comici*” bivouac at about 2000 metres.

**4 hours** from the Rifugio “*Alfonso Vandelli*”.

The “*Emilio Comici*” bivouac, dedicated to the great mountaineer from Trieste, is owned by the XXX Ottobre CAI Section, Trieste, and is situated on the edge of the *Busa del Banco* at the north eastern tip of the wild *Sorapiss* mountain range. It is positioned behind the colourful walls of the *Croda del Fogo*, in striking surroundings of magnitude and loneliness. It has 9 beds and is always open but unstaffed. There is no water there or nearby apart from at the beginning of the season when the snow begins to melt.



***The Croda Martora  
where the “Francesco  
Berti” mountaineering  
route passes on  
VARIANT IV of the Alta  
Via 4. The Cengia del  
Banco is clearly visible***





## Day five

### ■ From the “Emilio Comici” bivouac to the San Marco and the “Pietro Galassi” refuges

The initial stretch of this walk, with superb surroundings and views, uses the “*Percorso alpinistico attrezzato Carlo Minazio*” (equipped mountaineering route) along the *Colli Neri*. This “stroll” on the rocks (unfortunately full of mugo pine trees!) allows you, together with the more rocky and technical “*Percorso alpinistico Vandelli*”, (mountaineering route) to pass from the *Circo del Sorapiss* to the *Val di San Vito*.

From the bivouac you follow the path marked 243 towards the edge of the Busa del Banco then climb up straight away along the opposite side up to the Forcella Bassa del Banco (2128m); here you have two options to continue:

- Via an exposed route, although equipped. From the saddle you climb for about 30 metres, then traverse to the left along a ledge, partially covered with low mugo pine trees and very exposed, although the passage is aided by some fixed ropes. Watch out for falling stones dislodged by chamois walking along the crest. This takes you to a gravelly amphitheatre which collects water from storms and avalanches from the Cime (peaks) di Valbona; 30 minutes from Forcella Bassa. Here you join up with the following path;
- Through the Forcella Alta; a lot longer and more tiring than the previous route, but easier, with interesting surroundings. From the Forcella Bassa you go up the grassy, gravelly slope to the right as far as the Forcella Alta del Banco (2250m); from here you descend down a steep but easy chimney until you arrive in the Cime di Valbona amphitheatre where you join up with the above described route a). At this point you take the old hunting track, walking among scattered mugo pines, grass and gravel, until you get to a landslide. Still keeping half way up the hill you come to the Cresta dei Nani. When you are level with a steep gully, a path veers off, which you ignore. We are now in the upper *Val di San Vito*, on the path marked 226, which comes from *Palus San Marco*. You go the length of the valley via the orographical left side until you reach the

wide *Forcella Grande* (2255m) from where, having passed the grassy slopes with great views of the spectacular *Torre dei Sabbioni* and the *Cima Bel Pra* in the *Marmaròle*, you begin to descend in large curves through the *Giou Scuro* detrital gully. You walk quickly along this, on narrow zigzags partially cut into the rock, until crossing it at the bottom on the left. Pass down through the woods for a bit and shortly after you are at the *Rifugio San Marco* at 1823 metres.

**4 hours** from the “*Emilio Comici*” bivouac.

The **San Marco** refuge was inaugurated in 1895 and is owned by the Venice CAI Section. It is situated on the *Col de chi da Oss* (dialect from the *Val Boite* which means “hill of those behind” obviously eluding to those from Auronzo). There is a stone plaque in memory of *Giovanni Arduini*, President for many years of the Venice CAI Section and a pioneer of Venetian mountaineering. It has 37 beds and is open from 20th June to 20th September, offering the same services as a small hotel. Wonderful views of the nearby *Antelao* and *Pelmo*; book on 0436-94 44 or the manager on 0436-97 18.

Winter apartment with 9 beds.



From the *Rifugio San Marco* the path marked 227, once past the vegetable field, goes into the woods and quickly emerges (small water-filled gully) to traverse a very crumbly shelf which is quite fragile when descending. After scrambling along the gravelly base of the *Cima Bel Prà* and the *Scottèr*, you finally meet the path, which comes from *San Vito di Cadore* and the nearby *Rifugio Scottèr Palatini*.

Still following the 227 you easily reach the *Forcella Piccola* situated at 2120 metres. From here you briefly descend eastwards to arrive at the Rifugio "*Pietro Galassi*", at 2018 metres.

**1.30 hours** from the *Rifugio San Marco*.

**5.30 hours** from the *Bivacco "Emilio Comici"*.

Built in 1913 on the Val d'Òten slopes as a military shelter for mountain troops who were on mountaineering exercises, the refuge was then dedicated to Pietro Galassi, Lieutenant of the Alpine Troops, who was killed in action in Libya in 1913. It was then given over to the Pieve di Cadore CAI Section by the military authorities in 1915 only to be taken back again during the Second World War, and then abandoned. In 1950 it was handed over to the Mestre CAI Section who restored it. It has a total of 106 beds and is open from 20th June to 20th September with the same services as a small hotel. It is managed by the Section with members volunteering for shifts; book on 0436-96 85 or call the manager at the Mestre CAI Section on 041-93 81 98.

Winter apartment with 8 beds.

## Variant IV

■ **From the "Alfonso Vandelli" refuge to the "Scipio e Giuliano Slataper" bivouac via the "Percorso Alpinistico attrezzato Francesco Berti" (equipped mountaineering route), then on to the San Marco and "Pietro Galassi" refuges**

This is a mountaineering route with exposed stretches, which are partially equipped. It is intended for experienced hikers who are adequately kitted out.

From the *Refugio Vandelli* you skirt around the lake following the path marked 215, then climbing westwards towards the *Tonde de Sorapiss*. About 300 metres before the impracticable saddle which is





*The Ghiacciaio Superiore dell' Antelao with the Canalone and the Cima Menini (on the right); the Antelao on the left*

situated between the *Punta Negra* and the *Fopa de Matia* you can find the *Cengia* (ledge) *del Banco*. The path goes to the left and enters into a rocky gully which leads on to the actual *Cengia del Banco*. This ledge, always very exposed with danger of falling stones on a few stretches, crosses (slightly downhill) all of the western part of the *Fópa de Matia* and leads on to a large detrital balcony situated south west of the *Croda Marcòra*. The path, which here takes the name of "*Percorso alpinistico Francesco Berti*" (mountaineering route) and traverses along the panoramic and suspended ledge until you turn round the southern rim. At this point the path goes down a steep gully with fixed ropes and metal ladders. At the bottom you meet the path marked 241, which comes up from *Dogana Vecchia-San Vito di Cadore*. This is one of the most dangerous points for falling stones therefore it is recommended that you wear a crash helmet.

Once you reach the base of a dihedral, you climb up using metal ladders and fixed ropes until you get to an extremely exposed ledge which, to the right, goes to the *Forcella del Bivacco* in a very short time. Walking over slabs, in a few minutes you are at the near-by "*Scipio e Giuliano Slataper*" bivouac situated at 2600 metres.

**4.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Vandelli*.

The bivouac is situated to the West of the *Fond de Rusecco*, near a rocky spur. It is owned by the XXX Ottobre (Trieste) CAI Section and is dedicated to the memory of two Alpine troop officers (cousins) who died in action in Russia during the Second World War and were awarded the Gold Medal for Bravery. It is always open but unstaffed. It has 9 beds and there is no water.

From the bivouac, you go down an easy slope following the 246 (leaving the 247 to the left, east, which goes unevenly down into *Val di San Vito*) then, cutting across the length of the *Punta dei Ross* and the *Punta Taiola* slopes you reach the *Forcella Grande* (2255m); from here you soon arrive at the *Rifugio San Marco* at 1823 metres.

**1.30 hours** from the *Bivacco Slataper*.

**6 hours** from the *Rifugio "Alfonso Vandelli"*.

To get to the *Rifugio "Pietro Galassi"* follow the path marked 227 as described at the end of Day Four;

**1.30 hours** from the *Rifugio San Marco*.

**7.30 hours** from the *Rifugio "Alfonso Vandelli"*.

## Variant V

### ■ A climb to the summit of Antelao from the Galassi refuge

A mountain-climbing route, not excessively difficult, but long and in rigid surroundings. A very satisfying and recommended climb.

From the *Rifugio Galassi* you hike up to the *Forcella Piccola* (2120m; with chart). Using the path to the south you get to a pasture, then on to a gravelly valley often covered with snow up to July. You go up to the right below the rocks. With this path, going along a series of exposed ledges, you arrive on a ridge area called the *Bàla*. Passing along other exposed ledges you come round the ridge and meet a notch, which you manage to pass over slabs. You are now on the *Laste*. Beyond two small rock spikes called the *Becétt*, you briefly descend to another notch that is passed with difficulty, immediately climbing up a smooth chimney and arriving on to the second stretch of the *Laste*, which are typical slanted slabs, full of crevices and corruptions that are not difficult but should be crossed with caution when there is snow or ice present, something that happens quite often at this height. Keeping to the right you carry on laboriously up to a gully-corridor, which goes to the left (there are signs). You should proceed as close to the left as possible, almost at the exposed edge of the ridge, which is easier and more solid, until level with the *Bivacco "Piero Così"* at 3111m; chart present. The bivouac is not visible from here here but it is very close; just go along the ledge to the left and you are there.

Built in 1957 in memory of a mountaineer from Padua who died in the mountains, the *Bivacco "Piero Così"* is like a real eagle's nest, suspended over the impressive drop of Antelao's north gully. It is always open and is unstaffed; 9 beds; water from snow.

You go up to the right from the bivouac then left via ledges. After a trek over slab you go on to the last ridge from where, via a short ledge and subsequent chimney equipped with fixed ropes, you arrive just below the summit; here there is a cairn and a pole.



*The hanging face of the Ghiacciaio Superiore dell'Antelao*

Descend a bit, climb up the final rock face and you are on the summit of the *Antelao* (3264m) the king of the Dolomites, second highest only to the queen *Marmolada*; trigonometrical point; statue of the Virgin Mary; plaque in memory of a fallen mountaineer who ; huge panorama.

**4 hours**, in good conditions, from the *Rifugio Galassi*

## Day six

### ■ From the “Piero Galassi” refuge to the Antelao Refuge and to Pieve di Cadore

From the *Rifugio Piero Galassi* you take the path marked 250 which climbs up to the south and then traverses a rock barrier until entering into the moraine of the Antelao's Lower Glacier from where you carry on south eastwards reaching the base of a rock plate deeply carved by erosion, about 200 metres high and equipped with fixed ropes. At the end of the plate you emerge on to the small *Forcella del Ghiacciaio dell'Antelao* (2584m), sheltering behind the face of the glacier that once rested on *Lastrón dei Pian dei Arbó*

Via a narrow gully, smoothened over time by ice (be careful if there is snow or sheet ice) and after a small crumbly ledge you enter into the upper cirque of the enormous valley situated to the north east of the *Antelao*. At this point you make a long descent, being careful not to lose track of the signs, on gravelly then grassy ground, ending among mugo pines, as far as a flat piece of ground which you cross over towards the south east, ignoring the path marked 258 which goes down to cross the enchanting *Val Antelao* to then arrive in *Val d'Òten*. Carry on along the path marked 250 reaching a height of 1920m (water), then up to the right to meet a fork marked 230 which heads to *Campestrin*, which you ignore.

Continue to the left, along a slope, reaching the *Forcella Piria* at 2096 metres. The path now goes down towards the east below the *Crode di San Pietro* and traverses high up above the woods; then descends among mugo pines and then trees as far as *Sella Pradònego* and the *Rifugio Antela* at 1796 metres.

**5 hours** from the *Rifugio “Pietro Galassi”*.

The Antelao refuge is situated on Pradònego's grassy saddle below the unassuming *Crode di San Pietro* and has great views of the mountains south of *Comèlico*, such as *Cridola*, *Spalti di Toro e Monalconi*, *Duranno-Cima dei Preti* and the south ridge of the central Marmaròle. It is owned by the Treviso CAI Section and offers the same services as a small hotel. It is open from 1st June to 31st October and has 25 beds. It is also accessible by road from *Pieve di Cadore* and *Pozzàle*; book on 0435-7 53 33 or call the manager on 0422-82 30 10.



From the *Rifugio Antelao* a small road goes down towards the south east, as far as the *Forcella Antracisa* (1693m) where you can find the *Capanna Tita Pancera* belonging to the Pieve di Cadore CAI Section (locked; key at the Section; furnished with 11 sleeping places and kitchen utensils). At the saddle there is a fork with two ways of descending:

- From the *Forcella Antracisa* by road. Walk along the ridge towards the east for about one and a half kilometres, reaching the unassuming *Monte Trànego* (1847m), descending down to *Pozzàle* (1054m) after a few hairpin bends and to Pieve di Cadore at 880 metres.

**2.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Antelao*, by road, for about 11 kilometres.

**7.30 hours** from the *Rifugio Galassi*.

- From the *Forcella Antracisa* by path marked 253. Go down a bit to the south, then take the path to the left (253 – south east) which cuts along the grassy slope, traverses the debris from Costanuda caused by flooding, south of the Trànego, and arrives at the barns in Val Costede (1283m) beyond which, at a height of 1157m, the small road that leads to Pozzàle and to Pieve di Cadore (880m) begins.

**2 hours** from the *Rifugio Antelao*.

**7 hours** from the *Rifugio Galassi*.

**PIEVE DI CADORE (880m)**, situated on a large saddle between the *Col Contràs* to the west and *Monte Ricco* to the southeast, overlooks the confluence of the *Val Calda* into Piave.

Pieve's history merges with that of Cadore. In the XIV century a school of Italian literature was activated. In Pieve, in 1490, Tiziano Vecellio (Titian), the most famous painter from the Veneto, was born.

The town's banner is decorated with the Gold Medal for Bravery "for the memorable and tenacious resistance carried out in 1848 by the people of Cadore against the overwhelming and powerful invader" and with the War Cross for resistance in 1918.

Arriving from *Pozzàle*, the road enters into *Pieve* with the town hall immediately on the left, then *Piazza Tiziano*, where there is a bronze statue of the artist, the work of *Antonio Del Zotto* (1880).





***Pieve di Cadore coming  
down from the Rifugio  
Antelao with the Spalti di  
Toro in the background***

**Opposite there is the *Palazzo della Magnifica Comunità*, rebuilt in 1525 in place of the other dated 1447, partly destroyed during the *Lega di Cambrai* war. On the ground floor you can find the fine Caffè Tiziano, completely restored, but maintaining the architectural themes of the XIV century. On the first floor you can admire the hall, where resistance against the enemy was decided in 1848 under the command of Pier Fortunato Calvi. Here you can see the bust of Natale Talamini (1808-1876), patriot and poet, and that of Luigi Coletti, loyal comrade of Calvi. In other rooms you can admire the rich 15th century wooden engravings by illustrious citizens of the Cadore and important historical records.**

**Joined on to the building, to the left, is the splendid crenelated tower with an ancient bell; at the foot of the tower you can see a marble tombstone dedicated to Calvi, unveiled in 1875, destroyed by the Austrians in 1918 and rebuilt in 1919. On the other side of the tower there is a stone war memorial from the Great War.**

On the left of the *Palazzo della Magnifica Comunità* is the parish church, work of Schiavi (1814-1819). Inside you can see the Madonna with Child painted by the great Titian.

Across the square you can find the humble house where Titian was born, restored into a museum. Among other things it contains the certificate issued by Carlo V (1533), which made Titian a count and a knight.

In *Pieve di Cadore* you can find all essential public services, as well as hotels, B&B, small restaurants, chemists, hospitals, helicopter rescue, tennis courts and swimming pool etc.

Bus services to Calalzo (railway station), *Cortina*, *Comèlico* and *Sappàda*, *Carnia*, *Belluno* and during high season also direct services to Milan, Padua and Venice.

It is here that the *Alta Via n. 4* ends. In this delightful mountain town, surrounded by the *Marmaròle*, with sublime mountains full of history at its back, which are solemnly mirrored in the *Lago di Centro Cadore*.

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## MAPS USED

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SHEET 017, *Dolomiti di Auronzo* for the stretch from the *Fonda Savio Refuge* to the *Passo Tre Croci*

Sheet 03, *Dolomiti Ampezzane* for the stretch from the *Passo Tre Croci* to the *Galassi Refuge*

SHEET 016, *Dolomiti del Centro Cadore* for the stretch from the *Galassi Refuge* to *Pieve di Cadore*

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## **Refuge's stamps**

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## **Refuge's stamps**

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## Information

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For problems regarding bookings, confirmations, cancellations, opening and closing periods of refuges, etc., you can also contact, apart from the respective managers of course, the Italian Alpine Club Sections who own the properties, keeping in mind that the CAI members are volunteers and are not often present during office hours in the relevant Administration sections. For the mountain hut telephone numbers and those of their managers, refer to the text.