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Europa High-Altitude Trail 6

Großglockner to Vittorio Veneto

ITALO ZANDONELLA CALLEGHER



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Europa High-Altitude Trail 6

Großglockner to Vittorio Veneto

*from the glaciers
to the Veneto plain*

High Altitude Trail Grossglockner-Monte Peralba
by Günter Mussnig and Ernst Rieger

The Dolomites "Alta Via" n. 6
or Alta Via dei Silenzi
created by Toni Sanmarchi in 1972
by Italo Zandonella Callegher

Cover:

The Kreuzseescharte and the lakes Kreuzsee and Wangenitzsee of the Schobergruppe in the Hohe Tauern National Park

First page:

Rifugio Pier Fortunato Calvi

Back Cover:

The Monte Cridola

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Introduction

This booklet, created especially for the European hiking enthusiast, is something completely new, an absolute first. A truly European *Alta Via* (*High Altitude Trail*), which runs from the huge barrier of the *Großglockner*, in Austria, through into Italy to the *Monte Peralba*, i.e. from the springs of the Piave river, and on to the little city of Vittorio Veneto.

In recent years a wide range of new hiking routes has been created in the Alps, but none running through such a variety of landscapes as this one, which links the eternal glaciers at the foot of the highest mountain in Austria with the Veneto plain.

A fantastic route in 19 daily stages, some 180km long, providing a total of about 100 hours of hiking. Something like a prestigious trekking holiday in Nepal – if not better – and all of it in European territory.

All this has been made possible by a project called “Intervention for the exploitation of alpine and cross-border hiking routes. The system of the alpine mountain paths: *High Altitude Trail* “From the glaciers to the Veneto plain”, by Interreg IIIa Italy – Austria 2000 – 2006.

Thanks to this project it has been possible to “join up” the two *High Altitude Trail*: the Austrian one, almost unexplored by Italian hikers - which runs north of the Veneto Dolomites, starting out from the snow-covered mass of the *Großglockner*– and the tried and tested, but wilder, Italian *Alta Via* (*High Altitude Trail*) *delle Dolomiti n.6*, also known since 1972 as *Alta Via delle Dolomiti n.6* or *Alta Via dei Silenzi*.

A marriage of two different cultures, united by the same passion for the mountains, their culture, their valleys, their people.

Characteristics of this Europa

High-Altitude Trail 6

■ The two sectors which make up the Europa High-Altitude Trade 6

First sector, *High Altitude Trail Großglockner-Peralba*: leaves from the splendid mountain group which rises severely up north of Lienz and ends at the border between Austria and Italy at the *Passo dell'Oregóne*, between the Carinthia region and the *Cadore* area, near the *Monte Peralba*.

Second sector, *Alta Via (High Altitude Trail) delle Dolomiti n.6*, or "*dei silenzi*"; runs from *Monte Peralba* to the little city of *Vittorio Veneto*, after going over the mountains on the left of the Piave, between the *Veneto* and *Friuli* regions.

High Altitude Trail Großglockner-Peralba

The *Glockner – Vittorio Veneto* route begins at the foot of the *Großglockner*, the highest mountain in Austria, 3798m. From the *Großglockner* district, on the second day, the path leads into the *Schobergruppe*, which has over 50 peaks of over 3000m. Across high saddles, isolated cirques with beautiful alpine lakes, going from refuge to refuge, in about four days you will reach *Lienz*, Austria's "*Dolomite City*". If you choose to climb some of the peaks (*Großglockner*, *Roter Knopf*, *Keeskopf*, *Petzeck*, *Strasskopf*), you can spend even longer on these splendid mountains.

From *Lienz* the route leads into the massif of the *Lienzer Dolomiten*, comparable in appearance with the stone marvels of the South Tyrol. Across these imposing rock barriers, just under 3000m, narrow paths lead, in two days, into the attractive *Lesachtal*.

From *St Lorenzen* you proceed towards the Carnic Alps and, through the *Frohnthal*, a day's walking will take you to the Italian-Austrian border.

Here the *Alta Via High Altitude Trail delle Dolomiti n.6*, or "*dei Silenzi*", begins.

The *Glockner- Peralba* path initially follows a route which is rich in tradition, the "*Wiener Höhenweg*" (Viennese High Mountain Path), before its end on the South side of the *Hohe Tauern* National Park. The alpine landscape is dominated by the imposing *Hohe Tauern* with the largest National Park in the Alps. But why should a route in the *Hohe Tauern* be called after the capital of Austria, Vienna?

The answer is quite simple: in the "golden age" of mountaineering, at the beginning of the last century, it was mostly mountaineers from the big cities who were responsible for developing the tourist industry in the Alps, firstly with their significant mountaineering endeavours, such as the first ascents of peaks and rock faces of increasing difficulty, and later by building refuges and tracing paths and mountain routes. This was the case in the *Hohe Tauern* and in the *Schobergruppe*. On the southern side of the *Glockner*, Viennese climbers were particularly active.

Particular mention must be given to a group of mountaineers who shared an enthusiasm for the alpine environment which they wanted to transmit to their students. In Vienna, in 1874, they founded the "*Lehrer Touristenklub*", which initially was not part of the *Alpenverein*, but became a section of it in 1911.

Since 1914 the "*Wiener Lehrer*" Section has been in charge of the south-west part of the *Schobergruppe*, and since 1925 it has been responsible for the *Gradental*. In 1928 the *Gradenseehütte* was built. It was inaugurated in 1931, and later re-named "*Adolf No Berger Hütte*", after the first chairman of the "*Wiener Lehrer*" Section, who became well-known at the beginning of the 1930s particularly because of the paths he traced out in the *Schobergruppe*. He also designed the "*Wiener Höhenweg*" in its present form.

Therefore, we have to thank the far-sightedness and dynamism of these Viennese mountaineers for this superb *High Altitude Trail*. *Berg Heil!*

The route begins in the largest National Park in Austria, the *Hohe Tauern*. For the first few days, you walk in a north-south direction in the heart of this superb protected area, crossing the border between the

Tyrol and Carinthia regions several times. Then you leave behind the National Park and the chain of the *Hohe Tauern* above the *Iselberg*, and move on to new challenges with the traverse of the *Lienzer Dolomiten*, the Carnic Alps and on into Italy.

The traverse in the *Hohe Tauern* National Park from the *Glocknerhaus* to the *Iselberg* is definitely the most difficult stage from a mountaineering point of view, as the route goes as far up as the 3000m of the *Seehöhe*, and often crosses small glaciers; but it is also the most spectacular part of the entire itinerary. For a whole week, with ascents to various peaks, you will be walking at altitude without ever going down to the valley. And all of this through the magnificent, undisturbed natural landscape of the *Hohe Tauern* National Park, which is not only a wonderful high mountain landscape; it is also home to many rare species of animals and plants. If you keep your eyes open along the *Wiener Höhenweg*, you will often have the chance to see some extraordinary wildlife, such as wild mountain goats, bearded lammergeyers and eagles.

Alta Via delle Dolomiti n. 6 or “dei Silenzi”

In 1972, Toni Sanmarchi published the guidebook “*Alta Via dei Silenzi*” for Tamari Editors in Bologna, immediately warning readers that “...this route is not one of those typical, well-known ones that cross the most famous of the Dolomite groups and that are so fashionable nowadays; routes that are used excessively by all types of people due to their deserved popularity and fame, thus leading to overcrowding on some parts.”

This is a *High Altitude Trail* with a difference! Due to its surroundings, its lack of support points like those found on the other routes and its savage wilderness.

In fact the route, although running partly through the Pre-alpine territory, introduces characteristics that are much more severe than those normally found in the dolomites; extremely hot temperatures in the summer, frequent mist, unexpected storms and drastic temperature swings, to name but a few.

Nowadays the paths that up until about fifty years ago were abundant and well trod, have partly disappeared among weeds or under

landslides. Only the main ones remain, well maintained by skilled volunteers.

Along these partly equipped, signposted trails that can sometimes be a bit risky but never unachievable, runs the “*Alta Via dei Silenzi*”.

But why “*silenzi*”? (‘silence’)? In the midst of these mountains, especially in the middle and final part of the route, there isn’t a trace of a living soul, not even the sheep which used to graze here. There are also very few wild animals, as they have – foolishly – been hunted, although nowadays (2005) they are beginning to reappear. Here there is complete silence. That’s why Toni Sanmarchi alias “*Capitan Barancio*” chose this fitting name. Bit by bit, some structures have been added or improved on for hill-walkers so that these days, at the end of each walk, shelter can be found in a decent *rifugio* (refuge) or in a spartan but life-saving fixed bivouac. In the 1960s, when the great mountaineer W. Herberg (one of the last modern explorers) re-traced Lothar Patéra’s footsteps on the *Duranno* and the *Col Nudo*, he noticed that everything had remained “just like it was when it was first discovered” and the hours spent on the exploration added up to more than double of those used by the pioneers of the 19th and early 20th centuries. He could no longer find the paths and those remaining were hazardous. The *casère* (old shepherds’ cottages) – poor but irreplaceable places of protection – were crumbling and had fallen down over the years from neglect. Silence had returned...

Along this *High Altitude Trail* the isolation is peaceful, not disturbing; the surroundings are extremely remote and wild; the mountains have remained just as they were in primordial times. You may feel that all this sounds wonderful, and it is, but you should not let this lead you into underestimating the risks it presents. The more an environment is harsh and isolated, the more precautions are necessary. Safety, stamina, training, organisation and accurate maps and guides books are more crucial here than anywhere else. Remember there are no rescue centres nearby.

The *Alta Via delle Dolomiti n° 6* or *dei Silenzi* starts at the beginning of the *Piave* river, in the damp plateau at the foot of the *Peralba* at the head of the *Visdende valley* and reaches Vittorio Veneto by crossing over the *Rinaldo*, *Tèrse*, *Clap*, *Monti di Säuris*, *Tiärfin*, *Cridola*, *Spalti di Toro* e *Monfalconi* mountain ranges as well as the *Duranno-Cima dei Preti* and *Col Nudo-Cavallo*.

Right here at the beginning of the *Piave* river, this *High Altitude Trail* meets and joins up with the one coming from Austria, from the *Hohe Tauern*.

They move on together and become the *Europa High-Altitude Trail 6*, in serene friendship and without ideological barriers.

The *Alta Via delle Dolomiti n.6* maintains an average height of 2000 metres, with relatively easy hiking and rock climbing, but has frequent stretches on uneven ground that can sometimes be tricky and exposed (especially along certain variants), above all in the *Duranno-Cima dei Preti* area. However, fixed apparatus can be found on the most difficult parts. The main problem on this route is lack of water, especially in the central and southern parts. Up until July you can take advantage of the snow that has accumulated in the gullies; after that you have to resign yourself to going down to the river...

One of the privileges offered by these mountains are the fantastic views and the wide-open and majestic landscapes. However, as is always the case in the Pre-alps, mist is often present, so that they are only visible early in the morning.

Finally, changes in the weather should be studied very carefully in order not to be caught out unprepared in the middle of this wild and deserted wasteland, fantastic as it may be.

Having said this, we can only echo Toni Sanmarchi's words: "*The Alta Via dei Silenzi* is still the *Montagna del Buon Dio*". ("The Good Lord's Mountain"). May those who walk on it benefit not only from healthy physical exercise, but also deep, visual and spiritual personal satisfaction."

We feel obliged to point out that some authors have modified 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 strange variants, making the *High Altitude Trail* excessively long: more than fifteen days instead of eleven, with some stretches reduced to only two or three hours per day. It's true that this would be ideal for holidays, relaxing and enjoyable, but

we have preferred to remain faithful to "the old days", even if this means that some stretches may seem a bit severe in length or steepness.

11 days, however are quite sufficient to complete the main "branch" of the route, without hurrying unnecessarily. A word of advice: those wishing to tackle the *Alta Via delle Dolomiti* according to the schedule suggested will need to be fit and trained. Some stretches are necessarily long and without support points, and it would be much easier (but also heavier) to take a tent. However, some long stretches can be completed using a taxi or other vehicle, for example: from *Erto* to *Cimolais* and *Cellino* (not recommended on foot); from *S. Martino* for the *Alpago* to *Casera Pal* and from *Campón* to *Vittorio Veneto*.

However, the walking days could be increased by adding:

- 1) the climb from *Sappada* to the *Sorgenti del Piave* using the "*Sentiero Frassati*";
 - 2) the *Monfalcóni* traverse at altitude;
 - 3) the deviation for the *Capanna Tita Barba* and the *Casera del Cavalét*;
- And others; depending on how your holidays are organised!

The Italian part of the *Europa High-Altitude Trail 6* can be divided into three distinct parts, corresponding to the main ranges crossed.

- 1- *Peralba, Rinaldo, Clap, Tiàrfin*;
- 2- *Cridola, Spalti di Toro e Monfalcóni, Cima dei Preti-Duranno*;
- 3- *Col Nudo-Cavallo*.

In order to satisfy almost any whim, a few different variants are described. These variants aim to give a wider range of choice, but at the same time bring certain difficulties, although not significant.

Also in this case, in comparison with Toni Sanmarchi's guide, published in 1972, some changes and updates have been made to the original route, because during the last few years, there have been some morphological changes, as well as changes as a result of interventions carried out by the organisations responsible for maintaining and the 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 respectful willingness to improve on and to further define Sanmarchi's route.

The stages

The long route has been divided up into daily stages, each of which has precise reference points, a beginning and an end, which may be a refuge, a bivouac, a malga (mountain hut), or a simple shelter. These are generally open from the 20th of June to the 20th of September, excepting variations due to altitude or for other reasons which will be explained in the guide in the relevant “technical details” sections. Both the refuges and the mountain huts (of which there are many, and very welcoming, particularly in Austria) offer food and accommodation, sometimes basic, but always friendly and genuine.

The bivouacs are always open and unstaffed and inside all you will find are some mattresses, camp beds and blankets.

At the height of the summer season it is advisable to book places in the refuges well in advance (see telephone numbers in the descriptions of each refuge), especially in August.

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 stages have been designed in such a way that, from departure to arrival, i.e. from one stop-off point to another, they should take a minimum of 2.30 – 3 hours to a maximum of 9 hours, for an average fit, trained hiker. This should give hikers, especially those leaving early in the morning, the chance to rest, relax or visit the area around the stop-off point chosen.

Naturally, each stage can be walked individually, i.e. starting out from a different support point or a village at the bottom of the valley. These linking paths also come in useful if you want to divert from, or give up, the main route. Information on these paths, and where you can find them, can be had by consulting the Bibliography, or the topographical maps of the relevant area, details of which are listed in the “Technical Details” sections.

The stages are described in a simple way, immediately understandable and easy to read, but the descriptions contain different information and many important data; here you will find everything

even the most demanding hiker might want to know. Each daily route is described in such a way as to let the hiker know exactly what s/he can expect throughout the day; for example: other refuges or support points, gradients in ascent and descent, approximate length of the route in km, time required, path numbers, difficulty, any fixed equipment, signs; but also notes on the environment and the views, the flora and fauna, the geology and other points of interest.

As for mountaineering, there is now a difficulty scale, drawn up some years ago, for hikers, which should be learnt and taken seriously, in order to avoid unpleasant surprises.

Below is the **international table of hiking difficulty levels**:

T	for tourists, i.e. elementary difficulty
E	for hikers
EE	for expert hikers
EEA	for expert hikers with <i>via ferrata</i> equipment
A	for climbers

However, you should remember that in Austria, where the signposts indicate the level of difficulty, another evaluation system is used, based on different colours, as for ski slopes:

Blu	easy, i.e. T/E
Rosso	average difficulty, i.e. EE
Nero	difficult, i.e. EEA, some stretches possibly A

Recommended period

The ideal period for the routes is undoubtedly the summer, i.e. from the end of June to September, since the climate and weather conditions are more stable than during the rest of the year.

Bear in mind that each of the two sectors of the *High Altitude Trail* in this guide has its own individual “identity card”; thus, the Großglockner-Peralba sector is easier, at least the initial part, in July and August, due to its latitude and the corresponding weather conditions, while the *Alta Via delle Dolomiti n.6* can be tackled from as

early as the beginning of June until almost the end of September (but check when the refuges close).

On the **High Altitude Trail Großglockner-Peralba**, for example, some technical difficulties can be encountered on hard snow or frozen rock plates in the first part of the route, even at the height of summer. Obviously, on sheet ice it is compulsory to use hillwalking crampons, which weigh very little, and which no hiker should be without in their rucksack.

On the **Alta Via (High Altitude Trail) delle Dolomiti n.6**, difficulty on snow or ice is rarely encountered at the height of summer, except for the odd frozen channel or strip of hard snow at the beginning of the season. In these cases it is advisable to use a light rope to secure the less experienced. Remember that a slip always has unpleasant consequences, both physical and psychological.

So, better a piece of bread less and a length of rope more!

Equipment

It is necessary, indeed vital, for the hiker to have good mountain equipment. These days the market offers a huge range and variety of all sorts of products and technical specialities for use in all seasons. A trained, professional sales assistant can help you to choose the best product for your needs, but we feel obliged to offer some advice of our own.

The choice of **underwear** is extremely important. The traditional cotton and wool garments have been replaced by products in polypropylene and other materials, often combined with polyester or newly-designed materials (the textile industry evolves continually, and by the time this guide is published, even more innovative products will probably be available), which have the advantage of expelling sweat and thus keeping the body dry.

The famous “grandma” style **thick woolly socks** are now almost a distant memory, and today hikers use products created with synthetic fibres of various types, which are warm and allow the skin to breathe. To protect their legs, many hillwalkers use very light **nylon knee-length socks** (women’s pop-socks), which give excellent protection to the skin and a fine natural wrap for the muscles.

Hiking boots must be chosen with particular care. In the southern part of the route, light trekking shoes are sufficient, but on the snow-covered mountains of the northern sector it is vital to have a more technical, robust type of footwear, specifically designed for that kind of terrain, and to which crampons can be applied if need be.

Sunglasses are indispensable at least when crossing areas covered in snow.

Knickerbocker type **trousers**, comfortable as they are, are rarely worn in Italy, although they are still popular in other countries. The kind of trousers normally worn these days are long, very technical (i.e. light, elasticised, with numerous pockets, brightly coloured to aid visibility, water-resistant, etc.); there is a vast range of choice, depending on individual taste and budget.

The old-style heavy woollen **shirts** have also been replaced by synthetic fabrics (fleece), but you can also find excellent models in breathable cotton or other fibres that the market “imposes” upon hikers who want to keep up with the times (and with fashion).

Fleece is an exceptional fabric, which has been used for years now and is continually evolving, allowing the hiker to wear a splendid **sweater** which is lightweight, breathable, warm, waterproof and comfortable.

The same material is also common these days for **gloves** and **hats**.

It is not difficult to choose a good **wind-cheater jacket**. Polyamide jackets are the lightest, the most waterproof and also breathable. Unfortunately the high price puts many people off buying this extremely useful type of technical jacket, but if you take advantage of the sales, and ignore fashion trends for once, you can save a lot.

Telescopic walking sticks, adaptable and extremely lightweight, are very useful in ascent because they save you about 30% of the effort; they are practically indispensable for anyone with any kind of knee problems because they lighten the burden of the rucksack, transferring some of its weight onto the arms, which should therefore be kept in good shape. Even this extremely useful piece of equipment has its limits, however: it should not be used when crossing on led-

ges or on steep paths half way up the mountainside, for example, because they can cause you to lose your balance and trip; it should not be used anywhere you need to use one or both of your hands on the rock; it is not recommended in steep descent; if they get stuck between the shoulder straps of your rucksack and your back, they can collide with the rock and cause you to lose your balance.

It is unadvisable to carry too big a rucksack, because it gets in the way on difficult stretches; an average size rucksack is sufficient, with a few useful pockets to carry recommended items: **personal documents**, **cellphone** (very useful; it has saved many lives, although it cannot be used everywhere), **membership card** of mountaineering associations, to get discounts in the refuges, topographical **maps** and **guides**, a **pen** and perhaps a diary, Swiss **knife**, water **flask**, **compass** and **altimeter**, **camera**, **first aid items** (especially common ones such as painkillers, vitamin C, saline integrators, plasters, gauzes, bandages, thermometer, and anything else the individual hiker might need) and all those little accessories that personal experience and requirements demand.

Never forget a **change** of underwear, socks, handkerchiefs, **sheets in synthetic fibre** (on sale in many refuges), sleeping bag-lightweight bivouac for emergencies (you can buy them at a reasonable price, and they weigh about 200g), something to shelter you from the rain (the old-fashioned cap is not often used these days, with hikers preferring a small **umbrella**, which must, however, be able to stay up in strong wind), lightweight climbing **shoes** or other footwear for use inside the refuges, a waterproof cotton hat (the “desert” type is best, as it protects you from UV rays and also covers the neck and ears). A length (about 20 metres) of **lightweight rope** is useful, as well as some snaplinks.

On the vie ferrate it is compulsory to use a **helmet**, **snaplinks** and a ferrata harness, so these should also be carried in your rucksack. Crampons are also necessary (on the market you can find an extremely lightweight model for hillwalking, which is quite sufficient).

To tackle the *Europa High-Altitude Trail 6* it is not indispensable to have a rope, but it is certainly useful for some rocky stretches, ice-covered rock plates or other cases in which help might be required. In the

case of groups walking together, members could take turns carrying the rope.

Those who hanker after the old-style climbing environment can experience the beauty and majesty of the mountains by spending the night in a **tent**, curled up in a warm **sleeping bag**, sometimes lulled to sleep by rain falling softly on the roof. The only price to be paid for such an unforgettable experience is a few extra kilos to carry!

Extremely important: NEVER forget to bring adequate **water supplies** and, of course, a little **food** for daily use, which you can buy in the various refuges, without weighing down your rucksack at the outset with all manner of urban delicacies.

Route signs

In the Austrian sector of the *Europa High-Altitude Trail 6*, (i.e. the *High Altitude Trail Großglockner-Peralba* until the *Passo dell'Oregóne*) the signs are different from those used in Italy. In Austria the signposts also indicate the level of difficulty of the route.

- a) Metal signposts indicating the destination, difficulty level (blue=easy; red=average difficulty; black=difficult) time required and path number (according to EU indications); or wooden signposts.
- b) Two red vertical or horizontal stripes with a white stripe in the middle. Where very frequent signs are necessary, you will find simple red or red and white signs. The triangle with the number of the *High Altitude Trail* should be found also in Austria.

Along the route in the Italian sector (i.e. from the *Passo dell'Oregóne-Peralba* to *Vittorio Veneto*) the hiker can find three types of signs at all the main points.

- a) Painted triangle with the *High Altitude Trail* number inside; 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 monitored, sector by sector. Where the triangles, path signs and charts are found to be in poor condition 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 shouldn't have problems of orientation if they constantly refer to a good map or put into practice information given by hut managers along the route.

Safety in the mountains

As the paths of the *Europa High-Altitude Trail 6* can be very tiring at times and conducted above 2900 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 vital.

A fundamental condition for trekking along the *High Altitude Trail* paths is good weather! Therefore you should find out weather conditions first from the available sources.

If, despite all the above precautions and excellent equipment, an accident nevertheless happens (a slip, twist, fracture, injury from falling rocks, lightning, illness, vertigo etc.), try not to panic (difficult though this is) and follow the recommended indications where possible.

The Austrian Mountain Rescue Association was founded in 1896. Its task is to help, rescue, recover and assist people who have an accident in the mountains, or to search for missing people or people in emergency situations.

Some 11,000 men and women with mountaineering expertise belong to the association and are active in a voluntary and honorary role. The number to call for Mountain Rescue in Austria is **140**, free of charge and active 24 hours. The European emergency number is 112, but access to all networks is possible only if no PIN code is inserted, or more exactly, PIN code 112.

The membership fee of the Alpenverein covers the cost of rescue and transport home from abroad (as a result of accident or illness).

Information : Weltweit Service (www.alpenverein.at)

The **CNSAS** (National Speleological Mountain Rescue Organization, a special section of the CAI, Italian Alpine Club, whose emergency telephone number is **118**, active 24 hours) and the Austrian Mountain Rescue normally operate in so-called hostile environments and in all inaccessible areas of the province. This does not only mean – as is often believed – areas such as, 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.), that due to access or movement problems, or in special weather conditions, require the intervention of qualified personnel that have expertise in all areas of mountaineering and speleology techniques and rescue.

Keep in mind that the refuges located along the *Europa High-Altitude Trail 6* are equipped with public telephones (except the fixed bivouacs); in addition, all refuge managers are trained to help send correct and quick requests to Mountain Rescue.

■ International rules for mountain safety

- Never underestimate 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-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 individuals or organisations
- Obtain adequate information about the route's particular features and difficulty as well as the area in general. Study all necessary information in advance regarding the destination or route chosen, using the appropriate guides and maps.

- Always leave extremely precise information about where you are going and which route you intend to take, using visitors books in huts 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 a head torch. Do not forget light, easily digested food and water with perhaps added saline integrators.
- Bring a small first aid kit.

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

- Stay calm and do not act impulsively, try to evaluate the particular situation
- 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.
- **Request help by immediately calling 140 in Austria, or 118 in Italy. The European freephone emergency number is 112, which puts you through directly to the nearest police headquarters.**

■ **What to say when you call 140 in Austria and 118 in Italy**

- Supply precise information about the injured person/s (name, surname, residence) and the telephone number from which you are calling, if possible.
- Give details on the location of the accident or visual references that can help identify the spot easily, such as: mountain group, side, path, via ferrata, valley, channel, ledge, rest, crest, gully, etc...
- 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 aid the operation (people present, particular obstacles or difficulties etc.)
- Explain precisely how to reach the place where the accident happened, or where the injured person is.
- Indicate the presence of other people on the spot who witnessed the accident, and in particular, if they are able to help.

■ **Search interventions for missing or lost persons**

- Specify date and time of departure.
- Describe the method of transport used to reach the spot (if car, specify number plate, model, colour, appearance, characteristics etc.).
- Indicate destination and chosen route and/or probable or possible fixed objectives (hill walking, ferrata, climbing etc.).
- Give the number of walking or climbing companions and their hill-walking or mountaineering abilities and experience.
- Describe clothing (paying particular attention to colour) and materials and food supplies carried.
- Inform of any psychological, physical, family or social problems.
- Communicate information already given to other bodies and/or organisations.
- Supply any other useful information regarding the subject(s), location and general environmental conditions.

■ **Interventions in case of avalanche**

- As for previous points 1 and 2.
- Give the exact or presumed number of people swept away and the exact or presumed number of people buried.
- Specify the brand and model of apparatus used for searching the persons swept away by the avalanche.
- Identify the presence of any witnesses able to give an exact account of what happened:
 - If a visual-auditory- apparatus 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.);
 - objects already extracted and their position, as for previous point above.
 - other information and particulars that can help the intervention.

■ 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, i.e. 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, every 20 seconds, in a visual or audible way.

By acoustic signals, 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 or a wooden shelter).

The ever more frequent use of helicopters by Mountain Rescue has rendered new signalling methods necessary. Colourful sleeping bags or anoraks spread out on the ground, smoke signals or marks in the snow can aid location from above. The **SOS** rescue sign can be made with letters of 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 helicopter, you need to make the following signals with your arms or with lights at night:



Both arms raised and spread out or green light

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



Left arm raised and spread out, Right arm pointing down or 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 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!

Minimum impact

Hiking is one of the most pleasant and healthiest outdoor pursuits, but it also requires increasing awareness of the negative impact that it can have on nature and on the landscape. High in the mountains the mantle of humus is often very thin and the vegetation is extremely vulnerable to the damage caused by people walking over it: 3000 crossings of a stretch of alpine field in a year are enough to turn a grassy area into a barren terrain.

Hikers on the *High Altitude Trail* must do their best to avoid shortcuts to limit the effects of washing away of the waters and prevent unsettling the ground; they must also try not to go off the paths so as not to disturb wildlife, and to reduce noise pollution, particularly when crossing protected areas or biotopes of particular scientific importance. They should not leave rubbish behind, gather mushrooms, berries, flowers or fossils. If you have to light a fire, do so with extreme caution and only in appropriate areas.

High Altitude Trail badge

Hikers, once they arrive in Vittorio Veneto, can receive, free of charge, a special badge with the High Altitude Trail logo. To get this badge, you must go to the IAT (**Tourist Information and Assistance**) office in Piazza Duomo in Belluno, and present a sheet of paper with all the stamps from the refuges visited along the route (the stamps can also be left in the appropriate spaces in this guide).

Once hikers request the badge, they are also entered into the list of people who have completed the High Altitude Trail, and they can express their impressions of the route, and point out anything they think is lacking.

Table of itineraries

Itinerary	Departure point	Gradient in ascent	Gradient in descent	Time
High Altitude Trail Grossglockner-Monte Peralba				
Day 1	Glocknerhaus	700 m		4,30hrs
Day 2	Glorer Hütte	500 m		5,30hrs
Day 3	Elberfelder Hütte	600 m		4,00hrs
Day 4	Noßberger Hütte	500 m		4,30hrs
Day 5	Wangenitzsee Hütte	200 m		3,30hrs
Day 6	Winklerner Hütte	750 m	2,30 hrs +taxi	
Day 7	Karlsbader Hütte	300 m		4,30hrs
Day 8	St. Lorenzen	1200 m		5,00 hrs

The Dolomites "Alta Via" n.6 or Alta Via dei Silenzi

Day 1	Sorgenti del Piave	550 m	1150 m	4,00 hrs
Day 2	Sappàda	800 m	260 m	4,00hrs
Day 3	Rifugio De Gasperi	370 m	350 m	4,30hrs
Day 4	Rifugio Fabbro	500 m	1120 m	6,30hrs
Day 5	Rifugio Giàf	650 m	760 m	
Day 6	Rifugio Padova	980 m	400 m	4,30hrs
Day 7	Bivacco Laghèt de sòra	800 m	750 m	8,00hrs
Day 8	Bivacco Greselin	350 m	1620 m	8,00hrs
Day 9	Cimolais	1620 m	150 m	7,00hrs
Day10	Ricovero Col Nudo	1200 m	1300 m	6,30hrs
Day 11	Rifugio Semenza	430 m	2300 m	9,00hrs



High Altitude Trail Grossglockner-Monte Peralba

By Günter Mussnig and Ernst Rieger

Technical details

Itinerary

Departure Point:	from the "Glocknerhaus" at the foot of the Gro_glockner
Arrival Point:	Hochwei_stein Haus (Austria), Rifugio Calvi (Italy)
Walking days:	8
Route Length:	about 100 kilometres
Refuges on the main route:	8
Bivouacs on the main route:	1
Refreshments on the way:	11
Longest stretch:	the 2nd, about 5,30 hours.
Shortest stretch:	the 6th, about 2,30 hours.
Total time required (excluding variants):	about 33 hours
Difficulty:	T3,average difficulty; a stretch of T4, difficult
Total gradient in ascent:	about 6200 metres
Total gradient in descent:	about 6000 metres
Maximum gradient in ascent:	1650m, from Lienz (possible taxi)
Maximum gradient in descent:	1230m, to Lienz (possible taxi)
Maximum altitude :	Hornscharte, 2958m
Minimum altitude :	Lienz, 637m
Mountain Groups involved :	4
Recommended period :	from the end of June to the middle of September
Signs:	Good everywhere

Recommended maps (in order of use)

Tabacco maps 1:25.000

n. 40 "Glocknergruppe", Alpenvereinskarte, dalla Glocknerhaus alla Glerer Hütte;

n. 41 "Schobergruppe", Alpenvereinskarte, from the Glerer Hütte to Lienz;

Tabacco maps 1:50.000

n. 182 "Lienzer Dolomiten und Lesachtal", Freytag & Berndt, Kompass Karte, da Karte

n. 47 "Lienzer Dolomiten und Lesachtal", Kompass Karte, from Lienz to the Sorgenti del Piave

Description of the walks

Day one

■ From the Glocknerhaus to the Salmhütte and the Glerer Hütte

Time required:	4,30 hours
Maximum altitude:	Glatzschneid, 2660m
Gradient in ascent:	c.700m
Difficulty:	Red (EE, Expert Hikers)
Path:	N.741
Maps:	Alpenvereinskarte n.40, Glocknergruppe, 1: 25,000

The itinerary suggested leaves from nearby the renovated *Glocknerhaus* Alpine Centre, located right on the Gletscherstraße (Road of the Glaciers) to the *Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe*, a part of the *Alta Via del Großglockner* (*Großglockner Hochalpenstraße*)

The *Glocknerhaus* is located in the municipal territory of *Heiligenbut*, and a short stay immersed in the marvellous alpine world of the *Hohe Tauern* National Park before setting out on the long route is highly recommended. It is certainly a good idea to prepare yourself for the itinerary with some acclimatization trips around Heiligenbut. You can find tourist information about Heiligenbut from: Tourismusverband Heiligenbut, Hof 4, A-9844 Heiligenblut - Tel: ++43 (0) 48242001 21 - Fax: ++43 (0) 48242001 43 - Mail: office@heiligenblut.at - Web: www.heiligenblut.at

To get from Heiligenbut to the departure point of the route, the *Glocknerhaus*, take the local buses (which stop right outside the *Glocknerhaus*). The refuge, owned by the Klagenfurt Section of the Austrian Alpine Club, is a pulpit over the *Großglockner*. It offers all the comforts of a modern refuge, as well as various information points.

The *Glocknerhaus*, 2132m, owned by the Klagenfurt Section of the Austrian Alpine Club, is open from mid-May to mid-October, and is particularly interesting



Mouth of the „Pasterzengletscher“ glacier with the Großglockner in the background

from the point of view of mountaineering history. Building began in 1875; a year later, on the 17th of August 1876, the *Glocknerhaus* was officially opened, and at that time it was just above the gigantic *Pasterze* glacier. During the period of growth of mountaineering, the refuge was indispensable for access to the *Großglockner* area from the Carinthia side. The growing number of visitors, however, meant that the *Glocknerhaus* had to be restructured and extended, most recently between 2001 and 2003. As the glacier retreated (today it can no longer be seen from the refuge), the *Glocknerhaus* certainly lost for a time its significance for mountaineers, but in recent decades it has regained its role as the most important departure point for the climb up the *Großglockner* from Carinthia. But also the famous - *Pasterze* (Ice Path), a themed route of the Austrian Alpine Club in the National Park, starts out from here and leads directly to the tongue of the largest glacier in the Western Alps, the *Pasterze* (you can buy the nature guide at the *Glocknerhaus*). Refuge Tel: 0043 (0) 4824 24666. Fax: 0043 (0) 4824 24668

(www.glocknerhaus.com, info@glocknerhaus.com)

Beds in dormitory: 48. Mattresses in dormitory: 40. Winter bivouac with 8 places.

Some information panels of the National Park describe the route for the glacier and the climb to the *Großglockner*.

Follow the *Gletscherweg* and *Salmhütte* signs. The path leads, with a gradient of 130m in descent, to the two large containing walls of the *Margaritzensperre*. Beyond the summit crests of both walls you enter into the protected area of the National Park. Then you come to a fork and from here you follow the path towards the *Stockerscharte* and the *Salmhütte*. Now the path turns to the right and goes gently up the alpine pastures. The view towards the *Großglockner* and the *Pasterze* glacier becomes progressively more spectacular. Near the little lake *Am Seele*, 2230m, mostly dry, the path becomes considerably steeper. From here the route leads through a rocky flank towards the *Stockerscharte* saddle, 2501m.

About **1,30 hours**

The view from the saddle is breathtaking: the *Großglockner* is splendid and the *Pasterze*, the biggest glacier in the Western Alps, 9km long and with a surface of 18km square, spreads out at your feet. Other extraordinary icy mountains, such as the *Johannisberg*, 3453m, or the *Hohe Sonnblick*, 3105m, complete the superb view.

The first part of the stretch of path which follows is delicate and requires great care, since the sides of the valley sweep down for hundreds of metres until the bed of the *Leiterbach*.

Then there is a stretch secured by a fixed rope.

Be careful when the ground is wet, or covered with ice or snow.

The path soon widens, the walls open out, and the road, almost parallel to the rock layers, leads you towards the *Salmhütte*, 2644m.

The *Salmhütte*, owned by the Vienna Section of the Austrian Alpine Club, is an important structure for the climb to the *Großglockner*. It is not only the favourite base for those climbing the *Großglockner*, but it was a decisive factor for the first ascent of the highest mountain in Austria in 1800. *Salmhütte*, 2644m, Vienna Section of the Austrian Alpine Club. Refuge tel: 0043 (0) 4824/2089 Valley telephone 0043 (0) 4824/2089 Refuge fax: 0043 (0) 4824/2089. Open from mid-June to the end of September. Dormitory with 25 beds. Dormitory with 25 mattresses. Winter bivouac with 6 places.



Hikers high above the "Leitertal" valley on the path for the „Salmhütte" refuge.

When, in 1799, the Prince Bishop of Carinthia, Count Salm-Reiffenscheid, took his first expedition to the *Großglockner*, he ordered the building of the first *Salmhütte* at the foot of the *Leiterkees*.

Then, it was the first alpine refuge in the Western Alps. After the successful ascent of the *Großglockner*, during the "Second Salmic Expedition" in 1800, the refuge fell into disrepair, in spite of some improvements and extensions. In 1850, the Klagenfurt section built the second *Salmhütte* at the foot of the *Schwerteks*, by means of an artificial cave, as an emergency shelter. However, as a result of continual flooding, the refuge was abandoned again. The remains of the refuge (the cave) can still be seen on the path leading from the present *Salmhütte* to the *Hohenwartscharte*, 2700m.

In 1912 the Vienna section decided to build a "new *Salmhütte*" in the immediate vicinity of the original. In 1913 building began on the present *Salmhütte*. The First World War halted all the reconstruction plans, but on the 7th of July 1929 the "new *Salmhütte*" was finally inaugurated and opened.

If, enchanted by the view over the *Großglockner*, you decide you want to climb the highest mountain in Austria, you must already have the necessary equipment with you, and you must have an Alpine Guide accompany you.

You can find information for guided tourist hikes on the *Großglockner* from: Heiligenbut Guides Association : A-9844 Heiligenblut, Hof 4.
Tel.: ++43 (0) 4824 2700. Fax: ++43 (0) 4824 2700-4
(www.grossglockner-bergfuehrer.at , grossglockner-bergfuehrer@8ung.at).
WEB: www.grossglockner-bergfuehrer/.at

Day two

■ From the Glorier Hütte to the Elberfelder Hütte

Time required:	about 5,30 hours
Maximum altitude:	Kesselkees Sattel, 2926m
Gradient in ascent:	500m
Difficulty:	Red (EE, Expert Hikers)
Path:	N.713, 918
Maps:	Alpenvereinskarte n.41, Schobergruppe, 1: 25,000

From the Glorier Hütte, leave the *Großglockner* group and enter the spectacular, solitary Schobergruppe, with its wonderful views over the south side of the *Hohe Tauern*. This day is a long one, and it is recommended that you leave very early from the *Glorier Hütte*. From here, follow the *Wiener Höhenweg* on the *Peischlach Törl* signs and go round the *Kasteneck*, 2284m, to the west, where care is required in winter when crossing some snow-covered channels.

Towards the *Höhenkote*, 2570m, the ground becomes rougher and you soon reach the *Peischlach Törl*, 2490m, near which there is an unstaffed shelter.

1,30 hours from the *Glorier Hütte*.

In this area, the morphological characteristics change considerably, because the path leaves the above-mentioned *Matreier Schuppenzone* and goes into an area of different geological formations. In the coming days, you will be passing through a landscape of much darker rock formations, and the environment will become harsher.

The *Peischlach Törl* is also an important point because it is here that you leave the *Glocknergruppe* and enter the *Schobergruppe*.



From here a longer climb takes you towards the Kesselkees Sattel, c.3000m. The path goes past a very peculiar passage, with little valleys, basins and boulders, before the frozen lake of the Peischlach Kees.

Here you will find yourself, all of a sudden, in high mountain territory, and the path becomes noticeably worse. It takes you above the detritus at the edge of the glacier right to the Kesselkees Sattel, 2926m. The saddle is reached from the Peischlach Törl in about **1,30 hour**.

At the saddle is the fixed bivouac “Gernot Röhr”, which offers shelter in the event of bad weather.

From the Kesselkees Sattel there is a very long descent into the upper Gö_nitztal towards the Elberfelder Hütte. The first metres of the saddle are particularly steep, and rather difficult when there is snow; there is a fixed rope to aid this passage.

High above the so-called Tramerkar, if you get down a little you will just be able to see the little Tramersee, a jewel in this harsh environment. It seems as if an enormous river of rock, a glacier in blocks coming down from the Kristall Kopf, formed the retaining wall of the lake.

The path which follows leads to the Tramer Bach, which comes out of the little lake. From here there is a particularly beautiful view of the large overhanging glacier of the west wall of the Roter Kopf, 3281m. From here, the imposing rock fortress of the Roter Kopf seems difficult and inaccessible.

For a bit, the path runs along the base of the steep east wall of the Roter Kopf and at the end of the Gö_nitztal, finally crosses a little bridge over the sparkling, wild Gö_nitzbach. A few minutes’ climb will take you to the nearby Elberfelder Hütte, 2346m, which nestles in a superb landscape of rounded humps, smoothed into shape by the glacier.

You can reach the Elberfelder Hütte in about **2 hours** from the Kesselkees Sattel.

The *Elberfelder Hütte*, 2346m, is owned by the Elberfeld Section of the German Alpine Club, and is open from the beginning of July to the middle of September. It offers basic hotel services, with 12 beds in a dormitory and 46 mattresses, plus 5 places in the winter bivouac; Refuge Tel: 0043 (0) 4824/2545; email: blackhill65@yahoo.com; website: www.alpenverein.wtal.de/huette

The refuge bears the name of Elberfeld, a suburb of the large city of Wuppertal, in Nordrhein – Westphalia. The outbreak of World War One meant that building was postponed until 1925. After two years' work, on the 8th of August 1928, it was inaugurated. Today, the *Elberfelder Hütte* is a modern refuge, which has obtained the environmental quality stamp of the German Alpine Club.

Day three

■ From the Elberfelder Hütte to the Adolf Noßberger Hütte

Time required:	4 hours
Maximum altitude:	Klammerscharte, 2930m
Gradient in ascent:	600m
Difficulty:	Red and Black (EE, Expert Hikers and EEA Expert Hikers with Equipment)
Path:	N.921
Maps:	Alpenvereinskarte n.41, Schobergruppe, 1: 25,000

This stage is the highest point on the route, and also covers the most difficult stretch from a mountaineering point of view. You have a choice of two variants, neither of which is easy:

- 1- pass the ice-covered area of the *Klammerscharte*, 2930m, between the *Klammerköpfen* and the *Hornköpfen*;
- 2- conquer to the north-east the *Hornscharte*, 2958m, extraordinarily steep, between the *Großer Hornkopf* and the *Kreuzkopf*

Before choosing a route, it is imperative that you find out from the manager of the *Elberfelder Hütte* about the condition of the tracks. Generally speaking, the following rule of thumb is valid: at the beginning of the summer, until a layer of “*firm*” (hardened spring snow) covers the *Gößnitzkees* and this glacier allows you to climb up to the *Klammerscharte*, the first option is preferable. Later on in the summer, as the snow disappears, the *Hornscharte* variant is better, because the ice has melted, although it is steeper. Both variants are described below.

From the *Elderfelder Hütte*, follow the marked path through the clearly marked edges of the glacier and the head of the *Gößnitztal*, dominated by the seven peaks of the *Klammerköpfe*, separated from each other by extremely steep snow-filled channels. You soon reach a fork, from where you follow the track towards east, marked as *Klammerscharte*.



Now the path winds its way steeply up and crosses the base of the long, broken north-west crest of the *Großer Hornkopf*, 3251m, and finally reaches the edge of the glacier in an area scattered with morainic rocks.

The high mountain landscape inspires the profound respect of the traveller. The *Gößnitzkees* sweeps steeply down towards the bottom of the narrow passage of the *Klammerscharte*, bordered by dark rock walls and snow-covered channels.

N.B.! Especially when the glacier becomes exposed, crevasses open up, and a fall here could have fatal consequences. Climbers attempting this route should therefore have some experience of glaciers, as well as appropriate equipment (crampons, ice-axes, securing ropes; difficulty level EEA)

If you follow this advice, crossing of the *Klammerscharte* is sure to be an unforgettable mountaineering experience. The climb up the glacier, which is very steep, is accompanied by an increasingly striking landscape ; particularly impressive is the nearby *Roter Kopf*, 3281m, and then the *Großglockner*, 3798m.

You finally reach, in the steepest part of the glacier, some recently positioned metal safety ropes which, along the north edge of the branch of the glacier which here almost becomes a couloir, lead directly to the narrow rock window of the *Klammerscharte*, 2930m.

2,30 hours from the *Elberfelder Hütte*.

The view from the narrow rock breccia of the *Klammerscharte* is surprisingly wide, out over the nearest valley opening, of the *Gradental*. Down below are the sparkling waters of the *Großer Gradensee*. This splendid high mountain lake marks the end of the third day, because on its banks lies the little *Adolf Noßberger Hütte*, although it is not yet visible at this point.

The descent from the *Klammerscharte* to the *Großer Gradensee* goes down through an alluvial channel, initially narrow and steep, in the upper part of which you can find snow until late in the summer. For this reason, the descent must be tackled with caution. The first metres at the top are, however, made easier by fixed ropes on the right edge of the channel (in the downward sense). N.B.! The ropes are often covered with snow and/or ice.

Crampons and an ice-axe are necessary if the snow in the channel is hard. Hereafter the

channel becomes wider and less steep.

Over gravelly ground, you soon reach a recently created winding track. You are now near a fork near the shore of the lake. From here the channel of rubble and snow which sweeps down from the *Klammerscharte* appears extraordinarily steep and high.

Follow the marked path towards the nearby *Adolf Noßberger Hütte*, savouring the last minutes' walk along the banks of the lake.

The view around the lake, here in the heart of the National Park, is marvellous. If you want to enjoy it for a little longer, you can go along the path round the lake, but if you prefer to reach the day's destination straight away, you will soon find yourself at the little *Adolf Noßberger Hütte*.

1,30 hours from the *Klammerscharte*.

4 hours from the *Elberfelder Hütte*

Variant I

The *Hornscharte* is the "ceiling", i.e. the highest point of the *Wiener Höhenweg*, and indeed of the whole of the *Europa High-Altitude Trail 6*. The view from here is truly breathtaking; from no other saddle does the *Großglockner* appear so solitary and imposing.



On the „Hornscharte“ saddle (2.958m); Großglockner in the background (3.798m)

The climb towards the *Hornscharte* begins moderately and follows the marked path in an easterly direction. It goes past a stream and reaches a fork. The following upward path (*Hornscharte signpost*), well marked, leads to a marvellous, wide high mountain basin. Here, you will be enchanted by the lovely rock horn of the *Kögele*, 3030m, the imposing *Hornkees* and the gigantic rock bastion of the *Großer Hornkopf*, 3251m.

You will easily recognise the narrow rock window of the *Hornscharte*, 2958m, located on the crest which links the *Kreuzkopf*, 3013m, and the *Großer Hornkopf*.

At first the path leads easily north along the steep *Hornkees*, until, just under the saddle, you reach a steep area. Some steps in the rock are secured with fixed ropes. Finally, following a tiring, crumbly stretch, you climb briefly up to the exposed saddle. N.B.! In snowy or icy conditions, this stretch must not be underestimated.

The climb to the *Hornscharte*, 2958m, from the *Elberfelder Hütte* takes about **2,30 hours**.



Dawn over the peak of the Petzeck (3.283m), the Großglockner (3.798m) rises up in the distance

The descent which follows (from the *Hornscharte* into the *Gradental*) is one of the most difficult passages of the whole route, and therefore requires great care. The view towards the saddle is daunting; an extremely steep snow-covered channel sweeps down into a solitary glacial cirque.

A fixed rope leads directly from the saddle to an exposed rock mass towards an obvious ramp, on the rocks on the left edge in the direction of a steep snow-covered channel. The fixed rope runs along the wall which reaches the glacial cirque.

At the beginning of the summer, this ramp and the safety ropes may be covered with snow, which means you have to descend along the steep channel, exposed to falling stones.

In this case it is better to choose the *Klammerscharte* variant.

At the end of the ropes, you climb down on the rocks of the snow-covered channel, which is no longer so narrow and steep, and soon reach the glacial cirque under the saddle at an altitude of 2629m.

The following descent is a little easier, but is also steep. Now you can enjoy the superb view of the nearby rocky peaks: *Großer Friedrichskopf* (3134m), *Georgskopf* (3090m) and the *Petzeck* (3283m) with its gigantic north-east wall. The track crosses a large stream

and runs down along two evident rock crest discharges of the *Großer Hornkopf* (3251m), until it reaches a fork at 2346m. N.B.! Here you follow the signs for the *Adolf Nossberger Hütte* for about 150m. The path is good and leads to numerous little alpine lakes. The small refuge appears on the shore of the *Großer Gradensee*.

5 hours from the Elberfelder; gradient c.800m. Difficulty: Black (EEA)

The *Adolf Nossberger Hütte*, 2488m, owned by the *Wiener Lehrer* Section of the Austrian Alpine Club, is open from the beginning of June to the end of September, and offers basic hotel services. 14 beds, 22 mattresses, 2 places in the winter bivouac. Refuge Tel: ++43 (0) 664/9841835 (www.nossberger.at), roland@nossberger.at)

The history of the “*Wiener Lehrer*” Section is indissolubly linked with the opening up of the *Schobergruppe* to mountaineers. A group of teachers with a common passion for the mountains wanted to transmit their enthusiasm to their students, so they founded the “*Lehrer-Touristenklub*” (Teacher-Tourist Club) in Vienna in 1874. The Association later became part of the Austrian Alpine Club in 1911, because it was clear that its members were keen to help open up the Alps to climbers, even by creating refuges and paths, and looking after their territory.

Since 1914, the south-west part of the *Schobergruppe*, and since 1925 also the *Gradental*, have been looked after by the “*Wiener Lehrer*” Section. It was not until paths were made across the *Niedere Gradenscharte* in 1928,

and then the *Wiener Hohenweg* was created in 1933, that the *Schobergruppe* opened up to climbers. In the intervening years, from 1928 to 1931, the *Adolf Noßberger Hütte* (at that time called the *Gradenseehütte*) was built. The refuge was named after the then Chairman of the “*Wiener Lehrer*” Section, Adolf Noßberger (1881-1946), because of his huge efforts to create numerous mountain and climbing itineraries in the *Schobergruppe*.

Day four

■ From the Adolf Noßberger Hütte to the Wangenitzsee Hütte

Time required:	4,30 hours
Maximum altitude:	Niedere Gradenscharte, 2796m
Gradient in ascent:	500m
Difficulty:	Red (EE)
Path:	N.918
Maps:	Alpenvereinskarte n.41, Schobergruppe, 1: 25,000

The *Adolf Noßberger Hütte* lies in the heart of the *Schobergruppe* and is separated from the other refuges by high and sometimes difficult saddles. For this reason, the paths from the *Elberfelder Hütte* to the *Adolf Noßberger Hütte*, and then on to the *Wangenitzsee Hütte*, are the most difficult stretches of the whole route.

Niedere Gradenscharte(lower passage)

Here we will describe in detail only the variant which goes via the *Niedere Gradenscharte*, because, although it is a longer route, it offers many advantages: from a mountaineering point of view it is considerably less difficult, and above all depends less on the conditions of the weather and the ground. So the *Niedere Gradenscharte*, unlike the *Hohe Gradenscharte*, can be crossed without particular risks, even in fresh snow. A further advantage is that it is close to a splendid peak: *Keeskopf*, 3081m, which can be reached with just a little more effort.

You begin with a meditative walk along the shore of the *Großer Gradensee*, until you come to a fork you passed by the day before coming down from the *Klammerscharte*. Now follow the

“*Niedere Gradenscharte*” indication, and immediately cross a stream. Immediately afterwards the ground becomes very steep, but the path is well marked and you go up without great difficulty. At the beginning of the summer there are snowfields and an ice-axe is necessary. The climb up the east slope is a real pleasure; after all the stones and gravel of the previous days, it is wonderful to be able to walk over the rock plates smoothed by the glacier.

To the right of the climb the torrent of the glacier of the *Klammer Kees* cascades down, and the view downwards to the turquoise waters of the *Großer Gradensee* becomes more striking with every step you take. Soon the lake disappears from sight.

You now cross an extraordinary passage smoothed by the glacier, which nestles amidst a spectacular range of peaks. The view extends out over the numerous *Klammerkopf*, the *Großer Hornkopf*, the *Petzack*, the isolated *Friedrichskopf* and the “twins” *Perschitzkopf* and *Kruckelkopf*.

You can enjoy these peaks, as the path runs across slightly sloping ground down into a large depression full of little lakes, covered until late in the summer with a thick layer of ice. You walk close to the lakes, and soon come to the col of the *Niedere Gradenscharte*, 2796m, which sweeps steeply down into the *Debanttal*.

About **1,30 hours** from the *Adolf Noßberger Hütte* to the saddle.

The descent from the *Niedere Gradenscharte* is very steep and rocky at the beginning. A fixed rope guides you down directly from the saddle over the rocks into a small glacial cirque. The descent is aided, at the steepest points, by iron ladders; in dry weather it should not present particular problems. Out of the above-mentioned glacial cirque the stretch of path which follows leads, with numerous sharp bends, to some large boulders. A steep uphill path takes you to the so-called *Steinkar*. You soon meet a fork, and follow the signs for the *Wangenitzsee Hütte*. The route now crosses the steep slopes under the *Weißwandspitzen*, where the ground is steeper and requires particular care. In the most exposed passages there are fixed ropes to help you.

The steepness of the ground diminishes and you reach the



Lightweight bridge over the bank of the „Wangenitzsee“ lake

Perschitz Kar, one of the most solitary points of the hike: the glacial cirque is completely isolated at the foot of the rock walls of the imposing *Perschitz Kopf*.

You cross the glacial cirque with its large boulders and come to a fork on its northern edge. The *Hohe Gradenscharte* path, much more difficult, arrives here. Proceed upwards on a distinct rocky ramp until you reach the *Kreuzseeschartel*, 2750m, once again on the main crest of the *Schobergruppe*.

About **2 hours** from the *Niedere Gradenscharte*.

The day ends at the *Wangenitzsee*, because on the banks of the lake is the *Wangenitzsee Hütte*. The descent from the *Kreuzseeschartel* to the refuge is not difficult and is a very pleasant walk at the end of a very long day. The good path leads down to the valley with many sharp bends and there are splendid views over the lakes. The track finally leads to the bank of the *Kreuzsee* on flat ground and on to the large *Wangenitzsee Hütte*.

1 hour from the *Kreuzseeschartel*

The *Wangenitzsee Hütte*, 2508m, is owned by the “Royal Dutch Sport Club for Climbing and Mountains”. It is open from the end of June until the middle of September. 25 beds in dormitory, 38 mattresses in dormitory. Winter bivouac with 16 places. Refuge tel: 0043 (0)4826229

The *Wangenitzsee Hütte* has a very interesting and varied history, and is the only refuge in the Alps which belongs to the “Royal Dutch Sport Club for Climbing and Mountains”. The “Moravia” Section of the German Alpine Club, founded on the 15th of February 1882 in Brunn, bought the operative area from the ex Haida Section of the German Alpine Club on the 25th of May 1924. Soon afterwards the Section began building the *Wangenitzsee Hütte*, and the new refuge was inaugurated on the 8th of August 1927. After the troubles of the Second World War, it was completely destroyed by fire in 1947, and in the 1960s the Austrian Alpine Club asked its Holland Section to work on the reconstruction of the *Wangenitzsee Hütte*. Between 1964 and 1966 the refuge was rebuilt and extended. In 1998 the Holland Section broke away from the Austrian Alpine Club and founded its own alpine club, “Royal Dutch Sport Club for Climbing and Mountains”.

Day five

■ From the Wangenitzsee Hütte to the Winklerner Hütte

Time required:	3,30 hours
Maximum altitude:	Obere Seescharte, 2604m
Gradient in ascent:	c.200m
Difficulty:	Red (EE),brief equipped stretch
Path:	918
Maps:	Alpenvereinskarte n.41, Schobergruppe, 1: 25,000

The fifth day of the *Europa High-Altitude Trail 6* in Austria is the last in the *Hohe Tauern* National Park and on the *Wiener Höhenweg*. The route goes across a saddle on the main crest of the *Schobergruppe*, the *Obere Seescharte*, 2064m, into the *Debantal* and then to the *Winklerner Hütte*, which is on the south edge of the *Schobergruppe* and all of the *Hohe Tauern*.

The good path takes you firstly onto flat ground among the large lakes, and then across an overhanging bridge to the south bank of the *Wangenitzsee*. Now the path becomes steeper. A brief exposed passage



From the „Obere Seescharte“ saddle (2.604m), view over the „Wangenitzsee“ lake and the „Wangenitzsee Hütte“ refuge (2.508m)

is secured by a fixed rope; then there are some hairpin bends above a rubble-covered slope which take you to the *Obere Seescharte*, 2604m.

From here, round numerous hairpin bends, you go down to the valley until *Gaislitz Bach*. The last stretch of path for the *Winklerner Hütte* is, compared to the previous part, a comfortable walk through a wonderful landscape of alpine pastures. From now on, continue slightly downwards, cross numerous little streams and enjoy the brilliant green of the pastureland. The splendid view covers all the large peaks of the Southern *Schobergruppe*.

The 360° view covers to the west the imposing *Schleitniz*, the “local mountains” of Lienz, less than 3000m high, then the bold *Alkuser Rotspitze* and the north-west corner pillar, the *Hochschober*, which towers above everything. Here the mountain chain turns to the north-east and no longer goes down any lower than 3000m. It leads to the rounded, snow-covered hump of the *Kleiner Schober*, the rocky peaks of the *Debantgrat* which seem inaccessible, but are

actually quite easy to climb, and the dark rock horn of the *Ralfkopf*, which is certainly an extraordinary peak, but which cannot compete with the splendour of its neighbours, the *Hochschober* to the west and the *Glödis* to the east. Only the north-east part of the peaks of the *Debanttal* is not clearly visible from here.

The path becomes wider and comes out onto a mule-track on the alpine pasture. Now you are not far from the *Raneralm Hütte*, 1903m, (privately owned, overnight accommodation not available), where you can have a rest. From here a small saddle and a few minutes' walk will take you to the day's stop-off point, the *Winklerner Hütte*, owned by the Winklern Section of the Austrian Alpine Club, which can be reached in **2 hours**.

The *Winklerner Hütte*, 1905m, owned by the Winklern Section of the Austrian Alpine Club, is open from the beginning of June until the end of September and offers basic hotel services with 30 mattresses in dormitory, no beds. Refuge tel: 0043 (0)664 2333081 (winklernerHuetten@gmx.at)

The *Winklerner Hütte* nestles amidst an idyllic landscape of alpine pastures and it is also open at weekends in winter. From here, the *Strasskopf* (2401m) offers a first-class ski mountaineering destination.

Day six

From the Winklerner Hütte to the Karlsbader Hütte

Time required:	2,30 hours, taxi transfer from the Winklerner Hütte to the Dolomiten Hütte
Maximum altitude:	Karlsbader Hütte, 2260m
Gradient:	c.750m
Difficulty:	Black (EEA)
Path:	N.14
Maps:	Freytag und Berndt: “Lienzer Dolomiten-Lesachtal”, Wanderkarte 182, 1:50,000

New horizons await you with the traverse of two mountain groups which belong to the Southern Calcareous Alps : the *Lienzer Dolomiten* and the Carnic Alps. On the main crest of the Carnic Alps you will leave Austria and enter Italy.

Day Six is an unusual day, because you go beyond the great valley basin of Lienz, which separates the *Lienzer Dolomiten* from the *Hohe Tauern*. We recommend, assuming you do not want to waste time, that you take a taxi from the *Winklerner Hütte* to the carpark at the *Dolomiten Hütte*, which is the departure point. If you prefer to make do without the taxi, you will have to add on an extra day, because the descent from the *Winklerner Hütte* to the main road and the bus stop at Iselberg takes two hours. From here you get the bus for Lienz, with a connection for Tristach, where the climb to the *Dolomitenhütte* begins (a further two hours' walk).

Below is described the variant with the taxi and the climb to the *Karlsbader Hütte*. The manager of the *Winklerner Hütte* can help you book a taxi for the early morning.

Go down a good road until you meet the main state road at *Iselberg* (border between Carinthia and Tyrol), and then again towards Tristach, where the climb begins towards the carpark of the *Dolomitenhütte* (toll road from the *Gasthof Kreithof*). After about an hour you reach the carpark, at 1600m. Here, in the shadow of the imposing north wall of the *Laserzwand*, the day six route really begins.

From the carpark, after a few minutes, you pass the *Dolomitenhütte*, 1620m, always open, privately owned, no overnight accommodation available. Continue on the wide road and soon afterwards you will reach a fork, where the so-called *Rudl-Eller-Steig* starts.

This variant to get to the *Karlsbader Hütte*, the stop-off point of day six, is much more challenging than the normal way which runs near the carriage road; but if you have followed the *Wiener Höhenweg* route until here, you can undoubtedly cope with the "*Rudl-Eller-Steig*".

Follow the marked path above a steep grassy slope until you come to a large saddle : the *Weißsteinsattel*, 1747m, with many alpine huts. The view over the northern precipices of the *Lasezkessel* from here is simply breathtaking. The path leads up above a light crest through an idyllic pastureland landscape towards the splendid *Hexenboden* (Witches' Territory), in a wonderful larch wood. The path adapts to the wild environment. What has been until now a comfortable path through pastureland now becomes steep and exposed in places and

passes many small reliefs among large mugo pines. Brief passages are aided by fixed ropes, before you pass the *Zellinschartl*, 2070m, and start the hardest part of the "*Rudl-Eller-Steig*".

A steep channel-chimney (with a fixed rope) climbs upwards and continues on sloping rock plates (fixed rope, iron stirrups) until the beginning of a detritus ramp. You now find yourself directly under the north wall of the *Große Laserzwand*, 2614m, 600m high, almost vertical. This is the rock climbers' Eldorado; if you are lucky you might catch a glimpse of a roped party.

Now you go up the fairly tiring detritus ramp, where you must be careful not to dislodge stones. Soon you will come to a narrow rock window, the *Hohes Törl*, 2233m, the highest point on the "*Rudl-Eller-Steig*".

From the *Hohe Törl*, the path leads steeply down the precipice. A metal rope and some steps aid the descent; then you must quickly cross the precipice, because it is exposed to falling stones. Now the terrain becomes less difficult and you walk at the foot of the *Kleine Lazerswand*.

After crossing a brief rocky channel, you go down onto the carriage-road which leads from the *Dolomitenhütte* to the *Karlsbader Hütte*, 2260m. From here you can see today's stop-off point, the *Karlsbader Hütte*, at the centre of an imposing high mountain basin, near the *Laserzkar*.

The refuge can be reached in about **2,30 hours** along the carriage road from the *Dolomitenhütte*.

The *Karlsbader Hütte*, 2260m, belongs to the Karlsbad Section of the German Alpine Club, and is open from mid-June to the end of September. Beds in rooms: 40; mattresses in dormitory: 62. Winter bivouac with 4 places, always open. Refuge tel 0043 (0)664 9759998 Valley tel 0043(0)664 9759998

The superb surroundings, in the midst of a large number of fabulous mountains to climb, including the *Laserzwand* (2614m), the bold *Rote Turm* (2702m), the *Große Sandspitze* (2772m), the highest peak of the Lienzer Dolomiten, the level *Seekofel* (2744m) and the towered *Teplitzer Spitze* (2614m), explain why the *Karlsbader Hütte* is one of the best-loved meeting points for climbers in the whole of Austria.

Day seven

From the Karlsbader Hütte to the Lesachtal

Time required:	about 3,30 hours (plus another hour on the road until St. Lorenzen, if you prefer not to take a taxi).
Maximum altitude:	Kerschbaumertörl, 2285m
Gradient in ascent:	c.300m
Difficulty:	Red (EE)
Path:	213, 215
Maps:	Wanderkarte 182, 1:50,000

This stage also offers extraordinarily beautiful views, and brings you very close to the rocky peaks of the *Lienzer Dolomiten*. What is more, you can enjoy this stretch of path as much as you like because there are no exposed or difficult parts.

You start at the *Karlsbader Hütte* with a brief descent along the path marked "*Kerschbaumer Törl*" and then you walk alongside imposing rocky peaks, such as the *Teplitzer Spitze* and the *Kerschbaumer Törlspitz*. Finally you go up quite steeply round some hairpin bends until the marked notch of the Kerschbaumer Törl, 2285m, with its enclosure for cattle, an hour's walk from the *Karlsbader Hütte*.

A brief, but steep descent soon leads to a fork. From here, follow the path marked "*Zochenpaß*" which leads immediately down through pleasant fields to the foot of the imposing *Simonskopf*.

This green, grassy ridge (it is also known as *Mauererboden*) is splendid ground to walk on and leads directly onto the *Zochenpaß*, 2260m, the second pass of this day (45 minutes from the *Kerschbaumer Törl*). This pass also offers a splendid view, and the Carnic Alps, the last natural obstacle on the way, appear particularly fascinating.

From the *Zochenpaß*, follow the path diagonally west, towards a flat, green terrace. From here you enter into a steeper area, where the well-traced path leads downwards, with numerous hairpin bends. At the foot of this steep slope (also called *Ochsenlahner*), you go into the thick



From the „Kerschbaumer Törl“ (2.285m), view over the „Karlsbader Hütte“ refuge (2.260m)

of a wonderful larch wood, the so-called *Zochenwald*. Through the wood the trail leads out of the *Wildsendergraben* to a fork at which you go onto a large carriage-road. A two-hour descent from the *Zochenpaß* leads to the *Terme* (Spa area) *Tuffbad*, 1262m, today's stop-off point.

3,30 hours from the *Karlsbader Hütte*

Although the spa area (the waters of which are recommended for those suffering from rheumatism or metabolism disorders) and the hotel next to it offer peaceful overnight accommodation (book rooms in advance), the accommodation services at *St Lorenzen in Lesachtal*, 1128m, seem more suitable as a departure point for the following day (climb to the Carnic Alps). Therefore you must arrange for a taxi at *Tuffbad*, assuming that, after a long day's walking, you wish to avoid a further tedious three kilometres' walk along the tarmac road.

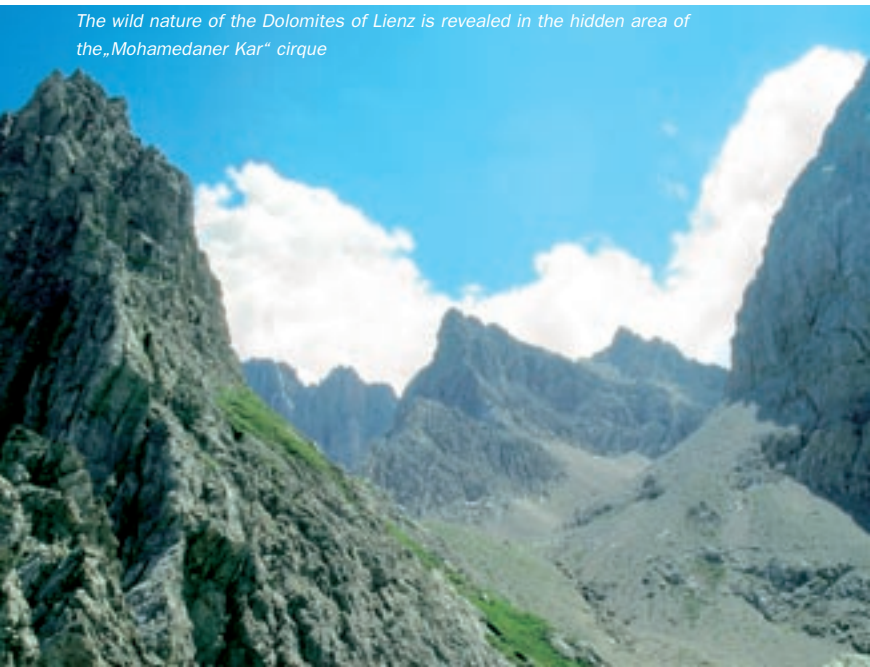
Day eight

■ From St Lorenzen to the Hochweißsteinhaus and the Rifugio Calvi

Time required:	5 hours
Maximum altitude:	Hochalpljoch, 2280m
Gradient in ascent:	600m from the Frohntal, 1200m from the bottom of the valley
Difficulty:	Red (EE)
Path:	448, 449
Maps:	Freytag und Berndt: „Lienzer Dolomiten-Lesachtal“, Wanderkarte 182, 1:50,000

Day eight is a special day, because you will be leaving Austria and setting foot in Italy, on the *Hochalpljoch* pass, 2280m, where, with the Carnic Alps, you go over a second chain of the calcareous Alps.

The wild nature of the Dolomites of Lienz is revealed in the hidden area of the „Mohamedaner Kar“ cirque



In the *Lesachtal*, which some years ago was chosen as “European Landscape of the Year”, you will encounter a harmonious culture, marked by a kind of mountain agriculture that you rarely find in the Alps. Those interested should set aside a day to stop in St Lorenzen and visit the Sanctuary of Maria Luggau, 1179m, which is just four kilometres away from the *Osttirol*, a magnificent example of gothic architecture with a splendid Baroque interior. Next to the chapel is the large convent of the *Serviti* order, a symbol of the little village.

Follow the carriage road from *St Lorenzen*, which, through the long *Frohntal*, leads up to the *Frohnalm*. This stretch takes two hours on foot along the carriage-road, which in the summer months is open to traffic. If you want to avoid this rather unattractive stretch of the itinerary, you can of course take a taxi.

Once you come to the parking area at the *Frohnalm* (*Ingridhütte*, 1646m), there is a very varied climb to the *Hochweißsteinhaus*, 1867m. At first the well-traced path leads you up onto a splendid alpine pasture, then, with many hairpin bends, up a steeper slope. Here, you can clearly see the wide opening of the *Frohntal*, in the middle of which is the *Hochweißsteinhaus*, 1867m, a refuge belonging to the Austria Section of the Austrian Alpine Club.

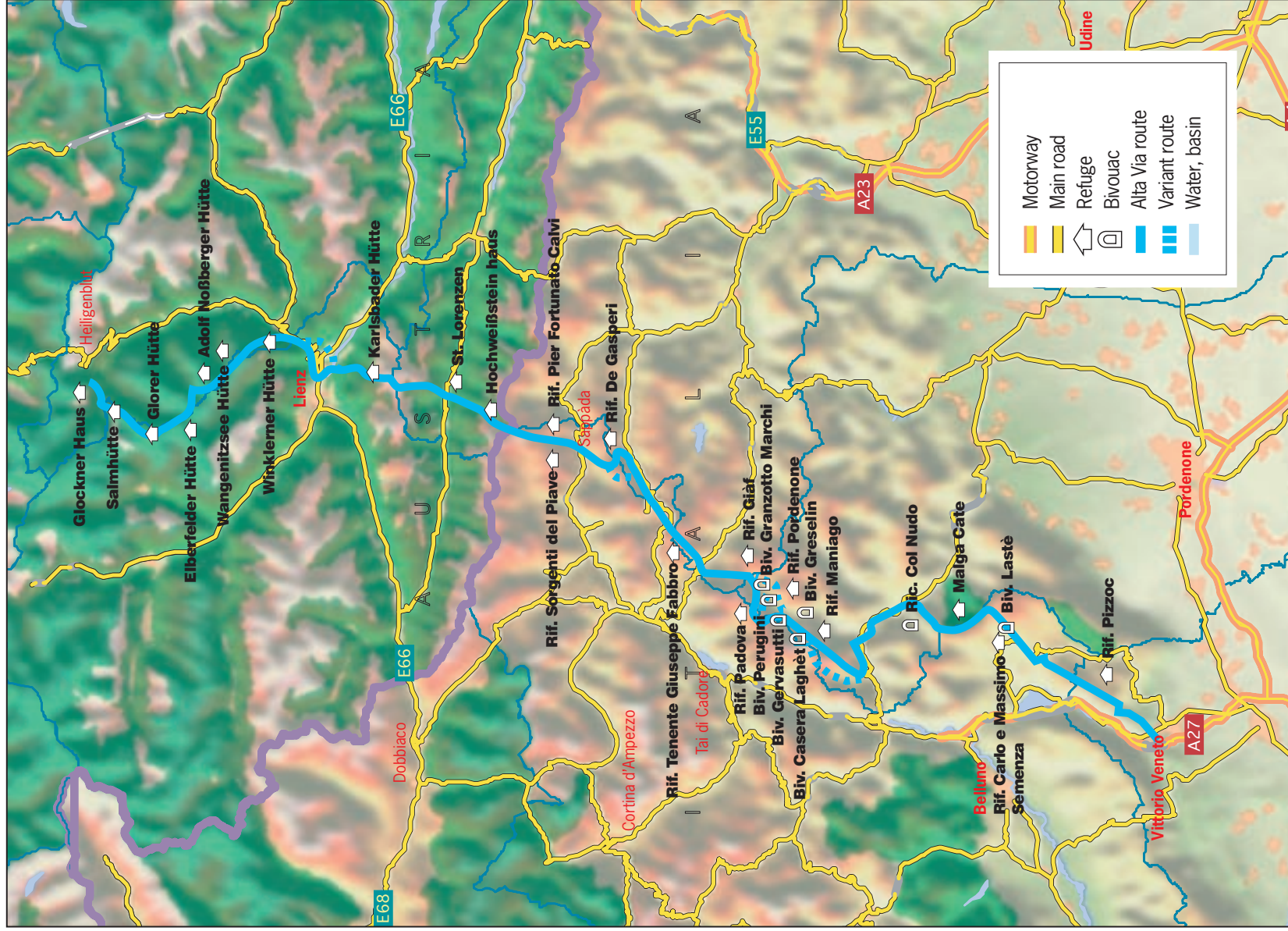
1 hour from the *Frohnalm* parking area.

This final stop in Austria is particularly pleasant in the summer, because the refuge is surrounded by flowers in bloom.

The *Hochweißsteinhaus*, 1876m, is owned by the Austria Section of the Austrian Alpine Club and offers basic hotel services. Open from mid-June to the end of September with 18 beds in dormitory and 40 mattresses.

Refuge tel. ++43 (0) 676 7462886. Valley tel. ++43 (0) 676/7462886 (hwh@aon.at)

From the *Hochweißsteinhaus* the route follows the path for the *Öfner Joch* until it comes onto an old military road (during WW1 the mountain front of the many battles between Italy and Austria-Hungary ran along here). Now you walk on this old road (*Hochalpljoch* signpost), where the traces of WW1 battles are visible everywhere. When you come to a fork, the ground becomes steep and the path, skilfully tra-



ced, moves easily upwards among the rock walls, before coming out again onto pleasant fields, on the *Hochalpljochs-Oregóne* pass, 2280m, on the border between Italy and Austria.

Now in Italy, you will soon come down to the Rifugio Pier Fortunato Calvi, 2164m, between the Peralba and the Chiadénis. The refuge could be an excellent departure point for the Italian part of the Europa High-Altitude Trail 6 (Alta Via delle Dolomiti n.6 or dei Silenzi), but if you like, there is time to go down to Sappàda and start the long adventure towards Vittorio Veneto from there.

5 hours from the parking area.

The *Rifugio Pier Fortunato Calvi*, 2164m, is just south of the *Passo Sésis*, between the *Peralba* and the *Chiadénis*. Owned by the Sappàda section of the CAI (Italian Alpine Club), it sleeps 56. Open from June 1st to October 15th, basic hotel services. Bookings can be made by calling 0435 46 92 32 or the manager on 0435 66176. Winter shelter sleeps 6.

Information

Information on the Hohe Tauern National Park

House of the National Park "Alte Schmelz", A-9843 Großkirchheim; Döllach 14

Tel++43(0)48256161 ; fax ++43 (0)4825 6161 16 (www.hohetauern.at, nationalpark@ktn.gv.at)

Information on weather conditions in Austria (in German)

Tyrol: ++ 43 (0) 900 911 566 08; Carinthia: ++43 (0) 900 911 566 08



The Dolomites "Alta Via" n.6 or Alta Via dei Silenzi

By Italo Zandonella Callegher

Technical details

Itinerary

Departure point:	from the Rifugio Pier Fortunato Calvi or Sorgenti del Piave at Comelico-Sappàda
Arrival point:	Vittorio Veneto
Walking days:	11
Length of route:	about 180 kilometres
Huts on the main route:	7
Bivouacs on the main route:	2 and a cavern shelter at Col Nudo
Refreshments on the way:	about ten
Longest & most difficult stretch:	the seventh, 8 hours, from Casèra Laghèt de sóra to the Bivacco Greselin
Shortest stretch:	the fifth, 3 hours, from Rifugio Giau to the Rifugio Padova
Total time required (excluding variants):	about 65 hours
Difficulty:	E, EE (EEA on some variants)
Total gradient in ascent:	about 9.000 metres
Total gradient in descent:	about 10.000 metres
Maximum gradient in ascent:	1627 m, from Cellino to Passo Valbona
Maximum gradient in descent:	1880 m, from the Rifugio Semenza to Vittorio Veneto
Maximum Height:	Forcella Compòl, 2450 metres
Minimum Height:	Vittorio Veneto, 139 metres
Ranges involved:	8
Refuges open from:	about the 20th June – 20th September
Signposts:	good everywhere, but be careful not to get lost in the Cima dei Preti-Duranno and Col Nudo zones

Recommended Maps (in order of use) - Tabacco map 1:25.000,

- n. **01** “Sappàda - S. Stefano - Forni Avoltri”, for the stretch from Sorgenti del Piave to Rifugio Fabbro;
- n. **02** “Forni di Sopra - Ampezzo - Sauris - Val Tagliamento”, for the stretch from the Rifugio Fabbro to Rifugio Padova;
- n. **021** “Dolomiti di Sinistra Piave”, for the stretch from the Rifugio Padova to Cellino;
- n. **012** “Alpago - Cansiglio - Piancavallo - Val Cellina”, for the stretch from Cellino to Casèra Pizzoc;
- n. **024** “Prealpi e Dolomiti Bellunesi”, from Casèra Pizzoc to Vittorio Veneto

Description of the walks

Day one

■ From the Rifugio Pier Fortunato Calvi and the Rifugio Sorgenti del Piave to Sappàda via the Laghi d'Olbe

Dislivello	550 m in salita; 1150 m in discesa
Tempo netto	ore 4 dalle Sorgenti del Piave
Sentiero	136, 129, 135
Difficoltà	E, EE
Cartografia	Carta Tabacco n. 01, 1:25.000

The Austrian part of the Europa High-Altitude Trail 6 ends at the *Rifugio Pier Fortunato Calvi*. From here, going round the Peralba, you soon come down onto the Val Sésis road from where you continue as described below

The Val Sésis road that comes from *Cima Sappàda* ends at *Rifugio Sorgenti del Piave* at 1830m, in an idyllic place lying west of the colossal *Peralba*, on the crest overlooking the *Val Visdende*. Easily reachable by car, it is privately owned. Open in the summer, with a bar, restaurant, and a few beds. Phone 347 8308614 for bookings.

A bit to the east from the *Sella del Col di Caneva*, and close to the refuge, you can find the Piave spring that up until the beginning of the century, and even now by some local farmers, was called “*La Piave*”, which you can find inscribed in stone. The huge *Monte Peralba* mass dominates the sombreness of the place at 2694m.

The *Rifugio Pier Fortunato Calvi* at a height of 2164m, immediately south of the *Passo (pass) Sésis* and situated between the *Peralba* and the *Chiadénis*, could be an excellent *Alta Via delle Dolomiti n.6* departure point for those coming from Austria.

For those coming from Italy and who prefer not to go up to the Sorgenti by car, we recommend the following alternative, which starts out from Sappàda and follows the second stage of the “*Sentiero* (path) *Frassati*”, thus avoiding a large part of monotonous tarmac road.

After passing the *Caserma* (barracks) *della Brigata Julia* at Cretta, you take the little road that goes to the left and leads to Piave and a restored mill. The little road then comes out onto a road that passes from *Cima Sappàda* into *Val Sésis*. Then, after a few metres, you take the “*Sentiero Frassati*” and the “*Sentiero Naturalistico* (nature path) *Piave*” to your left, which passes through the woods to the Piave. After crossing it, continue on until you meet the road again beneath the hairpin bends of *Piani del Cristo*. After crossing the road you take the path that passes through the shrine of Maria Luggau. Beyond the Piave riverbed you climb up the other bank following the old *Val Sésis* path until *Piani del Cristo* at 1410m.

After walking for a while on the flat tarmac road, you quickly reach *Baita del Rododendro*, where you leave the road for the path on the left until you reach the river Piave, which you can cross over on a little bridge. Go on to the right for about 60 metres on a mule-track and at the first fork turn right again onto the path that goes into the forest. You come out at *Ponte* (bridge) *Schordan* at 1496m, where you follow the tarmac road for about 200 metres until you see some wide bends. To the right there is an unmarked but obvious track that climbs up through the woods until you reach the road again. Cross over it (there is a sign on a tree) and walk up the slope for a short distance in order to take the good path that leads to *Pian dei Pastori*, passing just above the tarmac road.

At this point you follow the road until the big bend at a height of 1679m, where you will see a CAI path sign and a wooden chart indicating the nature path. From here there are two possibilities. Those who wish to stop at the *Rifugio alle Sorgenti* can continue on the tarmac road, reaching it after about 2.5 kilometres. Those who have decided to continue on the first walk are advised to ascend westwards along the “*Frassati*” and “*Naturalistico*” paths that lead to *Passo del Ròccolo* at 1815m, from where, towards the left (south) on path 129, you walk in the direction of *Rinaldo* and the *Laghi d’Ólbe*.

About **2.30 hours** from Sappàda.

Those coming from Austria must go descend at the *Rifugio Calvi* until the fork at *Rifugio alle Sorgenti*.

Shortly before the *Sorgenti del Piave*, just where the car park is, a dirt track with the path sign 136 branches off to the left (west) which, proceeding in a south western direction, borders the *Col di Càneva*. Walk along the crest until you reach the *Passo del Ròccolo* at 1815 metres. Here the path meets the “*Frassati*” or the “*Naturalistico*”, as mentioned before, which arrive from *Val Sésis*. Continue south on the 129 path (the 136 descends into *Val Visdende*) until the point where you almost get lost among the mugo pines and scree that form the wild base of *Monte Lastròni*, part of the *Rinaldo* range.

The path now clearly deviates west, crosses over a landslide of boulders, climbs steeply up a crumbling gully dotted with grass and leads to the green and panoramic *Sella del Franza* at 2152 metres.

A few paths leave from here: the 135 descends westwards through the *Val Popèra* (not to be confused with the *Popèra* group, which is on the other side of *Comèlico*) finishing in the *Val Visdende*; the other, constructed during the war and bit difficult to pass, climbs northwards, finishing on *Monte Franza*: a third path, the 193, branches off more or less westwards, steeply climbing to *Forcella Rinaldo*; the 135, which we are going to follow, immediately climbs up towards the southeast over steep scree and reaches the *Passo del Mulo* at 2356m, sheltering behind *Monte Righile*.

From the pass you descend in a sharp zigzag motion on an excellent undulating path that takes you neatly to the large grassy basin, where you can see the beautiful *Laghi* (lakes) *d’Ólbe* at 2156 metres.

2.30 hours from *Sorgenti*.

At the extreme eastern tip of the largest lake there is a fork.

This is where the marked path 138 leaves. This is not part of the route, but goes east, descending to *Pian delle Bombarde* in the *Val Sésis*, along the *Rio della Miniera* valley.

Follow the 135 path south, which descends into the large mountain pastures as far as *Rio del Mulino*. Having crossed these, the path enters into the narrow *Gosse* gorge, leads on to a small valley road and after a few bends, takes off again skirting the stream until it reaches the characteristic *Cappella del Calvario* (chapel). From here until *Sappàda*, *Mühlbach* area, at 1242m, the road is short and charming, passing through the *Via Crucis woods*.

A third path from the *Laghi d'Òlbe* goes off to the west on the marked path 141 descending south, skirting the *Cresta del Ferro*, until the Rifugio Monte Ferro at 1563m. The refuge is open in the summer and the winter and offers the same services as a small hotel. From here a small road leads to the *Granvilla* area of *Sappàda* at 1218 metres.

Both of these paths are good, although the 141 is a bit wilder and “civilisation” (i.e. the ski lift system) is met at 1563m, while on the 135, the road that leads to the ski lifts is met at about 1850m. You really are spoilt for choice!

1.30 hours from *Laghi d'Òlbe*.

4 hours from the *Sorgenti del Piave*.

Sappàda at 1218 metres is an important summer and winter resort and a target for beautiful and satisfying walks and climbs. It nestles in a vast, sunny plain that stretches for 5 kilometres among undulating, emerald grass-lands which, towards the top, disappear into a dense forest of conifers just before the imposing rocky structures of the Tèrze, Clap, Siéra and Rinaldo ranges.

The resort features pretty wooden houses, a spoken dialect of Germanic origin, time-honoured folklore and architectural traditions, refined cuisine and various cultural events. *Sappàda* is a unique pearl in the Carnic Alps district.

The population, of German origin, emigrated towards the middle of the XI century from the Valle di Villgraten, above Sillian in Austria, perhaps escaping from the oppression of Count Heimfels. In 1078, to guarantee their safety, the people of *Sappàda* sent a petition to the Patriarch Enrico di Aquileia who granted several privileges and exemptions. In 1296 the Patriarch Raimondo della Torre gave his citizens all the stones from his local church as a present. Together with the people from Camino, *Sappàda* followed the fate of the Cadore with Riccardo

da Camino's precise orders that “those brave German subjects” were not to be in the least disturbed. In 1347 the Patriarch Bertrando united *Sappàda* with Carnia remaining united until 1852, the year in which the Austrian government unified it with the province of Belluno. Thus, the local traditions are of German and Carnic, but geographically and administratively speaking, *Sappàda* belongs to Belluno.

Day two

■ From *Sappàda* to the Rifugio Fratelli De Gasperi via the Passo Èlbel

Time required:	4 hours
Gradient:	800m in ascent, 260m in descent
Difficulty:	EE
Paths:	314, 315, 201
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.01, 1:25.000

From the *Granvilla* area of *Sappàda*, situated at 1218m, you descend by tarmac road until you get to the Caravan Park. From here you go right (west, then south) until you reach the *Piave* river. Cross over the little bridge and follow the little road marked 314 that goes into the *Rio Storto* valley and ends at 1258m where it meets the *Rio del Gufo*. The 314 path goes on along the stream here takes the name of *Rio Enghe*. At a height of 1434m you leave the 314, which climbs up to the *Passo Oberenghe* (see Variant 1) on your right and you take the left branch, numbered 315. Very soon the path passes the “rio” (brook) and climbs up (curving sharply) the extremely steep hillside until it arrives at a drop with a beautiful waterfall. The path then crosses diagonally below the drop and reaches the entrance of the secluded, gravely cirque of the *Ciadin di Èlbel*. Turning southwards, keeping to the orographical left of the *Ciadin*, you climb up the upper part until you reach the *Passo Èlbel* (1963m) carved between the Crete Brusàde and the eastern margin of the *Cresta di Enghe*.

3 hours from *Sappàda Granvilla*.

From the *Passo Èlbel* you descend south via the old war path that shortly after meets the 202A path, which branches off from the 202 which comes from



The "Sappada Dolomites"

the *Passo Oberenghe*. Still keeping to the 315 you continue towards the east, encircling the base of the *Campanile* (pinnacle) *di Mimòias* and after crossing a thin pine wood, you reach the *Casèra di Clap Piccolo* knoll where you take the 201 path that comes from *Casèra Mimòias*. Following the 201 to the left towards the north, then the east, pass the two branches of the *Rio Pradibosco*, climb up a slope and arrive at the *Rifugio Fratelli De Gasperi* situated at 1767 m.

Ore 1 from *Passo Èlbel*.

Ore 4 from *Sappada Granvilla*.

The *Rifugio Giuseppe, Gian Battista and Luigi Calisto De Gasperi*, who were great mountaineers and scientists from Friuli, is situated on a wooded mountainside at the foot of the *Cretón di Clap Grande* and is owned by the Tolmezzo CAI Section. Surrounded by bold needles and wonderful dolomite rock-faces, it stands in a delightful position, dominating the *Val Pesarina*. It opens from the 15th June to the 30th September, although it will open outside this period with prior agreement with the manager. It offers the same services as a small hotel with 104 beds; to book telephone 0433-6 90 69 or the manager on 0432-58 04 52. Winter apartments available with 2 beds.

Variant I

■ From Sappàda to the Rifugio Fratelli De Gasperi via the Passo Oberenghe

From *Sappàda Granvilla* to the fork at the bottom of the *Valle del Rio Enghe*, at a height of 1434m, refer to Day Two

Continue to the right on the 314, which climbs up the valley's orographical left slope leading into the *Ciadin di Enghe*. After a long climb at the foot of the wild valley you reach the *Passo Oberenghe*, at 2081m, from where you can enjoy fantastic panoramic views of the *Tèrza Grande*, the *Creta Alta di Mimòias*, the *Razzo* plateau and the *Brentóni*.

Zig zagging briefly down towards the *Val Frisón*, at a height of 1975m, you take the southeast path marked 202 that leads to *Passo di Mimòias*, situated at 1976 metres, after a short walk eastwards. After crossing the pass and descending for a while, you walk along easily until the fork with the 202A, where you continue as described in Day Two

It is best to follow the 202 to the left (east), which descends down to *Casèra Mimòias*, at 1623m; from here you take the 203 path that descends in a north-eastern direction to a height of 1581m, where it joins the 201 that starts from the beautiful pasture and wooded oasis of *Pradibosco* and leads to the *Rifugio De Gasperi*, situated at 1767 metres.

5 hours from *Sappàda*.

Day three

■ From the Rifugio Fratelli De Gasperi to the Rifugio Tenente Fabbro via Forcella Lavardèt

Time required:	4 hours
Gradient:	370m in ascent, 350m in descent
Difficulty:	E
Paths:	201, 203, SS Road 465, un-numbered stretch
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.01, 1:25.000

From the Rifugio Fratelli De Gasperi you re-take the 201 and follow it until you reach Casèra Mimòdias, at 1623 metres.

From the casèra you follow the excellent track marked 203 (the 202 continues on to the right – west- towards *Passo Mimòdias*; see Variant 1) and you descend to cross the *Rio Mimòdias*. Continuing decidedly south, you walk through woods for some time at a height of about 1500m, until you reach a crossroads at *Casèra Lavardèt*, situated just to the north at 1459m. Carry on westwards and soon after you are on the tarmac branch that joins the SS 619 road at *Forcella Lavardèt* and the SS 465, closed at the moment, which crosses the *Val Frisón* leading (not now because it is closed to traffic) to *Campolongo di Comèlico*.

From *Forcella Lavardèt* (1531m) follow the ‘abandoned’ SS 465 westwards (passable from Campolongo only up to about 1020m) which comes from the *Val Frisón*. Descend for about one kilometre until you reach a fork at 1484 metres. Then take the cart-road on the left (south) that quickly leads to *Casèra Campo*, 1441 metres. This track continues on for a bit in a southwest direction and reaches the *Torrente Frisón* at a height of 1420 metres. Soon after, you leave behind on your right the road that goes on towards the valley, and you start to climb up a path that at first is moderate but then becomes steep. This path goes to *Casèra Sottopiova*, situated at 1733m. After arriving there, a short while later you reach the nearby *Rifugio Tenente Giuseppe Fabbro*, situated at 1783 metres.

4 hours from Rifugio Fratelli De Gasperi.

The *Rifugio Tenente Giuseppe Fabbro* is located on the western margin of the *Razzo* plateau’s pleasant pastures, slightly to the east of *Sella* or *Valico* (pass) *di Ciampigòtto*. Privately owned, it is managed by the Sinistra Piave Rural Families’ Association (non- profit) and is open from the 15th June to the 20th September (but also from 23rd December to 8th January and every weekend throughout the winter); it offers the same services as a small hotel and has around 40 beds; book by telephoning the refuge 0435-46 03 57, or volunteers on 0435-48 26 02 or 0438-50 15 58.

Day four

■ From the Rifugio Tenente Giuseppe Fabbro to the Rifugio Giàf via Doàna

Time required:	6,30 hours
Gradient:	500m in ascent, 1120m in descent
Difficulty:	E
Paths:	SS Road 619,338,336,207
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.02, 1:25.000

Leaving the *Rifugio Fabbro*, you reach *Sella* or *Valico di Ciampigòtto* to the west (1790m) after a few minutes, continuing on the SS 619 for about 2.5 kilometres towards *Laggio* and *Vigo*. Once you have reached the fork where the track marked 338 branches off to the left, a bit further on after the fifth bend and at a height of about 1660m, you descend it, meeting the stream at 1559m then climbing comfortably via a little track until *Casèra Doàna*, at 1911 metres, situated in an excellent position.

Leaving the casèra behind you join the path marked 336 that goes southeast, climbing up the Colròsolo slopes and arriving at *Passo del Landro* (1820m) after a lovely walk over the western cliffs of the col.

Leaving the 336, which goes awkwardly downhill to *Val Prendèra*, and the 329, which descends directly and with some difficulty to *Stàbie*, walk slightly south up to *Col Pioi* (1863m) to descend once again into the ever more dense woods, along the *Costa Bordonà*. Arriving at a height of about 1500m you meet the 207, which you follow to the right (west, then north west). This path gently leads to *Pian di Stàbie*, 1373m, where at a dirt track, it crosses the 336 that arrives from the *Val Prendèra*. Follow the 207 southwards, simply following the fine cart track that cuts through the tree-dotted pastures and which further on is flanked by picturesque barns. In this way you arrive a few hundred metres north of *Passo della Màuria* that you then quickly reach at 1298 metres. Here you can find a restaurant, bar and telephone. Bus services to and from the *Cadore* and *Carnia*.

4 hours from the *Rifugio Fabbro*.



A reasonable road, initially marked with the signs 341 and 348, leaves the *Màuria* in a southern direction. A bit further on the road divides. You follow the road marked 341 to the left. After about 1 kilometre, the road changes into a decent path that descends to the *Torrente la Tor*. Cross the stream and continue steadily at a height of about 1300m, through the pine, larch and beech woods until a bit after the *Rio Torriglia* springs where you go down to reach the *Torrente Fossiana* at 1187m. From here you climb up a woody hill, returning to about 1350m, you go round the eastern sides of *Monte Boschèt*, passing the *Torrente Giàf* and, after a short climb, you reach the *Rifugio Giàf* situated at 1400 metres.

2.30 hours from *Passo della Màuria*.

6.30 hours from *Rifugio Fabbro*.

The *Rifugio Giàf*, run by the Forni di Sopra CAI Section, is located in the upper Val di Giàf at the base of Costòn. It is open from 1st June to 30th September and offers the same services as a small hotel. It has 43 beds; to book telephone 0433-8 80 02 or the manager on 0433-8 85 01.

Winter shelter with 9 beds.

Day five

■ From the Rifugio Giàf to the Rifugio Padova

Time required:	3 hours
Gradient:	650m in ascent, 760m in descent
Difficulty:	E
Paths:	346
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.02, 1:25.000

This is a very scenic and easy walk. It comfortably takes you from the Friuli region to the province of *Belluno*, skirting along the *Cridola*, the *Spalti di Toro e Monfalcóni*. It is an excellent solution for those not wanting to challenge themselves with the more difficult variants described later, which wind their way down the Alta Via's Friuli slopes, apart from Variant 4, which stays in the *Cadore* area.

Bearing in mind that until you reach the *Rifugio Maniàgo*, three days from the *Rifugio Padova*, everything going well, there is no place to stop for refresh-

ment, it is strongly advisable to stop and get some supplies before entering into the enchanted kingdom of *Duranno*, and the idyllic green oasis of the historic *Rifugio Padova*, linked to *Domegge di Cadore* by a fine carriage road.

From the *Rifugio Giàf* you take the mule-track marked 346, which climbs up and immediately enters a sparse wood, keeping to the orographical right of the *Torrente Giàf*. Coming out of the woods you can see the *Torre Spinotti* and the *Torre Antonio Berti* further ahead on the left. The path passes at the base of the *Crìdola*'s south walls and the base of the *Monfalcòni*'s northern ones. Climbing constantly up a good path, you finally reach the panoramic *Forcella Scodavacca*, at 2043 metres which is a huge stony corridor with a wonderful entrance between proud crags that geologically speaking are no longer considered dolomite yet which have all the dolomites' main features. In particular, the *Crìdola*, the *Spalti* and *Monfalcòni*, have even more to offer in terms of architectural audacity! The mysteries of science....

From *Forcella Scodavacca*, staying on the 346, you descend west into the *Valle Pra di Toro*, entering the mugo pine woods shortly after.

Signposts on the *Forcella Scodavacca* with the *Torre Antonio Berti* (on the right) and the *Torre Spinotti* (on the left)



Where the *Val d'Arade* joins the *Valle Pra di Toro*, the path crosses the stream's shingle bed, goes into the pine wood and finally comes out into the large alpine basin where there was once the *Casèra Pra di Toro*.

At the bottom end of the hollow you can find the characteristic *Rifugio Padova*, at 1287 metres.

3 hours from *Rifugio Giàf*.

The *Rifugio Padova*, linked with *Domegge* by road and path, was opened on the 14th August 1910 at the top end of the clearing. It was destroyed during the First World War, rebuilt in 1920 and again destroyed by an avalanche in February 1931. It was immediately reconstructed at the bottom part of the hollow for safety reasons. It is owned by the Padua CAI Section and offers the same services as a small hotel with 24 beds. It is open from Easter to the end of October and from 22nd December to 7th January; to book telephone 0435-7 24 88 or telephone the manager on 0435-68 50 69 or mobile 338-47 63 400.

Day six

■ From the *Rifugio Padova* to *Casèra Laghèt de sòra* via *Forcella Spe*

Time required:	4,30 hours
Gradient:	980m in ascent, 400m in descent
Difficulty:	EE
Paths:	352,389
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.021, 1:25.000

From the *Rifugio Padova* at 1287m, you climb southwards on the marked path 352 until the nearby ex *Casèra Pra di Toro* where you turn decisively towards west, then southwards again, walking up the *Costa del Col*. After passing a large meadow you descend among fir trees and birches to the ruins of *Casèra Valle* at 1360 metres.

1 hour from the *Rifugio Padova*

You leave the path that goes up to the *Capanna Tita Barba* on your right (an idyllic place with fantastic views, well worth a visit; see Variant 4) and follow the little valley to the left, once called *Fosso degli Elmi*, staying on the path marked 352. NOTE: in some parts the path



Towards Pra di Toro and the Padova Refuge
with the Marmarole in the background

gets lost in the bed of the stream, which is almost always dried up .

At a height above 1850m, almost at the head of the wild *Fosso degli Elmi*, you meet the path coming from the *Capanna Tita Barba* which you follow, climbing steeply up the valley until arriving at the sandy *Forcella Spe*, at 2049 metres.

2 hours from the *Casèra Valle* fork.

3 hours from the *Rifugio Padova*.

From here, continuing left (east) for about 20 minutes, you can reach the *Bivacco Giusto Gervasutti* bivouac at 1940m, also accessible by the Variant 2. This is an excellent stopping place in case of bad weather with 9 beds. NB: there is no water.

After scrambling over the *forcella* (saddle) the path drops down to the right (south) for about 200 metres until it meets the path marked 389 at the head of the *Val di Santa Maria*. Be careful not to go down using the 356, which crosses via the harsh *Val di Santa Maria* finishing in *Val Cimoliàna*.

At this point, you follow the 389 to the right and after having walked across the eastern slopes of the *Cima Spe*, you enter into the *Val Misera*. You continue almost at altitude, climb up a bit, then down again until the extremely desolate and isolated *Val dei Làres*. After crossing this, you climb straight up to the *Forcella Pedescàgno*, at 1930m, a narrow opening on the crest between the *Col dei Fràssin* and the *Col Andón*. On the other side you can see the *Casèra Laghèt de sòra* shelter and the *Cima dei Preti* walls. With a wonderful walk towards the right, at the base of the rock face, you arrive in northern *Val dei Fràssin*, which you circle until you return to the south west reaching the *Casèra Laghèt de sòra* bivouac, at 1871 metres.

1.30 hours from *Forcella Spe*.

4.30 hours from the *Rifugio Padova*.

The hut is a lovely stone building, restored from the ruins of shepherds' old and humble shelters and is owned by the Monfalcone CAI Section, which merits praise for the superb job, clever insight and usefulness of the restoration. It is positioned in an extremely charming position. It offers 8 beds, with kitchen utensils and a wood stove; always open and unstaffed. There is water nearby.



Casera Vedorcia with the Campanile di Toro and the Spalti

The *Bivacco Casèra Laghèt* de sóra is reachable from at least four other important points apart from the *Rifugio Padova* via the *Fosso degli Elmi* on the 389 path and from the Val Cimoliàna on path 390. Three of these are a lot longer and more difficult, but very rewarding.

Variant II

■ **From the Rifugio Giàf to the Bivacco Casèra Laghèt de sóra via the Val Meluzzo, the Rifugio Pordenone, Sentiero Marini and the Bivacco Gervasutti.**

Friuli Variant 1

This is a lovely traverse that circles the eastern and south-eastern sides of the *Spalti di Toro e Monfalconi* mountain range.

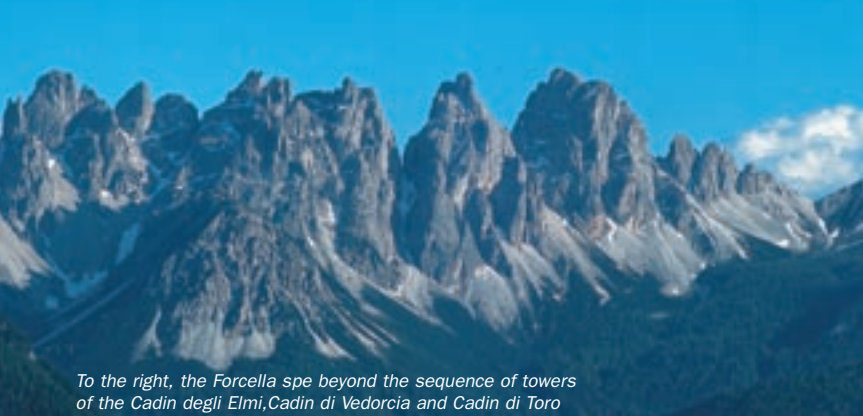
From the *Rifugio Giàf* you follow the convenient ,steep 361 path, which you go along south for a few hundred metres until reaching a fork. Here you leave the path marked 354 to your right and continue left on almost level ground, along a vast scree. The path now climbs upwards, goes around the northern rocky spur of the *Cima Urtisièl*, enters into a steep, gravelly and narrow gully and finally reaches the *Forcella Urtisièl* at 1990 metres. After *Forcella Urtisièl* the path descends southwards on the *Truol Sciòps* until a height of about 1800m (where the 369 breaks away and leads to the *Forcella Val di Brica*, still on the *Truoldai Sciòps*). From the fork you walk westwards until nearby *Casòn di Valmenòn* at 1778m, where there is some spartan shelter.

You then descend to *Valmenòn* by the convenient mule-track, passing *Casòn dei Pècoli* at 1363m and, after having walked the whole deserted *Val Meluzzo*, you reach a clearing where the dirt track leading to the *Rifugio Pordenone* at 1249 metres branches off to the right.

3 hours from *Rifugio Giàf*.

Owned by the Pordenone CAI Section, the *Rifugio Pordenone* was built in 1930 and then extended and modernised. It is situated almost at the point where the *Val Montanaia* and *Val Meluzzo* meet. It is in a pleasant position although immersed in a dense pinewood forest. It opens from 1st June to 30th September, has 77 beds and offers the same services as small hotel. To book telephone 0427-8 73 00 or the manager on 0437-77 08 51.

Winter shelter available with 6 beds.



To the right, the Forcella spe beyond the sequence of towers of the Cadin degli Elmi, Cadin di Vedorcia and Cadin di Toro

If you have some time on your hands you could arrange an excellent stop over here before embarking on the long, second part of this variant.

From the *Rifugio Pordenone* you descend westwards through the forest, then you walk across the *Val Montanaia*'s mass of scree up to the opposite bank where you take the 352 path, steeply climbing the woody slope. We are now on the "*Sentiero* (path) *Marini*". Shortly after, the slope levels out and comes out under a wide hollow where the *Casèra Le Corde* is situated at 1503m; from here you can enjoy a splendid view of the *Campanile di Val Montanaia*. After an almost flat stretch the path starts to climb steeply again, then descends to cross through a deep valley where you can find water, climbs up the other side and arrives at the *Casèra Col Cadorin* ruins at 1743m then, a bit higher up, the flat relief of the *Col Cadorin*. From here the path is almost horizontal, skirting the rocks and passing through some little valleys with gentle ups and downs. Finally you reach an exposed stretch aided by some fixed ropes; a bronze plaque commemorates Arturo Marini after whom the path is named. Completing the climb along the big slope covered with short mugo pine trees, you arrive at the Giusto Gervasutti bivouac, situated at 1940 metres.

4 hours from *Rifugio Pordenone*.

7 hours from *Rifugio Giàf*.

The Gervasutti bivouac is typical semi-cask construction and is owned by the Trieste XXX October CAI Section who named it in the memory of the great Friuli mountaineer. It is located south of the *Cima Cadin degli Elmi*, near the *Forcella Spe*. It has 9 beds and is always open and unstaffed. There is no water but you can find it in *Val di Santa Maria* somewhat further down.

Following the path 352 westwards, you reach *Forcella Spe* at 2049m in about 20 minutes, or a bit lower down if you follow the extremely crumbly scree track southwards; from here to the *Casèra Laghèt de sóra* bivouac see the final part of DAY SIX.

2 hours from the *Forcella Spe*

9 hours from the *Rifugio Giàf*.

Variant III and III/bis

■ **III) From the Rifugio Giàf to the Bivacco Granzotto-Marchi, the Bivacco Perugini and the Rifugio Pordenone.**

■ **III/bis) From the Rifugio Pordenone along the Sentiero Marini, to the Bivacco Gervasutti and the Bivacco Casèra Laghèt de sóra.**

Friuli variant 2

From the *Rifugio Giàf* you follow the path bound for *Forcella Urtisièl* for a while, marked 361-342 (on the route known as "*Anello di Bianchi*") up to the fork at a height of about 1580m. Going up to the right (west) via the 342 you reach the base of a large gravely gorge. Climbing awkwardly over boulders and scree you reach the *Forcella di Casón* at 2224m, where you then descend over rubble and grass until the final cirque of *Val Monfalcòn di Forni*, on the edge of which is the Granzotto-Marchi Bivouac at 2170 metres.

2.30 hours from the *Rifugio Giàf*.

The Renzo Granzotto and Antonio Marchi Bivouac is simply delightful and is erected a short distance from the *Forcella del Leone*, the *Forcella Monfalcòn di Forni*, the *Forcella de la Busas* and the *Forcella del Casón*, in the delightful upper cirque of the *Val Monfalcòn di Forni*.

The Monfalcon di Forni, which hosts the Granzotto-Marchi Bivouac



Sponsored by the Pordenone Rotary Club to commemorate two mountaineers from Pordenone it was opened in 1962. It is always open and is unstaffed. It has 12 beds and is owned by the Pordenone CAI Section. There is water nearby (10 minutes). It was destroyed by an avalanche in the winter of 88-89 and immediately rebuilt.

From the bivouac, the 349 path climbs directly to the *Forcella del Leone* at 2290m; here you can see a plaque to commemorate the mountaineer Piero Tajarol to whom the following path is dedicated. From here you descend south into upper *Val Monfalcón di Cimoliàna*, which is surrounded by fantastic scenery, meeting some springs on the way. Reaching the bottom of the cirque and level with a little stream, the path divides. You take the right branch (south west) marked 360, which initially crosses a narrow, gloomy gorge and then climbs directly west; a fixed rope and metal ladder helps with the climb up to the *Forcella Cimoliàna* (2184m) which you reach over extremely unstable, but not difficult, ground. At this point you descend on gravel to the upper cirque in the *Val Montanaia* and after a short while you are at the *Bivacco Giuliano Perugini*, 2060m, in sight of the *Campanile di Val Montanaia*'s north face.

Ore 5.30 dal Rifugio Giàf.

The bivouac is situated on a large grassy knoll, facing the *Campanile*'s north face. It is dedicated to the memory of the mountain guide and ski instructor Giuliano Perugini who was killed on the Jof Fuart in 1960. It opened in 1961 and has 9 beds. It is owned by the S.A.G. and the XXX October Sections of the CAI Trieste. Water can be found further down in the *Val Montanaia*.

Due to repeated vandalism it has been said that this bivouac will be removed. A sad but just punishment!

From the *Bivacco Perugini* you can reach the *Rifugio Padova* (and the continuation of the *Alta Via*) by crossing the *Forcella Segnata* (2150m) and walking for 2.30 hours along the path marked 357; see Variant V.

From the *Bivacco Perugini* you descend along the *Val Montanaia* on the 353 until you meet the 352 near the *Rifugio Pordenone*. The refuge is reachable in just a few minutes from the fork for those who intend to stop at this wonderful place, which we recommend.

7 hours from the *Rifugio Giàf*.

To continue along the *Sentiero Marini* until the *Gervasutti* and *Casera Laghèt de sora* bivouacs, see Variant II.

6 hours from the *Rifugio Pordenone*.

13 hours from the *Rifugio Giàf*.

Variant IV

From the Rifugio Giàf to Casera Laghèt de sora via the Rifugio Padova and the Capanna (hut) Tita Barba and Casera del Cavalèt and Forcella del Frate.

Cadore variant

From the *Rifugio Giàf* to the *Rifugio Padova* and up to the *Casera Valle* fork at 1360m, see DAY SIX.

4 hours from *Rifugio Giàf* to the fork at *Casera Valle*.

After arriving at the *Casera Valle* fork (1360), 1 hour from the *Rifugio Padova*, you continue to the right (west) along a decent unnumbered path that climbs quite steeply into the woods, crosses to the left (south west) and, circling widely at 1660m, returns from

North Peak of the Cresta del Leone, a sentry between the Monfalcone di Cimoliana and the Monfalcone di Forni



the right into the pleasant grassy oasis of Casèra Vedòrcia (1704m). Here there is a wonderful panoramic view of Cridola, Spalti di Toro e Monfalcóni. This is one of the most magical places in the Belluno Dolomites. From the casèra, you climb upwards again on a fine mule-track, flanked by rural buildings, until you reach the clearing where the small and welcoming *Capanna Tita Barba* is situated at 1821 metres. An excellent stopping place.

1.30 hours from the *Casèra Valle* fork

5.30 hours from *Rifugio Giàf*.

Leaving the *Capanna Tita Barba* behind, continue south-eastwards on the 350 through a dense wood up to the fork at *Campo Scorz* where the 350 branches off to the left to *Forcella Spe* (DAY SIX). Continue to the right (south west) on the 355 until you enter the grassy and gravelly cirque of the *Pian dei Làres* (1840m) where the path becomes a bit unclear. Head directly (watch out for the signs) for the tracks that can be seen on the overlooking *Forcella Pian dei Làres* (2049m), which are reached after a steep climb. A bit further on there is a fork where the 355 goes down to the right (west) towards the *Pian dei Làres* and *Val Anfèla*, while the path marked 372 continues left. Follow the 372, which circles the beautiful head of the *Val Anfèla*. The path is easy with only a few ups and downs. After arriving below the rocks, take the path marked to the right (the left climbs up to *Forcella Val Misera*), which crosses under the rock-faces, climbs up a small crest and a gravelly plate, finally leading to *Forcella per Vedòrcia* (2234m) on the crest that links the *Pale dell'Aio* to *Cima dei Làres*. Here there is a wonderful view of the Cavalèt basin.

Descend briefly on grass, taking care not to miss the tracks when it is foggy, to reach a secluded pasture with the *Casèra del Cavalèt* situated in the middle at 1995 metres.

This is a shepherd's shelter, in poor condition but useful as an emergency shelter. It is hoped that an adequate restoration will be made. Located in the lower part of the delightful basin, at the head of the *Val Bosco del Bèlo*, it is an excellent starting point for walks or short climbs in the surrounding area. There is water right in front of the casèra until about the middle of August, after that, further up following the bed of the stream. The territory as far as the *Cima Laste*,

Casèra Laghèt de sòra and *Pala Anziana* belongs to the town of *Pieve di Cadore*, although this may seem topographically illogical.

Those who do not want to reach the *casèra* can walk across pasture at the extreme left of the basin and come out on to path 365 leading to *Forcella del Frate* (2209m); from here, staying on the 365, a good path descends to the high pastures of the *Val dei Fràssin* where the *Casèra Laghèt de sòra* bivouac is situated at 1871 metres.

3.30 hours from the *Capanna Tita Barba*.

9 hours from the *Rifugio Giàf*.

Variant V

■ **From the Rifugio Giàf to the Bivacco Casèra Laghèt de sòra via the Bivacco Granzotto-Marchi and Bivacco Perugini, and to the Forcella Segnata, Rifugio Padova, Capanna (hut)Tita Barba and Forcella del Frate.**

From the *Rifugio Giàf* to the *Bivacco Perugini* see Variant III.

From the *Bivacco Perugini* follow the 357 path towards west, then south west, until you enter into a series of gravelly gullies which, with a bit of effort, lead to *Forcella Segnata* (2250m), immediately northeast of *Cima Toro*. Near the saddle there is a great view of the *Campanile di Val Montanaia*. Descend carefully (some parts are a bit tricky) along the opposite steep, rocky gully in a north-westerly direction keeping to the orographical left. Reaching the cone at the foot of the small rock-face, continue to descend towards the bottom of the *Val Ciadin* where another good path (the 357) can be found. Following it, you arrive at *Pra di Toro* and the *Rifugio Padova* at 1287 metres. An excellent stop over place.

8 hours from *Rifugio Giàf*.

For the *Capanna Tita Barba*, the *Casèra del Cavalèt* and the *Forcella del Frate*, see Variant IV.

6 hours from *Rifugio Padova*.

14 hours from *Rifugio Giàf*.

If you would like to pass via *Forcella Spe* (near the *Bivacco Gervasutti*) from the fork at *Casèra Valle*, see Day Six

4.30 hours from *Rifugio Padova*.

12.30 hours from *Rifugio Giàf*.

Day seven

■ **From the Bivacco Casèra Laghèt de sòra to the Bivacco Greselin**

Time required:	8 hours
Gradient:	800m in ascent, 750m in descent
Difficulty:	EE, A
Paths:	as yet un-numbered
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.021, 1:25.000

Here we enter into the very heart of the route, into the wildest and loneliest part of the *Alta Via delle Dolomiti n.6*, where silence reigns and where difficulties are psychological rather than technical, more of orientation than actual climbing. However, this stage is certainly demanding for a simple hill-walker used to the comfort of crowded routes strewn with mountain huts. It is only recommended for those who are familiar with the alpine difficulty range, at least with the lower grades. Some rock climbs in the *Cima dei Preti* area are in fact grade 2 and one climb comes close to grade 3.

Together with the eighth walk this is certainly one of the most beautiful stretches along the *Alta Via*. If you wish to leave the walk at anytime you can descend easily from the *Bivacco Casèra Laghèt de sòra* to *Val Cimoliàna* via the *Val dei Fràssin*.

It is strongly recommended NOT to do this walk in unpredictable or foggy weather.

From the *Bivacco Casèra Laghèt de sòra* the currently un-numbered path climbs towards the southwest, then south along the grassy summit of *Pala Anziana* and is often lost. Watch out for the signs ; there are many , but they are often hidden among the grass. High up, a bit before the slopes of *Cima Laste*, the path goes into a large, thinly grassed basin overlooking the *Pala Anziana*. Following the red signs,



walk across the whole of the basin enjoying the beautiful and solitary surroundings until you reach *Forcella Val dei Drap* at 2290 metres.

2 hours from the bivouac.

Go steeply down the opposite slope, which is a mixture of grass and scree, up to a small saddle on the right. Walk across this until you reach a small notch in the rock with *Forcella dei Cacciatori* written on it (2173 metres). At this point you pass the gorge, which descends directly from the east rampart of *Cima dei Preti*, and climb up over easy rock, keeping to the right, inside a steep couloir. Further on after another saddle you cross the upper *Val dei Cantoni*.

2 hours from *Forcella Val dei Drap*.

4 hours from *Bivacco Casèra Laghèt de sóra*.

The path then continues to the foot of a gully and, without entering it, climbs upwards again over easy rock, keeping to the left until it reaches *Forcella Compòl* at 2450 metres.

2 hours from *Val dei Cantoni*.

6 hours from the *Bivacco Casèra Laghèt de sóra*.

Beyond the saddle there is a long descent, initially on the left then going back into the gully on the right. At the beginning of the season you can find water here. After a few difficult points you arrive at the foot of the slope where you can sometimes find a small snowfield. After crossing the snowfield, or the rocks, the path brings you below a gully then, after another brief descent, you almost arrive at the bottom of another couloir. In order to reach this you have to tread very carefully on a small, narrow ledge; this is the most tricky, but not impossible, part of the traverse. At the end of the gully you descend further for a few metres, walk across grass and rubble, go up a short rocky shoulder, overcome one more little gully and you literally pop out close to the *Bivacco Paolo Greselin* situated at 1920 metres.

2 hours from *Forcella Compòl*.

9 hours from *Bivacco Casèra Laghèt de sóra*.

The *Bivacco Greselin* is situated at the edge of the large *Cadin de Frati* basin, between *Cima dei Frati* and *Cima dei Preti* and is owned by the Padua CAI Section. It was dedicated in 1958 to a mountaineer from Padua who was

killed in the mountains and was destroyed in 1975 by an avalanche. It was then substituted by the present traditional semi-cask model. It has 8 beds and sometimes there is water nearby; if not, 20 minutes away.

Day eight

■ From the Bivacco Greselin to the Rifugio Maniago to Erto and Cimolàis

Time required:	8 hours
Gradient:	350m in ascent, 1620m in descent
Difficulty:	EE, EEA
Paths:	358, 374
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.021, 1:25.000

A charming route set in an untamed, silent and peaceful environment. It has a few exposed stretches and some difficult passages aided by fixed apparatus. In case of bad weather or other necessity, you can descend directly from the bivouac to *Val Cimoliana* via the *Val del Compòl* path marked 358 between the *Costa dei Tass* and the *Pale Foriane*.

From the bivouac you follow the 358 south westwards, which passes at the foot of the *Cima dei Frati*. The path climbs up over some rocky plates, scattered with scree, then up a gully with a few fixed cables until it reaches the highest of the three notches on the *Costa dei Tass* jagged peaks, visible from the bivouac. After some exposed ledges, grassy spots and plates you cross over the *Cima dei Frati* crest and descend the steep, scree slope that originates from the *Forcella dei Frati*. The tracks for *Forcella dei Frati* and the *Bivacco Baroni* in the upper *Val Montana* go up to the right (north-west).

Walking on you pass a natural cavern positioned at the foot of *Duranno's* southeast slopes, which can be very useful in case of bad weather although not very comfortable. Continue up to the *Forcella Duranno* (2217m) where you meet the 374 coming from *Gravina del Duranno*. Once you have climbed over the south saddle, you descend to *Gravina*, at first over easy rocks, then on hard and rubbly ground until you are level with the wood. You reach the *Rifugio Maniago* at 1730 metres shortly after.

3.30 hours from *Bivacco Greselin*.



The Duranno and the Val Zèmolà

Owned by the Maniago CAI Section, the refuge was built in 1963 near the ruins of the *Casèra Bozzia* in *Val Zèmolà*. It is dedicated to the mountaineer Chino Mazzoli and has 26 beds. It is open from 1st June to 30th September and offers the same services as a small hotel. To book telephone 0427-87 91 44 or contact the manager on 338-169 74 79. Winter apartments with 6 beds.

The first rate path marked 374 leaves the *Rifugio Maniago* and goes swiftly down to the south along the woody hillside, passes what is left of the *Casèra Pezzèi*, meets a dirt track and descends as far as the *Torrente Zemòla's* rough riverbed. Beyond this you follow the road that leads up to *Erto* (778 metres). The road has exposed stretches and is closed to unauthorized traffic.

2.30 hours from the *Rifugio Maniago*.

6 hours from the *Bivacco Greselin*.



The Monte Tòc, descending
along the Val Zémola

At *Erto* you can find food and drink at the Locanda Julia in IX Ottobre 32, tel. 0427 879080. To rent rooms call 0427 879006.

From *Erto* to *Cimolàis* (652m) you follow the Statale 251, which passes *San Martino*. Cross over the *Passo di San Osvaldo* (828m) and descend to the delightful village after about 7 kilometres.

Of course you can use the bus (the *Longarone-Erto-Cimolàis-Claut* line; check the timetable) or you can ask a kind-hearted soul for a lift or finally you can use the old “caval di *San Francesco*” (meaning your own two feet!). You can also find food, drink and rooms to rent at *Cimolàis*.

About 2 hours, on foot, from *Erto* to *Cimolàis*.

About 8 hours from *Bivacco Greselìn*.

Variant VI

■ From the Rifugio Maniago to Erto along the “Sentiero alpinistico Osvaldo Zandonella”

This is a “crag walk” for experts. There are some tricky stretches on the rock face, aided by fixed ropes. Fantastic views. The path was created in 1978 by the “Gruppo Amici della Montagna di Onigo di Piave” (Friends of the mountains) who have also maintained it for years. Some fixed ropes have been replaced or been put in use again by those assigned by the region for maintenance and upkeep. The route isn’t difficult, just very rough.

The path is divided into two stretches. The FIRST you can find described below. The SECOND STRETCH is not recommended as it is much harder and has had some fixed apparatus removed due to continuous damage from falling rocks or landslides. They both remain, however, two fantastically beautiful routes.

First Stretch

From the *Rifugio Maniago* (chart) the path initially goes across towards the west, then climbs straight up to the north via a steep gully covered with mugo pines, after which you enter the fine gravelly and solitary cirque south of the *Duranno*. You cross this, climbing steeply up until you reach the rock face where there is a bronze commemorative plaque. Then you go up to the left via a long, wet, narrow slanted ledge (be careful if there is ice) until reaching a terrace. From here you walk along a rocky gully and shortly after you are

on the *Forcella della Spalla* (2133m); see chart. Here there are fantastic views of the Belluno Dolomites and the neighbouring *Duranno* and *Cima dei Preti*.

Take the clear deviation to the left (west) along the gravelly brow, until you reach (or cross immediately below) the *Cima della Spalla* at 2234 metres. The path now descends and becomes faint although it is still marked and clear. From a small saddle, high up and on the Vajont side, you cross the rocks below the short walls of the *Cresta di Rodisègre* as far as *Portellina di Ruditia*. Go down via the Piave side, going round a rock-spike on gravelly ground then immediately climbing back up another saddle, the *Portellina Ovest*. Via a narrow ledge with fixed ropes and a grassy area you pass a “landro” (shepherd’s hut). Scrambling over rocks and via a relatively easy equipped path you finally arrive at *Forcella di Ruditia*. Up over the rocks on the other side to follow a series of ledges with a good “landro”, or shepherd’s shelter (possibility of shelter for 2-3 people). Following some fixed ropes you go down to a ledge and through a very narrow passageway (chart with indications). You should continue along the ledge route, which is very beautiful with wonderful views, leading to an alpine meadow and then on to a small saddle situated below.

Still skirting the slopes, you arrive at another saddle from where you descend on the *Vajont* side along a small gully, which easily crumbles at the beginning but then becomes stony (watch out for the signs at the bottom). Half way along you cross over to the right among the small mugo pines, continuing on until you reach a fork in the woods. Continue on to the stream, climbing quickly up to the *Casèra Bedin* (1711m) where you can find spartan shelter.

N.B.: the “*Percorso alpinistico Osvaldo Zandonella*” (mountaineering route) continues with the SECOND STRETCH, not described here for the reasons mentioned before, which goes over the *Forcella di Citta* and, on the Piave side, crosses the *Buscàda* and *Palazza* slopes with considerable difficulty reaching the *Forcella del Borgà* towards *Erto*, and from here, to *Erto*; about 11 hours walking coming from *Rifugio Maniago*.

From the *Casèra Bedin* it is advisable to descend directly via the grassy path along the wooded hillside until you reach the *Val Zemòla* road and then *Erto*.

7.30 hours from *Rifugio Maniago*.

Day nine

■ From Cimolàis to the Ricovero Col Nudo

Time required:	7 hours from Cimolàis; 5 hours from Cellino
Gradient:	1620m in ascent, 150m in descent
Difficulty:	EE
Paths:	SS road 251,965
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.21 and n.012, 1:25.000

It is recommended that you get from Cimolàis to Cellino di Sopra 514m) with some type of transport as there are 6 kilometres to do on the SS 251 road.

From *Cellino* you proceed into the *Val Chialledina* on the marked path 965 along a little road at a height of 602 metres, that after a few kilometres is closed to traffic. Up to this point, which is 8 kilometres from *Cimolàis*, you could (in fact you should) go by car /taxi to lighten this considerable steep stretch; **2 hours** on foot.

Ascend to the top of the valley until you get to a meadow and the little *Casèra Gravuza* (984m). This is a tiny shepherds’ hut sheltering behind a woody slope, where the *Rio Frugna* flows into the *Val Chialledina*. The *casèra* can offer emergency shelter for about 4-5 people.

From the *Casèra Gravuza*, at the end of the little road which is often blocked by floods, you continue to climb towards the south west through the *Val Chialledina*, keeping to the 965 path which at first goes through woods then on to a morainic crest. Reaching a height of about 1400m, the path swings to the right and after leaving the valley that ends a bit further up, starts to steeply climb up the right side through mugo pines and beeches. Arriving at the foot of

the slopes you go across a field and you overcome a rocky fascia by climbing up steps carved into the rock. Then you pass another small gully made easier by a metal rope. Shortly after you arrive at a grassy spot, sloping slightly with rocks dotted about, which takes you to the pass. You walk along this keeping to the left of a few strange rock formations shaped over time by water and over gravel mixed with grass until you reach the *Passo di Valbona* (2130m) where you can find welcome shelter and rest in the Col Nudo shelter (2115m) nearby.

3.30 hours from *Casèra Gravuzza*.

5 hours from *Cellino*.

7 hours on foot from *Cimolàis*

The recently built *Ricovero Col Nudo*, commissioned by the CAI Alpàgo subsection, Longarone division, is vitally important, especially since the area offers nothing else. It takes advantage of a natural cavity in the rock-face and the bottom has been dug and levelled. Protective walls have been built around it, covered with wood and sheet-iron. Inside, up to 4 people can sleep on a wooden base; therefore it is useful, if not essential, to have a sleeping bag. Water is available inside the shelter. This is a must for romantic and inquisitive hikers: they will re-live the experiences of the old pioneers of these mountains, savouring the unique joys reserved to the explorer, in the simplicity of the spartan shelter...

Day ten

■ From the Ricovero Col Nudo to the Rifugio Semenza

Time required:	6.30 hours
Gradient:	1200m in ascent, 1300m in descent
Difficulty:	EE, E
Paths:	965, Road for Montanès, 924
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.12, 1:25.000

From *Ricovero Col Nudo* (2115m) you descend southwest on path 965, until you reach the wide basin located in the upper part of the desert-like Montagna del Vescovo. Head towards Col di Piero, a characteristic and isolated rock spike, which separates the two valleys. Keeping on the orographical right of *Col di Piero*, where the path's signs become more and more clear, you pass by the barely visible



The Col Nudo

ruins of upper *Casèra Scalet* where you meet the tracks of path 960, originating from the *Sentiero Costacurta* and which crosses west towards *Forcella della Lastra*. At this point the path improves and goes straight down to *Venà di Montanès*, arriving at lower *Casèra Scalè* (1169m) and meets the little road. Follow this southwards and when you get to the *Casèra Stabali* area (1049m), you leave the little road that descends southwards towards the *Rifugio Carota* and continue on to the left (east). The road makes a double curve, passes the bridge and starts to go down again towards south.

After about 4 kilometres of road from lower *Scalè* you reach *Montanès* (866m), then, still by road, *Pèdol*, *Funès*, *Irrighe* and *Tàmera*. From this last place, without a doubt it would be better to follow the decent sheep-track southwards, which firstly leads to *Stalle Pradevaia* then on to the *Casèra Mont* area where the *Rifugio Alpàgo* (970m) used to be. When the *Alta Via n.6* was 'launched' it was indicated as a stopping point.



The severe rock barrier of Col Nudo dominates the Alpage basin

Another way to 'invent' a place to stop is the nearby *Agriturismo Cate* (1022m), which is 1.5 kilometres away to the east still on the *Alta Via stretch*. **2.30 hours** from the *Ricovero Col Nudo*.

Owned by a *Chiés d'Alpàgo* cooperative, *Agriturismo Cate* is currently (2004) privately managed. It can offer restaurant services for up to 60 people and beds for 15- 20. It is open for the whole of August, plus all weekends the rest of the year, and from 23rd December – 8/9 January. It is recommended that you book on 328 8787012

Taking into consideration that the day's route is quite short and that from *San Martino* up to here you can get a lift in a car or you can use the taxi service, it is recommended that you go further on up to the *CAI Rifugio Semenza*.

From *Agriturismo Cate* a good carriage road continues on towards the east until it meets the 924 path at the fork at 1054 metres. Enter the forest on the little track until you reach the base of the *Val Salatis*. Coming out of the woods you continue on through lonely and primitive surroundings, passing close to a deep swallow hole (a funnel shaped cavity, which is a feature of karstic ground and often found in the Alpàgo area) After passing *Stalla Campitello* (1389m), the track ends at the *Casèra Pian de le Stèle* (1421m) where you continue on the main track to the right (east). At a height of 1558m there is another fork. Once again keep to the right, still on the 924, walking across the bottom of the *Valle Sperlonga*, at first walking on flat ground covered with rubble, then entering into an ancient U-shaped glacial cirque, where you climb steeply up, passing a cavern, as far as *Forcella Lastè* (2036m) where you can find the *Rifugio C.e M. Semenza* situated at 2020 metres.

4 hours from *Agriturismo Cate*.

6.30 hours from the *Ricovero Col Nudo*.

The *Rifugio Carlo & Massimo Semenza* owned by the Vittorio Veneto CAI Section, is open from 15th June to 15th September, offering the same services as a small hotel and has 30 beds. To book telephone 0437-4 90 55 or contact the manager on 0422-80 70 49.

The nearby *Bivacco Lastè* acts as a winter shelter and is always open and is unstaffed. 9 beds.

Day eleven

■ From the Rifugio Semenza to Vittorio Veneto

Time required:	9 hours
Gradient:	430m in ascent, 2300m in descent
Difficulty:	E (but it becomes EE because of the length and the gradient)
Paths:	923, 922, 980
Maps:	Carta Tabacco n.012 and n. 024, 1:25.000

From the *Rifugio Semenza* (2020m), descend towards the southwest along the ancient glacial cirque via the 923 path. The path improves once you get to the deep valley and opens up among rhododendrons and lean pastures, gravel and rocky outcrops, until it gets to a large boulder. Here you see a small plinth, with a little figure of the Virgin Mary donated by the Tambre Alpine troops (*Sasso della Madonna*) situated at a height of 1567 metres.

Two paths branch off from the boulder. Take the left one numbered 922, which goes round the *Col del Cuc*, with lengthy ups and downs and arrives at *Casèra Palantina* situated at 1521m in a splendid position. The excellent 922 path goes westwards then towards the south west, leading to *Canàie* (1069m), coming out onto a road in front of an inn.

From *Canàie* continue west on the 922 through the *Val Triton*, meeting up with the SS 422 which goes off to the left (south), leading quickly to *Campón* at 1041 metres. You can also get here easily from *Canàie* by the tarmac road.

1.30 hours from the *Rifugio Semenza*.

From *Campón* you follow the road that goes to *Palughetto* (1041m) for about 1 kilometre in a northwest direction. This is also reachable, and we recommend this option, by path n.922, which passes north of the plain. Go about 500m further on as far as the second bend where a mule track branches off to the left, bringing you to a small road close to *Valpiccola* (about 1340m) via a moderate climb through *La Banca*.

Crossing this road, you continue on in a south-westerly direction until you meet another cart road beyond which is the *Casèra Prese* at 1344 metres.

Continue on this cart road until it becomes more difficult; then climb up southwards towards the *Col de la Fèda* (1442m) on the orographical right of *Pian de la Pita* and *Monte Millifrèt* reaching *Casèra Pizzoc* at 1499 metres.

If you follow the road that has just appeared for about 1 kilometre eastwards, you arrive at the nearby *Rifugio Città di Vittorio Veneto* (1547m) owned by Italcementi and leased to the Vittorio Veneto Association of Alpine Troops, but privately managed. Open daily from July to September (and only at weekends in May, June and October). Basic hotel services, with 22 beds, shower and toilets. Refuge telephone 368 3 70 89 78. Telephone Association of Alpine Troops 0438 50 00 99. Offices open Monday and Friday from 5.30pm to 7pm.

The hut is on *Monte Pizzoc*, an extraordinary viewpoint for the Belluno Dolomites. It could be a useful resting place in case of necessity, as is still a long way to *Vittorio Veneto*, the heat is starting to be felt and tiredness is setting in.

From the *Rifugio Vittorio Veneto*, not far from the SS 422, to which it is conveniently linked, you can descend towards the plain by car if the opportunity arises, or by taxi (to book, call *Pieve d'Alpago* on 0437 47 90 92)

However, the *Alta Via* continues on to the left just after the *Casèra Pizzoc* and goes down the *Agnelezza* hillside. At the beginning through open, lean pastures then skirting a fir tree and black pine forest, then again through pastures as far as *Monte Costiera* at about 1100 metres. Fantastic views of *Lago di Santa Croce* and *Alpago*. The path continues to descend until a height of about 729m where it meets a small road that passes on the opposite slope and goes briefly up the north west side of the *Costa di Serravalle* as far as the stone quarry at 764 metres. After crossing the quarry you take a path that cuts across the hillside, covered with chestnuts, birches and little oak trees, returning to the crest through weeds and scrub. At a height of about 500m you meet the *Turris nigra* ruins, after which the path becomes steep and descends to the beautiful *Sant'Augusta* church at 349m,

where via a cobbled road and passing six chapels built by votive offering in 1642, you descend through the small wood to finally reach the *Piazza Serravalle* in *Vittorio Veneto* at 139 metres.

9 hours from the *Rifugio Semenza*.

Vittorio Veneto was named in 1866 in honour of Vittorio Emanuele II. It is formed by two neighbouring, but separate, ancient town centres which during that year were reunited after the annexation of the Veneto to the Kingdom of Italy: Ceneda, 142m, situated opposite the plain between the Meschio river and the Cervada torrent that flows from the Livenza river, and Serravalle, 149m, a bit higher up, sheltering behind the initial slopes of the Prealps, in the narrow gorge where the Meschio river exits.

Ceneda, of Roman origin and fortified by Teodorico was a very important town under the rule of the Longobards and even more so during the time of *Carlomagno*, separated from Serravalle shortly after 1000. In 1337 it was subjugated to Venice. These two ancient municipalities, at the time of the 1866 act of union were transformed into museums; the Ceneda one is the work of Sansovino and today houses objects from the battle of 1918: the Serravalle one contains works of art and ancient relics. Dominated by the San Martino Castle, of Longobard origin, Ceneda is now a bishops' seat and an industrial and modern commercial centre. Serravalle, however, has kept more of its historical appearance. Buildings of considerable beauty and interest include the Cathedral of Santa Maria Nuova, the ancient gothic town hall, the buildings surrounding Piazza Flaminio with walls and towers sheltered behind the hills. Vittorio Veneto lent the name to the battle that ended in November 1918 with which Italy won its long war against Austria. The city received a Cross awarded during the first world war and Golden Medal awarded during the Second World War.

Balconies in Venetian
architectural style in
the historical centre
of Serravalle in
Vittorio Veneto

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- MAP 40 "Glocknergruppe", from the Glocknerhaus to the Glorér Hütte
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MAP 02 "Forni di Sopra, Ampezzo, Sàuris, Alta Val Tagliamento" from the Rifugio Fabbro to the Rifugio Padova
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Information

in Austria

Administration of the Hohe Tauern National Park

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Tel. 0043 (0) 4825/6161, E-mail: nationalpark@ktn.gv.at

Internet: www.hohetauern.at

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A-9844 Heiligenblut

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Österreich-Italien Italy-Austria Interreg IIIA

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Information

in Italy

Provincial administration

Settore Turismo - Servizio Comunicazione e Promozione

Via Psaro, 21 - 32100 Belluno - Tel. +39 0437 940084

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Tourist information agency - Sappàda

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Tourist information agency - S. Stefano di Cadore

Piazza Roma, 37 - 32045 S. Stefano di Cadore (BL)

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Tourist information agency - Carnia

Via Cadore, 1 - 33024 Forni di Sopra (UD) - Tel. +39 0433 886767

Tourist information agency - Pieve di Cadore

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tai@infodolomiti.it

Tourist information agency - Domegge

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Associazione Pro Loco - Longarone

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Tourist information agency - Tambre d'Alpago

32010 Tambre d'Alpago - Piazza 11 gennaio 1945

Tel. +39 0437 49277 alpago@infodolomiti.it

Tourist information agency - Vittorio Veneto

Piazza del Popolo, 18 - 31029 Vittorio Veneto (TV)

Tel. +39 0438 5 72 43 - iat.vittorioveneto@provincia.treviso.it

For problems regarding bookings, confirmations, cancellations, opening and closing periods of mountain huts, 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 refuge telephone numbers and those of their managers refer to the text

Austrian Alpine Club Sections

Section Grosskirchheim-Heiligenblut-Möritschach

Döllach 146

A 9843 Grosskirchheim

Glocknerhaus, 2132 m

OeAV Section Klagenfurt

Völkermarkter Str. 9 - 9020 Klagenfurt

Salmhütte, 2644 m

OeAV Section Wien

Rahlgasse 6/14 - A 1060 Wien

Glorer Hütte, 2642 m

DAV Section Eichstätt

Marktplatz 15 - D-85072 Eichstätt

Elberfelder Hütte, 2340 m

DAV Section Elberfeld - Luisenstr. 108,

D-42103 Wuppertal

Adolf-Nossberger-Hütte, 2488 m

OeAV Section Wiener Lehrer

Josefsgasse 12 - A 1080 Wien

Wangenitzseehütte, 2508 m

Koninklijke Nederlandse Klim- en Bergsport Vereniging (NKBV)

Houttuinlaan 16A - 3447 GM Woerden - Netherlands

Winklerner Hütte, 1905 m

OeAV Section Winklern - A 9841 Winklern, Mölltal

Karlsbader Hütte, 2260 m

DAV Section Karlsbad - Rote Erde 56

D-95643 Tirschenreuth

Hochweißsteinhaus, 1868 m

OeAV Section Austria

Rotenturmstraße 14, - A-1010 Wien

An aerial photograph of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, a stone building with a grey roof, likely a mountain refuge, sits on a grassy slope. A light-colored, rocky path or scree field leads up from the building towards the center of the image. The background is dominated by steep, rugged mountain peaks with patches of green vegetation and exposed rock faces.

Italian Alpine Club Sections

Sappàda

32047 Via Bach, 146
for the Rifugio Pier Fortunato Calvi

Tolmezzo

33028 via Battisti, 4
for the Rifugio Fratelli De Gasperi

Forni di Sopra

33024 Via Roma, 13
for the Rifugio Giàf

Pordenone

33170 Piazzetta del Cristo, 5/A
for the Rifugio Pordenone

Padua

35100 Galleria San Bernardino 5/10 - Tel. +39 049 8 75 08 42
for the Rifugio Padova

Maniago

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for the Rifugio Maniago

Longarone, Alpàgo Subsection

32010 Pieve d'Alpàgo
for the Ricovero Col Nudo (shelter)

Vittorio Veneto

31029 Viale della Seta, 55
for the Rifugio Semenza and the Bivacco Lastè