

Summer 2020

# ALPE

Seiser Alm Magazine

CASTELROTTO · SIUSI ALLO SCILIAR · FIÈ ALLO SCILIAR · SEISER ALM · TIRES AL CATINACCIO

Dolomites

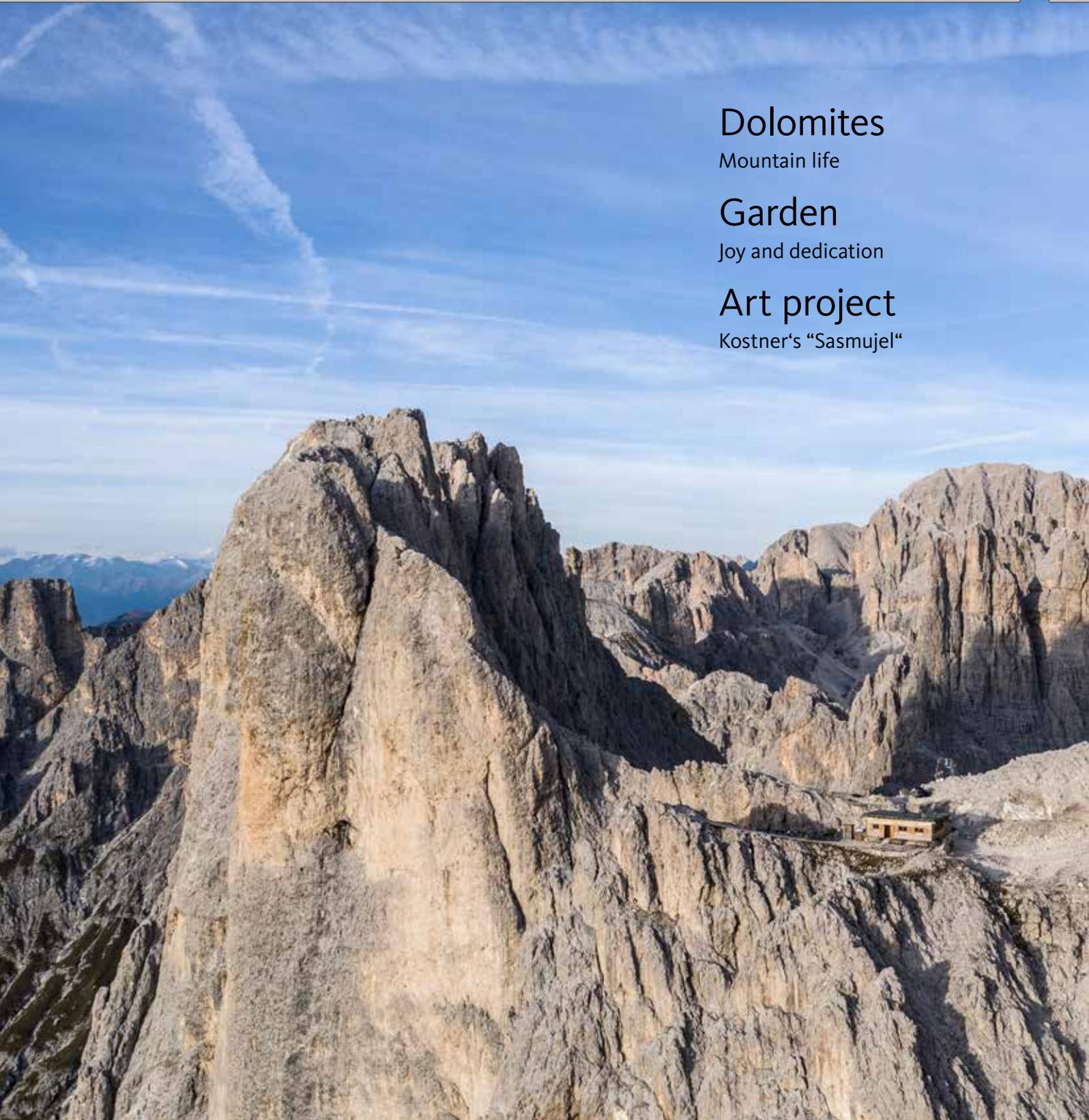
Mountain life

Garden

Joy and dedication

Art project

Kostner's "Sasmujel"





Has time come to a standstill here?

OR ARE WE JUST A STEP AHEAD?

ZALLINGER MOUNTAIN HOLIDAYS AND RESTAURANT

Christina & Markus

# Editorial & Contents



Photo: Helmuth Rier

## Dear guests!

Endless options, exhilarating adventures, the mountain life... Hiking and climbing, paragliding and swimming, savouring the tastes of traditional fare and relaxing in a hay-bath: In the holiday area Seiser Alm, your holiday prospects are boundless.

Read on, and enjoy the fascinating variety of articles in this issue: Where life buds, blooms and blossoms: Join us on a bird's eye flight over the extraordinary, lovingly-tended gardens - the stunning spectacle of shape and colour will take your breath away. You'll also find out how two sisters in Siusi allo Sciliar are making saffron cultivation possible here in our holiday area.

"Going higher": Dedicated young hut owners Michel and Romina aim to "go high" in the truest sense of the word, and are delighted to tell you what inspired them to head up to the dizzy

heights of almost 3,000 metres to take over the mountain hut Rifugio Passo Santner in the heart of the fairytale lands of the Catinaccio. And on the sportier side of things, professional mountain biker Franz Hofer tells us how his life's passion became his career, and shares his insights into life as a biking pro.

Have you always wondered why so many people wear a blue apron in this area? **ALPE** will share the secrets with you as we lead you on a journey into a world of living tradition and much-loved heritage. What is the story behind the "Sasmujel" stone wrapped in brightly coloured climbing ropes at the foot of the Sassolungo? Artist Hubert Kostner from Castelrotto invites you to share in the excitement of this fascinating artistic project.

**ALPE** - your holiday companion in our holiday area Seiser Alm!

In addition to important information about public services, you will find a wealth of tips on the best restaurants, restaurants, meeting places and shopping opportunities in the villages of **Castelrotto, Siusi allo Sciliar, Fiè allo Sciliar, Seiser Alm** and **Tires al Catinaccio**. This magazine will also provide you with a detailed events programme, information on all the top cultural and sociable highlights this summer, and a sneak preview of the winter 2020/21 calendar.

We hope you enjoy this edition and wish you a wonderful, unforgettable stay, filled with relaxation and joy.

**Eduard Tröbinger Scherlin**  
President for Seiser Alm Marketing and the Tourist Offices of Castelrotto, Siusi allo Sciliar, Fiè allo Sciliar, Seiser Alm and Tires al Catinaccio

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HOW DO I GET THERE? →

Florian lift  
Saltria 74



TRAIL NO. 9 (6 mins)



Hotel Tirlir – TRAIL NO. 9 (1 hr and 15 mins.)



## *Thank you, Peter!*

One of the true greats has left the winter stage: Peter Fill, ski racer from Castelrotto competed in his last World Cup event in February 2020.

He will always remain a role model in the sports world, and will be remembered both for his modesty and obliging demeanour and as an athlete who gave his all to pursuing success in his impassioned career as a ski racer right up until the very end.

Thank you, Peter Fill, for all the thrills and excitement you have given us over the years!

*The speed specialist and ambassador for the Seiser Alm retired from his skiing career this past winter.*

Brigitte Kompatscher's farm garden  
at the Moarhof in Fiè allo Sciliar,  
where nature lives in harmony with itself.



## Where life buds, blossoms and blooms

A garden, despite all the time and dedication it entails, is a source of immense joy: It gives you fresh vegetables, sweet berries and brightly coloured flowers but, above all, it fills you with satisfaction. ALPE took a look at a few gardens from a slightly unusual perspective.

# I

If you take a stroll through the villages and hamlets in the holiday area Seiser Alm in spring, summer or autumn, the wonderment never ends: In front of the farmhouses, sunflowers several metres in height stretch up from the gardens into the balmy air, while leeks and onions intersperse with the pinks, violets and yellows of aster, lady's mantle and iris.



The garden is normally the domain of the farming women and housewives, and life in most farms and family homes in South Tyrol would be unimaginable without this abundantly fertile patch of land. However, the single concept of THE garden »

**Text:** Elisabeth Augustin  
**Photo:** Helmut Rier



*The Malfertheiner family tend their garden at the Oberpstopser in S. Valentino with the greatest of love and devotion.*

simply does not exist; every garden is different. They come in different shapes, sizes and colours and vary in location, choice of plants and the reason for planting them. Every garden is also home to much-welcomed insects but on the other hand also to bugs that pose a potential threat to the vegetables and herbs.

These gardens are a lovingly tended wellspring of peace and of energy. Sometimes they are the epitome of orderliness, and sometimes they sprout forth wilder blossoms of breathtaking beauty. Unlike large-scale cultivation, family vegetable patches and gardens are home to an incredible range of vegetables, herbs, flowers and plants which, generally speaking, provide for self-sufficiency.

The trend of the moment is the rediscovery of old varieties, and an increasing awareness of their value has encouraged younger generations of farmers to opt for local varieties; this tendency is not only of benefit for the humanity and the natural world, but imparts a tremendous sense of joy in growing one's own food. Newer varieties also thrive in a number of traditional gardens and, at first glance, it is not



always easy to tell which of these are foodstuffs and which are decorative – the two are not always mutually exclusive. On looking over the fence and into what lies beyond, the attentive observer will discover an immense wealth of species, and it is well worth taking some time to enjoy a closer look at this mini cosmos.

For **ALPE** magazine, photographer Helmuth Rier set his drone off on flight to get a bird's eye view of the most unusual gardens. And when seen from above, the vision of shapes and colours is nothing short of breathtaking.



*Valentin Mayrl and his dog Dana spend so many precious moments together in their garden in Telfen.*

beautiful exemplar of natural heritage and a common sight in the mountainous reaches of South Tyrol. Located along the footpath leading to the Laghetto di Fiè lake, Brigitte's garden brings joy to plant-loving souls right through to the autumn. Alongside chives, parsley, celery, onions, lettuce, bell peppers, beans, carrots and tomatoes, Brigitte also grows blackcurrants and strawberries. Her own home-sown seeds shine in resplendent radiance, a composition of shades and hues set off by the backdrop of the Schlern: Zinnias, asters, marigolds, cosmos flowers, sunflowers together with tendrils of pink and lilac creeping their way up the fencing.

“Yes, our garden is definitely a typical farmer's garden” says Brigitte Wörndle Kompatscher, farming lady at the **Moarhof** in Fiè allo Sciliar, explaining that it is home to both flowers and vegetables. This style of garden is normally surrounded by larch-wood picket fencing known as ‘Speltenzaun,’ a

Amidst a vast stretch of green land on the southern slopes of S. Valentino, a large garden comes into »



*In her garden at the Psoar-Hof in S. Valentino, farming lady Edeltraud devotes her energies to "the best and most relaxing job on the farm."*

view near the **Oberpstopfer-Hof farm**. "Carrots, cabbage, red cabbage, runner beans, beetroot, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, onions, garlic, pumpkin, red and yellow potatoes, tomatoes, cucumber and courgettes all grow here," enumerates Anna Menghin Malfertheiner; "We grow everything organically." Her daughter Jolanda, who shares her mother's love for nature, is an enthusiastic assistant, and is trying to grow sweet potatoes. "The vegetables are for our own sustenance. Anything that we don't eat fresh, we freeze or preserve in jars," explains Anna, a trained cook. "All of our seeds are organic, and we buy them from the Pflgerhof farm. The garden is a lot of work, but it is a great joy."

When you pass by his house, you will nearly always catch sight of Valentin Mayrl working busily in his small field alongside the Siusi to Castelrotto road. Potatoes, broad beans and onions thrive and flourish in his lands, and weeds don't stand a chance – Valentin works hard to make sure of that. His dog Dana is always by his side when retiree Valentin crosses the street from his house to his nearby field and gives the command: "We're off to the gar-

den!" His kingdom is the **"Ziuger Anger"** in Telfen, Castelrotto, where he spends a great deal of time every day "mostly getting rid of the beetles from the potatoes," he laughs. He also has to spray them to prevent blight, and uses dung to fertilise the land. After he has dug the ground in spring, Valentin puts in his vegetables, he says, quoting an old proverb: "Setzt mich im April, kimm i, wenn i will; setzt mich im Mai, kimm i glei" ("Plant me in April and I'll grow at my own will, plant me in May, and I'll grow straight away"). Valentin Mayrl worked as a builder for 36 years, but is convinced that he would have made a great farmer. His wife Frieda



nods in agreement – she knows how much the garden means, and gives, to her Valentin.

At the **Psoar-Hof** in S. Valentino, which dates back to the year 1350, the garden is indubitably the realm of farming woman Edeltraud Rabanser Runggaldier. "I do everything here," she says. "This is the best, and most relaxing, job on the farm. Whenever I'm agitated I retreat to my garden, and I feel bet-

ter instantly." In summer months, the front of the house is nice and shady at lunchtime, and that is when Edeltraud can take a short break and relax in her garden. She grows mainly vegetables behind the old wooden fence, where passers-by never fail to stop and behold in amazement: carrots courgettes, lettuce, leeks, red cabbage, green cabbage, chard, onions, parsley, chives and garlic escorted by an array of traditional herbs including thyme, marjoram and basil, and blackberries, which Edeltraud boils up into mouthwatering jams. The vegetables are served up on the table to feed the family of five every day, and the leeks are frozen for use during the winter months. This farm is also home to another interesting aside: The potatoes are stored in an enormous cellar, which, in the days when the farm belonged to the Castelvecchio Castle, housed a dungeon.

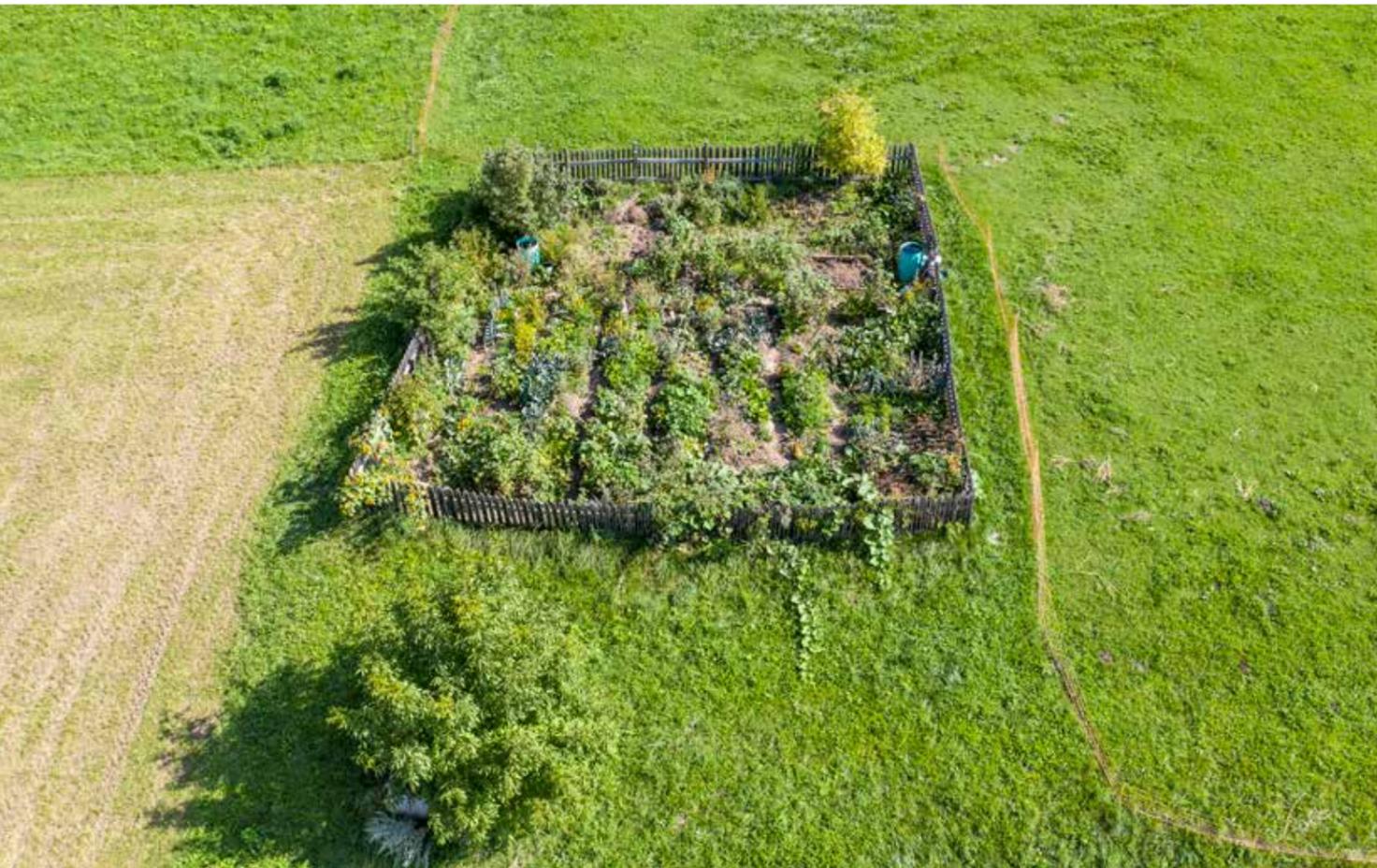
Maria Wörndle Rier tends a rare sight indeed in the centre of Castelrotto: **a round garden**. "My garden used to be square, like all the other gardens in the area," the 90 year-old Maria tells us. When her grandson became a gardener he designed the »

*Maria Rier's garden in Castelrotto town centre is an all-round joy. Having your own garden calls for dedication and, above all, a lot of time.*



round garden, and it has gone on to become, so to speak, an all-round joy that gives the sprightly old lady a lot of fun. In addition to basil, celery, chives, onions, beetroots, endives, Brazilian lettuce, cucumber and courgettes, Maria also grows a vast array of flowers, with roses, dahlias and asters bringing a vibrant glow to the garden in the warmer months. When she is out weeding, Maria particularly enjoys the afternoon shade in summer. She is

fine and Marialuise Planer rarely have the time for a chat when they meet there, as there is so much work to be done. "But we can always see what is growing and thriving in each other's patch," smiles Josefina, who lives on the farm. Knowing and, above all, feeling that the sister in the other part of the garden is also busy tending and nurturing, is a joy for both of them. Here at 1,230 metres above sea level, they grow lettuce, courgettes, cucum-



The hard work that sisters Josefina and Marialuise Planer put into their garden at the Pristingerhof in S. Valentino is amply rewarded with joy and fresh vegetables.

sorry to see that most of the gardens have disappeared from the town centre: "Unfortunately, a lot of people don't have the time for their own gardens anymore," she says regretfully. Maria is delighted, however, to have her own "green fingers" and the enthusiasm of her daughter-in-law and grandchildren.

At the **Pristingerhof farm** in S. Valentino, two sisters share an enormous garden. However, Jose-

ber, cabbage, beets and a variety of other vegetables, in addition to countless herbs, berries and flowers." In this day and age, knowing what you are eating is of inestimable value," the farming lady says. "I couldn't imagine farming life without a garden." When we ask if, occasionally, she wouldn't prefer to just sit on the bench with her sister and do nothing, Josefina can only shake her head: No. In this garden, there really is no time for such things. «

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*Hubert Kostner wrapped 10,000 metres of brightly-coloured climbing ropes around a boulder in the Sassolungo cirque.*

# Soft as stone

Up until mid-summer, hikers on the Sassopiatto cirque will meet with a stone wrapped in brightly-coloured climbing ropes. What lies behind this work of art, created by Castelrotto artist Hubert Kostner?

## W

When Austrian Alpine mountaineer Paul Grohmann, accompanied by two mountain guides from Val Gardena, made the first ascent of the Sassolungo on 13 August 1992, it was nothing short of sensational. Prior to this conquest, the imposing landmark which dominates the landscape of the Seiser Alm to the east, in concert with the Sassopiatto, had been considered “unconquerable” due to the length of its uphill ascent and perilous rockslides. In 2019, the 150<sup>th</sup> jubilee of this milestone in Alpine history in the Dolomites was commemora-

ted with an array of events. Transart, the contemporary art festival which has been held annually for the past 20 years made its own contribution to the celebrations and paid homage to the Sassopiatto with a piece of performance art created for this very unusual resonance chamber by composer Eduard Demetz and dancer Anastasia Kostner.

**The project** also included a contribution from the field of visual arts which can be seen at the scene of the performance - and not just for one day, but for »





Hubert Kostner: "Art exists purely in order to create new shapes and images."

the whole year - in the form of a work by visual artist Hubert Kostner. Entitled Sasmujel ("Soft stone" in Ladino), it is the realisation of a long-nurtured dream. In symbolic language, Kostner has expressed the essence of being "bound" to the mountains by trussing a boulder in no less than 10,000 metres of brightly-coloured climbing ropes, giving the rough rock a new surface and, with it, a soft, transmuted exterior. The ropes were procured in part through a fundraiser, and in part were donated by sponsors. So, what does it mean? "Climbers are often reproached for doing something absurd, senseless. Wrapping a stone may seem to be pointless, but art exists purely in order to create new shapes and images. Even though they may appear absurd, they are never pointless. The ropes are the key to creating a new object. At the same time, this work represents a mutual enmeshment: The mountain holds me, and I hold it. And, of course, the rope represents the existential relationship between climbers." The roughly 5-metre high, 4-metre wide rock looked something like a Toblerone bar before Kostner's transformation, and its metamorphosis into a coloured ball on a hiking trail - which was particularly busy that summer - did not go unnoticed. The Sasmujel was soon to become a popular photo and selfie opportunity, although not necessarily recognised or explored as a work of art. This brought unanticipated complications, and a "Climbing on the artwork is prohibited" sign had to be erected.

The high-Alpine stage setting is also a special experience

for the artist himself: "We artists usually work in protected areas like museums or galleries. Up here at 2,600 metres above sea level, everything is completely different. Aesthetic decisions are dictated by practical necessities, the weather plays a decisive role; you are, quite simply, subject to the laws of nature. But, more than anything else, it is an enormous honour for me to be able to install this work into this space where nature alone, not culture, prevails. In relation to the immensity of the grey rock arena my work is miniscule and, effectively, insignificant. Because this stone is nothing up there. Small, fragile, vulnerable - just like human beings when they are in this environment. In my 20 years as an artist, I have never had the opportunity to create art in a more beautiful or more compelling location."

**The winter months** blanketed the Sasmujel in a thick layer of snow, which was already lying in the cirque of the Sassolungo in November. As spring moves forwards, the brightly coloured rock will be one of the first splashes of colour when the snow melts. How it will look and whether or not it will need freshening up remains to be seen. The project has been documented in a book and in film. This coming summer, Hubert Kostner and an assistant will spend a few days on-site to liberate the Sasmujel from its ropes. When the jubilee year of the first ascent of the Sassolungo comes to an end, all traces of the action should disappear: "Captivation and liberation - and so the circle ends." «

*This summer, the "Sasmujel" will be liberated from its bonds - and afterwards, nothing will remain of this work of art.*



# Franz the mountain biker

Franz Hofer from Val Sarentino has been a professional mountain biker for a quarter of a century: A long, arduous road that, for the most part, he's travelled alone - and it's not over yet.

## C



“Cycling is a solo sport. I like being alone, and I liked it when I was a child. Naturally you do race for a team as a professional mountain biker, but you do 90 % of your training alone, unlike in skiing where a pool of 10 people train together. If you're a professional biker, you're on your own.” And so begins the professional chronicles of Val Sarentino “mountain bike veteran” Franz Hofer, all set to bike his way into his 26th season the coming summer. The decision to become a professional was not a hard one to take: For Hofer, born in 1981, the sport was the perfect fit for him both physically and psychologically, and it is clear that his love for the sport drives him onwards rather than any burning desire to make a name for himself in the races.

Franz Hofer helped out on a nearby farm in Val Sarentino starting his early youth, and he always biked to work. “It was only 8 kilometres, but there

were a good 600 metres of hill to contend with. And I enjoyed it. At some point my godfather gave me my first bike, and I entered my first race when I was 12 years old. From that moment on, there was no doubt that I wanted to do it for a living.” At that time, there were no schools, which fostered young talents like those in the Alpine region of today, mainly for skiing. From the very outset, Franz was on his own, and had to find his own way of doing it. “My second passion, other than cycling soon, and inevitably became finding sponsors.”

**His competitive career** began in the 1990s - an auspicious time, as it was in this period that mountain biking was classified as a professional sport. MTB Cross Country first became an Olympic sport in 1996 and similarly the mountain bike scene underwent something like a boom period in Italy, with its deep-rooted cycling culture. His debut in the junior races was a happy occasion. »

*Training on the doorstep:  
Franz Hofer finds the  
perfect conditions for it  
around S. Costantino.*





*Franz Hofer  
and former ski racer  
Denise Karbon have  
two lively children.*



When Hofer took the title of Italian champion in the U23 category in 2002 a number of teams expressed an interest in him and, at the age of 20, he signed his first professional contract with the team belonging to Austrian Formula One driver Alexander Wurz. This was followed by a notable 11 years in the Italian Scott Team. Franz Hofer's career is arguably more impressive for its length - how many athletes can look back on over 25 years as a professional? - than for its really big victories. Hofer, however, reflects with wisdom: "As a professional I have never really reached the top of the world. But even when I look back, I don't see this as being frustrating or humiliating; I just enjoy my job immensely. Maybe it was different in the first few years - when you're younger you want to achieve everything at once. But even though I've never been at the peaks of the World Cup loop, my good results at national and European level have always spurred me on. I know my own potential, and that is, possibly and fundamentally a positive thing as to today, I am still motivated to give my best. People who have taken the top podium and can't sustain their performance over time might see more reason to bring their careers to an end, but I just really like my profession."

In practical terms, this "job" consists of following a training programme every day which most recreational bikers would be proud of completing in a week. But, as Franz Hofer emphasises, he has always been somebody who needs little training. "I always used to try to train a lot because I loved doing it, but it was often counterproductive. With the benefit of hindsight, I now know that I have to take more care during the recovery phases so I only train once a day, and always right here on my doorstep." During winter, his training can often involve

cross-country skiing and ski tours but more often than not he hops on his "equipment" of choice, his bike, and takes advantage of all the possibilities in his immediate surrounding around S. Costantino near Fiè allo Sciliar. "Short, intensive training sessions take two to three hours and longer ones five, but I'm always back after six hours." Franz has other 'problems' which other men could only dream of: He has more or less given up strength training as he has a tendency to build up muscle too quickly, which is not an advantage in his sport: Body weight has to be hauled up the mountains and this metre upon metre of altitude difference.

At the beginning of his career, Franz Hofer mainly competed in the relatively short loop-routes of cross-country races but made a gradual shift from 2013 to 2016 and, finally made the transition to marathons - races of at least 60 km, generally with anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000 metres of altitude difference. This style of cycling involves a completely different kind of challenge for athletes: "I often got good results at the beginning of my career, but they were only good in athletic terms. Now that I'm older it is of course, difficult to keep up with the younger lads, but I can compensate to a large extent with my experience, particularly since I started racing in marathons." In the longer races, you have to be able to assess your progress and pace yourself throughout the race.

**But the time** is drawing nearer when the 38 year-old Hofer's active sports career will, inevitably, draw to a close. Last autumn, he transferred to the Italian team New Bike 2008, where he already has a dual role, which may lead to a potential future career. "I still race, but the team has brought in a few exceptionally talented young riders »

#### BIG VICTORIES

- 2002 Italian Champion (U23)
- 2002 European Championships  
4<sup>th</sup> place (team relay)  
Leysin (CH)
- 2003 World Championships  
Lugano (CH), 9<sup>th</sup> place  
(Cross Country)
- 2004 European Championships  
Graz (AT)
- 2005 Dolomiti Superbike,  
1<sup>st</sup> place
- 2006 European Championships,  
3<sup>rd</sup> place in the overall  
classification
- 2015 Transalp Stage Champion
- 2015 Bike four Peaks Stage  
Champion (DE)

#### PRESTIGIOUS WINS IN THE "CLASSIC" MOUNTAIN BIKE RACES

- 2014 Montalcino Marathon
- 2014 RampiConero Marathon
- 2015 Monteriggioni Marathon
- 2015 RampiConero Marathon

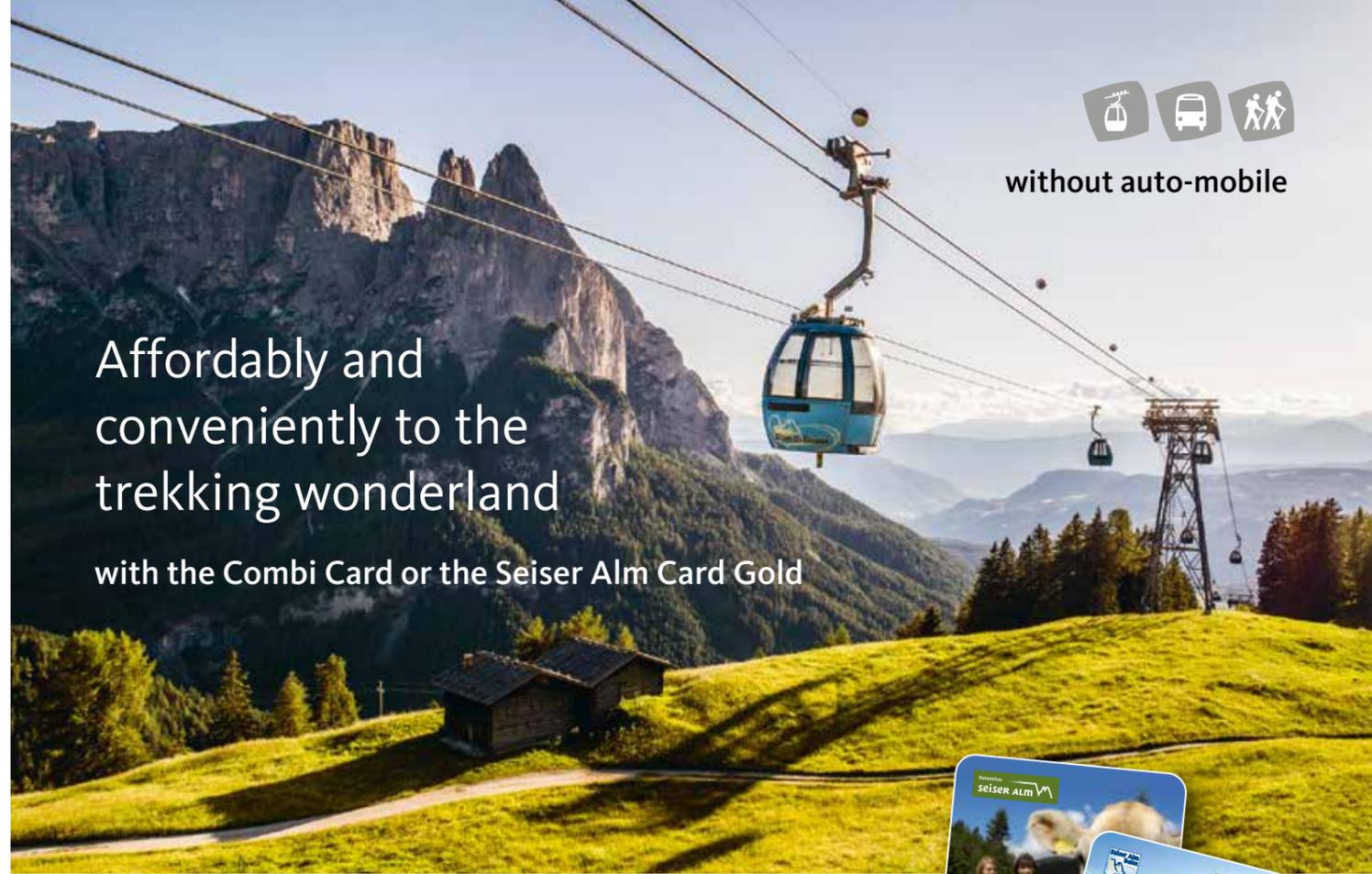


Broken chains – it can easily happen in cycling races, and costs you several positions in the rankings.

who will benefit from my experience and who I have taken under my wing a little." Equally, however, he could see himself sharing his experience in a cycling shop –something that he has always done on a part-time basis throughout his career. Sharing his enthusiasm for mountain biking is important to Hofer. When we ask about his favourite races in South Tyrol, the ones that every ambitious amateur should ride, he answers without hesitation: "The Hero Dolomites - it's an incredibly tough race but the views make it worth all the effort, and, of course, Dolomiti Superbike. It's not a technical race as such, but the excellent organisation has kept the family atmosphere despite the large number of participants."

Since 2014, Franz Hofer has been together with former ski racer Denise Karbon. The couple have two children together, and have been married since 2018. Their professional careers never

overlapped and they only got to know each other after Karbon had retired from professional sports, so they have never had to reconcile the everyday life of two professional athletes. Just as well with her understanding of his daily training routine and frequent absences - not easy with two young children - his wife provides him with great support, says Franz. Outside the home that they share in S Costantino, designed with amazing attention to detail, we can see another side to the lone cyclist: That of a loving father and family man. Dwarf goats, rabbits and hens play happily in what is practically a mini zoo, amidst a homemade tree house and natural outdoor games. Possibly, when he ends his career, Hofer says he might seek his alone time working in the woodland behind the house if he feels the need: There would certainly be plenty to do. But will he continue to bike after his professional career has come to an end? Well, that remains a surprise. «



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*Michel and Romina put heart and soul into their new venture up on high at the mountain hut Rifugio Passo Santner.*



# Mountain life

What does a young couple who live at an altitude of nearly 3,000 metres Romina Huber and Michel Perathoner enjoy life to the full in the heart of the Dolomites UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hosting a mountain hut is a great joy, but by no means a piece of cake.

## C



Clearly visible below the peak of the Catinaccio even from a distance away, the mountain hut Rifugio Passo Santne is located at 2,734 metres above sea level in the “Gartl” scree land in the heart of the Catinaccio mountain group. The hut was built in 1856 by Giulio Gabrielli, a mountain guide from the Fassa Valley and was owned by his family for over fifty years. When the hut was closed to the public for the first time in 2013 there were a number of pro-

spective buyers, one of whom was the Perathoner family from Siusi allo Sciliar. “My father asked me and my two brothers if any of us were interested in taking over the Santnerpass mountain hut, and I was immediately filled with enthusiasm by the prospect,” says Michel Perathoner. The oldest of the three sons had already completed his education at Hotel Management college and also his Bachelor in Political Science. He knew well what the life of »

**Text:** Katja Sanin  
**Photo:** Helmuth Rier



*It's the fundamentals that count in the mountains: At 3,000 metres up on high, there's no room for fripperies.*

a mountain hut host involved, as he had practically grown up on the mountain hut Rifugio Alpe di Tires, which his grandfather had opened in 1963. Michel could easily see himself running the hut, but the Gabrielli family from the Fassa Valley were unable to reach agreement on the future of the Santnerpass mountain hut and it remained closed for the next few years.

In the meantime, Michel completed his Master's degree in Economics in Bolzano and had pushed all thoughts of running the Santnerpass hut to the back of his mind until one day in spring 2018, when his father called him out of the blue, told him that the hut was up for sale again and asking him if he was still interested in taking it over. "I got straight on the phone to call my girlfriend Romina in Milan," says Michel. When Romina said she would do it with him, there was no doubt that the couple would take over the Santnerpass hut in the summer of 2019, as there wasn't enough time to get organised for the 2018 season, so the two new hosts tell The magazine Alpe via a WhatsApp call from Argentina, their current location on a tour of South America after their first season in the mountains of South Tyrol.

**They first stepped foot** into the hut together in June 2018. "Opening the shutters and letting the light and fresh air flow through our new summer home was an incredible sensation," says Romina, who has found it easy to settle into a life at 3,000 metres metres. Romina studied fashion and design

in Milan, and lived and worked there for nine years before she began her new life as mountain hut manager with her boyfriend. Life in a mountain hut could not be more different from that of a big city like Milan: "Both have their appeal, but I wouldn't want to go back to the big city," she says. Life in the mountains is more intense. You feel more grounded and appreciate the fundamentals of life, like water, so much more all of a sudden. There is no groundwater supply to the hut, just melted water and rainwater. Managing the water supply was a considerable challenge, the couple agree. It could be used for cooking, but there was no fresh salad in the hut, for example, as there was no water to wash it with. They made coffee with mineral water and when the temperature fell below zero in the evenings, they filled jerry cans and carafes with the water before it froze to have water at night and the following morning.

The new hosts split the labour: Michel works in the kitchen and Romina serves customers, does the paperwork and the cleaning. In the first season, her colleague Tobias ensured that everything worked out around the hut. The Santnerpass hut is not large, and sleeps twelve climbers in two new 6-bed dorms furnished in spruce wood. If there are a lot of people around, an additional five people can be accommodated in the parlour. Storage space for groceries is also limited and the couple got their supplies once a week when Michel's father brought their orders to the Rifugio Vajolet hut, where they were reloaded onto the cable car and transported

to the Rifugio Re Alberto 1° hut. There Tobias was waiting to unload the goods and pack them onto yet another cable car for the journey to the Santnerpass hut. "It always took three people to get the goods delivered, and we needed to top up twice a week in high season because of our lack of storage space," explains Michel, who kept track of the small inventory. "If we ran out of something, like onions or flour, we were able to count on the invaluable help from our neighbours Valeria und Stefan from the Rifugio Re Alberto 1° hut, who were always happy to lend us a hand if we were in a fix," says Romina.

**Seasonal and regional:** The couple's culinary philosophy. Michel wanted to do something a little different in the kitchen rather than serving up the staple hut classics. At the Santnerpass hut, onion soup was served rather than noodle soup, all imaginable variations of bread dumplings replaced the traditional 'shepherd's macaroni and chilli con carne' the classic goulash as a meat dish. The classics, however, stayed firmly in place when it came to desserts: Apple strudel was served every day, and Kaiserschmarrn (Emperor's mess) if time permitted. "The greatest success in our first season was our beetroot dumplings with gorgonzola sauce and, at the weekends, we made our own carnival

doughnuts and served them with homemade apricot jam," the couple tell us during their conversation with ALPE, reminiscing over their first season as mountain hut hosts while drinking coffee in Argentina. The hardest part was the difficulty in estimating how many guests would come each day; in their first season at the hut, the couple had no experience, and the number of guests fluctuated considerably from day to day: At the height of the season, they served 80 meals per day on peak days. The guests were a colourful blend of international climbers and, in addition to the many locals, Italians, Germans and Europeans, hailed from Japan, Australia, India, Iran, Mexico, Canada and more. "One guest even came from South Africa. He had no experience in the mountains and wasn't well equipped. He was lucky though, as it was a hot day and still pretty warm in the evening, so he didn't need warm mountain clothes," says Michel. The South African guest had been to a wedding in Venice and then made a quick detour to the Dolomites to spend the night at the Santnerpass hut before flying back to South Africa the following day.

Summer 2019 was a mixed bag, due to the unpredictable weather. On rainy days, the trio at the hut spent their time preparing for the following days. It wasn't a bad summer as such, but it wasn't steady. »



*"Over all the hilltops is quiet now," wrote Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.*



Nature and cuisine go hand in hand.

June was a particularly hot month and there were a lot of showers in the afternoons, so mountaineers had to plan their trips well. One day that Romina, Michel and Tobias will never forget is 25 July 2019, when the temperatures plummeted throughout Europe, and there was a record number of lightning storms in South Tyrol. “We thought we knew what a thunder storm was, but that evening was both incredibly scary and incredibly beautiful,” they recall. “By good luck, the overnight guests were already there when the storm began in the late afternoon. We had just finished dinner when there was a thunderous crack and we were plunged into darkness. We were right in the middle of a storm cloud, and the thunder was deafening. The sky all around us was pitch black, and lit up with flashes of grey and yellow lightning. The hut shook under our feet with every rumble of thunder. It was frightening, but when the storm clouds finally cleared it was a beautiful sight, and seeing one flash of lightning after another all around us was an impressive sight to behold,” they now say when recalling the unforgettable, breathtaking spectacle of nature. In that record night in late July, over 14,000 lightning bolts were recorded in South Tyrol.

“I can still remember the thunder storms on the Alpe di Tires when I was a child and how loud it was when the hailstones bounced off the metal roof, but that thunderstorm on 25 July was immense, and I was amazed by how much we all kept our heads in spite of the apocalyptic feel in the air,” says Michel. This was probably the most unforgettable memory which the couple experienced in their first season, and which they can now look back on with satisfaction as they look forward to many more summer seasons spent at the heights of 3,000 metres. The young couple can easily imagine having a family in the future and spending the summer at the mountain hut in the Catinaccio mountain group with their children. “We are not climbers ourselves but, if we have children, we will kit them out with climbing harnesses and ropes to make sure that they are safe on the mountain sides, like so many of our predecessors have done up here,” the couple say with a smile. «



Foto: DM/Andreas Merwa

The fascinating mountain scenery of the Dolomites.

## The myth of the Dolomites

In South Tyrolean extreme mountaineer Reinhold Messner’s words, they are “the most beautiful mountains in the world“. The incomparable beauty of the Dolomites is widely renowned and for many they are synonymous with excellence in winter holidays.

The mountains of the Dolomites can be thought of as a fossilised coral reef arching up into the sky in spectacular fashion. Thanks to their monumental beauty as well as their geological and geomorphologic significance, the so-called Pale Mountains were awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 2009. Divided into nine areas and forming part of the Sciliar-Catinaccio Natural Park, the

Dolomites are considered one of the most beautiful natural landscapes in the world.

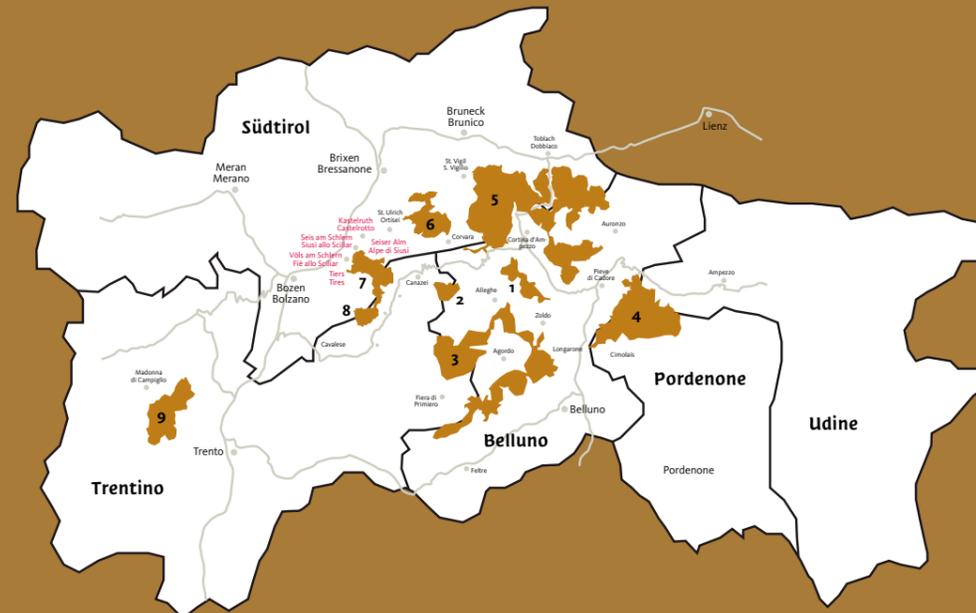
**Sciliar-Catinaccio Nature Park:** South Tyrol’s oldest natural reserve, a 7,291-hectare park, is situated in the western Dolomites and was founded in 1974. The Sciliar is an impressive mountain range whose emblematic outline, that includes the Santner and

Euringer peaks, stands out as one of the signature landmarks of South Tyrol. The Catinaccio massif, with its numerous peaks, is also known far beyond the country’s borders. The most striking part of the massif is the Catinaccio D’Antermoia peak, which stands at a height of 3,002 metres. The natural park also includes the mountain forests around Siusi, Fiè and Tires, and the Ciamin Valley. «



### Dolomites World Heritage UNESCO

- 1 Pelmo, Croda da Lago
- 2 Marmolada
- 3 Pale San Martino, San Lucano Dolomiti Bellunesi, Vette Feltrine
- 4 Friulian and d’Oltre Piave Dolomites
- 5 Northern Dolomites
- 6 Puez-Odle
- 7 Sciliar Catinaccio, Latemar
- 8 Bletterbach
- 9 Brenta Dolomites





# The most precious spice in the world

Saffron, a handpicked treasure, is as precious as gold. The sisters Sabine and Franzi are experimenting with a crop in a field above Siusi allo Sciliar.

## A

About 150,000 to 200,000 threads of saffron have to be harvested to produce a single kilogramme of saffron. And the “Crocus Sativus,” botanical name of the autumn-blooming, tuberous saffron plant, only comes into blossom once a year. Even in far-back olden times, saffron was so precious that it was weighed against gold, which is how it came to its alternative name of “red gold.” Saffron is a traditional crop in oriental and Mediterranean countries, and also in Switzerland. But how about South Tyrol?

**Saffron in Siusi allo Sciliar.** “We first came up with the idea of growing saffron when we were staying at a hotel in Alsace. The first tubers that we used came on one part from Sardinia and the part from Upper Austria,” recalls Franzi. The Sardinian tubers, however - unlike their Austrian counterparts - were reluctant to blossom; it would seem that they weren’t well-suited to the Alpine climate. “Team SaFran,” as the sisters SABine and FRANzi jokingly call themselves, sourced 6,000 bulbs from Austria and planted them in a sunny, wind-sheltered field of the Winklerhof farm, in front of the Schlern massif. Their home farm the Winklerhof boasts the ideal soil conditions for crocus plants as it is calcareous, rich in humus and dry. Their efforts were not in vain: The following

autumn, the field was covered in the hardy violet plants, and every member of the family helped to pick the flowers every day. They got to work early in the morning before the petals opened in the sunlight, otherwise the yellowy-red stigmas inside the flowers would have lost their essential oils and their distinctive and heady aroma.

When the flowers have been picked, the meticulously delicate work begins at home: Handpicking three threads of saffron from each flower. And you can imagine what a gentle touch it needs! Franzi then lays the golden threads on baking trays and dries them around the warm oven. “Roasting is a decisive factor in the quality,” as the sisters slowly learned. The threads shrink to a fifth of their original size and feel extremely fragile when Sabine and Franzi weigh them on precision scales and package a small amount into small dark glasses.

**Bees love saffron.** Even the seemingly superfluous petals have a great purpose. “Bees love to eat crocus flowers. They buzz around the crocus field and munch on our floral leftovers,” says Sabine.

After their first successful harvest a few years ago, Sabine and Franzi decided to expand their crop, and grew another 10,000 tubers on roughly 300 »



Deep violet blossom: In autumn, saffron takes on a particularly intense hue.



Text: Rosa Maria Erlacher  
Photo: Helmuth Rier

Sabine and Franzl Schgaguler invest endless time and energy into their saffron crops at the Winklerhof above Siusi allo Sciliar.



square metres of arable land. The first planting takes place in late summer, and the saffron plants blossom around two months later. Then the four-year vegetation cycle begins: The tubers sprout in spring and then the plants begin to garner their strength. In summertime all the green dies away, and does not reappear until autumn. “We do not use any fertiliser or chemicals, and for the most part, water the plants only when it is particularly dry in spring, but the weeds just keep growing,” moans Franzl. Picking the rampant weeds days after day is a lot of work, but not even the weeds can spoil their joy in their venture.

**A sideline with a soul.** “We’re still in the experimental phase,” says Sabine. Last summer, they treated a field with a layer of biodegradable cornstarch. “It was worth a try. Next year we’ll try sowing buckwheat or rye in the spring to try to

keep the weeds down and create added value.” Growing saffron should continue to be a side business for the sisters that brings them joy and enthusiasm. Sabine works full time in a sports shop and Franzl runs the farm with her husband.

The customers for their lovingly packaged saffron threads are local shops, including “South Tyrol Products” at the valley station of the Seiser Alm cable car and the grocery shop “Konsum” in Castelrotto. “We can’t produce enough to keep up with the demand”: The sisters are delighted with their success. Franzl often makes tea with a few infused saffron threads. “It’s a great pick-me-up,” she says. The saffron liqueur, which she has made is also delectable. Sabine, in similar vein, got herself a saffron recipe book and often tries out new dishes. Her greatest wish is to work together with local professional chefs as a saffron-grower. «

# The blue apron

Tourism adverts in South Tyrol promise you 300 days of sunshine a year and a holiday under a blue sky. Deep sky-blue is also the colour of the most commonly-seen item of clothing in South Tyrol. Very much the preserve of the menfolk in days gone by, the blue apron is also enormously popular with women nowadays.

## T



The blue apron also called the “Schurz” in South Tyrol, has shaped the image of these lands like no other garment. If you keep your eyes peeled when you’re out and about you are bound to catch a glimpse of the “Schurz”, known variously as “Fürtig”, “Firtig” or “Fürchta” depending on where you happen to be, especially in the countryside and mostly donned by farmers and craftspeople. However, you’re also very likely to spot it under the shopping arcades in Bolzano or at the fruit market, as the winegrowers in the Bolzano area remain devoted fans of the blue apron to this day.

The blue apron, or “farmer’s apron” is a clear declaration of class; it is a staple item in the working wardrobe and is practically indispensable to the working man in South Tyrol. “A man without an apron is only half-dressed,” as a local proverb goes, and many people are still of the same opi- »



*A blue apron is a clear sign of a hard-working South Tyrolean.*



nion today. Be that as it may, women have long since discovered the “Schurz” for themselves, eminently practical and multi-purpose as it is. It protects clothing, which especially in the past, was cared for with great attention. When the two ends are held in one hand, it makes a handy makeshift sack for carrying all manner of things for example: seeds, potatoes, apples or wood from A to B when you’re in a hurry. Documents, the newspaper and

all manner of small items can be stowed away in the bib, so you can wander around the house or the field without a bag. And in an emergency, the apron also comes in handy as a hanky or to wipe a weary brow.

**History.** The apron was originally white, made in local linen and was worn by farmers even on Sundays or on strolls through the city. When cotton

reached an affordable price in around 1900, synthetic blue became the colour of choice, bringing a splash of colour into everyday life and a new “fashion” for the workers of South Tyrol. It was generally home-sewn by the women of the house, and the breast bib was often adorned with lovingly stitched embroidery. Today, you can buy the blue apron in all specialist stores, at markets, and in general stores; it is often embellished with a witticism, making it a popular souvenir for both locals and guests. The apron is the vehicle of choice for making statements, and lovingly-embroidered adornments. “funny and single,” “Rarely at home” or “married and done,” especially in the days when courting was a secret affair, would have conveyed a meaningful signal to the marriage market.

**Living tradition.** The blue apron has got good prospects as the garb of choice for the quirky character in the third millennium. Years ago, Mikamale, a design team from Bolzano, came up with the idea of creating novel items in traditional fabrics. Everyday articles such as shopping bags and bread baskets for the breakfast table are stitched in the robust cotton and sold in museum shops as well as in a number of shops in South Tyrol. Fashion label Qollezione plan to rewrite the history of the blue apron, and their finely embroidered skirts, trousers and jackets will enthrall the younger generation for blue cotton: New fashion, with a hint of tradition.

**When work is done.** If you meet a man who has pulled up a corner of his apron and twisted it behind his trousers, it means that his working day is done. Older people know endless other hidden messages: It does make a difference if an apron corner hangs over your left leg or your right. But at the end of the day, you just have to put the apron on for yourself to see what it does to a man (or woman). With its endless versatility, there is every reason to hope that this amazing South Tyrolean accessory will be worn for a long time to come. «

*The uses of the blue apron are as multi-faceted as the people who wear it with such pride.*



Artist Willy Valier left a meaningful mark through his life's works.

# In memory of Willy Valier

100 years ago, the famed artist Willy Valer was born. Valier revolutionised art in South Tyrol, and spent many years of his life in Siusi allo Sciliar.

## I



In 2019, all South Tyrol shared homage to the great artist Karl Plattner. Born in Malles in 1919, he was undoubtedly one of the most important artists of the post-war period. And on 6 December, his friend one of the most innovative artists of the 1960s who sent shock waves through the art world in South Tyrol was born: Willy Valier.

Willy Valier was born in Bolzano in 1920, the eldest son of Willy Valier Senior and Valeria Cagol, and died of a heart failure at a very young age on 2 September 1968, while on holiday with his wife Liana and their seven year-old daughter Sarah in Senigallia. He is buried in St. Paulo/Appiano. His father ran a bakery under the porticoed arcades in Bolzano; after a failed attempt to expand the bakery into a larger company and thus, at the time of the great economic depression of 1930, the Valier family built and managed a Viennese Art Nouveau style hotel in Miramare, Rimini together with their friends, artist couple May and Anton Hofer.

Hofer had attended the Kolo Moser School of Applied Arts in Vienna, and was a member of the Vienna Workshop (Wiener Werkstätten), while his wife May (1896-2000) had a prestigious reputation as a textile and enamel artist.

Willy began his academic life at the Franziskaner high school in Bolzano, but shortly afterwards changed his course of studies and attended the School of Viticulture and Oenology in Conegliano Veneto. In 1939, he matriculated at the Florence Art Academy, which he also abandoned due to the war. Valier was one of the first people to "opt" for the German Reich following the Mussolini-Hitler Agreement calling for the forcible resettlement of South Tyroleans. In 1930 he enlisted in the German Navy, partly due to his enthusiasm for the sea and technology. He shared his sharp mind with his uncle Max Valier (1895-1930), a great pioneer of rocket technology and also one of its first victims; he died in 1930 in an explosion during a trial run of a new engine for the Shell company. The town of Siusi memorialised Max Valier with the naming of a street, and the Technological High School in Bolzano that also bears his name.

In 1943 Willy Valier married Anneliese Gerold from Innsbruck, who gave birth to their child. After the war, the Valier family moved to Siusi, where they again managed a hotel – the "Monte Piz," after their hotel on the Adriatic had been bombed during the hostilities. The hotel was to become a .retreat for Willy Valier, and from that »



Arnold Tribus, journalist and editor of the "Die neuen Südtiroler Tageszeitung" daily newspaper, also ran an art gallery in Bolzano for 20 years.

Text: Arnold Tribus  
Photo: Helmuth Rier



*With his mixed-media works, Willy Valier created a connection with the international avant-garde.*

time onwards Siusi remained a point of reference for the artist.

IN the mid-1950s, architect Arno Hofer once again built a modern, bungalow style villa for Valier's parents, for which Willy Valier designed some furnishings, wrought-iron lamps and banisters. The Valier's villa again became a rendezvous for artists and intellectuals, including Karl Plattner, Piero Siena, Roland Veneri and Gino Scarpa.

In 1949 Willy Valier resumed his art studies at the Munich Academy, where the artists Emanuel Fohn and Josef Kienlechner helped him to find a place. He did not, however, complete his studies, and dropped out once again in 1954. In the 1950s, Valier embarked on an intensive period of exhibitions.

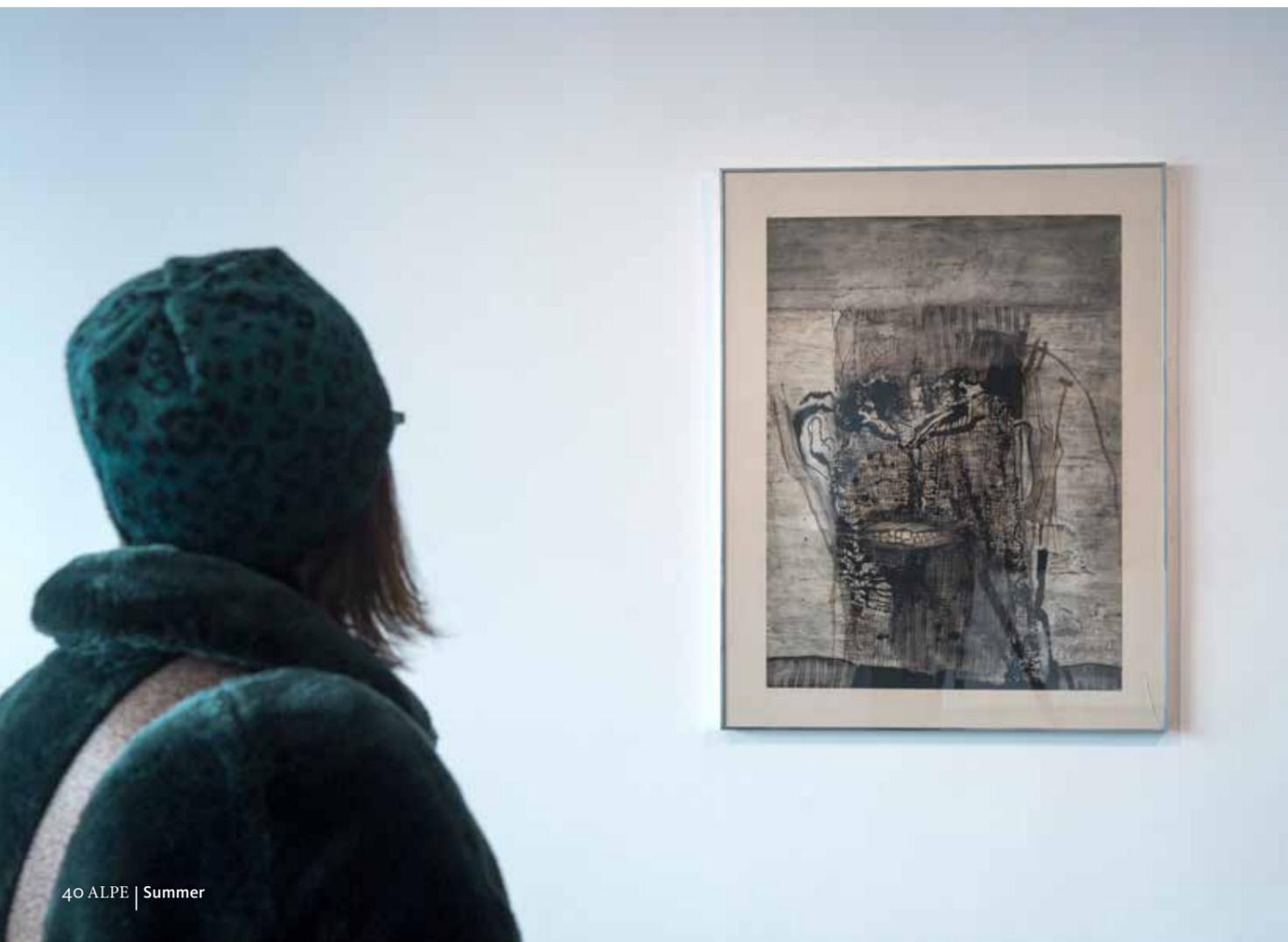
#### His works

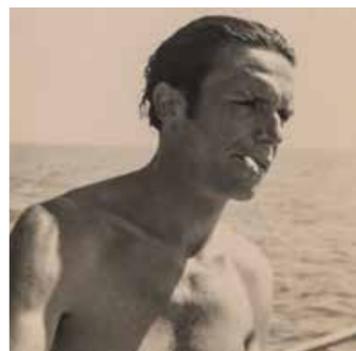
Willy Valier considered the post-WW II era to be a sharp turning point in the history of the world and the history of art. Shaken by the war, the atomic bomb, fascism, National Socialism and Auschwitz, the world of art turned its attention to approaches which could help to create a new beginning; the newly-regained freedom needed a creative outlet. And in Bolzano, Willy Valier was undoubtedly one of the most prominent figures of this new dawn. With his charismatic nature, he was soon to become a point of reference for a new, younger generation of artists who wanted to make a clean break with the past.

Valier's artistic career is a complex affair. His first cycle of works in the 1950s is an expression of a fantasy world and, above all, is characterised by stylised motifs with emblematic titles such as "Geometric Fish" and his famed birds, with a striking objectivity and a delicate embellishment. The beautiful colours of his works suited his audience's tastes: Modern, but not over the top and, above all, not abstract. They did not provide the artist with long term satisfaction, however; He was searching for something new and, principally, anxious not to lose his bond with the national and international art scene. At this time he created his second cycle of works, an abstract mixed-media-art period

which was certainly the most radical of his short-lived artistic career. This mixed-media approach received only reserved public approval; his audience felt disoriented and confused. His good friend Karl Plattner, who also struggled on the scene with his cubist-style art, confirmed a similar experience (let us not forget that one of Plattner's 1951 frescoes, created for the war memorial in Naturno/Naturns, was covered over with plywood until 1968).

Valier's mixed-media works are mainly large-format compositions in which, alongside colour, he used a variety of unusual materials including sand, plaster, ash, cement and plasticine with PVA glue, drawing his inspiration from masters such as Burri, Tapiés, Dubuffet or Fautier. Through these works, Valier succeeded in creating a connection with the international avant-garde scene which had been moulded by the "Informel," the collective appellation for abstract art movements of, amongst others, action painting, tachisme and art brut. Informalist art eschews fixed rules of composition in favour of spontaneity. It is by no means, however, chaos on canvas, but rather an unveiling of creative gesture and deliberate intent. »





Artist Willy Valier succeeded in developing his own style, going beyond all that was provincial.

With his mixed-media art, Valier started an open confrontation with the bourgeois society and the established art world of the time. Valier's work in the 1960s proved to be one of great importance in the new style of art in South Tyrol, as he not only developed his own style, but went far beyond all that was provincial. In his third phase, when he had reached full maturity, he returned to the figurative element which was to become the expression of his message, both political and erotic. His pictures were not created as an act of informal spontaneity, but an alternating rhythm of slow and fast; not explosive, but rather a process that constantly paced conditions, colours and lines. Valier's colour discipline is striking; it is not an indulgence of colour, but a modulation of grey-brown-blue-red; his formal elements are cumbersome, menacing, fuzzy and charged with meaning.

One cannot overlook Valier's biting humour, his political message, his anger, frustration and dissatisfaction, and the latent aggression which can be seen in both the background and the foreground; the complex form of his imagery creates tension and mirrors the artist's psychological and intellectual makeup, his excitement and his emotions. Valier's break with his 1950s style was so confrontationally clear that many people turned away from him. His works were no longer a question of beauty or of an artist's desire to create harmony, quite the reverse: To a large extent, his new works were the expression of conceptual abstraction.

In 1966 Willy Valier joined the Communist Party which for him signified a connection to the avant-garde currents of the time, but which South Tyroleans saw as a provocation, akin to that of our greatest poet Norbert Conrad Caser signing up to the Communist Party; he who had planned to become a Capuchin monk and then joined the communists. He donated one of his works to the Party and designed a fresco for the assembly hall of the Chamber of Labour. Valier's abundant expression was never again pleasing, enjoyable or exhilarating, and in no way corresponded to the traditional image of art; the provincial artist had become a national and European artist. «

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## Pear jam with saffron

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg ripe pears
- 500 g sugar
- Peel of 1 lemon
- Biological gelling agent
- 1 teaspoon saffron

### PREPARATION

Peel and chop the pears and leave them to sit with the sugar and lemon peel for one hour. Then put this ingredients into a pan, bring to the boil, simmer gently for around 10 minutes and blend with a stick blender. Stir in the crushed saffron and the gelling agent and bring to the boil again. Pour into small jars up to the brim, close them and turn upside down. Cover with a cloth and leave for at least 24 hours.

Barbara Pichler

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„local production,“ „short shipping distances,“ and „stimulating the local economy“ were major considerations. The wide variety of South Tyrolean specialties available here includes **traditional „schuettelbrot“** („shake bread“) made by the **Burgauner Bakery and Pastry Shop** – a delicacy usually served together with „Kastelruth bacon“ from the **butchery Gruber**. *We are looking forward to your visit!*

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# Summer Highlights 2020



Photo: Schloss Prösels/Helmuth Rier



Photo: DMI/Helmuth Rier



Photo: SAM/Alpe Photo Meyer



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Photo: SAM/Helmuth Rier



Photo: Helmuth Rier

> 1 May – 31 October 2021

## SUMMER AT CASTLE PRÖSELS

At Castle Prösels, enchanting matinées and sophisticated evenings are offered. The high-quality repertoire of artists ranges from the fine sounds of classical music through down-to-earth brass music to sophisticated jazz. From May to October, guided tours take you through the historic walls of the castle. Furthermore, in July and August, magical family tours, with „Knight Friedrich“, „Witch Marta“ and ghostly nights with „Fridolin von Pröselstein“ let children's eyes sparkle.

[www.schloss-proesels.it](http://www.schloss-proesels.it)

> 6 May – 30 June 2020

## SEISER BALANCE IN SPRING

As the countryside awakens in spring, the urge to get out into the open air gets ever stronger and draws us out into the great outdoors and the spring air. A variety of events and workshops on the theme of health, balance, nutritious diet, optimal training techniques for runners and equipment will ensure you have all the basics you need to get the warm season off to a good start.

[www.seiseralm.it/balance](http://www.seiseralm.it/balance)

> 5 July 2020

## 8<sup>th</sup> SEISER ALM HALF MARATHON

21 kilometres, 601 metres of elevation gain and 700 participants: These are the characteristic numbers of the Seiser Alm Half Marathon on 5 July 2020. Surrounded by the Dolomites UNESCO World Heritage, the Seiser Alm Half Marathon is a unique experience and sporting challenge for both professional and amateur athletes. The starter's gun for the running event with start and finish in Compatsch is fired at 10.00 am.

[running.seiseralm.it](http://running.seiseralm.it)

11 July 2020

## 4<sup>th</sup> ROSENGARTEN-SCHLERN SKY MARATHON

Right in the very heart of the unique UNESCO World Heritage Dolomites, an Alpine Mountain Marathon with a length of 45 km and around 3,000 m of elevation difference will be setting off from Tires al Catinaccio: the Catinaccio-Sciliar Sky Marathon. The challenging mountain race will begin in Tires, lead round the Catinaccio Massif, over the Sciliar, past the Monte Cavone Hut and back to Tires. The highest point of the Sky Marathon is the Principe Pass at 2,630 m.

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

> 6 July – 31 August 2020

## SUMMER CLASSICS IN SIUSI ALLO SCILIAR

For lovers of classical music, Siusi offers an extraordinary series of concerts. Artists will perform the works of great composers. The "Summer Classics" of Siusi represent a high level of musical talent and have long since become an integral component of our summer cultural program. Both locals and visitors will be enchanted.

### DATES

6, 13 and 20 July  
17, 24. and 31 August 2020

Summer 2020

## OPEN-AIR GOURMET EXTRAVAGANZA

With three unusual open-air gourmet events on the cards, the Seiser Alm summer promises to be something of a culinary experience. First up is the **Berglertafel** (Mountaineers' Banquet) in Tires al Catinaccio on 16 July – legendary not only for its culinary finesse but also for its spectacular views over the Catinaccio mountain. On 29 July, Castelrotto will be welcoming its guests to a culinary event steeped in history: the **Krausen Banquet**, where the Monte Calvario hill will be providing the historical backdrop for the evening. In the beginning of September the gourmet events draw to a close at the **"Vormessn"** on the Seiser Alm, where an exceptional breakfast will be served accompanied by a 360° view of the Seiser Alm.

> 1 - 31 October 2020

## THE 43<sup>rd</sup> KUCHLCASTL - CULINARY FESTIVAL IN FIÈ ALLO SCILIAR

The Kuchlkastl Culinary Festival has been the culinary highlight of autumn in the Alpe di Siusi holiday area for over 40 years now. Gourmets and lovers of traditional cooking are in for a treat in October, when the restaurants in Fiè allo Sciliar open their doors for the "Gastronomic October" festival. The chefs will be serving up traditional recipes with a modern flair. The theme: Old recipes reinterpreted and served with love.

9 - 11 > October 2020

## 36<sup>th</sup> KASTELRUTHER SPATZEN MUSIC FESTIVAL

Celebrating, spending pleasant evenings together, experiencing the "Kastelruther Spatzen" live: The Spatzen-Festival in Castelrotto is a must for every fan. Surrounded by the unique scenery of the Dolomites the seven "Spatzen" enchant all friends of traditional music.

> 1 September – 31 October 2020

## SEISER ALM BALANCE IN AUTUMN

Recharge your batteries in South Tyrol's nature. In Autumn 2020, a series of events and workshops themed around wellness and relaxation will be taking place. Assisted by the helping hand of nature, they offer a sublime time-out for body and soul and the opportunity to amass your energy stores for the coming winter. These experiences in the breathtakingly beautiful autumn countryside are a guarantee of relaxation and culinary pleasure at its very best, and are held in sites of special energy on the Seiser Alm and in the villages of Castelrotto, Siusi, Fiè allo Sciliar and Tires al Catinaccio.

[www.seiseralm.it/balance](http://www.seiseralm.it/balance)

*This issue of ALPE was printed in May 2020. Due to the many uncertainties connected with the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, the editors cannot guarantee that the events which have been planned (and are listed in this issue) will take place.*

*We all hope that we overcome this crisis as soon as possible, so that we can meet once again and take joy together in the many large and small pleasures on life.*

The ALPE Editorial Team

# Winter Preview 2020/21



15 years

> December 2020

## MAGICAL CHRISTMAS IN THE HOLIDAY AREA SEISER ALM

When the fragrant scent of gingerbread, cinnamon and mulled wine waft through the air, you know it's Advent time at the foot of the Sciliar. The pre-Christmas period is a time of contemplation here in the holiday region of the Seiser Alm. The Christmas markets in the towns of Castelrotto, Fiè and Tires are small yet beautiful and get guests and locals alike in the mood for Christmas time, far away from the tumults of the cities. With traditional handicraft, specialities from the South Tyrolean kitchen and Christmas-y tunes they invite you to enjoy a sociable get-together.

### DATES

#### 15<sup>th</sup> Christmas in the mountains in Castelrotto

5 – 8 December 2020  
11 – 13 December 2020  
18 – 20 December 2020  
24 December 2020  
26 – 30 December 2020  
2. – 5 January 2021

#### Christmas market in Fiè allo Sciliar

5 - 8 December 2020  
12 & 13 December 2020  
18 – 20 December 2020

#### “Bergler” Advent in Tires al Catinaccio

5 December 2020  
19 December 2020

> December 2020

## WINTER KIDS FESTIVAL

The 2020/21 winter season will be getting off to a sparkling start with the fifth Kids' Winter Festival on the Seiser Alm with Nix the Witch. Nix is calling all kids to join in the party, and will be transforming them into witches and wizards for the occasion. The day is guaranteed to be fun: games, an arts and crafts corner, a treasure hunt, good music and masses of surprises to bring a shine to the eyes of every child. Nix the witch also has a whole lot of tricks to teach for safety on the snow.

> Winter 20/21

## LIVING THE CASTLE PRÖSELS IN WINTER

The majestic Castle Prösels, owned from the “Kuratorium Castel Prösels” has been refurbished and is open also in the winter months for guided tours. The castle boasts several collections historical arms, the valuable “Batzenhäusl” and picture collections. In January, February and March 2020, every Thursday at 3pm a guided castle tour takes place. After the one-hour guided tour a glass of “Apfelglühmix” a mulled local apple juice will be served. [www.schloss-proesels.it](http://www.schloss-proesels.it)

> 17 January 2021

## TRADITIONAL COUNTRY WEDDING OF CASTELROTTO

The Country Wedding in Castelrotto has already become a tradition. It's the authentic reproduction of a historical farmer's wedding like those celebrated since time immemorial at the foot of the Seiser Alm. The throngs of participants wear their traditional garments with great pride – one of the reasons why the event has developed into one of South Tyrol's most spectacular pageants.

> 28 January 2021

## 15<sup>th</sup> SOUTH TYROL MOONLIGHT CLASSIC SEISER ALM

A sporting event illuminated by the glow of flickering torchlight, the chance to put your skills to the test at international level, and the spectacular winter backdrop of the Seiser Alm. In 2021, the Moonlight Classic will once again be offering numerous athletes and cross-country fans the chance to spend a sensational evening on the Seiser Alm by night. Participants can opt to take part in either the 30 km or the 15 km variant of the loop route. Both variants begin and end in Compatsch and are raced exclusively in classic diagonal style. The starting pistol for this cross-country spectacle will be fired at 8pm. At the start/finish area, spectators will already have gathered en-masse to enjoy the atmospheric display when the alphorn players and whip crackers take to the floor to set the scene for the evening. [www.moonlightclassic.info](http://www.moonlightclassic.info)

> January 2021

## FIS WORLD CUP SLOPESTYLE SNOWBOARD & FREESKI

For the fifth year in a row, the world's best freestylers will be taking to their boards and skis in a gravity-defying display of choreography. The two Slopestyle World Cups will be taking place at the Seiser Alm Snow Park. Slopestyle, first introduced at Sochi 2014, is the most recent extreme-discipline on the Olympic scene, and sees athletes competing on a course, which features a variety of jumps and obstacles. Six judges rate tricks on creativity, difficulty and execution or style, while jumps are evaluated on height, range and landing. [www.seiseralm.it/worldcup](http://www.seiseralm.it/worldcup)

> 7 March 2021

## WINTER BERGLERTAFEL MOUNTAINEERS' BANQUET

In 2021 the legendary summer's Berglertafel Mountaineers' Banquet in Tires al Catinaccio will be featuring on the winter events' program for the fourth time. Like its summer counterpart, the Berglertafel's Flying Buffet will be serving classic dishes with a creative twist in a feast for the eyes as well as the stomach, as participants will discover when the day draws to a close with a view over the famed Alpenglow of Catinaccio at sunset.

> 17 – 21 March 2021

## 15<sup>th</sup> SWING ON SNOW WINTER MUSIC FESTIVAL

Jazz in the mountain huts, soul on the slopes and traditional tunes in the restaurants in the evenings: Musicians from all over the Alpine region will be performing from morning to night in the holiday area Seiser Alm for the Swing on Snow festival. Bands and singers will be setting the tone on the slopes and getting old and young, winter sports visitors and music lovers alike, into the party mood. The modern interpretation of traditional folk music with jazz, soul and pop reflect the musical culture of the Alps; listeners can swerve in time to the beats and rhythms, and weave their way downhill to the sounds of the tuba, bass, dulcimer and accordion. Concerts will be played on the slopes of the Seiser Alm in the mornings, afternoons in the huts and evenings in the villages of Castelrotto, Siusi, Fiè allo Sciliar and Tires al Catinaccio. [www.swingonsnow.com](http://www.swingonsnow.com)

> March 2021

## WORLD ROOKIE TOUR – FREESKI FINALS

The Seiser Alm Snowpark will host the first Freeski Rookie Finals for the second time in March 2021. The international contest combines sports competition with a lifestyle experience, where talented under 18 freeskier from several nations meet and compete for prestigious prizes. During the finals of the freeskiers, which qualified on the tour in Austria, Switzerland, the USA and Slovakia, will be awarded the World Rookie Freeski Champions. In addition to the competition, the World Rookie Tour Events include a strong lifestyle program with video premiere, workshops, parties, yoga lessons, meetings on typical dinners and much more. [www.worldrookietour.com](http://www.worldrookietour.com)

# Around & about



Photo: Helmut Rier

**35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Kastelruther Spatzen Fest".** The first-ever "Kastelruther Spatzen Fest" was held in August 1985 in Castelrotto. It was a small affair at that time, with a slightly different line-up and without the slightest inkling of the success it would become. The "Kastelruther Spatzen" ("Castelrotto Sparrows") have long been the undisputed stars of the folk scene; over the course of the last few decades they have sold millions of discs, and are charismatic ambassadors to our homeland. The "35<sup>th</sup> Kastelruther Spatzen Fest" was held last autumn, and lasted for five days.



## The holiday area Seiser Alm, a popular film location

In 2016 a part of the film "A Hidden Life," released in German cinemas in January 2020, was shot on location at S. Valentino in Siusi allo Sciliar. The inspiring film by director **Terrence Malick**, is based on true events and tells the story of farmer and Nazi resistance fighter Franz Jägerstätter (played by **August Diehl**), who staunchly refused to fight for the Wehrmacht; even in the face of his impending execution, his resolve to follow his conscience was unwavering.

## The Törggelen Farm of the Year 2019

Törggelen, one of the greatest culinary customs in South Tyrol, is so beloved that it has been christened with the title of "5th season." When the grape harvest has drawn to a close, the traditional *Buschenschänke* farmhouse taverns serve guests a feast of homemade, mouth-wateringly tasty dishes. Every autumn many of these farm inns enter the "Törggelen farm of the year competition". In 2019, the "Laitnkeller" in Aica di Fiè took part in the contest and claimed the victorious title of the South Tyrolean Sunday Newspaper "Zett". The family farm has been welcoming guests to enjoy a break and savour traditional South Tyrolean fare since the 15th century. **ALPE would like to congratulate them on this outstanding achievement!**



Photo: Zett/DLife

**IMPRINT.** ALPE: Reg. Court Bolzano / Bolzano, n. 9/2002 R.St. Published by: Seiser Alm Marketing, 39050 Fiè allo Sciliar, Via del Paese, 15, Tel. +39 0471 709 600, Fax +39 0471 704 199, info@alpedisiusi.info, www.seiseralm.it. Legally responsible for the editorial content: Elisabeth Augustin  
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**Translations:** Studio Bonetti & Peroni. **Advertising:** Sabine Demetz, Christoph Trocker. **Graphic:** Komma Graphik. **Printing:** Litopat, Verona.



## MESMERISING NATURAL PARADISE "WITCHES' SPRINGS"



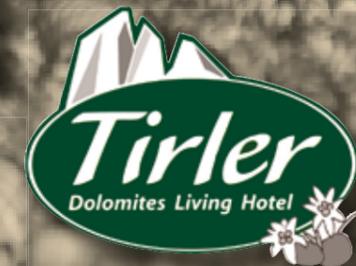
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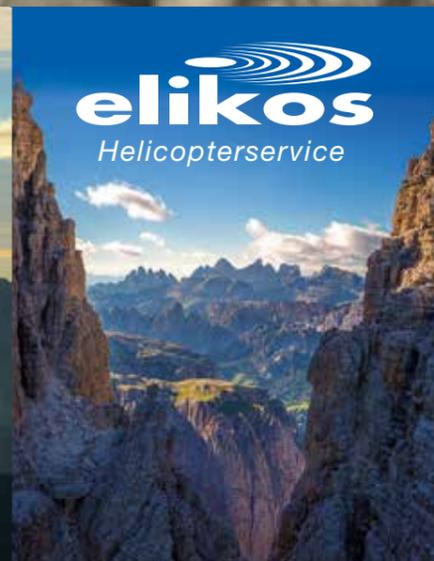


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