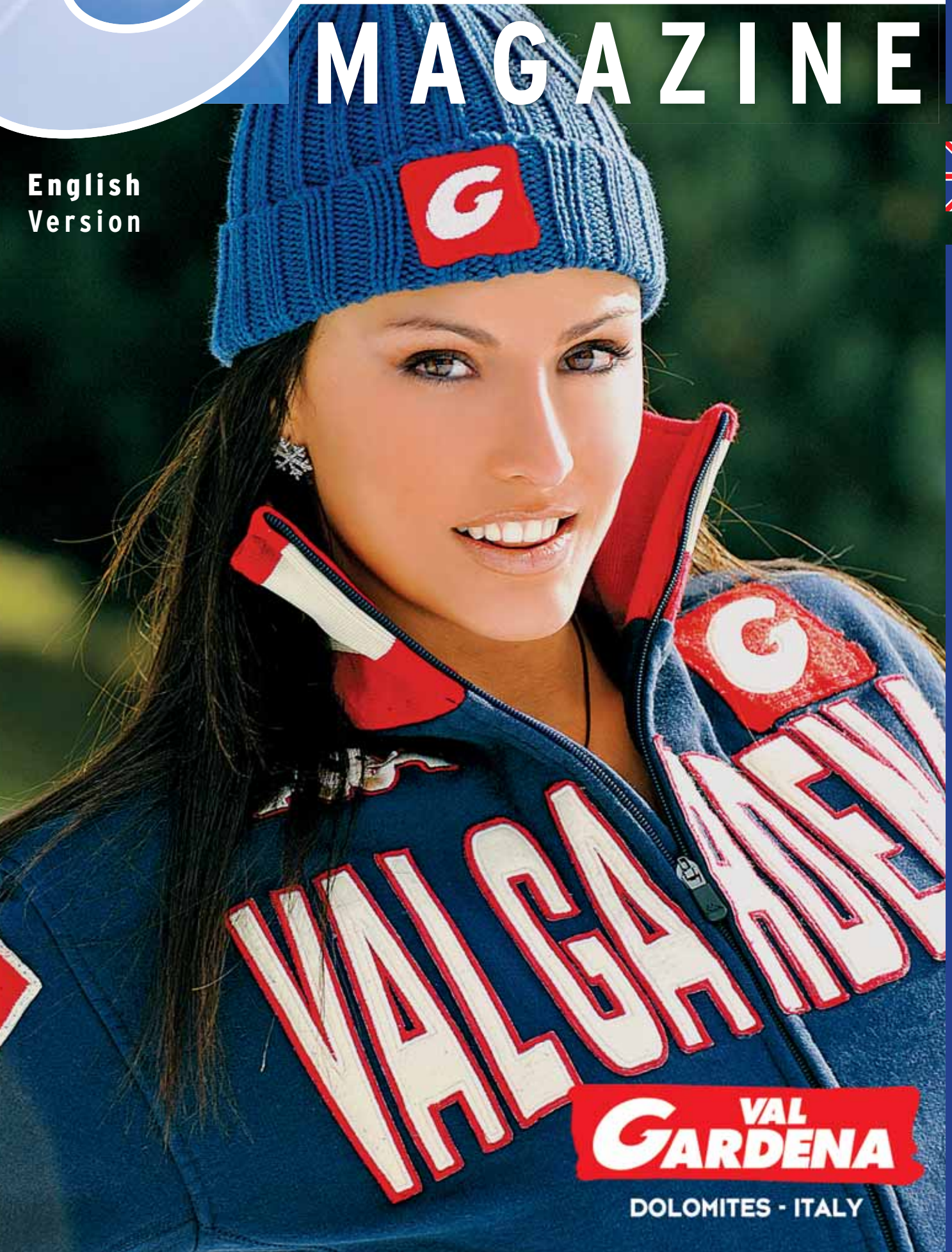


Gardena MAGAZINE

English
Version



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THE BEGINNING OF SKIING IN VAL GARDENA

Leo Senoner



Short historic outline

The popularity of skiing as a modern, leisure sports activity dates back to the first decade of the nineteenth century in Norway, to the Østerdal and Telemark high plateau near the capital Oslo in particular. It was there that the first amateur races were held, followed by more formal, official meetings and later the first ski clubs began to emerge. The world's first ski club, founded in 1877, was the Cristiania Ski Club, which takes its name from the original name for Oslo. The year 1888 was especially important for skiing when the Norwegian naturalist and explorer Fridtjof Nansen, crossed Greenland, one of the largest and last inhospitable frontiers left on earth. He covered more than five hundred kilometres from Umivik to Godthaab in forty-two days with his feet strapped to 230 centimetre long wooden skis made of oak and birch. His incredible adventure brought him admiration and praise both at home and world-wide and helped promote the sport as never before. His success, coupled with the publication of a book about his adventure entitled „By ski across Greenland“, which appeared in 1890, was

excellent publicity for the sport especially throughout Europe and countless winter sports fan set out to copy their hero. French alpinist, Henri Duhamèl from Grenoble, helped spur interest in skiing when he founded the first French ski club at Des Alpes in 1896 and the sport became more and more popular in Austria and Germany through the ,80s and ,90s. The well-known Austrian Gloris Club was founded in 1881 and yet it was not until 1891, when a book by Nansen was published in German, that the popularity of skiing grew above all expectations.

The beginning of skiing in Val Gardena

Skiing first appeared as a sport in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century when a certain Adolf Kind decided to use his name to publicise the new sport. All this happened, however, in the western Alps, a good five hundred kilometres from Val Gardena yet skiing first appeared in nearby valleys at about the same time when, in 1893, Jocl Castlunger from Colfosco began to practice the sport. He had been contacted by the

Bamberg section of the German Alpine Club and asked to over-see the building of a high mountain refuge hut on their behalf in the Sella Group. Castlunger went to Germany to discuss preparations for the project and it was there that he first saw this strange equipment which would help make his job a little easier. A few years later, skiing was introduced into Val Gardena by Vigil Pescosta, a neighbour of Castlunger, who had seen the strange equipment and asked to try it out. Pescosta moved to Ortisei in 1897 to learn the craft of wood carving and, full of youthful enthusiasm, brought his skis with him so that he could go on long excursions over the snow-covered mountain scenery in winter. Interest in skiing as a sport increased as did interest in the skis themselves as equipment to help with certain jobs. Vijo Rudifieria, owner of the inn at Passo Gardena, liked the idea of being able to ski down into the village and save both time and effort when away on errands. Local farmers, wood cutters and travelling merchants agreed with him, using skis as quick and easy means of getting from one place to another rather than as competitive tools. Soon the general public turned their attention to skiing and began enjoying thrills-and-spills as they made their way over the snow-covered pastures and down steep slopes. Vigil Pescosta was one of the promoters of the „Dolomiten Alpen Ski



Club Ladina" which was founded in Ortisei in 1908 and soon the inhabitants of Selva decided to found their own rival Ski Club Sella in answer to their „friends" in Ortisei. Skiing was reserved for the inhabitants of the valley and for small numbers of visitors as tourists still only tended to visit the area in the summer months, not yet in winter. There was a great interest in the sport generally and people of all ages and all types saw it as an exciting pass-time to be enjoyed with family and friends. A number of locally organised amateur ski meetings took place and Vigil Pescosta organised a proper race on Dantercepies, the slopes near Passo Gardena, in 1908. Fifteen skiers took part in the event which finished in Selva and Ludwig Schmalzl was declared winner. Schmalzl, in fact, went on to become one of the pioneers of skiing in Gardena together with Vigil Pescosta and Hans Jirasek. The same year saw another race in Ortisei which Pescosta managed to win in spite of stiff competition from a certain Schneider from St. Anton in Austria (probably Hannes Schneider who later became director of the Arlberg Ski School and who wrote numerous important books on the sport). Various military units also played their part in promoting skiing and both the Austrian Kaiserjäger and the Italian Alpini were well trained skiers by the beginning of the last century. Major Oreste Zavattari, head of inspectors responsible for the Alpine Troops, organised a specialist ski course for soldiers at Sesana near Turin, a course which gave such brilliant results



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that it led the military authority to engage the Norwegian brothers Smith and Swiss guide Christian Klucher as the first ski instructors to work in Italy. Some sixteen thousand Italian soldiers took part in ski courses during the First World War and Hans Jirasek, who had long been president of the Dolomiten Alpen Ski Club Ladinia, became ski instructor to the army after having worked with Goerg Bilgeri, head instructor of the Austrian-Hungarian troops in Val Gardena. When the war was over, Jirasek went on teaching the youth in Gardena how to ski so that they could take full advantage of the equipment and facilities abandoned by the military when fighting ceased.

The first traces of winter tourism were seen in Ortisei around the year 1910 while Selva did not begin to find popularity until 1923. There was no recognised „winter season“ as yet and the trend was slow to take off. Larger numbers of winter visitors were noted from the 1930s onwards and new facilities to take them up to the high pastures and the start of downward runs with modern equipment soon began to appear, to attract as many people as possible. The first cable-car from Ortisei to Alpe de Siusi was built in 1935, only the second of its kind in Italy after the one in Sestrière. Also, two enormous sleighs carrying between 20 to 24 passengers which were pulled by cables, could be seen - in Selva in 1938 - one at Ciampinoi and the other on Costabella. The first ski school, (one of the first in Italy together with those of Cortina d'Ampezzo, Sestrière, Stelvio and Cervinia), opened in Ortisei in 1935. It was later taken over by the FIS, the Italian Federation for Winter Sports, and its name changed to the National Ski School of Val Gardena with three centres in Selva, S. Cristina and Ortisei. The Italian National Ski Championship meeting, the first large-scale event of its kind to be organised in the valley, was held in Selva in 1937, and there were now so many good skiers in the area that the FIS held its first examinations for ski instructors in 1932 at Clavière in Val di Susa and on Stelvio. The tests concentrated on telemark, stemmbogen, cristiania and parallel techniques but candidates were also required to know something about cross-country skiing and ski jumping. More trained instructors were necessary for the increased numbers of people interested in learning how to ski and further exams were held in Cortina in 1933, San Martino di Castrozza in 1936 and on Passo Sella in Val Gardena in 1938. Skiing was becoming a very popular sport and leisure activity by then, as well as a winter sports discipline.

Gardena, past and present





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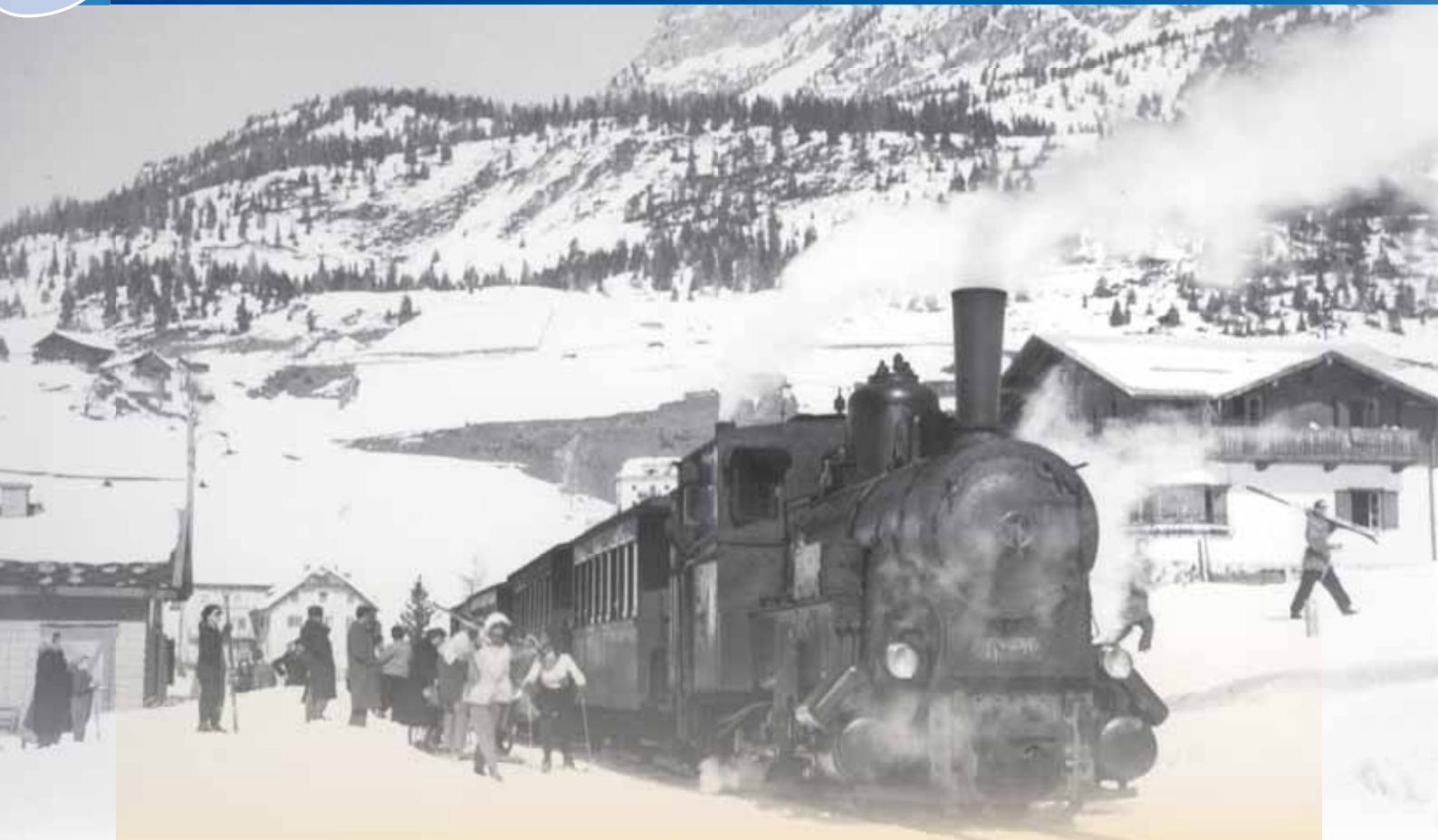
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THE STORY OF ONE OF OUR LOYAL GUESTS ...

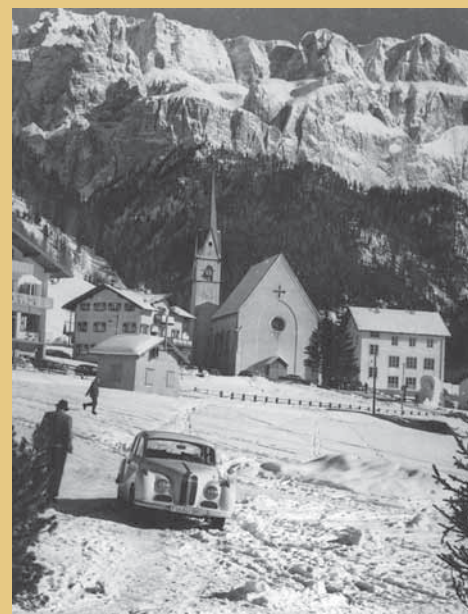
Selva, from generation to generation

Anna Maria Gabrielli



Selva has played an important role in the history of our family for some four generations. We children grew up listening to the tales told by the grown-ups, our parents and grandfather and, especially, those of our great grand parents who first visited Selva at the end of the 1930's when you could still enjoy the unspoilt, natural beauty of the pristine clean, snow-covered landscape and magnificent views. Our grandparents actually got engaged during a visit to Selva in 1940 and my own parents met for the first time on a ski run here a mere twenty years later. Each of us remembers the holidays in a different way, of course, and the time we now spend in Selva has, unfortunately, got shorter and shorter as the years have passed. We were always fascinated and a little jealous as children when our grandparents used to tell us that they used to ride by horse-drawn sleigh to the ski runs on Ciampinoi. This, unfortunately, is something we never managed to do as children forty years ago and we really regret it. I am also sorry to say that I cannot remember the little valley train which my grandparents also enjoyed so much. My mother loves to recount episodes from her childhood when her relations stayed with the Mussner family. Apparently, she would hear her father calling her on his arrival even before the coach came to a halt just before the stop at Plan. Luckily, my grandparents had the wonderful idea of buying their own holiday home in Selva in 1968 knowing it would be a special treat for us grand-children who lived at the seaside, to spend a holiday in the invigorating, healthy, fresh mountain air. The perfect excuse, should we need one, and the perfect way of making sure we did not lose our strong ties with the valley. Now that I am in my forties, most of my own personal memories are, of course, in black-and-white, rather like the snaps which fill the family photo album, but it is enough to talk to my twenty- year-old son for me to appreciate that Selva

means something very special to me, too. I remember I used to hide in the so-called „bidoni“, the empty lift cabins, at Danterciepies when it got really cold during a snowstorm to get away from the biting wind. I always looked forward to tumbling head-over-heels and doing cartwheels on the soft, cushioned ski runs even though my feet were like frozen blocks of ice inside my leather ski boots. My boots sometimes got as hard as stone and, at the end of the day, Pacifica Gluck, who we always called Mami, had a hard time getting us out of them as we sat near the stove to warm ourselves. For us town children, however, Selva meant freedom and the liberty to do almost what we wanted. Selva was where we found that certain special atmosphere which makes a summer or winter holiday really unique. Even as young children, we always went skiing in a group and the only rules we had to obey were never to go off the ski runs or do anything stupid like leaping off the Danter ski lift before it had come to a proper stop. I suppose we never thought of danger then or when, in summer, we played all sorts of mad games in Vallunga, the same tricks my son and his friends played when they were that age. Later, as teenagers, we liked nothing more than to spend New Years Eve in a mountain hut far above the snow-blanketed valley and return home in the not-so-early hours through the dark, fragrant woods gliding silently and smoothly on our toboggans, something which very probably would not be allowed nowadays. This is one of my most precious memories and I well remember the scratchy noise the blades of the toboggan made as they cut their way through the crisp mantle of snow. I had already started smoking by then and my breath looked like a burst of steam as I sped down the run. Maybe the best part of it all was the company of our group of friends, a kind of social system we felt we belonged to and which, in turn, offered a form of protection. The friends from back then are still our friends now although all of us have children of our own and countless responsibilities. It is not possible for us to get together as often as we once did when we took a whole day out to do a ski tour of the Four Passes or enjoyed a happy birthday party. One of my favourite things is, however, to stand in the modern cable-car and listen to the young people from the valley as they pass personal comments about some visitor or other, myself included, in the valley dialect which they well know is incomprehensible to the vast majority of guests. I do not move a hair until the lift doors open and then I turn to them just before I step out onto the run and make a comment or other. You should just see their faces! I love teasing them and my little trick somehow makes me feel young again, too, and so much more at home.



Do you have some special memories of your holiday in Val Gardena?

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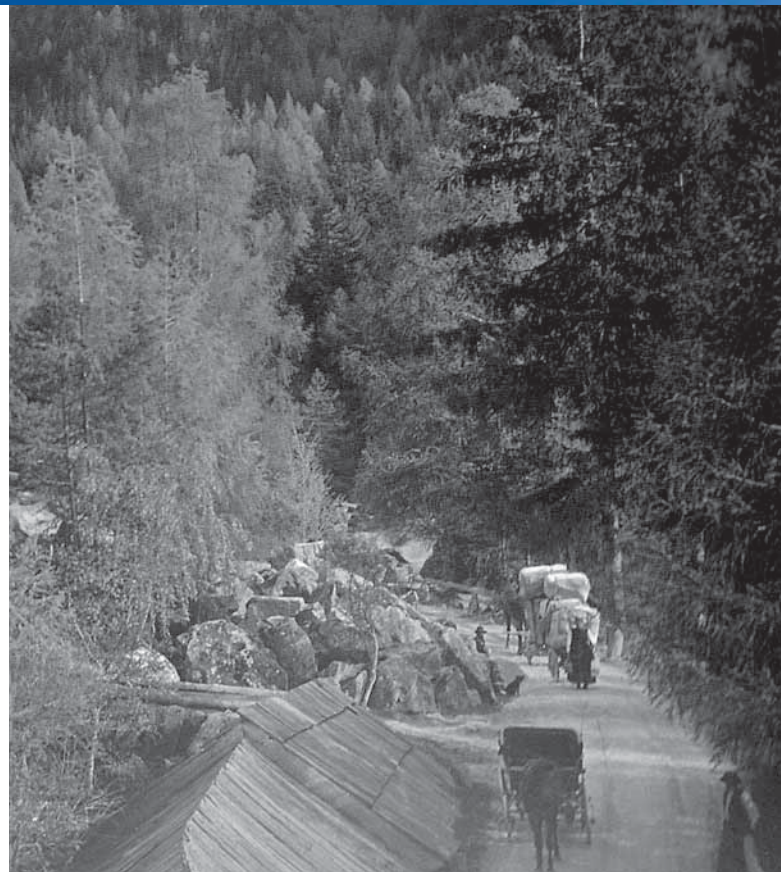
THE ROAD INTO THE VAL GARDENA

in 1856 -
an economic necessity

Elfriede Perathoner

There were, at one time, three roads leading out of Val Gardena - the first, the old Poststeig, or post road, led northwards through St. Peter and Laion to Chiusa. The second, the historic Puntserweg, went south over the Pinei Pass to S. Michele and Castelrotto as far as the Torggele bridge over Campodazzo in the Isarco valley while the third headed past the tiny hamlet of Ried near Laion to Ponte Gardena.

The wood industry developed considerably in Val Gardena during the '80s and quickly became the most important economic aspect of the area. Good, functional roads became more and more essential as, without them, travelling merchants were forced to take dangerous routes on foot or on horseback and could carry loads of not more than 100 kilos at a time. They had only the most primitive, impractical means of transport at their disposal and the goods they dealt in frequently arrived at their destination broken or badly damaged. As more and more locally-cut wood was used, it also became necessary to import the essential raw material from more distant parts of the surrounding area, from San Pietro, Laion and Funes for example, in order to prevent the over-cutting of valley forests and woods. This involved considerable logistical problems and the cost of the transport involved obviously added to that of the finished products so plans for a



new road were soon undertaken. Surveying work regarding a road between Ortisei and Ponte Gardena began in 1842 at the request of Johann Baptist Purger, timber merchant and wood carver as well as then-mayor of Ortisei and his brother-in-law, Johann Matthias Moroder of Plan de Mureda, but the project was rejected as being too costly at the time. Johann Baptist Purger did not lose heart and later commissioned another project which he



hoped to finance by charging a toll at Ponte Gardena. His idea was generally very popular and the new road, from Starz near Ponte Gardena to Pescosta on the border between the council areas of Ortisei and Santa Cristina, was officially inaugurated on 26th. October 1856. A large number of people attended the opening ceremony, a larger crowd than "...had ever been seen and more than would ever easily be seen again ..." according to chronicler of the time Ujep Anton Vian. A Stellwagen, a kind of covered horse-drawn coach, was seen for the first time in Ortisei on that occasion, something so exceptional that Vian added an amusing little anecdote about a small boy who turned to his mother and said: "...look Mother, they have even brought a little house with them ...". The opening of the new Val Gardena road was celebrated with great enthusiasm by all and especially by the owners of the hotel Deur (Cavallino Bianco/White Horse) and the Daverda (Aquila/Eagle), the two biggest hotels in Ortisei at the time. Their proprietors hoped the road would lead to an increased number of visitors coming to the valley and restaurant owners and farmers alike were happy about the new road as were horse-owners who began carrying both goods and tourists by horse-drawn coaches and carts. The new road from Ponte Gardena to Ortisei was thirteen kilometres in length and initially there were two trips a day to carry the post and goods as well as two Stellwagen services. The first summer guests soon arrived to take advantage of the improved transport facilities.

The new Val Gardena road meant that wooden articles could be carried to the markets outside the valley much more easily and conveniently and summer and winter guests had a less arduous journey. When the Brenner railway line was inaugurated in 1867 and the station at Ponte Gardena opened for service, larger numbers of visitors began to arrive and the Val Gardena was much more favoured by good connections than any other place in the Dolomites.

A toll was introduced for the tract as far as Ortisei at Pescosta to help pay for the construction and maintenance of



the road up to that point while the primitive, unsurfaced track which led further up into the valley as far as Santa Cristina and Selva remained in poor condition. The inhabitants of the end of the valley later decided it was necessary to improve conditions of the road to their little villages but the people of Ortisei objected. They were afraid of losing their privileges because "some visitors might not stop at Ortisei but go on right to the end of the valley.... (so) more than one hotelier, business man or merchant from Ortisei would prefer the road to stop at Pescosta".

These complaints were certainly something to be taken seriously, and it is not sure whether a second toll introduced at Pescosta in 1892, was necessary in order to finance maintenance of the entire road from where it started to Santa Cristina and Selva or simply a way of penalising the inhabitants of the two rival villages. In any case, the business people of Selva and S. Cristina were forced to pay a double toll to transport their goods through the valley, the first at Pescosta and the second at Ponte Gardena.

The development of tourism and the growing importance of the timber industry in the valley led to an enormous increase in the transport of both people and goods along the new road of Val Gardena. The road was continually being widened and improved but eventually could not take much more traffic and so a new solution to the problem appeared on the horizon, Rail transport for goods and people was quick, efficient and safe and was popular throughout the world. Before not too long ...





FROM VAL GARDENA TO ARGENTINA

Mariangela Schiavo



The story of Anna Rosalia Kelder begins in Italy after the end of the Second World War when people were trying to forget the horrors they had lived through and were forced to come to terms with the aftermath of so much suffering, misery and hunger at a time when the country was facing a dire economic crisis. There had been little opportunity to emigrate during the Fascist era but, later, the desperate situation in Europe meant that a large number of people decided to leave home and seek a new life on another con-

tinental. Realising how hard life in Italy would be for some time, thousands of people were brave enough to look for a better life elsewhere, hoping to improve their situation by finding a job and a home and, therefore, a more positive future. People packed their bags and left all parts of the Italian peninsula and, although conditions were not quite so desperate in this particular region as in other parts of the country, many left Val Gardena, too.

The majority of the emigrants chose to head for the United States while others went as far afield as South America, mostly to Brazil and Argentina.

Anna Rosalia Kelder, in fact, chose Argentina as her destination in 1950. Born in Ortisei on 27th. October 1922, she left from the port of Genoa on a ship called the Vapore Salta on 9th. January 1950 with a suitcase full of memories and a heart over-flowing with hope and optimism. She was going to join her fiancé, Arduino Dalla Torre, who came from Rocca Pietfore. They had met in Ortisei in 1948 where both of them were then working, he as a mechanic and she as a waitress.

Destiny had it that they fell in love a mere four months before Arduino was due to leave for Argentina even though he had had a good job in Ortisei since 1943.

He already had a ticket for Argentina in his pocket when he met Anna for the first time and, after he left Italy, the two stayed in contact and kept their love alive writing countless letters to each other. As happens in the very best of love stories, they eventually decided to get married but, of



course, had to abide by the laws of the country they had chosen to live in. President Peron had been in power since 1945 and governed the country as an absolute, authoritarian dictator. In order to control a disciplined flow of immigrants, he refused to let single foreigners enter which meant that Anna could only get a permit the country as Arduino's wife. It was, therefore, necessary for them to marry by proxy and, so, a ceremony took place in Ortisei with Anna's brother, Antonio, as witness while the other was celebrated in the town hall of La Plata witnessed by Arduino's aunt.

Anna arrived in Argentina on 28th. January 1950 after a twenty-day sea voyage and the newly married couple made a home for themselves in La Plata. Arduino went on working as a mechanic while Anna dedicated herself to the home and her family. The couple had three children, one son and two daughters, one of whom returned to Ortisei with her family three years ago. This particular part of the story is of special interest if we think of how the situation has changed and turned round on itself after a considerable period of years. Anna's daughter and her family felt it better for them to leave Argentina and return to where her mother had originally come from and she is, without doubt, the heroine of a new story.

In some way, Anna's adventure is typical of that of many from Val Gardena who abandoned the valley where they were born, to go and look for fame and fortune elsewhere, often in the New World. These brave immigrants took few possessions with them except for their artistic talent and knowledge of woodwork, a typical, local craft they helped export to many other parts of the world.

Well-known men who have helped spread the Gardena artistic traditions far and wide included Leo Moroder, husband of Amalia Kostner and Augusto Mahlkecht (Palmer), two craftsmen who used their talents for the building of the Cathedral of La Plata which houses a museum and crypt dedicated to Leo Moroder and his wife. Moroder's story has been told through a personal exhibition of his work together with his family tree and various tools he used during his long career as well as an old map showing Ortisei.

Other valley folk who have made a name for themselves abroad include Anna Moroder and Domingo De Beruel who emigrated to Bariloche where their children now own a large chocolate factory which is one of the most important industries in the area. The stories of these Gardena people serve to remind us of an era of hardship and sacrifice, and should make us think about present-day emigrants and their reasons for seeking a new, more dignified life. We should bear in mind the problems and doubts they faced, differences in culture, traditions and mentality as well as how difficult it was for them to start new relationships and make friends so far away from their homes and their families. Remembering the past may well help us understand how important it is to treat everyone with more respect, solidarity and tolerance.

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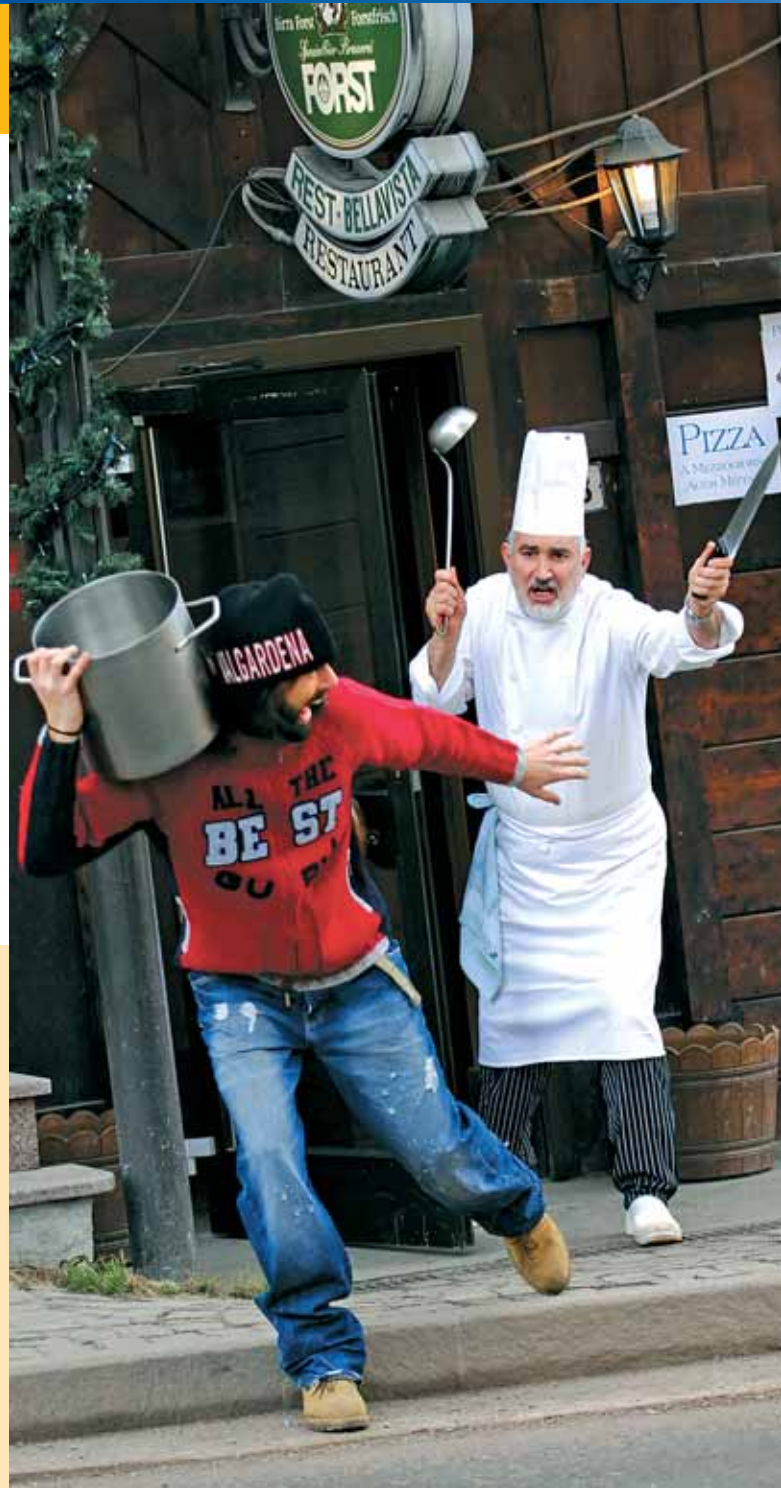


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Val Gardena is justly proud of its historic traditions and treasures them like true jewels. Some of these traditions and customs may have lost a little of their original significance but they are still respected and loved by many of the valley folk. One of the most enjoyable and hilarious of these traditions is „stealing the panicia soup” which takes place on Carnival Thursday every year. The „panicia” is a hearty soup made of barley, pork and bread dumplings called „canederli” or „Knödel”. Mothers and grandmothers spent the entire day in the kitchen making this tasty, warming, extremely nourishing soup and were always on the look out for anyone who might sneak in and try to steal it. The young people would think of a hundred tricks to get the women out of the kitchen or, if all else failed, the ladies would be persuaded to turn a blind eye and the soup would disappear with an old pot and worn shoe left in its place. The tradition dates back to harder and much darker times when few people had enough to eat and the Carnival celebrations gave them an excuse to „steal” something for their empty stomachs in such a way that it would look like a joke and, thus, go unpunished. The church, which was even more notoriously rigid and precise in its ways then than it is now, tolerated the general upheaval at Carnival as a natural and almost acceptable way for people to express their inner feelings.





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NEWS & PEOPLE



Sky Dining in the Val Gardena

Refined, elegant atmosphere and “fine dining” in Gardena style for true gourmets set against a thrilling backdrop of majestic mountain peaks? We all know that 14th. July is the anniversary of the Storming of the Bastille during the French Revolution but, now, that same date has taken on another, more pleasant significance. It marks the first time the local cable-car in Alpi di Siusi took some thrilled guests on a romantic, adventurous trip to sample various, refined, traditional specialities of Val Gardena. Five luxury restaurants in Ortisei had the idea for a very original culinary event for the summer in Val Gardena and organised a truly special evening up above the tree line. A magical Mid Summer Night's Dream high above the dark green pines at dusk and on through the late hours!. The revolving cabins of the Alpi di Siusi lift were re-arranged to accommodate from two to six dinner guests at a time and expert chefs and well-trained waiters prepared and served a five star menu against the unforgettable natural beauty of the surrounding

mountain landscape and fascinating valleys with their twinkling street lights beneath. A truly special, five star gourmet event for our lucky guests as they glided silently upwards above the night sky of Ortisei - something we know they will never forget!

Leading Mountain Resorts & Dolomiti Superski

This is a truly new international collaboration project which involves various ski resorts near Vail in the USA, Bariloche in Argentina, Queenstown in New Zealand and Val Gardena in the north of Italy which aims at an efficient, selective marketing and publicity promotion operation for all its members. “Endless Winter Global Ski Experience” is the name we have chosen for our new enterprise for this winter season. The project means that skiers with a season ski pass for Val Gardena will be able to ski for 50% less on a weekly ticket in any one of the other member ski areas of their choice simply by showing their ski pass from home. The Italian name for the project is “Global and Permanent Winter”. The idea will cover the 2007 and 2008 winter seasons in both Vail in North America and Val Gardena in Europe as representatives for the northern hemisphere as well as the 2007 and 2008 summer seasons in Bariloche, Argentina and Queenstown, New Zealand in the southern hemisphere. The following ski resorts and organisation, the Dolomiti Superski in Val Gardena, Colorado Pass near Vail, Coronet Peak, Cardrona, the Remarkables and Treble Cone in Queenstown and Cathedral Alta in Bariloche, are all members of this attractive, innovative and exciting project.



The S. Cristina By-Pass

The idea of a by-pass around the little town of S. Cristina with its daily traffic problems has been around for a decade or more and the situation has become more pressing over recent years with the arrival of more and more cars. The executive project involves a 1.7 kilometre long road starting from the bend at Greva, some 100 metres before the Townhall, a 87 metres long bridge over the Rio Gardena stream, one 475 metres long tunnel near the Tervela mountain farm and another 365 metres long under the Saslong ski run as well as three cross-roads, one at each end of the by-pass and a third at the Monte Pana ski lift where a new car park is also planned. The by-pass will run to the south of the little town and meet the main Val Gardena road at the dl Moro bend just about the finishing post of the Saslong run near the village of Ruaccia. 160,000 square metres of material will have to be moved during the building of the two tunnels and most of this will be used in the construction of other parts of the project. The tunnels will not need a fresh air system and the total cost of the finished project is estimated at some 24,000,000 Euro. Work is scheduled to begin in spring 2007 and should be finished over the next two years.



Belsy and her success in the 2006 Gran Prix

Belsy, our very own Val Gardena singing star, won first prize at the XXI edition of the "Gran Prix der Volksmusik", the Alpine Folk Music Gran Prix, which was held at Munich in Bavaria, Southern Germany, earlier this year. Belsy, who sang with tenor Rudi Giovannini and the Monti Pallidi choir from the nearby town of Moena, was awarded the prestigious cup by the expert jury and with public approval. She had come very close to winning on two previous occasions, won she third prize in 2003 with her auto-biographical song "Heimat entsteht", loosely translated as "What my home means to me", and second place in 2004 with the song "Madre di Dio". She was, of course, simply delighted this year to win first place with her song "Salve Regina" whose words praise the mystic, sublime beauty of the Dolomite mountains. Belsy and Giovannini won much applause and were placed well ahead of the other competitors from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, getting full marks from the special jury. Delightful twenty-two-year-old Belsy was, in fact, born in India but has lived in the valley with her adopted family since she was small. She now stands at the beginning of what we hope will be a very successful career in her chosen field. She first competed in public at an edition of the well-known Italian television competition for child singers, the "Zecchino d'Oro", when she was only seven years old and is now busy touring and doing various concerts. She produced her first CD in 2002 and now has five albums which are doing very well on the market. We feel sure that she has a great future in front of her and wish her all the best!



Renewed Interest in Ski Jumping in the Val Gardena



Val Gardena is well-known for the wide selection of winter sports it has to offer its guests, everything from downhill and cross-country skiing to ice hockey, ice skating and tobogganning yet interest in ski jumping had waned over the years and the sport had not been seen in the valley for something like fifty years. The inhabitants of Santa Cristina had long wanted to revive this

once-popular sport, especially since various local athletes had been national and international champions in the Nordic combination events in the years between the two World Wars. The old jump at Ducati in S. Cristina and the mythical Tutino jump in Vallunga in Selva are no longer there and building has already started on two new jumps near the cross-country ski run on Monte Pana in Santa Cristina so as to have a centre for Nordic sports disciplines and their fans there. One jump will be 21 metres in height, the other 35 metres and both are constructed in such a way as not to damage the natural beauty of the area nor obstruct views of the valley. The facility includes two leading ramps, two launching platforms and a landing area. Ideal for expert and amateur sports fans alike, as well as those youngsters who are attracted by danger and thrills and who want to learn the discipline from top-quality instructors. The new facility will be ready to host its first competitive event at the end of December 2006.



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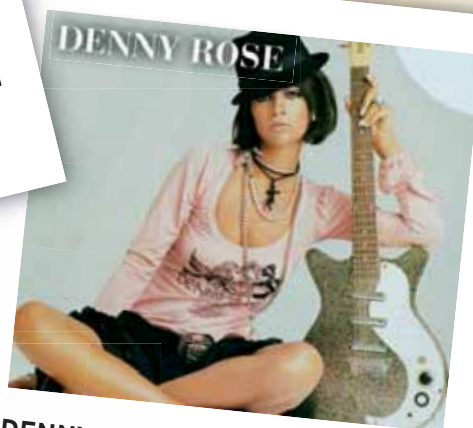
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Roped together for the „LIA DA MONT GHERDĚINA“

Giovanni Di Vecchia

I once had the pleasure of meeting Flavio Pancheri in his workshop in Ortisei. Pancheri was a respected mountaineer and president of the Gardena Section of the Italian Alpine Club, the CAI, and held various other prestigious titles.

Many years ago, he had been „first in line on the rope“, leader of a group of local men who wanted to found one single Alpine Association in the Val Gardena, a club which would bring together all the members of other various local clubs. But this was no easy project at the time even though there was a single cultural identity in the predominantly Ladin valley. Pancheri knew such an organisation would prove extremely important and successful over the coming years especially when, as in other parts of the region, a section of the Italian Alpine Club was founded in Val Gardena in the year 1954 and well as a section of the German-language Alpenverein of South Tyrol, the AVS. These two distinct groups, one catering for mountaineers from the Italian-speaking part of the population, the other for the German-speaking population, had similar, if not the same interests, aims and operational functions. The two clubs often worked side-by-side and many members belonged to both clubs. Co-operation between the

two associations continued over the years and they often promoted the same projects and programmes until, in an assembly held on 4th. December 1977, it was agreed to found a combined association, the „Lia da Mont Gherdeina“. Article no. 2 of the association's rules approves the foundation of the club and its composition „of members from the Val Gardena who are already members of the CAI or AVS and who have equal rights and duties within the association“. Article no. 4 states that an annual assembly must approve of biannual elections of a manage-





ment committee composed of fourteen members, seven from one linguistic group and seven from the other, who, in turn, must vote for the choice of a president and two vice presidents, one from each of the two linguistic groups. Furthermore, all responsibility and expenses should be divided equally between the two groups. The new association soon became referred to as the „Ladin miracle“ and the organisation is regarded as an innovative project made possible by the insistence of a few courageous members of both associations and the drive of the strongly convinced athletes who decided to „climb in roped formation“, as mountaineers do, one helping the other and giving advice, support and encouragement when necessary. A „communal headquarters“ opened to welcome the combined members of both associations and is regarded as the symbol of the whole venture, a concept which honours the „culture of the mountains“, a positive, active principal that all mountain folk agree with. As well-known mountaineer Chris Bonnington has said in this regard: „...Our role is to be carriers of a great tradition which continues today; we must educate and persuade people towards the idea of solidarity, humanity and respect of others, we must encourage exploration, incentive and adventure, research, study, interest in literature and art regarding mountains in order to bring people closer to them. We must try to convince people who do not feel as we do about mountains and inspire them with our ideals and values...“. And, with regard to values and ideals, Tullio Mussner, our president, emphasises the fact that the „Lia da Mont“ association aims at protecting and defending the mountain regions. We have, in fact, worked together with the various mountaineering associations of Val Gardena since 2003 and have published an „Alpine Ethics Code“ following the example of great mountaineer Giovanni Battista Vinatzer. We have opened new routes and undertaken various difficult climbs for the first time using movable, temporary equipment rather than attaching metal studs, footholds and railings to the mountain sides as was done in the past hoping that less and less routes will be spoilt by metal framework and other ugly equipment. The story of the history of the „Lia da Mont“ is not long but the association has already registered various successes, alternative projects, new climbing routes and other enterprises which can be read about in the specialist book on the same subject written by Monica Moroder. I feel sure the association will go from strength to strength in the future.



A present from Gardena Valley

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DAS EDELWEISS
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DOMINIK MAHLKNECHT

from the Val Gardena
became „artist of state“
in France

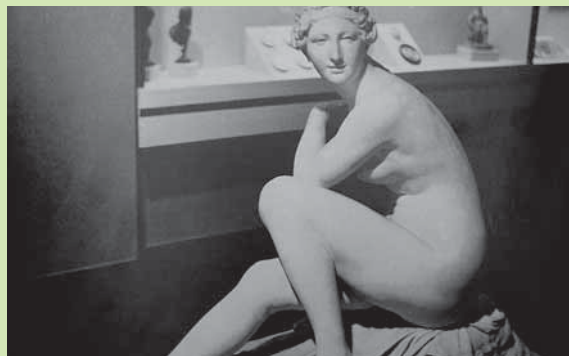
Leo Senoner



Dominik Mahlknecht is certainly not the only artist from the Val Gardena to have left his home to find fame and fortune elsewhere. He is, however, the only one to have assumed another nationality, to have acquired the title „artist of state“ and to have had work specially commissioned by reigning monarchs and men of state.

Mahlknecht was born in the Rainèl farmhouse in the little hamlet of Sureghes near Ortisei on 13th. November 1793. He spent a quiet, happy childhood and, like many of the valley people, showed a talent for art and wood carving. His father decided to apprentice him to one of the well-known local sculptors hoping this would ensure him a good position later in life. In 1809, history played an important part when Tyrol found itself in the middle of the Napoleonic Wars and the young Dominik decided to enrol in a local patriotic military division. He fought for his fatherland at the bloody battle of Bergisel near Innsbruck and one year later, when he was just seventeen years old, met Andre Mölzer, a German wayfarer who traded in craft-work from Val Gardena. Mahlknecht decided to accompany Mölzer on a journey to France which took the two men to Milan, Turin, Nice and Marseilles before they reached Lyon where Mahlknecht left

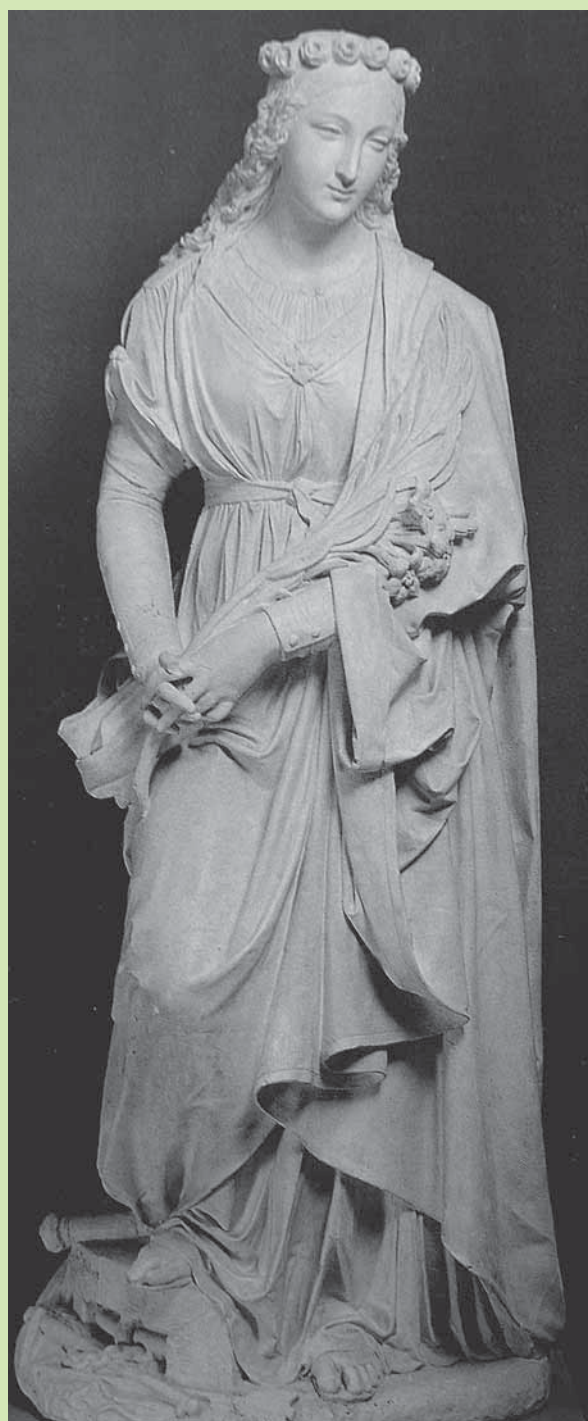
his friend and stayed for some months. He then moved on to Paris and Le Mans but had little luck in finding his fortune in either place. He managed to find occasional work but few private commissions were available for an unknown young artist hoping to make a reputation for himself in a foreign country. Soon, however, things began to improve. He moved on to Nantes in 1812 at a time when the thriving Atlantic coast port was the scene of exceptional cultural and artistic activity even though the political situation was not very good as a consequence of the downfall of the Napoleonic Empire. The Restoration meant that churches and convents



which had been secularised during the French Revolution were returned to the clergy. These buildings were often in need of much repair and many artists, including Mahlkecht, managed to find considerable work in this field. By 1814, twenty-year-old Mahlkecht was already working as a wood carver in his own right and by 1818 his fortunes had improved enough for him to have his own spacious apartment and nearby work-shop in the centre of Nantes. In 1821, the Nantes administration honoured him with the official title „city sculptor“ and also gave him permanent commissions for work in the city itself. Mahlkecht stayed in Nantes until the year 1830 when pressing professional commitments led him to the capital, Paris, where he lived until his death in 1876. Mahlkecht's artistic career is characterised by both professional and economic success from the early years onwards. He took part in the annual art exhibition in Paris from 1830 to 1857 and his works were awarded honorary prizes on two different occasions. He was admitted to the „Società de Beaux Arts“ and named „artist of state“. Various public institutions commissioned works from him and his main pieces include the statue of St. Francis in the military church of Saint Louis des Invalides, a figure of Saint Frances of Sales in the Eglise de la Madeleine in Paris and the carved woodwork and furnishings of the Hotel d'Orsay also in the capital. Dominik Mahlkecht, the wood carver from Tyrol, felt at home in France and soon regarded the country as his chosen home. He was happy from both a professional and sentimental point of view, married a French woman, Marie Roblot, in 1821 and opted for French citizenship in 1848.

It was not easy for him to maintain contact with his origins in Val Gardena, his family and heritage although he owed much to them and was an excellent ambassador for his home in a foreign country. He gave significant donations to the area where he was born including the statues of the Virgin Mary and the Four Apostles in the parish church of Ortisei as well as his lovely statue of Venus now housed in the Ferdinandeum Museum in Innsbruck. This latter institution appointed Mahlkecht honorary member and awarded him a gold medal for his exceptional contribution to art. The city of Innsbruck held him in great esteem and chose to place a bust of Mahlkecht above the facade of the Ferdinandeum. Furthermore, his name appears on the list of the twelve most important Tyrolean artists of all time. Even though France was Mahlkecht's artistic fatherland, traces of his background in the Val Gardena can be seen throughout his work. He is mainly considered as a self-taught sculptor due to the fact that he was never apprenticed to a great master and he also had very little formal,

academic education. In spite of this, he earned an important place for himself among the elite members of French sculptors of the 1800s. His works cover a variety of conceptual fields including formal statues, monumental busts, religious and sepulchral works, mythological subjects, architectonic sculptures and plastic portraits. They can be seen throughout France, though mainly in the west of the country at Versailles, Sangers, Bordeaux, Rennes, St. Malo, Caen and Metz as well as in the southern cities of Cahors, Toulouse and Marseilles.



PISCIADÙ MOUNTAIN REFUGE HUT

a one-hundred-year
long history

Thomas Demetz



The Pisciadù mountain refuge hut, named in memory of Franco Cavazza, stands at some 2,587 metres above sea-level near the lake of the same name on the north-east face of the Sella group. It is one of the most popular huts in the whole Dolomite area and can be reached by a number of various routes including the most direct one from Colfosco through the Mesdì Valley or another from Passo Gardena through the Setus Valley. Both these paths are clearly marked and well-maintained and promise hikers and mountaineers an interesting excursion with few difficult places. A third route leads from the Boè refuge hut which can be reached after a long but easy path over the Sella high plateau. The popularity of the Pisciadù/Franco Cavazza hut owes much to the well-known „Ferrata Tridentina“ path with an impressive hanging bridge which extends over a 300 me-



ter precipice to the side of the so-called Exner tower, an awesome rocky peak. The „ferrata“ was completed in 1968 and has been extremely popular ever since. The 1800s saw the beginning of tourism in the area and the arrival of many enthusiastic mountain climbers and mountaineers. It became necessary to have a network of mountain refuge huts at high altitude for use in emergency situations and various Alpine clubs, including those from Zwickau, Lipsia and Bolzano to name but a few, showed interest in premises in the Sella Group. Bamberg, a city in Germany, however, was the only club to find the necessary financial backing and, after surveys carried out in 1893, the Assembly of the Bamberg Section decided to build a refuge hut just beneath the Piz Boè at an altitude of 2,873 metres. It is now known as the Boè refuge hut and has proved to be a great success. It registered an enormous increase in guests from a total of 66 to 345 during the first eight years of its life and had its own permanent care-taker. As Alpinism became more and more popular in the Sella Group, the Bamberg section of the German-Austrian Alpine Associations decided to open a second, smaller hut at 2,587 metres above sea-level near the lake at Pisciadù. An assembly met on 11th. December 1901 to consider the matter and the hut was completed over the next two years by a team of workers under the leadership of master-builder Jakob Kastlungher. The second hut is a two-and-a-half hour walk from the first and is now called Cavazza. The refuge hut was ready for opening in 1903 and quickly became very popular with ever in-

creasing numbers of visitors. From the 181 guests it had in 1903, numbers grew to 220 in 1904 and then 300 in 1905, forty of whom were women. Most of the visitors arrived from Passo Gardena or from Colfosco over the deep Mesdì valley. Although the hut was stocked with food supplies, there was no live-in caretaker as yet and guests who wanted to stay over-night had to get the keys when they left the hostel at Passo Gardena. This system often led to problems when guests did not arrive on time to get the keys or returned them later than promised while others simply forgot to give them back at all or returned them much later than arranged. Other visitors went away without paying for the food they had eaten while ropes and other climbing equipment mysteriously disappeared and acts of bad behaviour and downright vandalism meant that the refuge was damaged and nobody offered to pay for its repair. One serious event happened in 1904 while in 1906 it appears that three couples literally took possession of the hut for their exclusive use during a three-week holiday period, refusing to let anyone else in at all. Eventually, the Bamberg Mountaineering Association chose mountain guide Joseph Rungger from Pescosta to look after the property. The First World War, which lasted from 1914 to 1918, had a certain effect on life in the area and most of the refuge huts, including the Bamberg hut as it was then known, suffered considerable damage. The military authorities handed the hut over to the Tridentino Alpine Society, the well-known SAT from Trento, in the year 1920. The SAT took formal possession of the building in 1924 and official permission was given for it to be completely restored. The hut was run by the SAT until 1942 and not much is known about it during this particular period. It gradually fell into disrepair and is known to have been in such a poor condition by 1940 that the SAT commissioned engineer-architect Tanesini from Ortisei to prepare a project for converting the little chalet into a cosy, modern refuge hut. Tanesini had good contacts with climbers and mountaineers in Bologna and, when funds started running

low in 1942, the SAT decided to hand the hut over to the Bologna section of the CAI, the Italian Alpine Club. The Cavazza family did much to finance necessary restoration work in memory of their son, Franco, second lieutenant in the prestigious Alpini regiment and member of the Bologna Cai. A keen mountaineer, he often climbed in the Dolomites, loved the Sella Group and had been killed on 20th. March 1941 during fighting in Albania. The Pisciadu refuge hut was renamed in memory of Franco Cavazza immediately after the end of the war and mountain guide Germano Kostner from Ortisei, who had devised a project to build a cable lift across the Setus valley to transport building materials and other essential supplies to the hut, was chosen to run it. Although it was difficult to get bulky materials and heavy supplies to the building site, the little property was completely re-stored and re-modernised in record time. The lift was rebuilt in 1962 and improved once more in 1983. Thanks to the help given by the Corvara section of the Alpini soldiers, part of the Tridentina Brigade who checked and maintained the main routes to the hut, the renovated Franco Cavazza refuge re-opened in August 1947. It was already working well by the 1949 season and registered a total of 2,923 guests in the year 1950. A large rebuilding project was again undertaken in the sixties and the access path through the Val Setus was checked and widened in 1973 again with the efficient help of the Brigata Tridentina. Electricity was installed in 1978 and the latest re-building work was done in the eighties. More bed space was made in 1983 as well as a store for foodstuffs and other equipment, a special room for permanent use during winter, a shower room and shoes-and-boots store. Further maintenance work was done on the Pisciadù-Franco Cavazza refuge hut, which had by then been taken over by the Bologna Alpine Club, in 1993. The list of well-known men who have run the hut includes Joseph Rungger (1908-1915), Gustin Sorarù (1930-1938), Pietro Percoldrungg (1934-1940), Germano Kostner (1947-1979) and Renato Costa from 1979 on.





High lights

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28 | 01 - 04 | 02 | 2007

■ ITF WOMEN'S
CIRCUIT



15-16 | 12 | 2006

■ MEN'S
FIS-WORLD CUP



2007

■ 13. SELLARONDA
SKIMARATHON



28 | 03 - 01 | 04 | 2007

■ 17. VAL GARDENA
SPRING TROPHY

26-29 | 12 | 2006

■ SNOW SCULPTURE
COMPETITION





2007

■ GARDENISSIMA

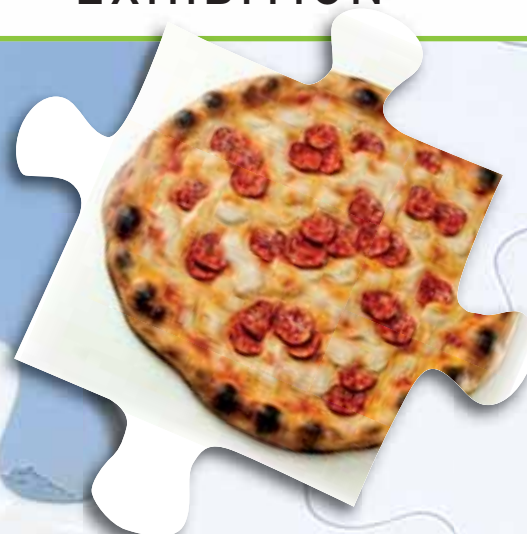

LUGLIO/JULI/JULY-
SETTEMBRE/SEPTEMBER 2007

■ VALGARDENA
MUSIKA


2007

■ SELLARONDA
BIKE DAY

31 | 08 - 02 | 09 | 2007

■ UNIKA - SCULPTURE
EXHIBITION


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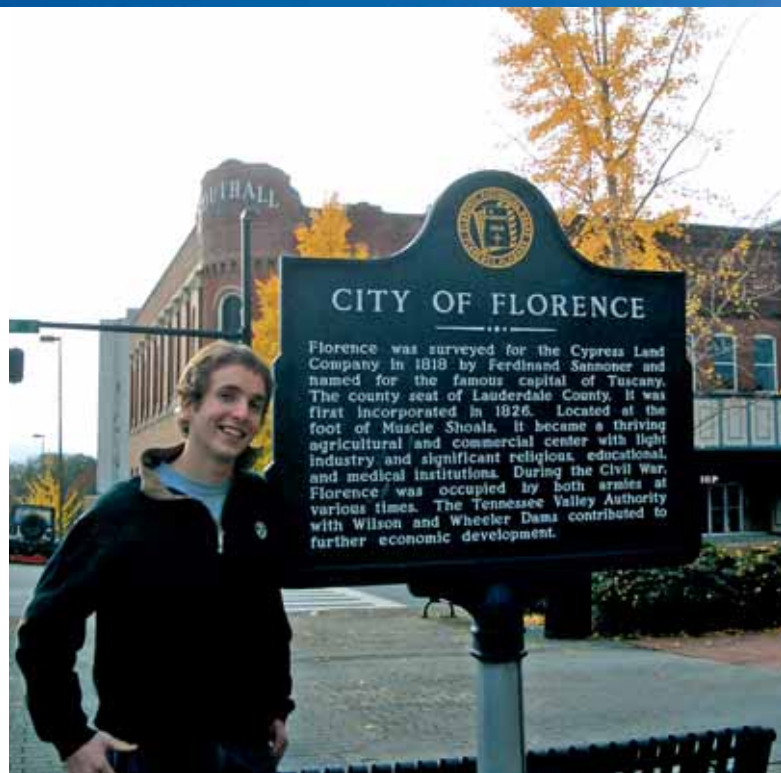
■ VAL GARDENA
EXTREM MARATHON



FERDINAND SANNONER FROM GARDENA

and “his” city in the USA

Leo Senoner



Ferdinand Sannoner was an engineer by profession and always admired Florence, one of Italy's most beautiful cities of art yet, when times got hard at home, he decided to join others from the valley who were emigrating to find a new life across the ocean.

Destiny took him to hot, humid Alabama in the south of the United States where there was plenty of work for professional people like himself. He directed projects to drain and reclaim vast areas swampland in the state ready for building and various construction work and eventually decided to make his home on the banks of the river Tennessee. He there founded the city of Florence in the year 1818. Nowadays, Florence is a typically quiet, little American town with a population of 36,000 inhabitants

and an enormous board at the entrance to town bearing the name of its founder. People back home in Val Gardena know very little about Sannoner and his life on the other side of the Atlantic until Stefan Peintner, a high school student from nearby Bressanone, spent an exchange visit in the U.S.A. last year and visited the little place for a couple of days. He was intrigued by its history as soon as he recognised that the name of the founder of the city sounded familiar. He did some research and quickly discovered Ferdinand Sannoner's connection with Val Gardena, as well as his relationship with the American city he founded on the banks of the river Tennessee two centuries ago, a city which now has two honorary citizens from this part of Italy, Sannoner himself and the much younger Stefan Peintner.





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