



DISCOVER the character of Brda!

I FEEL
SLOVENIA



Land of invigorating moments



BRDA THE LAND OF INVIGORATING MOMENTS

The fairytale landscape offering views toward the sea, the Friuli and the Veneto, has a special, magical power. Brda, the land of hills, nested midway between the Alps and the Adriatic, preserves and develops its heritage, safeguards its beauties and generously bestows its delights on anyone who visits the area.



Although the times of fairytales are over, fabulous images of Brda are becoming increasingly real. The abundance of beauties, curiosities and adventures always attracts attention of travelers who wish to get acquainted with Brda. Bearing the stamp of the past, today's life in the villages and hamlets of Brda has been taking its own pace - tranquil and cheerful, surrounded by family and in harmony with visitors.



DISCOVER

the character of Brda!

Turbulent events of past centuries have imprinted indelible marks on Brda, while nature and people have shaped the soft, undulating landscape full of beauties, curiosities, delicious products and unique views awaiting to be discovered and enjoyed - among communicative and hospitable inhabitants of Brda.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The cultural heritage of Brda was, as everywhere, shaped and influenced by numerous factors. These were interacting through centuries, leaving behind various traces, from cultivated landscape, typical village architecture, castles, fortified villages, individual houses, typical dry walls and ponds to numerous ethnological curiosities of people's lives, their past and present celebrations, customs and habits and a typical dialect.



THE STAMP OF THE PAST



The Brda area is indisputably one of the most picturesque landscapes of Europe which was given its special character by the turbulent past and where the traditional way of life has been preserved for much longer than elsewhere in Slovenia. The remnants of medieval architecture, vestiges of the colonate and the consequences of the 1976 earthquake are perhaps only three signs of the past that were imprinted deeply in Brda and in lives of its inhabitants.

NATURAL ATTRACTIONS



Although the Brda area is mostly cultivated and transformed into vineyards and orchards, it is also exceptionally interesting for nature lovers. Attentive traveler's eye will notice numerous beauties, while those with more exploring spirit will ask around and the locals will reveal them a lot of interesting local geological, climatic and botanical features.





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Several castles in Brda, along with churches and the picturesque medieval village of Šmartno, are dating from the Middle Ages. The colonate, this peculiar way of contractual relationship between landlords and tenants, called the *coloni*, could still be found in Brda even in 1950s. The lives of local people were also deeply affected by the two World Wars - the first one caused mass refugee movements while after the second one, a substantial part of Brda remained in Italy due to a new border.

And the earthquake of 1976 which shook Brda houses to their foundations also completely ramshackled all aspects of people's lives. The old was very quickly giving way to the new and the modern. Changes at every level were getting ahead of themselves and were creating great disharmony. In many cases, a tractor came to the house before a toilet or a bathroom.





CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cultural heritage jewels can be seen everywhere in Brda and it primarily depends on us what will attract our attention.

For the visitors interested in architecture, there is plenty to be seen in Brda. From the remnants of simple and modest coloni houses with "*žbatafurs*" (kitchen extensions with hearths) to castles with mighty towers, castle courtyards (Dobrovo, Vipolže), as well as fortified medieval villages (Šmartno). There are several clustered villages with narrow alleys where you can see wooden balconies, small lattice windows and many other typical details. Worth of interest are also dry stone walls skillfully built of sandstone, a gray-brown rock typical of the Brda area. True gems are of course to be found in churches: in various parts of altars and other furnishing, in interesting paintings, murals... all the way to patriotic inscriptions from the time after World War II.

Fans of ethnological curiosities will be attracted by wine-growing, wine-storage and fruit-growing traditions while more persistent explorers will be acquainted by the locals with past and present customs and holidays as well as with the peculiarities of the Brda dialect some of which are quite amusing. Part of cultural heritage are also specialties of Brda cuisine you can enjoy in various places in Brda, especially during ethno-colored events.





NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

Thanks to **flysch soils** and the **climate** with plenty of sunshine, sufficient rainfall, hot summers and mild winters, natural conditions in the Brda area are especially favorable for **viticulture**. Flysch (interchanging layers of marl and sandstone) which is 35 million years old in this area is constantly exposed to weathering and thus producing fertile soil especially suitable for wine-growing.


Vineyards in Brda are mostly located on **terraced slopes** interspersed with patches of **woods** where black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) for vineyard poles is growing and where game and singing birds find shelter. **Oaks** used to be the most common trees in the area (one of the largest oaks can be seen in Drnovk village) while in the northwestern part of Brda around Kožbana **chestnut** is still characteristic, also the marron, an important food source for many generations in remote villages along the border.


Despite cultivated landscape, diverse **plant life** can be observed everywhere in Brda, from auricula (which is otherwise an Alpine flower) along the Idrija river to colorful meadows on Korada where numerous orchids and other rare, endangered and thus protected plant species grow throughout the year.

Caves are a rarity in Brda since this is not a karst landscape. To find caves, you have to ask older locals. Otherwise, you can visit **Krčnik**, a natural stone bridge, and the **Korita gorge** on the Kožbanjšček creek near the villages of Hruševlje and Pristavo.



LEGEND

 Natural heritage

 Church, chapel or sign

 Petrol station

 View point

 Castle

 TIC Brda

FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE



The hilly Brda landscape is speckled with villages, some clustered like birds' nests, some elongated and dispersed, with houses spread along the ridges, but all of them surrounded by the greenery of vineyards and orchards with roads, tracks and paths winding among them.



DOBROVO

Snežeče
Višnjevik
Gradno
Medana
Ceglo
Plešivo
Fojana
Barbana
Biljana

7



ŠMARTNO

Kozana
Vipolže
Cerovo
Vedrijan

17



KOJSKO

Vrhovlje pri Kojskem
Hum
Podsabotin

23



NEBLO

Šlovrenc
Hruševlje
Belo, Nozno
Kožbana
Vrhovlje pri Kožbani
Brezovk
Slapnik
Golo Brdo
Senik

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DOBROVO

Dobrovo

Dobrovo with some 400 inhabitants is the administrative center of Brda Municipality and also the center of the Brda wine-growing area. The village name is derived from "dob", pedunculate oak, once the most common tree species in Brda. In the immediate vicinity rises the mighty **Dobrovo castle** where the permanent collection of graphic works of the world-renowned painter Zoran Mušič and other

temporary collections are displayed and various events are held in the Knights' Hall or in the castle courtyard. Rooms on the second floor are especially important for the history of the castle, presenting the life of the Baguer family and part of returned original furnishing. In front of the Municipal building stands a memorial dedicated to the fallen and the victims of World War II, while at the Dobrovo castle there is a sculpture depicting the poet Alojz Gradnik in a typical pose, a work of Jakov Brdar. A visit to **Goriška Brda**

Wine Cellar, the largest cooperative cellar in Slovenia, founded in 1957, is a very interesting experience. The visit can be complemented with wine tasting and the purchase of excellent Brda wines. Every year in the beginning of June, a traditional **Festival of Cherries** is held in Dobrovo. From Dobrovo where a pharmacy, a health care center, a post office, a school, a bank and some shops can be found, any of the villages in Brda can easily be reached by car, motorbike, bike or even on foot.

Dobrovo Castle

The beginnings of the Dobrovo Renaissance castle can be traced back to around 1600. It is known that the medieval castle fell into ruin and the current castle was built on its ruins. The walls were probably built during the Second Venetian War in the period 1615-1617 because the castle had an important strategic role at that time. The four corner towers, offering magnificent views of the surrounding countryside, give the castle its characteristic image. The castle and the estate were the property of the Colloredo family while at the end of 18th century it was taken over by



the Catterini-Erzberg family. The last and the best known owner of the castle was Count Silverio de Baguer, a Spanish diplomat, the secretary of Spanish Embassy for Austria, Bavaria, Württemberg and Hessen in Vienna who married Cecilia de Caterini-Erzberg in 1872. Thus, the property came into the hands of the Baguer family. After World War II, the Allied Military Administration resided in the castle and after 1947 it became the so-called common property of the people. In 1970s it was taken over by the Gorica Museum and its complete renovation started in 1979. The castle was open for the public in 1991, soon after Slovenia became independent.

- 1 Festival of Cherries
- 2 Dobrovo Castle



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Snežehče • Višnjevnik • Gradno

Snežehče

In the vicinity of Dobrovo, opposite the Drnovk village, lies the village of Snežehče. A castle stood here in the Middle Ages – its remains can be seen in the renovated Polenčič house where coat of arms of the barons of Conti can be seen. The church above the village has a simple front with a tympanum and an Aquileia-type bell tower. Initially, this was a chapel of Troillo counts who had a farm here. There is a story related to the church saying that a pregnant countess felt disgust towards a

crippled man and chased him away, afterwards giving birth to a crippled child.

Višnjevnik

Višnjevnik is one of the few Brda villages without a church. In the Middle Ages it became famous for the lords of Višnjevnik and for Rittersberg, the oldest castle in Brda. Remnants of this castle no longer exist.

In this scattered Brda village you will find out everything about the birth of rebula which was

mentioned for the first time in written sources already in 1336. Namely, Henrik of Rittersberg purchased a vineyard where six buckets of rebula were produced every year. It is known that rebula from Višnjevnik, Gradno and Krasno used to be of the best quality and therefore very much sought after by merchants. No wonder, then, that the *Rebula lovers Society* was established here and that every year in the beginning of May they honor it with the Festival of Rebula and Olive Oil. Olives that almost disappeared from Brda decades ago also have their honorable place beside rebula.



Frlanšče in Krasno

In the immediate vicinity of Višnjevik, at **Frlanšče in Krasno**, you can see a completely preserved farm, a colonus house with a courtyard and an outbuilding, a nice example of typical architecture and interior design.

3 Snežeče with Biljana in the background

4 Višnjevik

5 Frlanšče

6, 7 Church of St. George

Gradno

Gradno whose name probably derives from "graden" (sessile oak), an oak species that was once the most common tree in Brda, is full of interesting details. Here stands the interesting Church of St. George where Stations of the Cross were painted by a world-renowned painter Zoran Mušič and part of the painting is the work of the painter and graphic artist Lojze Spacal. On the church wall there is a memorial plate dedicated to a priest, a prominent national revival figure, a publicist and a pedagogue Andrej Žnidarčič who served in Gradno for 28 years and whose efforts were dedicated to restraining the penetration of the Italian spirit organized in the Lega Nazionale.

In the village you can see two nice examples of renovated dry stone walls made of local sandstone. This kind of walls are a true rarity nowadays in Brda. Above one of these walls, the oldest olive grove in Brda is catching the sun.





Medana • Ceglo • Plešivo

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Medana

Visiting Medana, a picturesque wine-growing village with a rich tradition of cultural events, is a must. Here you can visit the birth house of Alojz Gradnik, a great poet who masterfully depicted the nature of Brda and its people in numerous collections of poems. Another poet, Ludvik Zorzut, was born in the same house. His poems about the life in Brda were less sophisticated, often in dialect and included many ethno motifs. Renowned



Medana wine growers keep collections of art works created during MMMart painting colonies. From the village where an international poetry festival named Days of Poetry and Wine is held every year in August, there is a beautiful view of the Vipolže plain – it is said that Mussolini planned to dam the plain, create an artificial lake and afterwards build hotels on its shores.

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Ceglo

Ceglo got its name after a Roman brickworks. It was located in the field below the village - the place is today on the Italian side of the border. The hamlet is given its character by a renovated castle composed of two units. Once a property of the Codelli family from Mossa, it is now a private property. The first, central unit comprises a palace, a chapel and belonging buildings, while the second, lower unit is a farm.



Plešivo

Nearby is the village of **Plešivo** with an interesting fortified hamlet of **Jordano**, once the property of Jesuits, serving as a climate resort for their ill brethren, friars and theologists. From the village, four doors led to four directions: to Medana, Plešivo, Fojana, and Krmin (Cormons). After the Jesuit order was abolished, the estate was bought by the Catterini family and let to be used by Dominican friars. During the agrarian reform after World War II, the hamlet was divided among several owners.

- 8 Medana
- 9 Gradnik's wine cellar
- 10 Plešivo
- 11 Military tower in Plešivo



Fojana • Barbana

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Fojana

Fojana is a small village less frequented by visitors due to late road connection. It has a rich history: during the Middle Ages it was home of the famous lords of Fojana, while between the wars the first cooperative in Brda was established here.

Historically rich Fojana has two churches. The first one is named St. Spirit on the Lake. According to oral traditions, a cave or a lake lies beneath it;



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the fact is that the entire slope, along with the church, has been sliding. The important composer and conductor Rado Simoniti is buried here. The second church has one nave, with main altar dating back to 1800.



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Barbana

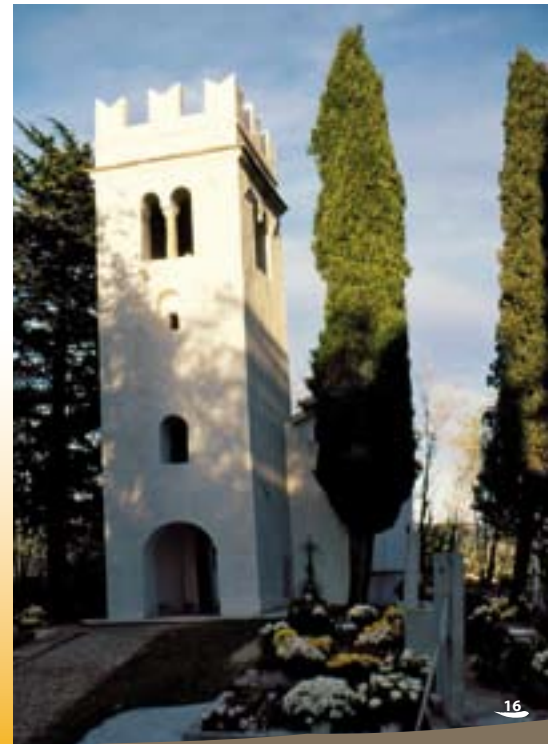
The small village of Barbana in the vicinity of Fojana is worth a visit especially due to the Church of Mary's Birth which has been renovated by local people.

12 Fojana

13, 14 Church of St. Florian

15 Church of Mary's Birth

16 Church of St. Spirit



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Biljana

Biljana is one of the most beautiful Brda villages, recognizable from afar by its church with a typical Aquileia-type **bell tower** in the village center. The bell tower was rebuilt at the end of 19th century by Valentin Vuga, a mason master from Kozana who even depicted himself on the front stone on the bell tower. The Parish Church of **St. Michael**, which is still Gothic in its basic appearance, was mentioned for the first time in old scripts from 1233. The star-arched presbytery was built in 1534,



while the church itself is adorned by Baroque furnishing. The walls were painted around 1900 by the famous painter Clemente del Neri, while Christ's Resurrection, a wooden sculpture from the first half of 16th century, is a carving work of the South Tirol workshop. Murals behind the side altar prove that the initial church was of the same size and several times larger than other churches in this area. Namely, it had a special function of ancient parish for the major part of the Brda region.

Dorišče with a small tower, firing slits and portals, where the lords of Biljana lived in 13th century, is an interesting building. At the end of 15th century it became property of the Orson family and later it came into hands of the Edling nobles of Gorizia and the lords of Dornberk. Before World War I Austrian army was located in the building and a military hospital was there during the war. Biljana villagers are proud of Kožlin brothers due to their contribution in music (especially singing) in the

second half of 19th century and of the physician Lojze Simoniti (1901-1957). The village is also famous for the well-known Fourth Biljana Meeting in 1869.

For some time, the Biljana church attracted curious visitors who came to see "the appearance" in the bell tower - in a game of light and shadow some people claimed to have seen a silhouette of the Mother of God.





ŠMARTNO

Šmartno, the architectural jewel

A former medieval border military fortress and today a largely renovated village is one of the most beautiful cultural monuments in Slovenia.

The picturesque walled village with five preserved towers, perched on a panoramic hill (as the poet Alojz Gradnik would say) like an eagle's nest, can be seen from every corner of Brda. The settlement that was probably built on Roman foundations used to

be a fortification on the strategic Venetian-Austrian border. Today it is an architectural jewel, a cultural monument, unique as a whole and in numerous details.

Between 16th and the second half of 18th century, Šmartno was an important strategic defense post incorporated in the system of fortifications and never taken by the Venetians. The border was defended by contract soldiers coming from far away; many were of Uskok (Croatian) origin. The

wall between the seven towers was built in a way that the passages were spacious enough to allow movement of soldiers in different directions. It seems that the settlement had a drawbridge in front of the entrance and was surrounded by a deep moat. Military origin of the village is also testified by a crenellated church bell tower and by both squares - upper and lower square - which were intended for gathering of soldiers in case of an enemy assault through the main entrance. The village derives its name from the Church of

St. Martin, the largest church in Brda, with a bell tower which was once a fortification tower. A bell made in 1857 with a motif of the three holy kings is installed in the tower. The Baroque church has three magnificent marble altars, the main altar being especially rich. Presbytery and Stations of the Cross were painted by the painter Tone Kralj. The white marble pulpit on the right side of the nave is also a beautiful work. The villagers started to modify the military character of the village in 19th century, while the



professional renovation of the village was initiated at the end of 1970s on the initiative by Emil Smole, at that time director of the Institute for the Protection of Monuments in Nova Gorica. In Šmartno today, you can visit any of the exhibitions in the *House of Culture*, while in *Briška House (Brda House)* you can take a look at old furnishment of a simple farmers' house with a fireplace. The village is especially lively during the festivals *Brda and Wine (Brda in vino)* and during St. Martin's feast.





Kozana • Vipolže

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Kozana

Kozana is also a dispersed village with a good view. Situated between Šmartno and Vipolže, it is surrounded by numerous vineyards with sweet grapes and by orchards with various kinds of exceptionally tasty fruit. It is therefore no coincidence that Kozana women sold fruit in Austrian cities and resorts already before World War I, while men were supplying it to them by train daily from Gorizia. Local people are proud



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of St. Hieronymus Church with a bell tower reconstructed according to the plan by the famous architect Jože Plečnik. The upper part of the bell tower as it is today, shaped like a temple and separated from the church, was heightened according to Plečnik's plan in 1956. The church is adorned by a Baroque altar and an altar painting from 1714. Only one bell was preserved after both world wars; so far, the bells have been replaced twice with larger and better ones.

Vipolže

In nearby Vipolže, a scattered village in lower Brda, you will certainly be enchanted by an old castle from 11th century and enormous cypresses of honorable age growing beside it. The castle used to be a representative villa and a hunting manor of the counts of Gorizia where horses were bred, while later on, it changed hands between members of Herberstein, della Torre, Attems Petzenstein and Teuffenbach families.

The building was rebuilt several times, in 17th century into a Renaissance villa in the Venetian style. In front of the castle there used to be a magnificent castle park with a Baroque fountain, several hundred years old cypresses and oaks. During World War I, the castle was used as a



military hospital while in 1948 it was damaged in a large fire. It is one of the most beautiful examples of castle architecture in Slovenia built between Renaissance and Baroque. The castle is awaiting fundamental renovation, according to plans, there will be a seat of international center for graduate studies. In the so-called new castle which was built in 18th century in the Baroque style, there was a seat of a cooperative after World War II, while afterwards it was used as an apartment building. In Vipolže there is the only preserved water mill that still operated in 1990s and the village is also known for fossil numulitins that were found there.

17 Vipolže castle

18 Church of St. Hieronymus in Kozana

19 Vipolže



Cerovo

Gornje and Dolnje Cerovo

Gornje Cerovo is interesting in various aspects. It was mentioned already in 1205 when the castle of the lords of Cerovo stood just before the site of today's Church of St. Nicholas. The church we see today, with its Baroque pilasters, entablatures and an altar, was finalized in 1754. Both marble side altars were made according to the Venetian style. The circular path around the wall is also very interesting. In Dolnje Cerovo you can ask the locals about the origin

of a thick chain around the Church of St. Leonard, a patron saint of prisoners and the detained, and you might hear several stories about it. They talk about a vow made by a farmer who transported wine with oxen, got stuck in mud with the cart somewhere along his way and had a chain with a year 1859 forged after safely returning home.

The church has a crenellated bell tower, a Gothic presbytery and a Baroque nave and furnishing. It is surrounded by a wall from where Brda can be

admired in all directions. A picturesque stairway leads to the panoramic area around the church where some ruins of the former castle can also be seen.

Interesting stone cutting details that might be attributed to the castle architecture along with a small purse containing 97 silver coins from various mints and lands of 15th and 16th century were discovered nearby when a house was being demolished.



Vedrijan

On the neighboring hill stands the village of Vedrijan, a true landmark visible from everywhere in Brda due to its church and a bell tower from 16th century. It was first mentioned in 1319. During World War I, a refugee center for refugees from other Brda villages and a hospital were located in the village, while during World War II, the Kojško command headquarters was stationed there. Vedrijanšček, the creek below the village, was once crossed by two bridges from the period of Illyrian Provinces. Only one of the five mills that used to operate on the creek is partly preserved today.





KOJSKO • Vrhovlje pri Kojskem

Kojško

Visit Kojško, a scattered village with 300 inhabitants overlooked by a hill (elevation 290 m) with a Church of Saint Cross on the top. According to oral tradition, the church used to be called Saint Cross on the Lake, which is hardly surprising since numerous springs really come out from beneath the hill. The church was built around 1500 and is part of a former fortified village; the last of its fortified crenellated towers is today a bell tower.

The path leading to the church is lined with Stations of the Cross chapels, while its murals originate from the second half of 17th century. Once a popular pilgrimage destination visited by pilgrims from Carinthia, Friuli, Gorizia, as well as from Vipava and Posočje regions, the Church of Saint Cross remains today primarily an interesting tourist attraction. The main Gothic wing altar was made in the Villach carving workshop in 1515 and is one of the oldest Gothic altars in Slovenia. The place is exceptionally panoramic, offering views

all the way to the Alps and the Adriatic Sea in fine weather. It is said that from here, the Italian king observed battle positions on Sabotin during the Battles of the Isonzo. The preserved 300-meter single-track railway tunnel named "*Na kalehih*" indicates the strategic importance of the village during World War I. The Church of the Assumption is also interesting – it was rebuilt in the Baroque style in the second half of 18th century with the presbytery preserved from the Late Gothic period.

Unfortunately, only a few remains (a tombstone with inscription plates and coats of arms of the Coronini and Dietrichstein families) of the once most beautiful castle in Brda can now be seen. In 18th century, the castle was the focal point of cultural activities in the Gorizia area and, as it was also the seat of judiciary, justice was delivered here for almost entire Brda region. Before World War I, Kojsko was the economic and cultural center of the Brda region. Today, however, it is a distinctly wine-growing oriented village. A post office, a health care center and a restaurant are located there. Beside the road, you can see a monument dedicated to Srečko Kumar, a famous choirmaster and musical pedagogue.

In 1086, Kojsko is mentioned for the first time as a village given to Rosazzo Abbey by count Henrik of Gorizia. In 1879, the first wine tasting, exhibition and wine competition was organized in the village.

20, 21, 22 Church of St. Cross

23 Statue of the Assumption of Mary

24 Vrhovlje pri Kojskem



Every year they also celebrate St. Cross holiday and stage a procession.

Vrhovlje pri Kojskem

Similar holiday is celebrated in Vrhovlje pri Kojskem, a small village with a late Baroque pilgrim Church of Virgin Mary on a panoramic hill where "kopelnica" was held on the White Sunday (the first Sunday following Easter). Market traders sold typical cakes while the young and the old gathered from near and far.



Hum

Between Kojsko and Števerjan (San Floriano del Collio) lies Hum, a village on a ridge with a magnificent view from where the entire Brda area can be admired. Along the road to Nova Gorica a large building can be seen - the House of Cooperative representing a social gathering center

for this part of Brda well after World War II. Along the road leading to Števerjan (San Floriano del Collio) a nice example of a renovated Brda farm house with a courtyard and a farm building can be seen.





Podsabotin

Podsabotin is a village through which a road from Solkan leads to Hum and further on to Brda. Numerous hamlets that once belonged to Šentmaver (San Mauro) (which came under Italy after World War II) were rather remote until the construction of the so-called Osimo road on the slopes of Sabotin. After World War I, architect Fabiani drew up a plan for the renovation of the

hamlet around the Church of St. Nicholas which, however, was destroyed during World War II. The second, typical countryside church with a stone bell turret, stands in the Podsenica hamlet and is dedicated to St. Lawrence. It was also destroyed during World War II but was rebuilt soon after. In the village there is a memorial dedicated to Mirko Zimic and other fallen and victims of World War II.

25 Renovated Brda farmhouse

26 Interior of the Church of St. Nicholas

27 Bell turret of the Church of St. Lawrence





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NEBLO • Šlovrenc • Hruševlje • Belo • Nozno

Neblo

The village of Neblo in the lower Brda is composed of several hamlets which is usual for the villages that belonged to the Venetian Republic. Their Church of St. Nicholas from 15th century is a hamlet of some sort itself. The church has a Gothic presbytery, a pointed-arch Gothic portal at the front and Baroque furnishing. In front of the church there is a small square with a fountain. Golden

altar of Venetian type was made in 17th century while probing also revealed traces of murals. Archaeological site Borg in the vicinity testifies to the importance of this place in the Antique: a Roman pottery workshop was located in Neblo.

Šlovrenc

The nearby village of Šlovrenc that used to be a border village between the Austrian monarchy and the Venetian Republic until 1798 is also interesting. The Church of St. Lawrence was built in late Baroque. It has a semi-circular apse and an Aquileia-type bell tower built partly in 1667 and partly in 1898.

Hruševlje

To the north from Neblo is the village of Hruševlje. In the past, the villagers were coloni of de Onesti landlord and later of the Jakončič family. There is an interesting Gothic Church of St. Margaret with the open roof construction and ornamented rafters, a wooden altar and wooden sculptures of St. Sebastian, St. Margaret and St. Rochus. An interesting stone bridge with two arches on a road to Slavče has a stone sculpture of John the Steadfast with a unique road sign from 1903 on its base: a fist with a pointing finger carved in a shallow relief and an inscription Belo-Slavče. At Peternel there is a memorial commemorating the fire set during World War II in which 22 people died.

28 Neblo
29 Church of St. Lawrence



Belo, Nozno

If time permits, take a walk to **Belo**, a former typical Brda clustered village of which only two concrete memorial pillars remain. During World War I, the village was transformed into a hospital and was connected to the neighboring village of Nozno by a new road. Above Belo rises the hill of Pungart on which ruins of a tower with a rectangular ground plan can be found; it is a remnant of a fortified dwelling from early Middle Ages.

The village of **Nozno** with a Late Gothic church on a nearby hill is worth a visit. The presbytery and part of a church nave are Gothic, while the western part of the nave and a bell tower are built in the Late Baroque style. At this location probably stood a castle with towers already in the 14th century, owned by Gorizia feudal lords of the Orson family.



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Kožbana • Vrhovlje pri Kožbani

Kožbana

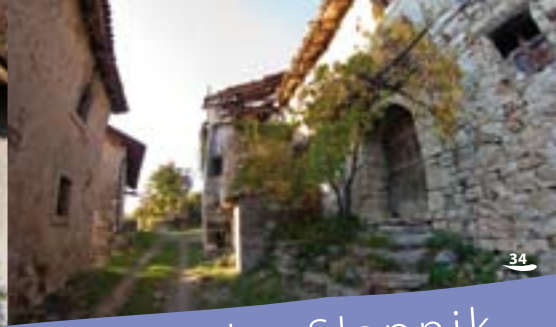
Kožbana is the largest village of the so-called Kožbana Corner, the extreme western part of Brda that used to be economically most closely connected with Cormons and Cividale and where wood, cattle and chestnut were the mainstay of the people. In the center of the village rises the Gothic Church of St. George which was enlarged in 19th century and its interior was baroquized. Its

right altar belongs to the so-called group of golden altars and was created in 1687. According to traditional belief there was an older chapel on the site of the present church which is said to be the oldest church in Brda.

Vrhovlje pri Kožbani

In Vrhovlje pri Kožbani they will be glad to unlock the door of the ancient St. Andreas Church with

the oldest murals in Brda that decorate the presbytery and the chancel-arch wall. There, we can admire scenes from the life of the Holy Family and depictions of saints and apostles. Images of angels playing various instruments from the second half of 15th century are also very interesting. Similarly as several other churches of the Mediterranean type, this church has a bell gable and a kind of a shack in front of the entrance, covered with stone slates.



Brezovk • Slapnik

Brezovk

Venetian-style architecture in Brezovk, a rather remote village that remained almost untouched by rapid post-war renovations, is also worth a visit.

30, 31 Church of St. Andreas

32 Kožbana

33 Brezovk

34 Slapnik

Slapnik

In the completely deserted Slapnik you will ask yourselves who were these people, how they lived, why they left and where to. Namely, after World War II most of the villagers emigrated to the Koper littoral region as well as to Argentina and other places around the globe. Slapnik is accessible from the road Vrhovlje-Korada, preferably on foot.

Although in deteriorating state, the village is full of interesting motifs and magnificent stone-cutting details that remind a visitor of a lively past. Slapnik awaits better times and represents one of the most beautiful motifs for photographers and painters.

The only entirely abandoned village in Brda, once a village of well-off farmers which is obvious from beautiful architectural details, is today left to decay.



Golo Brdo

Golo Brdo

Historically, this little village by the border river Idrija was repeatedly subject to turmoil which resulted in constant emigration of its inhabitants. Only a handful of people live there today who will be glad to show you where auricula (Primula auricula) grows. Here, this Alpine flower grows at unusually low elevation below 100 meters, in precipitous limestone cliffs which themselves are

a rarity in Brda. In the beginning of April when it blossoms you can admire its yellow fragrant flowers from a bridge crossing a creek pool along the road to Britof.

The medieval church just above Golo Brdo is also worth a visit. According to oral traditions, a count who was grateful for the survival of his son who fell into a karst shaft beneath the today's altar had it built in 13th or 14th century. The church

with a rectangular nave, a three-sided presbytery and a bell tower that can be seen from far away was enlarged in 16th century. It is called Mary on the Lake by the locals. Murmuring of water can actually be heard from the abyss behind the altar. Slovenian, Italian and Friulian pilgrims visit the church every Easter Monday.

Old houses in Golo Brdo show a great architectural influence of the nearby Veneto and Friuli regions, while archaeological ceramic finds testify that the hill was inhabited already in the Antique and prehistoric periods. With its strategic position, the hill was definitely suitable as a natural fortification which was additionally fortified with stone dry walls by the locals.



Senik

The road between Golo Brdo and Neblo leads through Senik, a clustered village where the influence of Venetian architecture can still be seen today. There is an interesting fountain in the center of the village, made by the villagers in 1907, and a water tank by the road Senik-Golo Brdo made by Italian soldiers in 1915 for supplying soldiers and horses. Just outside the village stands a small Gothic Church of St. Magdalene, renovated after World War I, the most recently in 1996. On St. Magdalene's day, they used to organize gatherings by the church where wine and cakes were sold.

35 Church of St. Mary on the Lake
36, 37 Senik



Special attractions of Brda





Krčnik, natural stone bridge and Kotline pools

Natural monument, one of the most beautiful of its kind in Slovenia, will enchant you in every season of the year, while it will also offer you a pleasant refreshment during the summer. Krčnik is a 5-meter long and slightly over a meter thick stone bridge, smoothly polished by the water, looming above the Kožbanjšček creek on top of a gorge. Oral traditions offer several interesting stories about how the bridge was created. It can be accessed by a short path leading from the Neblo-Brdice pri Kožbani road. Worth visiting are also nearby Kotline, three pools carved into the stream bed

by the Kožbanjšček creek during the process of overcoming a 10-meter cliff. In summer, this is a popular bathing place for the youth of Brda.



39



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Korada

Korada is the highest point of Brda. The mountain rising 812 above the sea level is also named Kobalar by the locals, after a farm of a well-known farmer Kobalar, a figure in interesting stories that are still being told today. At the Kobalar farm, farmers from Brda had their mountain meadows which were never used as pastures. Hiking on Korada which offers magnificent views in all directions is a beautiful experience in all seasons and the meadows are full of colorful flowers most time of the year. In the sheltered position below the summit there is a small mountain hut open to visitors on weekends. Not far below the hut a small Church of St. Gertrude (**Genderca** in local dialect) can be visited which is also a convenient resting point on the way up to the top.

It is said that the name of Korada is derived from the word **korajduc**, an old Slavic word for limestone.

Korada is one of the most popular destinations among the locals. It can be reached by hiking trails from Brda, the Soča valley and Sabotin.

*39 Church of St. Gertrude
40 Mountain hut on Korada*







Sabotin

On the Sabotin ridge, remains of St. Valentine Church can be found. It was maintained by monks-hermits and was abandoned in 18th century. Coins found at the site testify that the building originates from even older times. During World War I when Sabotin was a scene of violent battles, the church was completely demolished. The spirit of World War I is still haunting visitors on every step since the mountain is criss-crossed with abandoned battle trenches, tunnels and caverns, now cleared and partly restored for the visitors. In past several years the **Peace Park** was established there, reminding visitors from all over the world of the senselessness of all kinds of wars. Sabotin is an exceptionally panoramic mountain. From its top, the view can reach the highest

Slovenian mountains and the Adriatic sea. The view of the Soča river winding its way between Sabotin and Sveta gora on the opposite side is also magnificent. The mountain is an attractive site for botanists, while bird experts know that even golden eagles nest here.

Don't overlook in Brda





The view from the tower in Gonjače

When the weather is fine, the best way to start exploring Brda is from here. From the view tower, the entire Brda area can be admired as well as Julian and Carnic Alps, the Dolomites, the Friuli plain and hills, the Gulf of Trieste, the Karst plateau, the Vipava valley and the Trnovski gozd plateau. 144 steps lead to the top of the 23-meter high tower. At the tower, there is also a memorial to 315 victims of World War II, a work of sculptor Janez Boljka. The tower can be accessed from the road in Gonjače.



Šmartno, a detail

Among interesting details of medieval architecture in Šmartno is a house with *žbatafur* (a kitchen extension with a hearth) in the upper square. *Žbatafur* was a place where the whole family gathered; it usually had small windows and *gartarada*, a forged metal lattice.



Dobrovo castle

In the Knights' Room, coats of arms of four owners are displayed. Another point of interest is the Hunters' Room with wall paintings created in 1894 by Clemente del Neri, depicting local properties of the count Bagueri. The Gorica Museum maintains the collection of graphic works of the world-renowned painter Zoran Mušič who was born in Brda and who donated part of his many creations to his native Brda region. An interesting collection of the remains of the former castle furnishing is also displayed.



WORDS OF THE...

žbatafúr (kitchen extension with a hearth)

gank, pajú (balcony, usually wooden)

gasa (narrow street)

cine (battlements (crenellations) on a church bell tower)

gartaráda (forged window lattice)

plac (square)

kamin (chimney)

bošk, boškič (forest, wood)

turn (tower)

rakác (black locust tree)

p'č (water well)

(they can differ from village to village)



... Brda dialect you must know



DID YOU KNOW...

... that auricula, which is an alpine plant, grows at the elevation below 100 meters in Brda? According to experts, it has been preserved in shady cliffs along the Idrija river as a remnant of the Ice Ages.

... that at least five caves exist in Brda, none of them open for tourists? There is one cave near Golo Brdo, two karst shafts are located near Senik and two can be found near Vrhovlje pri Kožbani. Although the caves are not large, fans of the underground world still find them interesting.

... that many villages derive their names from various species of oak: Dobrovo, Cerovo, Gradno, Cerje, and also the surname Gradnik?

... that in the Church of St. Andrew in Vrhovlje pri Kožbani an angel was depicted in 15th century, playing a dulcimer or a small cimbalom, a very popular instrument at that time and a precursor of the modern piano? The mural is among the most beautiful and best preserved in Slovenia.

... that the word rebula (an old, local type of white wine) originates from the Friulian word ribuela which has the same meaning? The word was initially used for a red type of wine since in vulgar Latin, rubeola means "ruby red". Otherwise, rebula is regaining its reputation and popularity in recent years.

... that the name of Imenje (small village near Šmartno) originates from the language of Uskok contract soldiers who came to defend Austrian-Venetian border in the Middle Ages? According to some sources, they had their land, property there, which is exactly the meaning of the Croatian word "imanje".

... that wooden chests that were used in Brda villages for keeping bridal trousseau were often inlaid? Apart from flowers and geometric ornaments, birds were among the most common motifs in 18th and 19th centuries.



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