

GHIUMAA

2022

THE MAGIC OF
KÖPU PENINSULA

TOP PICKS
FROM SUMMER
AND YEAR-ROUND
ISLANDERS

LIGHTHOUSES AND
MILITARY HISTORY

A NEW
LONG-DISTANCE
HIKING TRAIL

*An island of
many worlds*

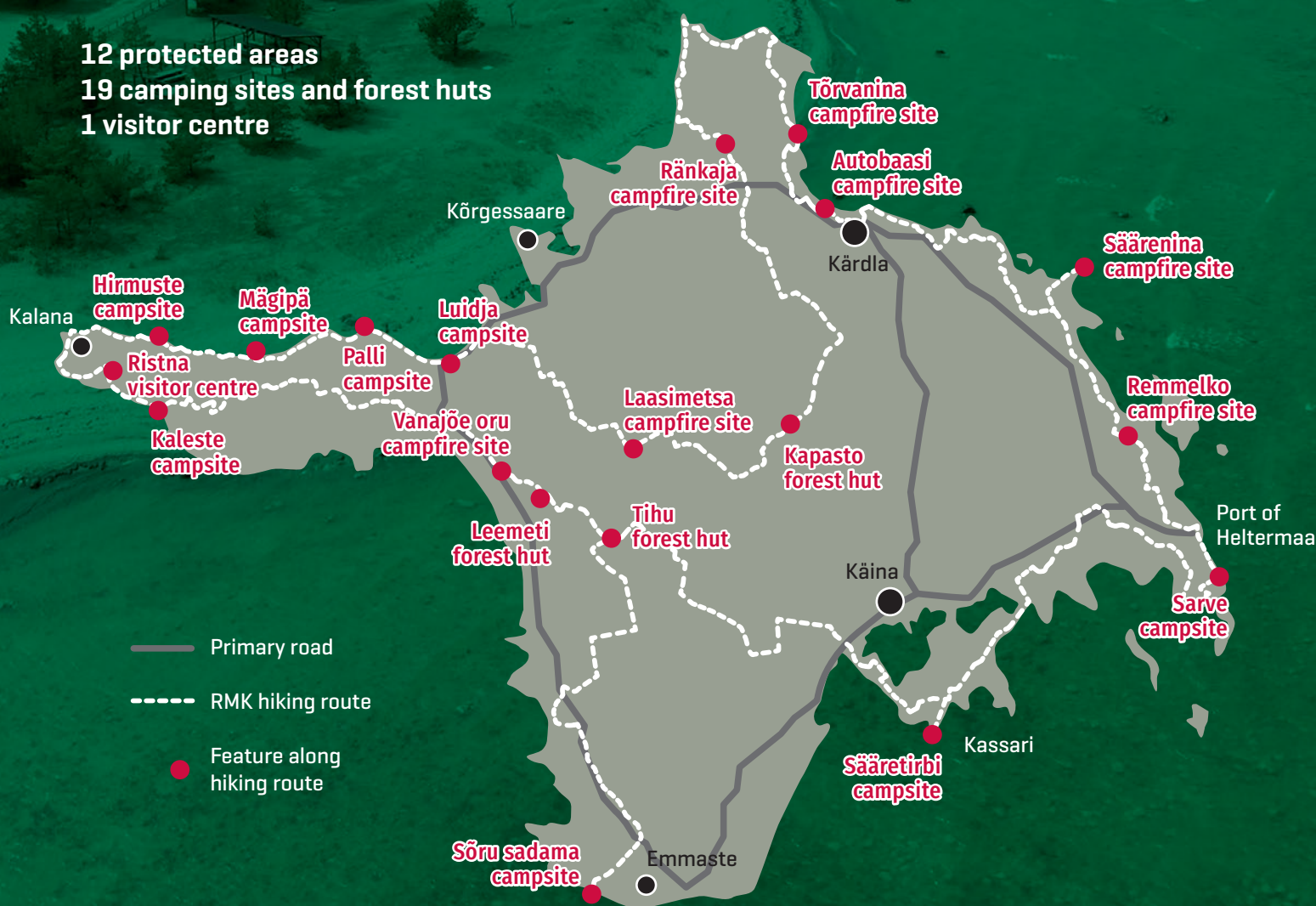
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THE NEW BRANCH OF THE ESTONIAN STATE FOREST HIKING ROUTE NETWORK IN HIUMAA

The latest addition to our country's long-distance hiking routes managed by the State Forest Management Centre (RMK) offers diverse landscapes and unforgettable nature experiences along its way. The route passes through wilderness areas of Tahkuna and Kõpu peninsulas including abandoned military sites and picturesque sandy beaches; the wetlands and sand dunes at the heart of the island and unanticipated hills rising over treetops. The Hiiumaa branch of the RMK hiking route includes:

- 12 protected areas
- 19 camping sites and forest huts
- 1 visitor centre



Hiiumaa – island of many worlds

I've had the privilege to travel to more than 100 different countries. Some of the distant lands I've been to have already started fading from my mind. But certain other corners of the world are strongly etched in my memory, where I'd return in a heartbeat. Without a doubt, one such place is Hiiumaa. It has history that is just as fascinating as Caribbean pirate lore; beaches just as beautiful as in Miami and where the (wind)surfing is as good as in Australia; natural splendour that can outdo the Amazon jungles; restaurants you won't find in Paris; mushrooming spots that no one in the world knows (other than Aunt Maria, who entrusted her secret to me).

At a time when everything in the world is becoming more homogenous, Hiiumaa has managed to hang on to its distinctiveness. Hiiumaa is just the right distance from the mainland to create that sense of special isolation. Naturally, the *hiidlased* themselves are special. So are their quirks and sense of humour.

Indeed, I strongly urge you to travel to this beautiful and exhilarating yet peaceful land. An ideal place for a real vacation. But I would also impress upon you just as firmly to come here as a well-meaning guest – treat the island's environment gently and don't clash with the rhythm the native islanders' lives. With that sort of approach, Hiiumaa becomes an immense, big island, with plenty of room for many good people.

TIIT PRUULI

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, GO TRAVEL MAGAZINE

In these crazy times when the news of the world becomes more and more dismaying with each passing day, my son will tell me consolingly: "it's lucky we live on Hiiumaa!" Estonians have a saying about living behind old God's back, and that's never truer than on this island. Here, chargers for replenishing the weary spirit come free of charge in the form of sea, forest and sun. (Vitamin boosts from juniper berries, whitefish or bilberries also available in season.) A place worth visiting, experiencing and enjoying.

Time moves at a different speed on Hiiumaa. "Jovaadab – we'll see," the Hiiu islander will say in the lilting local dialect, and put off today and tomorrow's cares until the day after tomorrow. After all, there's so many pleasant things to fill the day with – listening to the sounds of nature and learning the art of *productively doing nothing*, as the photographer, naturalist and great friend of Hiiumaa Fred Jüssi recommends.

On Hiiumaa you can take time out and regain your peace and mind and balance. Be by yourself, walk through the forest, throw stones into the water, and gaze at the spinning stars. It's dark on Hiiumaa, and LED advertising signs and street-lights don't kill the contrast here. You can think thoughts or not think, empty your mind of thoughts and meditate. On Hiiumaa you can *really* do this; visitors are not immune to the time-slowness effect. I recommend trying it.

And if of course, you're not ready for such a radical shift, you can also take a conventional holiday, relax in the mainland rhythm. Hike, ride, dive, sail, climb, fish, consume culture and celebrate. There's even a swimming pool, go-kart track and sports centre. If that's enough, there's even a seaside co-working hub and lodging with a sauna.

The native *hiidlased* are impressive people and Hiiumaa is here. Come and see for yourself! *Terit teitele!* (Hello and welcome!)

KRISTEL ÜKSVÄRAV

HEAD OF THE HIIUMAA TOURISM CLUSTER

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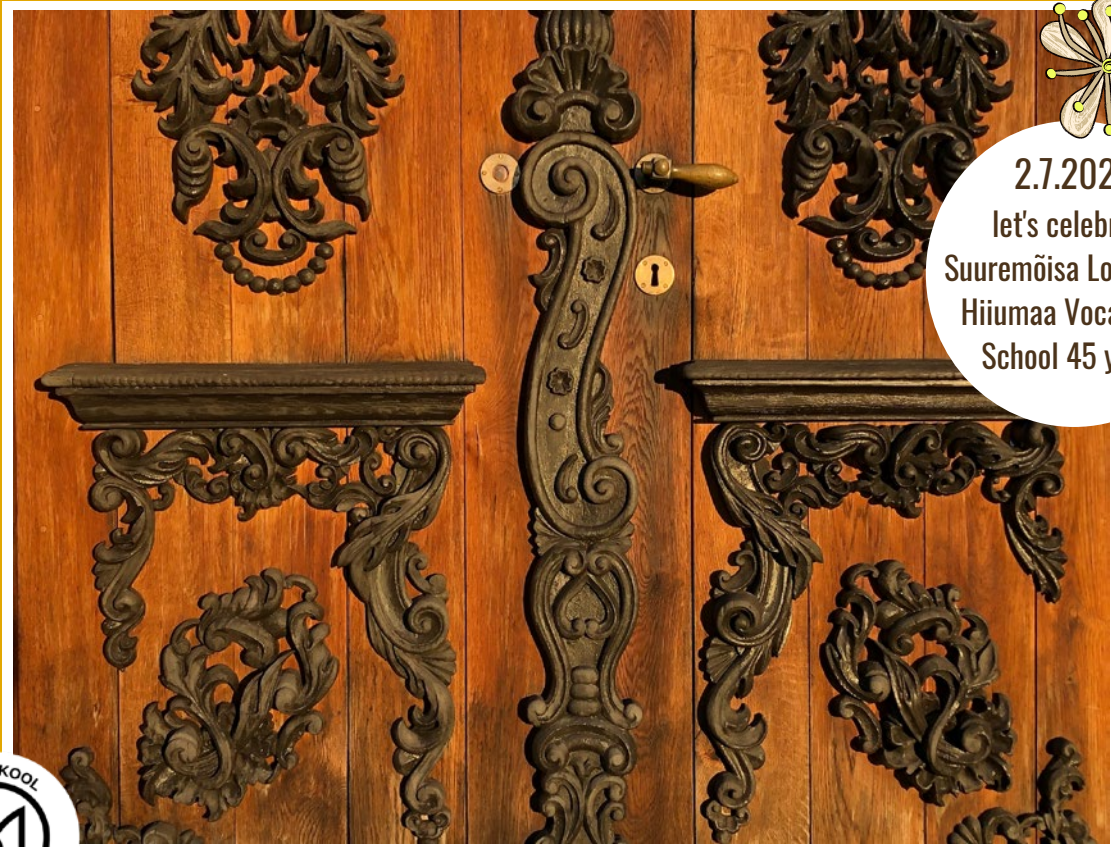
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SIIM NESTOR, MUSIC JOURNALIST

Every time I disembark from the ferry in Heltermaa, a deep calm enters my body, mind and soul. I don't experience that feeling anywhere else. As if I stepped into a new velvet-quiet reality and all my senses are sharp. The smells themselves are different. Much more pleasant than the mainland.

Recommending places in Hiiumaa is a bit complicated. The tendency is to want to keep the most secret and special places and gatherings to ourselves. To be conspiratorial about them. Sure, we will tell our friends – take them there and show them, but not to mass audiences... It's because the whole value of many of these places comes down to the fact that they are lightly peopled in the first place.

But if you feel the same flood of peace and calm come over you when you dock at Heltermaa, then look me up mano-a-mano, and ask me about some of those secrets.



KADRI TIKERPUU, CULTURAL PRODUCER

I can't think of anything that'll give you a more authentic sense of Hiiumaa than going out with the local fishermen in the morning with the fyke nets. Quite a few local men offer trips where you can accompany a fisherman out to sea with advance arrangements.

I myself stow away each spring with my friends Ahti, Siim and Kuli, who are coastal fishermen. Catching fish in fyke nets? My favourite! We have our own traditions with those guys (which I myself started) – I bring some fresh baked bread and a thermos of coffee. And when the first net is in place, we have our breakfast: fresh-caught *äikine* – something like Hiiumaa ceviche. Recipe: you fillet the fish, cut it into pieces, toss it with salt, pepper, oil, dill, lemon juice. Cover with a lid and shake. It's ready! The species of fish change with the season. And if you are lucky enough to catch a fish with roe – a real gourmet treat!

5x3

recommendations

We asked people with a Hiiumaa connection about their special must-see places on the island.



KAAREL KOTKAS, VERIFF FOUNDER AND CEO

I was born on Hiiumaa so my bloodstream is one with Hiiumaa. There's no stronger bond than that. The farther I am, the more I miss that instant my car wheels roll off the car deck and touch Hiiumaa and my heart rate slows to half...

Hiiumaa is part of my identity and I look after its well-being even when I'm away.

Three places I recommend visiting would be Kõpu Peninsula, Kassari, and Hiiumaa's smaller harbours. The first two places are like a concentrate of Hiiumaa's natural beauty and allure. Our smaller harbours are all diverse venues for festivals, culture, sports, maritime history and coastal culture. The action there can be enjoyed all boating season long.

Hiiumaa is a magnet for easy-going visitors who are drawn by our image and interest in island life. Our quiet exerts a pull and our island has a rhythm, and a couple times each summer, there are more people here, with good reason – midsummer holiday, the pop-up café day and Sõru music days. Luckily our ferry connection capacity keeps us from reaching critical point.



DOUGLAS WELLS, AUTHOR OF "JÄNKI SEIKLUSED HIIMUMAAL" (AN AMERICAN'S ADVENTURES ON HIIMUMAA)

The lighthouse tour reference book I wrote in 1993 taught me that Hiiumaa is genuinely amazing. It seemed like there was a legend about every rock and tree, sometimes more than one!

If I had to choose only two things to recommend, they would be the following.

First, the tip of Tahkuna Peninsula. Lovely beaches, an impressive lighthouse, WWI-era fortifications.

Then there's Pühalepa Church, Hiiumaa's oldest church originally built before the 13th century, with many fascinating architectural features and the surrounding centuries-old cemetery, with the graves of Baltic Germans who owned this area in the 18th century. I got married here in 1995, when I was a Peace Corps volunteer. It was the first wedding here in 50 years!

And of course, you have to check out Hiiumaa's true symbol, Kõpu Lighthouse! This massive pyramidal stone structure will turn 500 in 2030. It is believed to be the third oldest lighthouse in the world.



GUIDO KANGUR, ACTOR

If I'm not presently busy with Sõru Jazz, I would go to Sõru Saund or Vahuveini Viikend or the pop-up café day. If none of these events are on, I would just sit in Orjaku or Kärkla harbour café, enjoying the day, admiring the nice boats and letting my mind wander. Ports around the world are my favourite places!

If you're a nature photography buff, don't forget your gear! You never know what who or what you might come across on the hiking trail...and I'm speaking from experience!



Zoologist Kaja Lotman is one of Estonia's best-known conservationists. "I don't know what I can say about Hiiumaa nature in a nutshell, I could go on for hours, days..." Kaja frets. But we try to winnow it down. Kaja Lotman reflects on Hiiumaa's nature below.

TEXT: KAJA LOTMAN

Hiiumaa nature is rich in variety. There are plenty of forests, wetlands, beaches and beautiful landscapes for everyone. The ferry from Rohuküla to Heltermaa affords good views, because the route passes through a very important marine area for migratory birds and ringed seals.

From the car windows on the ferry, you will glimpse the broad limestone barrens of the Sarve landscape protection area. The pastoral grazed meadows continue

KAJA LOTMAN: “Hiiumaa is an island richly endowed by nature.”

along Käina Bay, too. Maintaining these semi-natural areas is complicated but the hard-working Hiiu folk manage it. Their preservation ensures the survival of a meadow ecosystem forged symbiotically by man and nature and offers a way of maintaining the heritage breeds that have adapted here historically.

Most of Hiiumaa is forested, but the forests are also carefully managed. The wild game populations are in good shape – harts and wild pigs in particular. Hiiumaa forests offer good mushroom and berry sites. Hiiumaa people all try to keep their prime foraging grounds secret – to varying degrees of success.

UNIQUE FLORA AND FAUNA

Close to one-quarter of the forests are very valuable and under nature protection to ensure habitat survival. One of them is a mushroom *Ceriporia tarda*, which in Europe is only found on Hiiumaa. The restoration of the European mink population has been one of the big conservation success stories in Europe. As for plants, the very rare allseed flax

has a habitat here, as do many orchid species. To get to know the latter better, Kõrgessaare even has a orchid nature trail that is best visited around the summer solstice. RMK, Estonia's state forest management body, has established hundreds of kilometres of hiking routes.

Also noteworthy are sites of human origin – Kärkla city park, Suuremõisa park and allée, and native religion worship sites: Tärkama sacrificial oak, Põlise Stones of Perpetual Agreement, and Ristimägi hill.

It's exciting to look for the meteorite crater from 455 million years ago and traces of the last Ice Age. The model field of the crater in Paluküla is a good place to get better understanding of the complex geological history.

The satellite islets of Saarnaki and Hani-katsi are less accessible gems where the culture of small farms of the Väinameri strait still clings to life.

Hiiumaa's environment is well-kept, which allowing this beautiful island to be included in the UNESCO Western Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve. ■

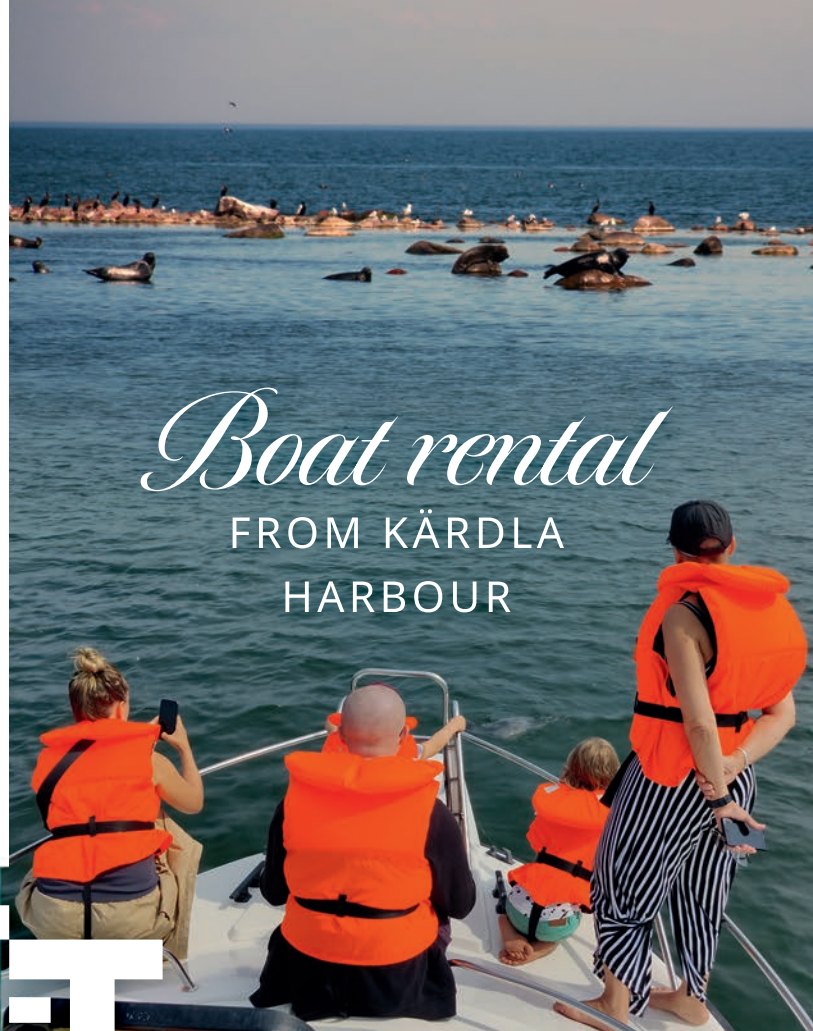
PHOTOGRAPH: KAJA HIIS





Boat trips

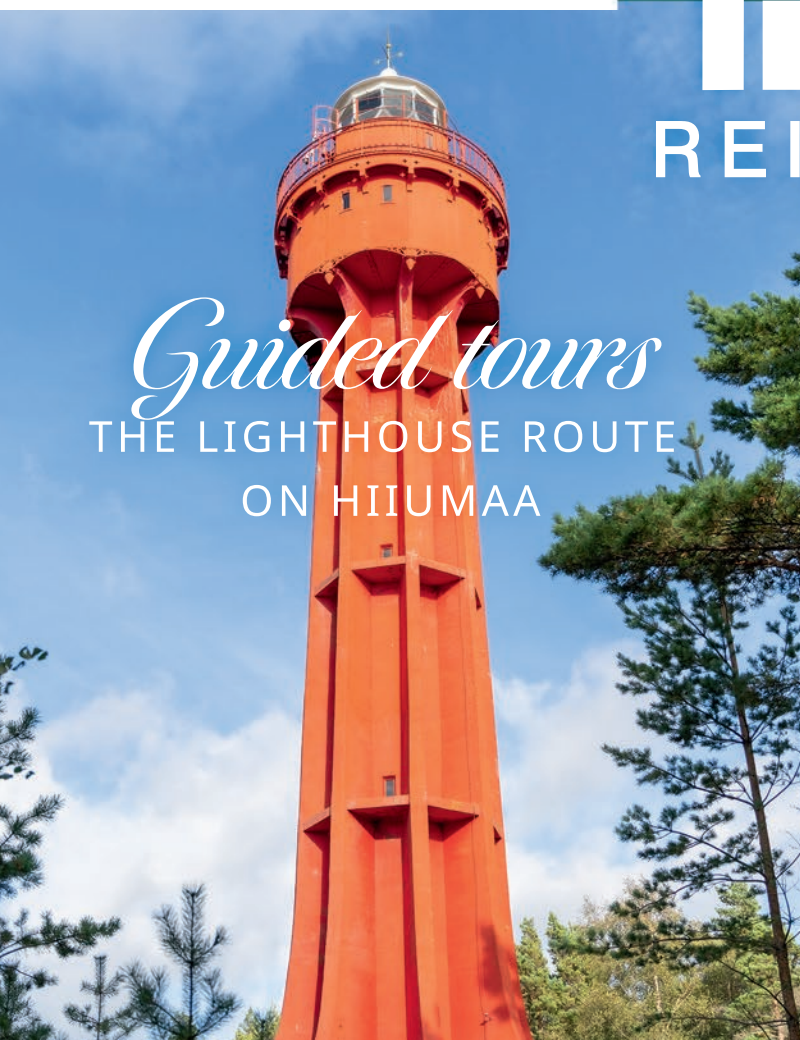
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PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASIUK



Captain RANDO KESKÜLA: “You won’t get seasick on the Hiiumaa ferry.”

The 1860s can be considered the start of the regular connection between mainland and Hiiumaa – that was when the Ungern-Sternberg family purchased a steam-powered sailing ship, the Progress. Hopefully a model of this graceful looking vessel can soon be seen in the lobby of the Heltermaa harbour. A model of the Gustav, which transported passengers in the 1930s for the Sergo shipping company, currently stands there.

Nowadays, two Port of Tallinn owned Turkish-built ships travel between Rohuküla and Heltermaa – the *Leiger* and the *Tiiu*. *Leiger* was a mythical hero of Hiiumaa and *Tiiu* was his spouse. *Leiger* plies the straits since 2016, and in the last year the captain has been a Saaremaa man, Rando Kesküla.

Hiiumaa is 22 kilometres (12 nautical miles) from the mainland. Ships cover it in 1 hour and 15 minutes. It seems like a long sailing time. Rando reassures those afraid of seasickness: “The sea is shallow, no heavy surf, and no risk of seasickness: I haven’t ever seen anyone seasick anyway.”

With a capacity of 700 people, it would be quite a scene if everyone was seasick.

The captain’s bridge is nice, clean and quiet. It leaves the impression of being an easy place to work. But seafaring is complicated and always will be. “The hardest is docking in high wind,” says the captain. “It’s sometimes hard going through the ice in winter, while in

summer the water level can be low and it isn’t possible to carry a full load:

If the weather gets rough, the ships stay in port. The wind speed has to be more than 90 km/h (25 m/s) for that to happen. “There are only a few days like that a year.”

The ships are similar to the ones that serve the mainland and Muhu, but the Hiiumaa leg is longer and so passengers have a few more things to do – there’s a mini-library and a play area for children.

When asked whether he felt sorry that he was on a Hiiumaa route and not a Saaremaa route, he says the only thing that makes him sad is seeing holiday makers disembark in high spirits knowing that he himself will have to make round trips for 2 more weeks.

he says the biggest difference between Hiiumaa and Saaremaa is that Hiiumaa has more wild and unspoiled nature left. “We have fewer places to be secluded.” ■



Welcome to our harbours!



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ALAR SIKK: “The RMK Hiiumaa hiking trail is the best of the batch!”

Alar Sikk was the first Estonian to summit Dzhomolungma (Everest). An architect of hiking trails, Sikk is also the first Estonian to complete the Seven Summits. About Hiiumaa, he just says: “I simply like it a lot!”

“Building a hiking trail is a team effort,” says Alar Sikk. “You have to come up with the conception, map it, put the campfire sites in place – a big group of people work on these things. But I suppose my handwriting is visible everywhere here,” he chuckles. The trail is now at the point where you can start hiking from Heltermaa Harbour as soon as you disembark on Hiiumaa.

WHAT ARE RMK’S HIIUMAA TRAILS LIKE?

“There are many state forest hiking trails,” says Sikk, who specializes in long-distance routes. There are dozens of short trails on Hiiumaa but only one multi-day route. “This one is 230 kilometres long. And of the ones I have worked on, I like the Hiiumaa RMK trail the best. That’s because of its variety. I’m an inland southern Estonian boy, so I am drawn by the novelty of the sea.”

Sikk followed practical considerations in designing the trail, and Hiiumaa his ideal was sea on one side, forest on the other. Hiiumaa’s trails are meant for year-round use: Even in November, when it’s sleeting. RMK trails follow the crests of dunes and tend to be located a bit inland so that the cold wind doesn’t freeze hikers. The trail is often about 200 metres away from the beach.

Although sometimes the trail takes you away from the shore, all of Hiiumaa’s multifaceted landscapes can be found along it. Two-thirds of it passes through forest, continuously – in contrast to mainland Estonia, where the hiking trail sometimes worms its way between fields.

Another difference, Sikk notes, is that this RMK long-distance trail is not for cyclists but for hikers. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASJUK

Hundi Farmstay

– an idyllic fusion of history
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Built in the early 20th century and renovated two years ago, the main house sleeps 8, while the more adventurous will love the historical fidelity of our converted barn, which sleeps 6. Couples looking for more seclusion can stay in a small cottage in the shape of a boat.

A great place for a family holiday, a getaway with friends or someone special, or a retreat with co-workers



The downstairs of the main house has a spacious lounge area, well-appointed kitchenette and shower/WC, while the sleeping area is upstairs.

The outdoor deck has southern exposure, and gas heaters for chillier weather. The complex also includes a weather-proof BBQ shelter.

What's a trip to the islands without a sauna? Hundi has both a barrel sauna and an Estonian/Finnish-style sauna. A dip in the sea is only a kilometre away, and a smoke sauna spa with large tub is nearing completion!



Hundi Farmstay is located in the vicinity of Kärdla Airport and Roograhu Harbour. If you arrive by plane or yacht, we recommend renting a car seating 5-7 or a bicycle to get around the island.



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Marek was born and raised on Hiiumaa. He lived in Viljandi for one colourful period of his life, but there's no sea in Viljandi and when there's no sea, Marek starts feeling ill at ease.

What is there to do in Hiiumaa in terms of maritime tourism?

"For one thing, we could make a nice circle around Hiiumaa, because there are plenty of ports and new ones are being developed," says Marek. He himself would prefer to go from port to port, not make a full circle. Thirty miles one day, another 30 the next day. Marek draws attention to the fact that each harbour always has "tons of interesting things" to visit within a five kilometre radius. One can travel everywhere by boat. "Vormsi and Saaremaa are reachable. Finland is just a soup and a sandwich away," says Marek, measuring distance in terms of provisions.

Where would Marek set a course for?

"The heading isn't important but the company on board is," says Marek quickly. "It depends completely on who is on board and what they want to do. The time we spend with friends is more important, not a specific destination."

Why not hang out with friends in an apartment? Why put out to sea?

"Because the sea is freedom," sighs the *hiidlane*. "I'll always remember once when Estonia had just regained its freedom. The ink was hardly dry on our passports, Estonia wasn't in the Schengen zone yet, and we decided to take my brother's yacht across to Finland. We had some pasta, a compass and a map. So we basically had a chart of the Baltic Sea and a boat and you can't beat that feeling!" Marek says.

He adds: "The most important thing was the feeling that the whole sea was open before you, this great feeling of freedom you can't fully explain!"

MAREK RÄTSEP: "The sea and sailing are all about possibility and freedom."

What's the story behind the *Lisette*?

The *Lisette* is an old flounder trawler we found in Kõrgessaare. A traditional coastal trawler used in Estonian waters. No other such ships are being used to catch flounder anymore." With the help of the non-profit organization Halulaev, Marek and his friends dismantled the ship in a onetime kolkhoz root cellar and rebuilt it completely.

As Marek says: "An old ship is like an old house – full of emotions and memories but if you run the calculations, there's no point in fixing up something that's old and broken; better to build a new one."

That, says Marek, is what they did, and the boards that were still in better condition were repurposed for summer cottage construction. The shipbuilding project took about five years, off and on: Named the *Lisette*, the impressive vessel has been sailing again since 2016. When not taking customers out to sea, it is docked in Orjaku. Thanks to MTÜ Halulaev, another ship also now plies Hiiumaa waters – the *Hiiu Ingel*. It was launched in 2017 and also caters to pleasure tourists.

How many such tourist vessels are there on Hiiumaa?

"Not many. Every port has some ship, bigger or smaller," said Marek and explains that it's worth showing up and asking at the port – it's within the realm of possibility that you can talk some captain into it. As to whether there is also sailing in winter, Marek says ice will keep a wooden ship from going anywhere but sometimes they are able to offer winter trips.

What would you tell someone coming to Hiiumaa?

"People don't realize how accessible everything is and how easy it is to go sailing. You don't need to do much more than show up on Hiiumaa." ■



RIHO SÕRMUS: “If you just drive down tarmac roads, you won’t see very much.”

The director of the ports of Sõru and Heltermaa has been living on Hiiumaa for 21 years. We talked to Riho about Hiiumaa roads, since road construction is what he was trained in, having once worked for the Road Administration as well.

“Include some humour in your article, too,” he advises us. “Otherwise people won’t read it.”

THE CAR TOURIST ON HIIUMAA

“When the cars roll off the ferry, the race is on – who’ll get to Käina or Kärđla first. I don’t know why that’s so important for mainlanders,” says Riho, scratching his head.

Riho explains that Hiiumaa no now has blacktop roads in a complete circle around the island. A decent road splits off from the circle at Puski Church at Lu-idja, leading to Ristna and Kalana down the middle of Kõpu Peninsula.

“Day trippers always drive the circle, plus Kõpu. They’ll visit Kärđla, Käina and maybe Kassari too. And then it’s back to the ship in the evening.

The ones who want to see more of Hiiumaa have to leave that circle and the Kõpu branch and drive on the parallel roads. They’re narrow and a higher-clearance car would be better. They take you to solitary places with quiet and amazing nature. If you just drive the tarmac roads, you won’t see very much.”

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ICE ROADS FOR HIIUMAA PEOPLE

The ice road is a part of Hiiumaa identity and a tourist attraction, says Riho. He complains jokingly that he isn’t fond of it: “I have a personal grudge against the ice road. If anyone gets stuck, I’m the one who gets the call because they know I have a vehicle that can pull them out. “And a massive amount of money is always invested in building the ice road, but it always seems to me like the ice melts in two days after it was opened.”

This year they announced no ice road would be opened.

“I wouldn’t plough snow off ice roads!” says Riho. “Snow is nice. Except for Tallinn, where you sprinkle salt on it.” Riho shoots the interviewer an accusa-

tory look. “If you clear the snow, the ice becomes more sensitive to temperature changes. Snow is like natural insulation.”

Riho says studies are conducted for ice roads. Holes are bored every 200 metres to check thickness. There are three gaps between the mainland and Hiiumaa and they have to have wooden bridges.

Speed for driving in ice roads has to be either below 30 km/h or faster than 60 km/h. Between those ranges, sympathetic vibration occurs and that can be dangerous.

DO ACCIDENTS OCCUR?

Those arriving in Heltermaa are greeted by a bronze sculpture by Seaküla Simson, which depicts an old Hiiumaa man showing a ship to a roe deer. A onetime kolkhoz chairman was the model, as he was a contemporary of that Hiiumaa comic skit – he and the deer meet every new ship and he lets the deer loose first on the ferry. For 50 years now: He holds an unusual Hiiumaa record – he has sunk through the ice road three times and managed to climb out of the cold water each time. They do say Hiiumaa men are tough!” ■



LIINA HÄRM: “Come visit our harbours!”

What goes together better than an island and a harbour? Liina Härm's work is to maintain the strengths of the island's ports with the help of a “great bunch of co-workers”. She adds: “I go to work every morning in a good mood!”

The Hiiumaa Municipality foundation Hiiumaa Sadamad manages and develops the maritime gateways in municipal ownership. There are four newer marinas: Kärkla, Orjaku, Sõru marina and Kalana marina.

How different are Hiiumaa harbours from each other?

Liina: “All harbours are different for those visiting them.” She summarizes the attributes of each.

Kärkla is a modern visitor marina, new and designed for present-day needs. The city of Kärkla offer a wider array of service and thanks to good neighbours at Yachts Service Hall, repairs and more complex procedures, such as engine replacement or deck replacement.

Sõru is in some sense the smallest and quietest. Visitors feel exclusive since there aren't many people around. Sõru is where you experience the real local life.

Kalana, still a work in progress, is at the ends of the earth. Someone once joked that while Kassari is for Hiiumaa novices, Kalana is for intermediates. For an Estonian, it has more a feel of the ocean.

Orjaku is an important centre of local life. The village society decided to establish its community centre at the harbour and the harbour has become a hub. Orjaku

is also the bastion of coastal fishing.

Many more boat harbours

Hiiumaa also has over a dozen boat harbours “And then there are the big ports: Heltermaa of course, and the port next to Sõru marina is used for ferries to Saaremaa. Lehtma port was closed, unfortunately,” says Liina, who said that prior to the Schengen zone, Lehtma border checkpoint was one of the most important ports for recreational craft entering and leaving Estonian waters.

Why does a harbour end up being closed?

As it turns out, the answer lies in the word “dredging”. “Lehtma is in a naturally challenging place where silt comes in around Tahkuna Peninsula to the south and clog up the entrance of the port. Trawlers tend to want to transport fish to the mainland ports. The largest merchant ships have moved from Lehtma to Heltermaa, which has developed its facilities to keep up. Times change and the type of freight also changes. “But yes, Lehtma is now closed.”

“If Hiiumaa becomes so popular that Kärkla can no longer handle all the tourists arriving by sea, we will extend the number of piers starting from Kärkla until we get to Lehtma,” she laughs.

Is the number of yachters increasing or decreasing?

“It tends to be increasing.” She says the pandemic is one reason – people seek out possibilities to be away from others, out in the open air or in small groups. Or they want to new things they didn't before, find a new pastime. The restrictions on movement have also decreased the number of foreigners. Foreign tourists make up the majority of yachts calling at marinas. In terms of numbers, Finns are the leaders, followed by Germans, then Swedes, Poles and Dutch. (Latvians are the overall leaders in the figures for all Estonian ports, but because of the visits

to Ruhnu Island.)

Can a port also do anything to boost maritime tourism?

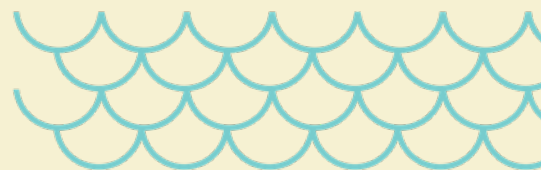
“Naturally. Marinas can do marketing and self-promotion. Attend fairs, find partners. Information on ports and services has to be available and accurate! Ports can do a lot to get people to come. More broadly, agencies such as Enterprise Estonia, port organizations and cooperation projects help promote the region and the Baltic Sea as a sailing destination.”

Do ports have customers who return time and again?

“Yes. They often come back to the same place if they know services are high calibre. Or maybe they have good memories of the port, some experience, perhaps culinary, or they need new mittens made of Hiiumaa wool. Of course, the neighbourhood – people dock at Orjaku to attend a concert in Sõru, people will sail from Vormsi to dine in Kärkla, and from western Finland, Hanko to Kärkla is a common itinerary across the Gulf of Finland.”

What do visitors like about Hiiumaa?

“The fact that it's not overpopulated but they can enjoy high-quality cultural events here. Foreigners give high marks for the quality to cost ratio. They also like the right size of the island to see most of the important things in a day or two, with a few things yet to discover.” ■



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Sakarias Jaan Leppik spent five years as an Estonian Eastern Orthodox priest on Hiiumaa. He calls himself an “autumn hiidlane” – someone who likes being here in non-summer periods. Besides his work for the church, he is a jack of all trades – managing to find time to be a singer and music teacher, writer of articles, deliverer of lectures.

SAKARIAS JAAN LEPPIK: “Having a little drop of Hiiu blood in you helps you get accepted.”

WHAT ARE FATHER SAKARIAS' FAVOURITE CHURCHES?

“My favourite churches? It’s not like sports statistics!” Sakarias exclaims. Sakarias says all churches regardless of architecture have their individual, unique attributes. “Clearly, I’m an Orthodox priest and I feel most at home in Orthodox churches. On Hiiumaa, two Orthodox churches have been restored. Kuriste Church and Malvaste Chapel. The latter is an older wood structure, with a thatched roof. The locals say logs from a shop near Puski Church were used to build it,” he says.

PUSKI CHURCH

“Puski Orthodox Church is in a derelict condition. Old photos give us a look at the church interior as it was. It was so beautiful, with a tender, dusky colour tone, emotionally warm like an Orthodox church ought to be,” he says with a yearning tone.

Sakarias says the interiors of all churches are designed by the congregation members. Orthodox churches are bound by strict rules as to interior design, so there’s no possibility for kitsch to enter the picture. Sakarias says he’s pleased that Puski received considerable funding from the municipality and national heritage board for completing the exterior structure. As a result, the church will become an attractive religious centre at the foot of Kõpu.

If all of the furniture is not brought back into the church, it will remain empty as Orthodox churches originally were, and the acoustics would make it a good venue for liturgical music.

Sacral music has also been performed in recent years in Kuriste Church. The island has eight operating churches. And prayer houses on top of that. The soul will not lack for spiritual suste-

nance on this island.

THE CHURCH CEMETERY

“Everyone who has been to the graveyard around Puski Church describes a sense of the utmost peace they don’t experience elsewhere,” says Sakarias. “This cemetery, with its old graves and tall trees, is something special. Looking at it through a secular eye, too, the biotope around the cemetery is amazing. You can sit here in the cemetery for hours. I have experienced many cemeteries, but you don’t feel like walking so long in some of them. But Puksi – you don’t want to leave!” says the priest.

TIES TO HIIUMAA

Sakarias Jaan Leppik’s roots are not in Hiiumaa. His wife is a Hiiu native, though, through one generation was skipped.

A TRIBAL MENTALITY IS IMPORTANT

“Cultural anthropology tells us that tribal mentality is one of the building blocks of preservation of tradition. Oral tradition would not fall apart otherwise. Oral history has to convey our forebears’, our elder clan members’ folkways, wisdom, the clan’s inside information, everything we need for our identity. Especially on an island, since it’s a isolated place,” says Sakarias.

ABOUT BEING ACCEPTED BY LOCALS

“I’ll never be completely one of their own, and I just have to accept that. But having a little drop of Hiiu blood helps you get closer. Let that drop fall into a glass of water and the water becomes a little pinkier.” ■



PHOTOGRAPH: KAJA HIIS

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Ain worked as a lawyer, left a mark in the world of journalism, and ran a business. In recent years, he's has turned to the sea and studying history.

Asked about the origins of his interest in military history, Ain says: "Probably every boy has played war games. Besides, history is fascinating."

Fifteen years ago, Ain started a website called *Militaarne Hiiumaa* (Military Hiiumaa), which allows military buffs put together itineraries. The map includes over 200 sites, plus 50 shipwrecks in the waters around the island.

You've also established a military museum in the Tahkuna border guard station, where the local story is told. What is that story, in a nutshell?

AIN TÄHISTE and a brief military history of Hiiumaa

Hiiumaa's war-related events are mainly from the 20th century. When the First World War broke out, imposing artillery batteries began to be established here. Their job was to defend the Gulf of Finland and the imperial Russian capital of St. Petersburg at its back end against hostile navies. The batteries were quite huge. To move that much concrete and steel into the woods, a separate pier and railway were required.

But Hiiumaa turned into a battlefield in October 1917?

After overrunning Saaremaa in about a week, the Germans also conquered Hiiumaa and that is how things remained for a while – the islands held by the Germans and the old regime on the mainland. That all changed with Estonian statehood and the Estonian War of Independence.

The War of Independence didn't impact Hiiumaa very much?

There wasn't too much military presence on Hiiumaa during the interwar period of independence. There were one or two Estonian defence forces officers stationed there and the volunteer force, the Defence League, took care of the military side. The situation changed on the eve of WWII when the Soviet occupation force again developed coastal defence batteries to protect the same city, now called Leningrad.

Twenty-one bunkers were built in total. The chain is 41 kilometres long – one-third of Hiiumaa's coastline. It starts in Sarve, which is 2 kilometres south of Heltermaa harbour and runs along the coast to Lehtma.

The big guns did not end up being necessary since the German made their advance over land and Hiiumaa was one of the last Estonian islands they captured. The Russians retained control of Osmussaar for some time after Hiiumaa fell to the Germans.

At the end of the Second World War, we were one of the westernmost parts of the Iron Curtain. What was life like?

Hiiumaa was a border zone. The western beaches were closed. Even to locals. You could go there only on the basis of a strict special permit.

In the early 1960s, Kärkla had more troops than civilians and it was common in the mornings for a column of tanks to drive through the town from one end to another. They were going from the regiment at one end to exercises on the other side, Rehemäe.

In the same decade, the military numbers decreased. Still, until the end of the Cold War, Hiiumaa had two radar stations and five border guard stations (*we're in one of them now*) and a handful of naval personnel. We were in a border zone, which meant you could only go in and out with special permits.

It's good that we can now board a ferry and soon be on this beautiful and peaceful island without any trouble. ■



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Almost everyone on the island knows Helgi, who is never idle. “Just say I’m a typical person from Hiiumaa!” she jokes when asked what title to use for her in the story. “Actually, my position at the museum goes by the name of research director, but that’s not that important right now.”

Helgi Põllo is about as native a Hiiumaa islander gets. She doesn’t have practically anyone from the mainland in her family tree, if you leave out one *põtku* (the local term for a mainlander), and that was close to 200 years ago.

Among her many callings, Helgi’s also an historian. So we asked her what anniversaries and birthdays – both for buildings and Hiiumaa folk – are worth celebrating in 2022.

“This year has a number of dates to save and they are on the calendar of events in Hiiumaa. I’m not directly involved in organizing any of them I can’t list them from memory. But,” she says, thinking about it, “I could draw your attention to a few points,” said Helgi.

PEOPLE CELEBRATING ROUND-NUMBER BIRTHDAYS IN 2022

“As far as people celebrating jubilees and such, 2022 won’t bring too many of them on Hiiumaa. We do have our share of artists and anniversary exhibitions are held for them, but next year will be a bigger year in terms of people with round-number birthdays. But one such anniversary

HELGI PÕLLO:

“There’s so much on Hiiumaa that’s fascinating!”

this year has some symbolic value,” says Helgi.

It’s the 175th anniversary of the birth of the father of composer Rudolf Tobias. And next year is the 150th birth anniversary of Tobias himself. “Rudolf’s father was a fascinating man, and must have had quite a lot of initiative, as we don’t know how he picked up his musical interest and knowledge back then to pass to his children, thanks to which his son became a trailblazing composer.”

“Others celebrating round-number birthdays are literati Paul-Eerik Rummo, Ave Alavainu, Tõnu Õnnepalu and many others who have drawn inspiration from our island or settled here,” adds Helgi. “Actually, every year brings important birthdays.” Clearly the takeaway is that there is no shortage of artists, writers and other creatives on the island.

2022 is also the anniversary of Suuremõisa Castle and Reigi Church. The main house at Suuremõisa Manor was built in 1772 and early July will commemorate it with a local festival.

“Many exciting historical events and people are linked to Reigi Church, and are featured in the work of writers, artists and musicians. In addition, of course, there is the story of the Swedes of Reigi being exiled from the island and the famous Ungern-Sternberg family also ties in to the church. In short, the current church itself is not all that old, but it has more on the inside than that of many buildings the same age.”

Helgi reels off the most important lighthouses that are can’t-miss for tourists: Kõpu, Ristna and Tahkuna. Coming by land, they’re basically on the Reigi Church road, within the former Reigi Parish.

“Even back when the island was a special border zone during the Soviet occupation, it got its share of tourists. One needed a permit to visit the island. But there were no proper maps of Hiiumaa back then. If you got your hands on a map from the 1918-40 independence era, I suppose you could secretly peek at it.” As a child, Helgi and her brother drew their own maps of roads and paths in Hiiumaa.

In 1989, with the winds of change blowing, the predecessor of the Hiiumaa Development Centre published a new map for which Helgi contributed written notes. The map even makes note of Hiiumaa’s position with respect to Finland and Sweden. “For its era, that map was an important, great accomplishment. For the first time, I put down my Hiiumaa thoughts in writing, about some major events and personas. I guess for many, that tourist map was their first acquaintance with Hiiumaa. We added a great amount of images. And most important, the notes were translated into English.”

■





AVE ALAVAINU:

“I emigrated to the West by getting married – without crossing the Soviet border.”

The well-known writer and poet Ave Alavainu goes by another name here – “The Sugar, Salt and Pepper of Kärđla”, summing up her indispensability, and a plaque with that inscription is mounted on the back of a bench next to her house. Indeed it’s almost impossible to talk of Hiiumaa, particularly its cultural scene, without Ave’s name coming up.

When did you come to Hiiumaa and why?

I emigrated to the West by getting married, without crossing the Soviet border. Others went to Finland, I came with Vaapo Vaher in 1976. I was a little too far ahead of time, since I thought I had to leave the city because everyone would soon be doing the same and there wouldn’t be room in the countryside. My child was three and I didn’t want them to grow up on blacktop. Life brought Vaapo my way and I was already in love with Hiiumaa islanders anyway.

I travelled all of Russia once, but I didn’t dare live alone in the Estonian countryside, isn’t that funny? Luckily I had some

people I knew in Hiiumaa already so I came and stayed. Many asked me, why are you moving to the sticks?.

Do you feel comfortable here?

Affirmative! There’s no place better!

Was moving to Hiiumaa good for your creative output?

I wouldn’t put emphasis on “creative output”, I like doing everything else, too! (Laughs for a long while.) I started getting involved in theatre and poetry club right away. I think there’s a little secret teacher inside of me. I like gathering people around me and organizing something with them.

Were the Hiiumaa people active participants in your theatre and poetry activity?

Of course! Everyone came out.

What would you say to people who move to Hiiumaa? Any recommendations?

Well, I don’t know what to say, people and times change. I came here some 50 years ago. When I arrived, the locals sort of sniffed me out. For the first five years, they tend to be sure that you’ll stay. But you gain citizenship in nine years. You never become a *hiidlane*, but you do get naturalized when you know the people around you for four generations and can walk them home based on their last name.

Is it hard to master the local dialect?

No. Just say a strong “I” and soften the “s” and it will come. A bit of a sing-song intonation and you’ve got it. But to be clear, it has to be in your blood. All languages have to be in your blood!

(Ave pauses and then says cheerfully: “Did you pick that up? All languages are languages of the blood! I have never thought of that before!”)

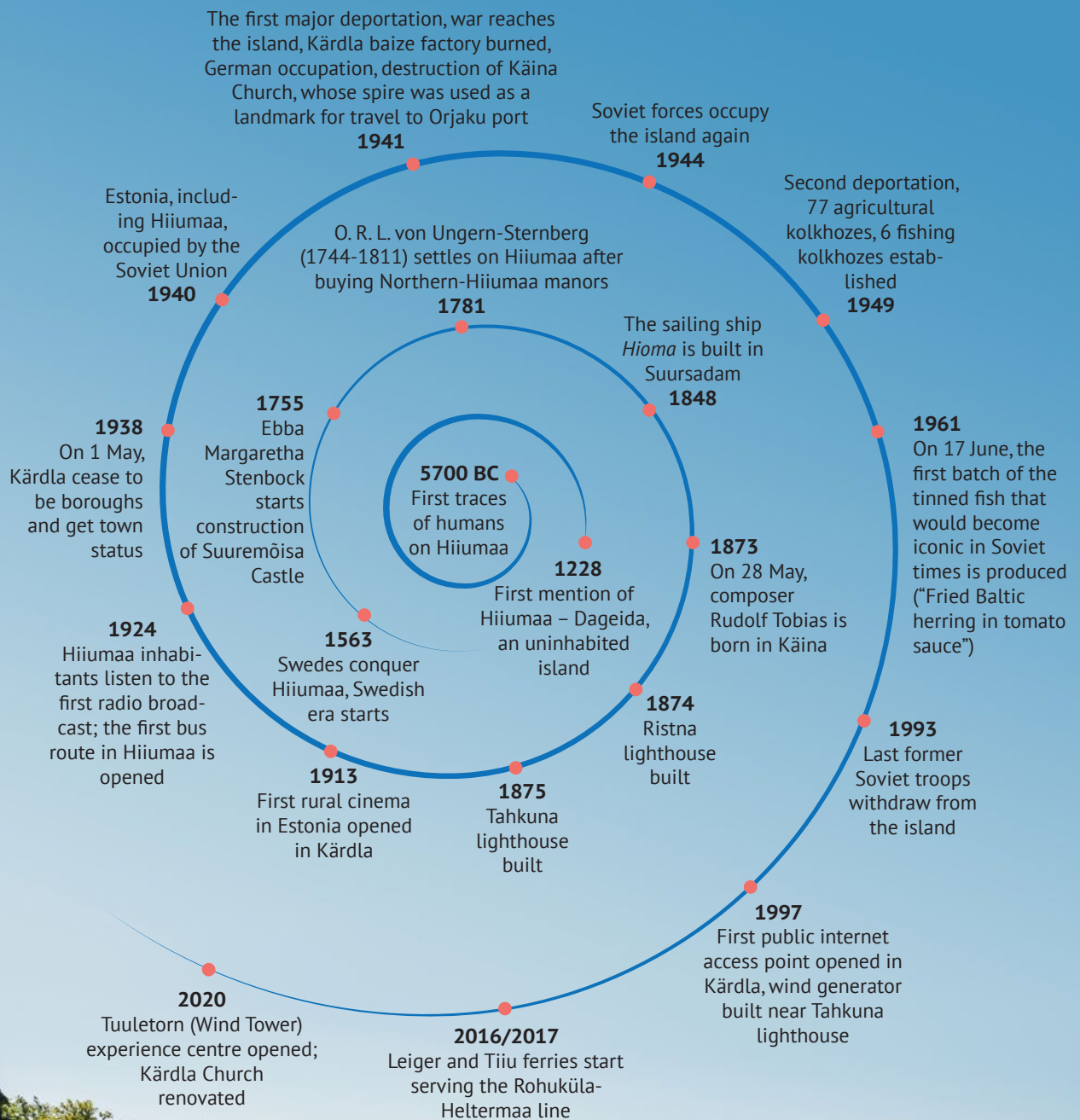
What’s hardest about life on the island?

Once a young nurse was posted here from Tallinn. She was crying all the time and wanted back. It turned out that she was bothered by the fact that she couldn’t go to the theatre or cinema – not that she always wanted to, but it wasn’t possible if she did get the urge. Everything is far away. In Tallinn, she lived next to the Drama Theatre but never went, but she knew she could go to the theatre if she fancied it.

Is anything lacking in Hiiumaa?

Plays are. I’d love to produce plays if I had my former energy. But I don’t, unfortunately. We have a puppet theatre, but no classic theatre plays! There’s no person to breathe life into this area right now. I hope that one will come and undertake it. New people do move to Hiiumaa, I guess they are starting to flee the cities and towns – finally they have got some sense! ■

Highlights from history





Urmo Vaikla is an interior architect who with his wife Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla launched Kordon, an international artist-in-residence programme in Kärdla.

Any discussion of Hiiumaa's art scene should mention the art NGO HiKu and Nelja Nurga (Four Corners) Gallery. Also, Hiiumaa Museum Long House, Kärdla Cultural Centre, Reigi Parsonage, and Suuremõisa Castle, which constantly host exhibitions.

Since 2017, Hiiumaa has one more interesting art den, operated by the Vaikla family, all of whose members being artists.

It's an artist-in-residence programme called Kordon and it's in Kärdla. Estonia has 10 art residencies, of which the one in Narva is state-funded. The rest, including this one, are private initiatives.

Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla is the daughter of linguist Paul Kokla, who was from Hiiumaa and compiled a Hiiu dictionary. That is the family's direct link to the island. Thanks to the urging of artist Kaljo Põllu, who was born in Kõrgessaare, she and her interior architect husband Urmo bought a place on Hiiumaa more than 30 years ago. One daughter, Ingel, is a visual artist and film-maker and the other, Ann-Mirjam, is a theatre production designer.

Urmo, an art residency is a place where artists go on vacation, isn't it?

Ohh, that's the biggest misinterpretation possible.

Well, let me play the dumb journalist, and tell me how it actually is!

What it actually is, is a place that offers artists living and working conditions.

URMO VAIKLA:

“The scales are tipping more and more toward Hiiumaa.”

Around the world, many artists move to different paces to get inspiration. At the same time, it has to have normal work conditions. Artists don't want to just go to a hotel, either. A residency offers an environment that is tied to the local community, to nature.

The goal is to draw artists from outside Hiiumaa – both from Estonia's art community and internationally known artists. We're also members of the international network of art residencies.

How does world art tie in with Hiiumaa?

Our keystone idea is that a given place is introduced primarily by people who have been to that place.

We know Hiiumaa through the stories of Aino Kallas and Herman Sergo. We know Norway through Konrad Mägi's paintings. An artistic person reflects the place they are creating their art in.

Our first resident artists were a French couple, Thomas Lanfranchi and Agnès Aubague. Thomas creates gigantic flying objects made out of trash bags and which he then films and photographs. It's a good example of getting Hiiumaa exposure in the world. The work he made here was purchased by Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Not just trash bags but you have also consecrated a marine shipping container as art!

It started from Karel Koplimets maritime-themed video installation “Case No. 14. The Storm on the Baltic Sea”. We debuted it during Tallinn Photomonth. It is exhibited in a space with a tilted floor and gives it a uncanny spatial experience of anxiety. The work hadn't been on display in Estonia and since we planned a small exhibition space at Kordon, we thought a marine shipping container would be perfect and it could also be tilted for the Koplimets work.

Who else has had a residency with you?

The painter Kristi Kongi, the director, actor and playwright Andri Luup, photographer Marge Monko, sculptor Neeme Külm, *Müürileht* editor in chief Aleksander Tsapov, curator Laura Toots and many others.

Since we are artists ourselves, it's what's called an artist-run residency. And of course we use this place ourselves to recharge creatively.

Are you and your family more hiid-lased – Hiiumaa people – or Tallinners?

The scales are tipping more and more toward Hiiumaa. ■

A spatial installation entitled Reincarnation_2 at Reigi Parsonage. Photo credit: private collection



The veteran politician has his own home on Hiiumaa and has long ceased to be merely a summer resident.

Eiki Nestor discovered Hiiumaa in 1973 thanks to his wife, whose grandfather was from here. He still remembers the sense of freedom when he found himself among the islanders, on the basis of an invitation. At that time, the vigilant state apparatus didn't even let Eiki holiday in Bulgaria – Hiiumaa was the westernmost place he was allowed to visit.

With freedom in his heart, he would go sunbathing on Sõru Beach. Even there, the border guard kept a close eye on people. "The Soviet border guard was unique because they were making sure people weren't leaving, not arriving."

Hiiumaa still makes Eiki think of that sense of freedom now. It isn't something that you can experience over just one weekend. You need to be on Hiiumaa a little longer and march to a different drummer there. That brings different thoughts into your head. "I think that different sense of freedom is familiar to everyone who has discovered Hiiumaa for themselves," Eiki says. We ask Eiki what he would say to someone on Hiiumaa for the first time? "Some go around wearing tie and don't brush their teeth before the tie is on. Some ladies don lipstick first thing in the morning. Leave the necktie and lipstick behind if you're coming to Hiiumaa! You won't need them," says Eiki.

What's special about Hiiumaa is that it's natural. "It is a product of the nature and the people. People are natural here, they are who they are. No vanity or pretending to be polite."

EIKI NESTOR: “On Hiiumaa, you can be yourself.”

HIIUMAA WILL TICKLE YOUR SENSE OF HUMOUR, THAT'S FOR SURE!

There's a lot of humour on the island, says Eiki. It's not insult comedy, it's warm and sincere. Once an old guy sitting outside a shop called out to a woman on a bike on her way to play bridge at our place: "Don't overdo it, take the chain off, it's much easier to pedal!"

Hiiumaa humour isn't edgy or nasty. Even Saaremaa and Hiiumaa people's jokes at each other expense are good-natured ribbing. The two islands try to maintain a healthy relationship.

Eiki also makes a point of reminding: "All Hiiumaa names ending in 'o' should be pronounced 'u'. Reimo is Reimu, Veljo is Velju and so on. Just the way it is on the island."

WHAT'S A HIIDLANE LIKE?

"They don't rush. Hurrying doesn't get you anywhere, and if something is left undone, it wasn't necessary in the first place, they say. Which doesn't mean they're lazy. They just do everything in their own good time. If you start to agree something with a person with Hiiumaa and he says, "We'll see," then it's practically a done deal. You just have to look him up and remind him of the agreement, and everything needed will be done."

Eiki says mainlanders should also be aware that the time of day has its own meaning on Hiiumaa and it's different from what it is on the mainland. If you're 20 minutes late coming from Tallinn to Tartu, it's no big deal, but if you're 20 minutes late for the ferry, you'll lose several hours. Mainlanders have a hard time getting used to this.

Islanders like to use the familiar mode of address. Eiki doesn't remember anyone using the formal. "Everyone's met each other at least once before. But they also say the familiar 'you' to people from farther off. People are natural and direct here."

EIKI'S LOVE FOR MUSIC

15 years ago, music festivals started popping up like mushrooms after a rain. "I listen to a lot of jazz and when Sõru Jazz had performances nearly in my own yard, I was over the moon. It's really special, hearing jazz in the big building where women once cleaned fish."

In a different genre, summer residents Raul Saaremetts and Siim Nestor launched another good event. SõruSaund started out as a small party and now only expanded. It's an event of a slightly different kind than a jazz festival. The audiences are the same kind, but 20 years younger. The festival always features new artists. Nublu got started here, if I'm not mistaken. So put briefly, it could be called an electronic alternative music festival with an amazing number of performers."

Eiki is certain that people will start leaving the cities in the information age. The back to the land process is under way. The population non Hiiumaa has grown for two years. Many people who left are coming back after a stint on the mainland, now in their 40s.

How can the population be increased further on this beautiful island? "Jobs that require a slightly higher education should be created. People will come, no doubt. Hiiumaa is a good place to live." ■



JAANUS NÕGISTO – A ghost of Mustana

Jaanus isn't the first hiid-lane in his family. Far from it. One of the musician's forebears was Abraham Ernst Wolens, who arrived to serve as assistant to the controller at Suursadam harbour in the early 18th century. The latter's children were borne by local women, they were driven out by the Germans and landed in Kõpu, which is where Jaanus has a home now.

"My most famous relative is Feliks Voolens, uncle on my mother's side," says Nõgisto.

Jaanus says Estonia's biggest extant old ship – the three-masted motorsailer *Ernst Jaakson* – also known as the "Alar" – is slowly mouldering at Sõru harbour. His uncle was the last ethnic Estonian captain of that ship. "The ship isn't considered seaworthy anymore. Perhaps it will get a roof over it and be left in place as a permanent exhibition, the propeller is already currently a showpiece for the village," says Jaanus.

Jaanus says the island has become home to a big musician community. "Riho Sibul, Rainer Jancis, Erkki-Sven Tüür and many others ... can't even list them all," says Jaanus. "We gave concerts at Kõpu lighthouse for 10 years. The concerts haven't taken place in two and a half years. Hopefully, we'll get it restarted again."

How much has Hiiumaa inspired you?

Jaanus: "Living here has a different rhythm and atmosphere. You can concentrate and there are fewer distractions. Knowing that your forebears' spirits are floating around you adds depth and spark."

I'm not an ethno-musician and so Hiiumaa doesn't have a direct influence on me. I don't want to try to pretend otherwise. The inhabitants of the seaside place I live in have been called Mustana's Ghosts for centuries. It's far from Kõpu Village – hence ghosts. The musicians have jokingly been given local neotraditional names – Erkki-Sven Tüür is the Old Man of Tõrvaahju, Riho Sibul is Sibulamäe Riks.

He explains that one of the last ghosts, Mustana Jaan, was a master of bawdy songs. Jaan's grandson brought a notebook of village songs to Jaanus, some of which were so vulgar that Jaanus couldn't bring himself to sing them, but he adapted some of them, because this genre of songs on Hiiumaa is very witty.

"Authentic Hiiu folk music undoubtedly exists somewhere in the recesses of memory, though it's a separate matter whether how seriously it can be considered authentic. The majority of what is considered Estonian folk music is either

German or Swedish in origin, many of the local men were hardy seafarers and also brought exotic stuff back from the far reaches of the world. So it can be said that my own songs also constitute Hiiumaa folk music.

"If there's any old-fashioned retreats left, you'll find them in Kõpu. There are a number of hard-working people who built cultural centre in Kõpu Orthodox Church, with decent club facilities, a working cinema."

Would you call on people to move to Hiiumaa?

"Hiiumaa has space and land, you can buy an abandoned house and fix it up. If young blood arrives, that can only be a good thing. Newcomers aren't feared in Kõpu. It depends on the newcomer's attitude how well they are accepted. Hiiumaa has privacy and privacy has its own charms. It's something you appreciate when you're older. It's a good thing when neighbours don't intrude on each other," says Jaanus.



PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASIUK

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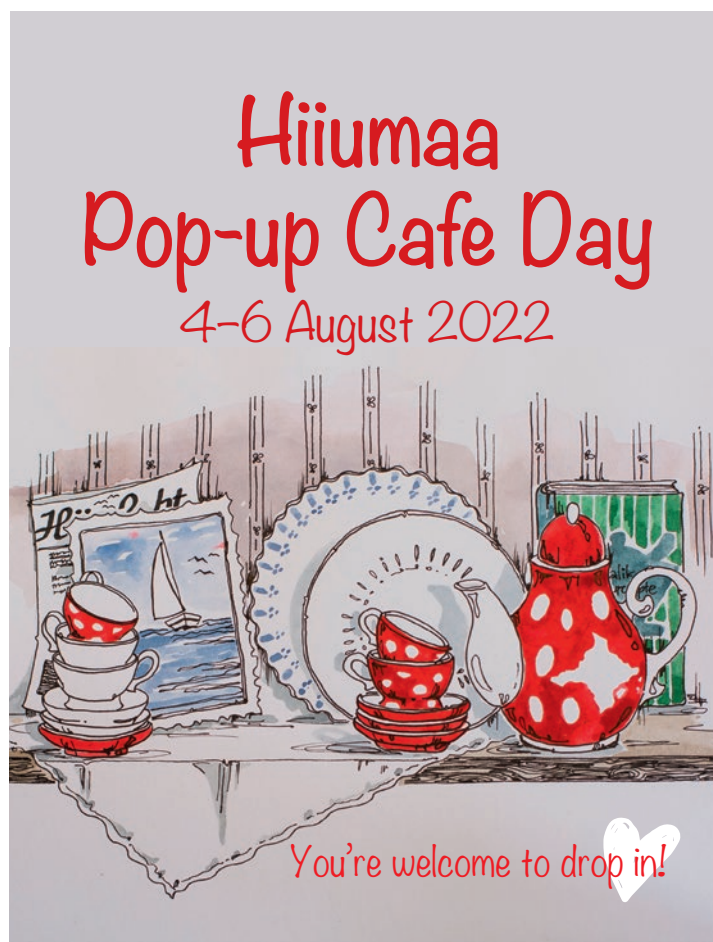
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Erkki-Sven Tüür, Erki Pärnoja, Jaak Sooäär,
Hiiumaa Chamber Orchestra, Collegium Musicale.
Artistic director: Endrik Üksvärav





Composer Erkki-Sven Tüür's studio on Tõrvaahju (tar kiln) Farm on Kõpu Peninsula is 200 paces from his house. In the winters, under a black starry sky, those paces take a long time, because different scales are involved, it's easy to lose yourself gazing up at the sky.

For an international musician like yourself, is being from Hiiu-maa an important part of identity?

"Of course, naturally," he says without a pause.

"I was born here, attended school in Kärkla up to the eighth grade. My mother's from Saaremaa Island, my father's from Hiiumaa."

Then he sinks more into thought pondering whether Hiiu music exists. "Maybe that's bound up more in the folk melodies collected here. It's frequently hard to see uniqueness and distinctiveness of what you're up to the eyeballs in every day. But I think that being here, living on the island gives me some special primal

The Hiiu language is a very real thing. We have our own words, lexemes, our own unique intonation.

It's especially pleasing when you hear younger people sometimes talking unsullied Hiiu dialect amongst themselves, not just the old folks. I myself sometimes find myself dropping a triple negative, classic Hiiumaa-speak: "äi pole mette"

— ERKKI-SVEN TÜÜR

ERKKI-SVEN TÜÜR: "The wonders of nature can be sensed very strongly here."

energy, there's a motor that is like a catalyst here."

We try to dig even deeper – is it tied to nature, his current home or childhood memories? "All these things are here together. I perceive that my roots are here, but even leaving that aside, it's the island's natural character that is important to me. It's a collection of great variety in a very powerful form.

And it's still in a pretty unspoiled state, thank heavens. I draw energy from that."

NATURE AND MUSIC GO HAND IN HAND

"The natural environment at the tip of Kõpu is indeed special, and both forest and sea are sources of inspiration. There's also some vertical relief that we ourselves call hills,"

he says with a suppressed tinge of pride. "Those old dunes make our forest landscape very distinctive. Long sandy beaches alternate with seashores strewn with stones and pebbles. We have scale and variety. And in the southern part of the island, Kassari has a completely different landscape with its junipers."

Hiiumaa hosts a large number of fascinating music events in summers. What would a professional musician highlight? "They're all noteworthy in their own right, from Pühalepa Festival to Hiiu Folk. The fact that medium-long ferry

ride or a flight is required to get here isn't really a deterrent, either." So the logistics problems don't sometimes get someone on the international scale fed up?

"They're just the logistics problems of the modern age – if the power goes out in a storm, I lose my high-speed internet and it makes it somewhat harder to work. Otherwise, you just have to get used to the specifics of travel between the mainland and island, you have to plan ahead a little you have a longer trip to Western Europe or another continent coming up."

THE DIVERSITY OF NATURE OPENS THE SENSES

But weigh the nature and peace and quiet against the inconveniences. You don't sometimes feel like throwing in the towel and moving to Tallinn?

"I have the possibility of always comparing the two. I have a flat in Tallinn. I call it Tõrvaahju Farm's embassy. But my embassy isn't a place I would live full-time."

We start winding up our brief interview – Erkki-Sven has to take part in a seminar in Mexico over Zoom. But the maestro isn't done just yet: "There's one more thing I want to say, something close to my heart. When I'm on Hiiumaa for a longer period, I can be part of these nearly imperceptible processes in nature. I can sense so clearly how calm weather suddenly becomes storm, how the seasons change, how the sun swings higher in the sky after the winter solstice. And you sense that you're a part of it." ■



The irrepressibly energetic Triinu Schneider runs a horse farm on Hiiumaa, where visitors, too, can enjoy equestrian experiences. Triinu wasn't born or raised on Hiiumaa but she does trace her ancestry here and spent the summers on the island as a girl.

"We lived in Jäeneda when I was a girl and I refused to go to Hiiumaa unless I got a horse. My parents bowed to my request and that's how it all started. The other girls I knew kept asking me if they could ride my horse and I got an idea of asking for a couple roubles per ride and I was in business."

HOW MANY HORSES IN TOTAL?

"Almost 300," says Triinu matter-of-factly. It's a horse breeding farm in essence and many of the 300 are young, so it's like a horse nursery," clearly enjoying the interviewer's astonished look.

Triinu says that they have about 20 horses reserved for the tourist sector and invites me to take a look. We head to the pasture.

MAKING NEW FRIENDS

She identifies the horses in front of us as sport horses. "We're engaged in endurance riding," she says.

"One of our advantages is that our horses are very well-adjusted and have a calm temperament. They spend all their time outdoors. Wind and noises aren't not a problem for them, they don't rear and bolt. So it's safe for tourists."

TRIINU SCHNEIDER:

"Horses, nature – it's so hard to beat!"

She adds that the low population density of Hiiumaa is also a benefit. You can everywhere here on horseback. Not like in the capital, with zones where riding is prohibited.

"Naturally it's also fun to lead a horse through the shallow sea. Someone who has only been on groomed terrain gets an amazing experience galloping through water."

NO REGRETS

"Horses, nature – it's so hard to beat! You're a free man in a free country here," she says, expressing no regrets at her decision to make Hiiumaa her home. "In the winter season, I take the kids to the swimming pool, in the summer, I cater to the tourists. Other times of the year, I might be tending to apple trees and juicing apples. That's a good recipe for living in the countryside!"

Triinu admits she tries to convert the riding tourists to the organic way of life. The word for organic food and mellow might be the same in Estonian – *mahe*

– but Triinu says she can be pretty assertive in explaining what organic is all about. "It's not synonymous with expensive produce in shops. Things are *mahe* here in nature, no factory smokestacks or cars. *Mahe* is nature, horse and apple juice."

Triinu also mentions that she tells her customers about nature conservation. "I talk about what it really means," though I am distracted by a horse (named Kotkas – Eagle) that has started nuzzling my jacket.

"If you raise your arms, that might make the horse back off," says Triinu. Turns out that doesn't work on Kotkas, though. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: KAJA HIIS

No Going Hungry in Hiiumaa

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Nature's favourite child, an island paradise... Harda Roosna uses superlatives to describe Hiiumaa's magnetic pull.

TEXT: HARDA ROOSNA

I've thought about the phenomenon of Hiiumaa's allure and what exactly makes people return time and again. I've warned my friends planning to make their first trip to the island – watch out, it can end up becoming a habit.

For me, the reason was simple – I came here for love. Our children were born here, and the love story became a deeper bond.

After graduating from college, my husband got himself assigned to an island he'd never been to before. He arrived with a young person's natural desire to strike out on his own, get out from the influence of his father. The years have flown by and Hiiumaa has become the island where we have grown and pursued happiness. Our home. And now we call ourselves Hiiu natives – *hiidlased*.

WHO IS A HIIDLANE?

I really like something IT scientist Linnar Viik said at a pre-election weighted voting course years ago at Kassari community centre – raise your hand if you *feel* that you are a *hiidlane*. Not just place of birth or where your parents are from – your roots – but the desire to live on the island, do something for the community and find yourself.

The writer Tõnu Õnnepalu still travels the world looking for himself. He probably hasn't succeeded at it. But the island does offer the possibility to find oneself.

The distinct charm of Hiiumaa

First of all, you have to meet yourself, and that's not always easy

WHAT MAKES HIIUMAA SPECIAL

Talking to older people here, I've realized that there was once a time when being from Hiiumaa wasn't such a point of pride as being from the capital city. When did the change occur? Was it when the big fishing companies, and wealthy EPT (agricultural technology) and KEK (kolhoos construction office) from the mainland came to better Hiiumaa's standard of living? Or when you had to beg your Hiiumaa relatives for a permit for a chance to visit the mysterious island? Can't say.

But at some point, it happened; and since then, *hiidlased* could take pleasure when people exclaimed: "Ooh, you're from Hiiumaa!" I've been there! Yes, a classmate from school lives there! Yes, Hiiumaa is so beautiful – the junipers and whatnot!"

Hiiumaa's popularity led to an interesting phenomenon – we started to feel like the chosen people. We called our island "nature's favourite child", "island paradise", managed to get time to slow down here. All to be even (more) distinctive and draw visitors and tourists.

The fact that tourists are good for the island is something that Hiiumaa's "own" personal American Douglas Wells, a Peace Corps volunteer, taught us shortly after Estonian re-independence. This was a time when we didn't know too much about local tourism ourselves. Yalta and the Black Sea, sure, but Estonian islands and tourism – come on. Holiday-makers – OK, maybe.

In a book he later wrote, Wells described his special experience on the island. I haven't asked Doug about it myself but it seems that this guy from Nebraska, from a big family and big country, found himself here.

Since we are very young, we need to be noticed and attention to understand – I'm special, important! Just think of what a kid will do to get this sort of valida-

tion. But if you've always been part of a big crowd clamouring for attention, it's sometimes hard to believe that there is something special about you, that you are capable of many things, that you can even attain the elusive "Peace Corps Moment".

It's that special moment when you feel you've managed to make the world a little bit better and that you have changed in the process. Better. More trusting of yourself.

I think that's precisely what happened to Doug on Hiiumaa. He got a lot of attention from us, many different kinds of attention, because he was blazing a new path. He was special for us – he was still American, but became ours. He challenged himself and got to know the Hiiu people. And Doug tried to make our little world better, with all his heart.

ROOM TO BREATHE AND A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

Hiiumaa is a small enough island to have a sense its borders and community. Yet there's still enough room to be alone.

The islanders are connected to each other through different kinds of bonds. Every day you see many people you know, say hi – it gives you a sense of security and belongingness. Or it does for me, anyhow. I've even picked up the local custom of asking when I meet someone new – "whose family's child are you?"

On this island, where people are always in short supply, many get their chance to be SOMEONE, do something meaningful for a community of THEIR OWN. You don't have to be ultra-rich, super-brilliant or hyper-successful – everyone is important because there are few of us.

The population of Hiiumaa has now turned to growth and it seems to me that just as in the past – such as in my case – newcomers try to do something for the good of this beautiful island, to become *hiidlased* not just in terms of their home address but also in spirit. ■



INDREK SAMMUL,
LIINA OLMARU
AND CHILDREN

How to speak about a special place

How do you talk about Hiiumaa when it's like a delicate secret within you and you want to keep it that way? It should be said that it's a place you can really move to if you have been invited. If you haven't received the proverbial invitation, it would be better to stay away. The invitation can come through different channels – a message in a bottle or a fragment of a song in a chapel or the roar of the storm in a language you don't understand. But it could also come from the voice box of someone you love, or a thousand other ways...because Hiiumaa speaks the way it wants to speak and invites whom it wants to invite. If we tried to talk about places or people or churches or pastures or berries or the sea, that would go a certain way toward speaking about Hiiumaa, but if we approach this island and (if we are fortunate) our invitation with the sense of gratitude that has sprung in our heart over the years, maybe we can touch something real. Yes, it's worth coming to Hiiumaa, because it engenders a sense of gratitude...

PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASJUK



Enn has lived all his life in Hiiumaa, although circumstances have sometimes forced him to work elsewhere. Since 1989, he has called himself a “guy from the end of Kalana”.

What's special about Kalana?

“I’m a native inhabitant, so it’s not unusual for me,” laughs Enn. “When my friends visit, they say they are going to the yip of Kalana, the tip of Ristna, for

ENN RANDMAA: “The charm of Kalana tends to be lost on locals.”

the special aura that recharges you fast. Quite a few people have said that Estonia doesn’t have any place like it.”

“There are 16 year-round ‘smokes’ in Kalana,” explains Enn. “When I came here, there were nine. Last summer I counted 98 properties where there was activity. The total number of properties is 130. It seems that there’s nothing in Kalana on sale,” he says and adds: “But of course we have room for visitors, so you can show up here even in peak summer season and still find a place!”

KALANA'S HARBOUR

“There’s always been a harbour in Kalana and it has had some prosperous periods. The last one was during Soviet times

when the fishing kolkhoz Hiiu Kalur developed it, but since it moved to Lehtma at some point, Kalana port has been passed from owner to owner and gone downhill quietly.

It’s an old harbour that is in private ownership. The current owners have been there for two years.”

KALANA'S BEACHES

“The water temperature on our beaches depends on the wind direction. One day in summer, it might be 6 degrees C, another day it might be swimming pool temperature,” laughs Enn. “So swimming here isn’t a given. I don’t know why visitors come here, but they do and it’s great that they do!” ■



Like many recent secondary school graduates, Siim, the proprietor of the Hõbekala Guesthouse and Café, once tried to leave Hiiumaa, but after three days it just seemed like something wasn’t right. While he persevered and forced himself to make the best of the situation away from home, the island’s call was strong – his parents and heart were still on Hiiumaa.

SIIM RÄTSEP: “Hiiumaa is just right!”

KÕPU PENINSULA

“Kõpu is really a primeval, wild place,” Siim says wryly. “But besides deep forest, it also has everything that is needed: roads, power – all amenities ...” he continues, his gaze directed at some woodland visible through the window.

What makes Kõpu so special?

“The people, forests and beaches of course,” comes the answer.

Kõpu is practically a mecca for windsurfers. From here, a road leads to a place whose name leaves no doubt: Surfiparadiis.

There are even surfers at Kõpu in winter. “They’re of course the stalwarts,” says Siim. If the wind is blowing, the number of sails might even be in the double digits despite the below-freezing weather.

What kinds of tourists are welcome

on the island?

Everyone gets a warm welcome on Hiiumaa. Siim himself in Kõpu would be partial to tourists who come and stay longer, get habituated to the rhythms of the island and understand how time flows and the whole way of life.

They say there’s not enough ferries. “What?!” splutters Siim. “It’s a lot easier to get to the island than it was 10 years ago and there are enough ferry connections, too.”

Do you have to have a strong constitution to live on Hiiumaa year-round?

“Such a myth has been circulating, but it’s not like that at all,” says Siim. Life on the island is like it is elsewhere, only with a slower rhythm. You get used to it. “Hiiumaa is just right! It’s secluded, but it has all of the basic services. Come and see for yourself!” ■



Asked why Märt has made Hiiumaa his base, the journalist answers: “My personal story with Hiiumaa is a long one but to sum up, some people simply recognize their native environment even though they don’t have roots and other attributes of home there. You can just like a certain place, it strikes a sympathetic chord with you. So it’s my happy place and I just hope with all my heart that no one else is bothered by my presence there.”

PLANS TO GO TO HIIUMAA

Märt recalls: “My first ‘recon missions’ on the island started long ago, when Hiiumaa was still ‘decorated’ by barriers installed by the occupation army. I was visiting a girl, a classmate of mine.” Later on, there were more pragmatic things and he started going native about 10 years ago. That was when I bought a place to live here and started tinkering and improving it. “That could certainly be considered a more serious bond with Hiiumaa,” says Märt.

“Can I come up with an ode to Hiiumaa? And who would I sing my ode to? For their part, Hiiumaa people know well that their island is a pretty neat and liveable place, and maybe it’s becoming less so as all sorts of newcomers keep on swelling the ranks.” Märt laughs and then notes a particular phenomenon of Hiiumaa: “Hiiumaa still has something that’s in increasingly short supply in the rest of

MÄRT TREIER:

“Hiiumaa still has something that’s in increasingly short supply in the rest of the world.”

the world.” I like the insularity, how it’s endlessly devoid of people. If you don’t have a single house in any direction for 15 kilometres, that’s incomparable. Like a prairie or desert, but in the most liveable places in the world.”

THE NATURE OF LOCAL TOURISM

“I don’t like the word *tourism* myself. People come to a place in exchange for money and expect a nice reception. Warmth isn’t encoded into that word,” says Märt and tells a Hiiu joke about tourism: “A tourist boarding the ferry from Rohuküla harbour on the mainland asks, ‘Which stop should I get off at?’ The Hiiumaa person replies: ‘The second one.’”

Märt emphasizes that to really be part of the spirit of Hiiumaa, you should make an acquaintance with a native and if the person allows you entry into their life, they will give you insight into a thing or two on the island. Otherwise, you might just drive right past various sites, climb up a lighthouse and read the signboards, but come away with superficial memories.

“If a local person opens their life to you, you will see their home, which is more than just the person’s house and yard. But that’s not a scalable activity. We don’t make friends with everyone in real life; life is not Facebook where you have 4,000 friends. Friendships take work, you have to offer something in return. You have to open your own home to people from Hiiumaa if they want to visit the Tallinn zoo,” says Märt.

“The gates to Hiiumaa start opening when there’s someone on the island who welcomes you,” he adds.

WHAT IS THERE TO DO ON HIIUMAA?

“Everyone has such different needs. Some like crowds, others want to go into the forest. It depends on what they’re into. Hiiumaa has it all. When I go into a foreign environment, I don’t want a guide who is too talkative – I’d rather just walk and soak up the impressions. In Italy, I go to a mountain village and just breathe the air. That’s also a good thing to do in Hiiumaa – just breathe, without people coming up to you selling camel ride.”

THAT’S NOT ALL...

“Hiiumaa humour is famous. You can pick it up on your own after spending some time on the island. The essence of Hiiu humour is basically getting up to some extended wild hijinks with a deadpan expression.”

A cool aspect of life on Hiiumaa and the islanders, says Märt, is that if you get in trouble, people will come to your rescue. Otherwise, you might not see your neighbour for weeks, but if your car breaks down on the road by their house, they might show up and start fixing it without even saying hi first. They don’t come for small talk but to see what can be done. So helpfulness is definitely a quality that can be associated with people on Hiiumaa. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: INDREK ILOMETS



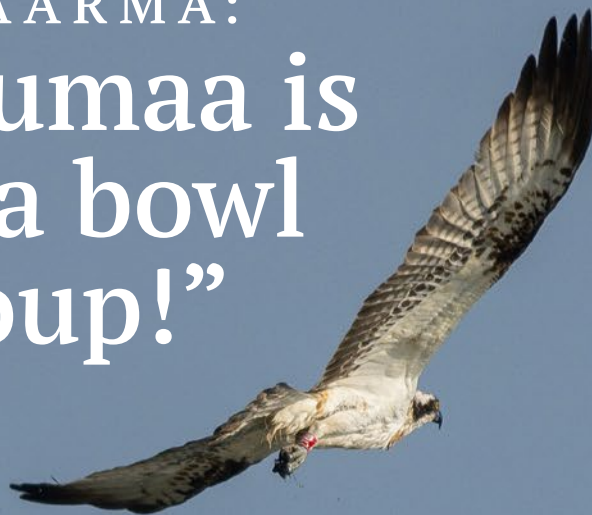
Kiur Aarma isn't a native hiidlane, but this special island is so deep in his heart that he's bought a house here and appreciates the charms of the island year-round.

"See that little sail there? That's me." Kiur points to where his Hiiumaa home is on the map.

Kiur doesn't have roots on Hiiumaa. However, he says: "My mother's from Lääne County on the mainland and Hiiumaa is culturally similar in some ways. Not just similar but the same. Väinameri Strait, the Muhu Strait, from Osmussaare to Muhu Island, Estonia's coastal Swedish settlement area with its distinct traditions – from coastal landscape to music, the colours of the houses, fish, sheep and junipers."

Kiur's first time on Hiiumaa was memorable. They decided to take a class trip on bikes. When the day of the event arrived, but turned out there were three people going: Kiur and two other boys. They went anyway. "We went for one day and we didn't have much money." It was the same day that the national currency the kroon was introduced and suddenly we didn't have any money," he laughs. "We were famished. That's what I remember from my first time on the island – being starving," he says, taking a swig of coffee. Kiur also recalls the solution: two angelic Hiiumaa girls who were in the same student camp as Kiur and his classmate hosted them in their parents' house and fed them well!

KIUR AARMA: "Hiiumaa is like a bowl of soup!"



PHOTOGRAPH: INDREK ILOMETTS

20 YEARS OF LIFE AS A HIIDLANE

Things got better later on. "My friend Jaanus Rohumaa had a little peasant's farm on Hiiumaa and I would visit in the summers. That was the push I needed to finally get my own place there." It's just so great in the countryside.

Looking for a house (or a place to build a house, as it were) took some driving around in a little green car I had at the time, after all there weren't any marketplaces on social media then. While canvassing the island on one such occasion, Kiur struck pay dirt and he has now been there for 20 years.

What do you make of the fact that Hiiumaa keeps on trying to entice more tourists to live there? "A native *hiidlane* has the right to say where there's space and where there isn't," says Kiur. "I'm an ordinary Hiiumaa Municipality taxpayer, I'm not going to preach. I suppose there is room enough for everyone here, I don't know if that's the case for tourists, too. But people's standard of living on the island – how well they ride out the winter – depends largely on how many tourists they get in the summer. But again, not my place to say."

WHO IS A HIIDLANE?

Kiur mentions the fact that people use the informal *you* here. Addressing a stranger in a familiar manner – this can be a fine line and it's hard to be sure when it's appropriate. The *hiidlased* have this art down.

"They're a pleasantly introverted bunch. Like I am. They don't get on each other's case," Kiur says. They tend to take a wary, wait-and-see attitude until they get to know who a newcomer is exactly. They have to make sure they're not some "pointless bloke". Once you've put in your years on the island, they'll let their guard down with you. But it will take 100 years to be accepted as one of their own." But do the islanders stick together, stick up for themselves? "Again, I'm not one to say here. I suppose Hiiumaa is like any social community – if there's a common danger, they rise to the occasion. I don't have much of a point of comparison, but I think they don't tend to give their neighbours a hard time."

Kiur visits the island year-round, but doesn't spend all winter here. He is sceptical of the concept of summer *hiidlased*, who become islanders only for one season: "A summer *hiidlane* – this is a pretty naïve term. I vote and pay taxes on Hiiumaa, so how can I can be a summer *hiidlane*."

CARE TO MAKE A PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION ON WHERE TO GO ON THE ISLAND?

"Hiiumaa is like a bowl of soup. It's fairly empty in the middle and you go around the edge of the bowl. Most tourists tour the lighthouses. The day begins with a lighthouse and ends at a grill. I would advise not going anywhere. Go to any old place on Hiiumaa and be where you are. Discover the world within a 2 km radius to where you are, that's what I recommend."



Ulla Kadakas spoke about her experience on a dig near Kõpu Village in the 1990s and what visitors to the area should be aware of.

This year, Jesper Parve opened a creative hub complex called Loomekordon near the village of Kõpu. It's based in a former Soviet border guard station (Estonian: *kordon*). In the summers almost a generation ago, it was home to a bunch of young Estonians who helped to excavate Stone Age seal hunters' seasonal settlements under the supervision of archaeologist Aivar Kriiska.

Ulla Kadakas was an archaeology student back then, along on a dig as an intern in 1994, and soon became one of Kriiska's closest assistants.

"Aivar was researching into the Stone Age in Estonian coastal areas and his work took place on Saaremaa, Hiiumaa and Ruhnu," said Ulla.

These digs took you back 7000 years when the first humans – not yet permanent inhabitants at that point – set foot on Hiiumaa?

Yes, to about 5000 BC, in the Late Mesolithic. Seal hunters had established a stopover point on a small island.

You mean Hiiumaa? It's not a small island!

It was back then. To explain: at the end of the Ice Age, the ice sheets receded and there was lots of water in the Baltic Sea basin. The ice had weighed down heavily on the land mass and ever since, post-glacial rebound has been taking place. Over the millennia, the Baltic Sea been at times connected to the ocean and then due to the rising land mass,

Archaeologist ULLA KADAKAS: “A 7000-year-old firepit gets your heart racing.”

cut off again – accordingly, sometimes there is less water, at other times there is more. But in principle, we can say that the surface of Estonia is rising from the water. Hiiumaa was completely under water after the Ice Age but around 8300 BC it started quietly re-emerging. The first point to break the surface of the water was Andrese Hill on the current Kõpu peninsula. By 5700 BC, Kõpu was a small island. The beach formations from that period can be seen all along the south-eastern coast of the island. Sealers from Saaremaa Island landed there. And their settlements can be found on those coastal formations.

How did Aivar Kriiska know exactly where to stick his shovel in the ground?

The Archaeologist Vello Lõugas that found the first Stone Age settlement site there in 1981. Lõugas himself was studying stone-cist tombs, which are in the area of Pihla Farm. When Aivar was working on his doctorate, he started taking a real interest in the coastal settlement history. When Lõugas discovered the first settlement site, Aivar was 15.

How was he so lucky?

Aivar collaborated with geologist Harri Moora and paleozoologist Lembi Lõugas. They made up this productive young group of researchers. The settlement sites they found were from different eras, from 5700–3000 BC. Over four years, Pre-Pottery culture sites, Narva Pottery and Pit-Comb Ware settlement sites were found.

What were some of the valuable finds?

Firepits, for one thing. Many potsherds. The main material used for tools was

quartz. A local, somewhat poor-quality flint. It was great to find a massive amount of slightly charred hazelnut shells in one earlier site. You can imagine how the seal hunters were pounding out quartz tools around the fire while munching on hazelnuts.

Although you didn't exactly strike gold, was it exciting for young researchers to dig up those nut shells?

Oh yes, archaeologists tend to quickly get serious. But still, if you find even one quartz tool among ordinary quartz fragments – a scraper or graving tool, let alone a stone cutting axe or even a blank meant to be shaped into one – the emotions run much higher. To think that someone made a fire there 7000 years before you, that's a big thrill.”

What should visitors to Kõpu keep an eye out for today?

You could learn to recognize what we call a coastal formation – it isn't a dune, it's this long surface ridge where the sea used to lap up against the coast thousand years ago. You can imagine the seal hunters once walking along the beach. In addition to seasonal settlement during the Stone Age, the Kõpu area was the one with the earliest permanent settlement – stone-cist tombs and ancient cropland systems can still be found from the early agriculture and animal husbandry period, all near Kõpu, Ülendi and Ojaküla. The village of Ülendi also boasts the famous Ülendi sacrificial linden. If you continue toward Kõpu from there, you can gaze across the pasture of Ristipõllu Farm on to a coastal formation, and next to the cemetery wall is the seal hunters' settlement site that was first to be discovered on Hiiumaa. ■



Elmo Viigipuu, who has lived on Hiiumaa for 40 years, is the grand old man of Estonian philately, the author of a history of the first 100 years of Estonian postage stamps, the steward of the stamp collectors' email list and organizer of countless exhibitions.

Elmo and colleagues' first stamp exhibitions were in the late 1980s, with two exhibition series called Dago and Hiiumaa Ruut. Virtual exhibitions have lately gained popularity.

Elmo is proud of the number of issues featuring his home island. Hiiumaa makes it on to postage stamps as often as it does for several reasons. It is featured most often on stamps with depicting maps of Estonia and its islands.

Of course the Hiiumaa coat of arms has also been featured.

Eesti Post has an ongoing series of our coastal lighthouses. Maritime Museum artist Roman Matkiewicz has also illustrated Ristna, Kõpu, Sõru, Tahkuna and Orjaku lighthouses. Since seamount stamp collecting is internationally quite popular, Hiiumaa has probably penetrated many corners of the world thanks to these postage stamps.

The folk costume series of Estonian postage stamps includes Emmaste and Reigi costume, among sartorial traditions from other locales. Both of these stamps were designed by Mari Kaarma.

A Suuremõisa Castle stamp was designed by Jaan Saar.

ELMO VIIGIPUU: Getting a new generation of stamp collectors interested

The people of Hiiumaa wanted one of their points of pride featured on a postage stamp – the three-masted barque *Hioma*, which was built in Suursadam port in 1848. It was the first Estonian-built ship to round the horn.

When we ask Elmo what the next Hiiumaa feature to be commemorated might be, he says Rukkirahu Lighthouse would be a good candidate: "This lighthouse is at the gates of Hiiumaa. An important landmark that could also be a stamp."

Besides direct tie-ins with Hiiumaa, some more indirectly related features are also of interest to collectors. A piece of postal stationery issued to mark the 50th anniversary of Estonian student work camps would be a good inclusion in a Hiiumaa themed album. "It's here that in 1966 a camp started, in which 68 secondary school participants took part." They were lodged in Käina and Putkaste and worked in Hiiumaa Kalur and Sõprus kolkhoz, Putkaste sovkhos and Hiiumaa forest farm.

They were officially called Korchaginites after the main character in a Nikolai Ostrovsky story Pavel Korchagin. It was a successful undertaking and in February 1967 they decided to set up the Estonian student camp – called the Eesti Õpilasmalev from 1970.

Elmo's biggest concern is the younger generation – will there be new philatelists to continue the tradition and take up this fascinating hobby that broadens one's knowledge about the world. ■



STAMPS AND POSTAL STATIONERY:
COLLECTION OF TIIT PRUULI



Hiiumaa in art



Paul Teesalu. Haldi Cape. 2020. Tiit Pruuli's art collection

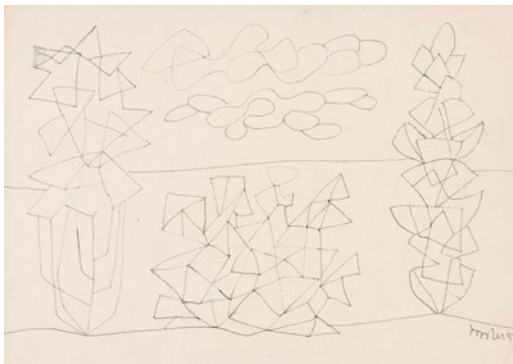
Current Estonian Ambassador to Rome Paul Teesalu is also engaged in art. Along with art friends from the mainland, they have travelled to Õngu Village on Hiiumaa since the summer of 2010 to paint landscapes. "My Hiiumaa paintings are produced *alla prima*, painted on-site in natural settings in a single session," says Paul. "I traditionally paint the Õngu area and I have also found time for Haldi and Sõru. Sometimes I go to nearby Mänspe Chapel, and farther way, Reigi and Kõpu offer plenty of subject matter. Hiiumaa in high summer is mainly dry and sunny, only a few times has rain forced me to do still-lives indoors. Our small crew of painters – the Õngu school, we call ourselves – have also reached out to local artists as we have been able, visited the artists Liia Lüdig-Algvere and Aado Algvere in Haldi Village and enjoyed summer cultural events on Hiiumaa." ■



Theodor Albert Sprengel. Reigi Church. 1860. Art Museum of Estonias



Aarne Miikmaa. Kärkla Net Shed. 1940. Enn Kunila Art Collection



Ülo Sooster. Junipers By the Sea 1959. Tiit Pruuli's art collection



Freelance photographer Raigo Pajula, who has roots on the island, can appreciate Hiiumaa's beauty – it's one of the best locations for photography and all of Estonia's landscapes can be found in one compact area.

Raigo's mother is from Hiiumaa, his relatives are from Hiiumaa and he has a summer home on Hiiumaa as well. "I'm mostly on Hiiumaa in the summers, but I also swing by in the winter to keep an eye on things," he says.

Raigo looks puzzled when asked why a photography buff should go visit Hiiumaa. "Where else?" He adds with a grin: "Actually, you shouldn't visit Hiiumaa, but move there! I mean, if you want to photograph Estonia's highest hill or a sea cliff, you can leave the island for a bit, but everything else can be found here."

RAIGO PAJULA: “Actually, you shouldn't visit Hiiumaa. You should move there!”

A MECCA FOR NATURE PHOTOGRAPHERS

Forests, bogland, meadows, Estonia's biodiverse wooded meadows and various kinds of seashores.

At the seashore on the mainland, you can photograph the sun going down in the sea in north-western or northern Estonia, but in Hiiumaa you can take a picture of the sunrise and in the evening, photograph the sunset without covering much distance.”

Raigo describes Hiiumaa's nature as follows: The sea and the deep inland forest are so close together in Hiiumaa. There are mires and bogs in the interior, and some hills in Kõpu. And small islets. Some of them can be reached by wading. If you travel to the island for a few days, you can get a variety of nature shots with a different environment without covering much ground – it's all compact.”

Raigo says all of Estonia's wild game species are also represented on the island and he says Hiiumaa is best for deer photography.

THE TOP PHOTOGRAPHY LOCATIONS

Raigo has one definite recommendation. “Definitely Ristna! When the wind is blowing, all shutterbugs head there for the surf! And another solid pick is Kaibaldi forest and the Kaibaldi sand fields. It's an unusual one because it's of human origin – it was once a tank shooting range. Aerial photos show that it is a circle that of which half is now forested again but the other side is still open. A very unusual place! And of course, the autumn and spring bird migration is a good time to head to Käina Bay. It's particularly grand to photograph eagles there, you can see several pairs at the same time.” ■

“Weather is important, you have to get the weather right for photography. Hiiumaa has the most sunny days a year anywhere in Estonia.”

– RAIGO PAJULA

PHOTOGRAPH: RAIGO PAJULA



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EVEN AND MARYS SUISLEPP: “Even an ordinary bum wants pure and wholesome Estonian black bread.”

Even traces his roots back to Hiiumaa on his mother's side. He and Marys met at the Estonian University of Life Sciences in Tartu and after finishing school, Even decided to move to Hiiumaa. Marys followed him here; she's from next-door Saaremaa Island herself.

In 2015, the couple started raising cattle in Valgu Village. Five years later, they gave up the herd because they tended to cause trouble. They started the trade mark Hiiu Jähu instead. Now this enterprising young couple sends organic stone-ground grain products to Hiiu-maa's shops.

The grain is certified organic, grown without chemicals with chicken manure – which must also be from organically raised chickens – used as fertilizer and mechanical techniques used to keep the weeds under control.

The yields are lower than from conventional agriculture and there's also more

work. Weather and wild pigs are other hazards. And while conventional farmers can nip problems in the bud on rape-seed crops by spraying, for organic farmers, it can suddenly turn into a party for pests.

How many other organic farmers are there on Hiiumaa?

Marys: “A lot. But we're the only flour producers. Animal husbandry seems to have the highest potential for organic producers on Hiiumaa. The island has seaside grasslands where chemicals aren't allowed.

How many products in Hiiu Jähu's catalogue?

“There were 11 products in the beginning. We tend to fill special orders now, too, so it's hard to say exactly how many. We sent chickpea and lentil flours to vegan communities as a pilot. We hope there will be interest there,” says Even.

Sprouting of wheat and rye berries is popular in many places, but, says Marys, “the first consignments sent to shops didn't seem to sell well. Hiiumaa doesn't seem to be into sprouted foods. Everyone has their own garden where they can get their fresh greens and so on.

“We've planted wheat and rye and much more. This year we grew hempseed. Caraway seed, too. The kind that goes into Estonian light rye bread – it's in high demand. The caraway is a two-year process. We will see if the weeds will take it over or whether we'll get a harvest next year.

Says Even: “Items you won't find in shops are Estonian chickpeas and lentils. Instead, it's Canadian and Spanish in origin.” Hiiu Jähu is looking to fix that.

So, who are the young organic farmers' customers, anyway – ecologically minded or just ordinary bums?

Marys laughs and says, “Even bums want good quality Estonian rye bread.”

Are organic products in fashion?

“They're quite expensive, that's the worry. But if you look at sales recently, their popularity is growing in Hiiumaa.”

Is work all people think about on Hiiumaa?

“There's no point in showing up here if you don't have any work or anything else to do,” says Even.

“But we'd encourage enterprising young people to move here, sure,” says Marys. Now that they're settled, they have a busy social life. “We go folk dancing in our spare time, we have a club called Mufi Selts where people from four villages socialize together. If you find it boring on Hiiumaa, then maybe you're boring!” ■



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Harri describes himself as a writer and a Finn, and lives in Kärkla.

Why Hiiumaa?

Twenty-three years ago, Harri and his family unit back then spent Estonian summer holidays on Saaremaa, Pärnu and other places, but as soon as he reached Hiiumaa, Harri felt: "Ahh, this is something special!"

He bought a plot of land on the island. A few years later, the plot already had a sauna/house on it. A few years later, a traditional Estonian barn dwelling was relocated there. It burned down. And then finally, a divorce. "But so what, I couldn't bring myself to leave the island anyhow," recalls Harri. The summers spent on Hiiumaa have become longer and longer with each year, until one year, Harri didn't return to Finland. That was seven years ago.

"I was at my mental peak in the 1980s and it seems to me that Hiiumaa epitomizes the eighties. All of the scales are also right. Nature is the right size. Houses are just the right size, people are just the right size. The island also has high-speed internet, so it isn't lagging behind." Harri is fond of walking. He carries a camera with him as he goes.

"All of the wildlife in Estonia is represented on Hiiumaa, except for bears. The world's most critically endangered small predator, the European mink, is even found here, only in a very few places, as the American mink has nearly driven the European mink to extinction. If any fauna here lets itself be photographed, I'm up to the challenge. Very often they decide to say no."

Are you a *hiidlane* now, or still Finnish, too?

HARRI RINNE: "Hiiumaa forests have the greatest concentration of Estonian cultural figures."

"You become a *hiidlane* if your grandmother and/or grandfather are buried on Hiiumaa. Once I thought I would start a company called Reburial OÜ. That service would ease my journey to becoming a *hiidlane*," he says, tapping into Hiiumaa humour.

Were you accepted by the community?

"I was lucky, as I met the right people right away. I had been running with the Café Orientale crowd for 15 years already," says Harri and pauses for thought. "This island doesn't reveal all of its secrets at the same time, but one at a time. Every year, I find out – aha, this also exists here!"

He also says that Hiiumaa is a place with the most Estonian cultural figures lurking in the forests. "They don't want new people here, they have not come to show off, they have come here so they can breathe better," he says.

Was it hard to learn Estonian?

"No, after all it's like Finnish. But I'm not very fluent," he says in perfect Estonian.

Is a *hiidlane* different from a mainland?

"Maybe accepting the inevitability of that fate is different for them. A *hiidlane* has a more philosophical, "it is what it is" outlook. Maybe it's the result of isolation? Because that attitude can also be encountered on other islands, such as Kihnu and Ruhnu. The biggest difference is probably Hiiumaa people vs. Tallinners." Harri says sometimes everyone in the capital seems to be going green and vegetarian. "In Hiiumaa, the party goes on. No one says they're vegan or have gluten intolerance. No one knows here knows what that is yet."

If a friend asked you, what places what you suggest visiting on Hiiumaa?

"One of Hiiumaa's charms is there isn't anything here. Come and check it out! But my recommendation to my friend would be based on their personality." Harri says Sõru Jazz is a unique event. It's a place where musicians go and recreate and get together. Hiiumaa also has pop-up cafes and speciality festivals.. Some of his friends might enjoy birding on Hiiumaa.

What's the typical Hiiumaa tourist like?

"Once, I was photographing birds of prey in an out of the way place and a car with two older women from England stopped and asked where the meteorite crater was. I said, 'you're standing in it.' Can you imagine: people come to Hiiumaa all the way from England for that!" exclaims Harri. Harri says that there are plenty of tourists of different nationalities – the French come and are amazed that it's allowed to pick wild bilberries yourself. There are wonders on Hiiumaa, which locals don't consider wonders. Japanese tourists have been amazed to see dandelions by the roads – they couldn't believe it. "I have met tourists who come for the underground trenches left over from the war. People from Russia and Latvia come to fish, especially during flounder season. I don't know when it is, though, I'm not into fishing at all," he says.

Harri emphasizes that as a local, he probably doesn't have a good sense of what precisely draws people to the island. He can only imagine that people want to visit lighthouses, but who knows.

"The island isn't for everyone, that's for sure! It isn't for people who really like shopping. There isn't a lot to do here, unless you come up with ideas yourself. But people who are on good terms with themselves and don't expect others to entertain them – they'll thrive on Hiiumaa. So come visit Hiiumaa, there's nothing here," Harri says again, with a laugh. ■



This three-masted ship was built in Estonia and with its 35-metre length is still the largest of the extant sailing ships.

TEXT: URMAS DRESEN

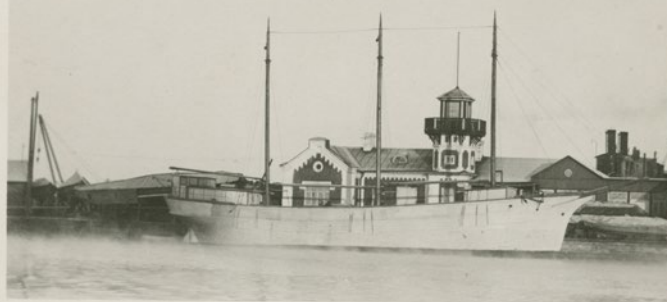
The motorsailer *Alar*

The long-lived ship is a great example of wooden shipbuilding from the late 1930s in Estonia – above all due to the fact that the builder Peeter Himmist was from Saaremaa, the construction took place in Hiiumaa (in Õngu coastal village), the masts and cabins were installed in Loksä and finally, the oil Bolinder engine in Tallinn.

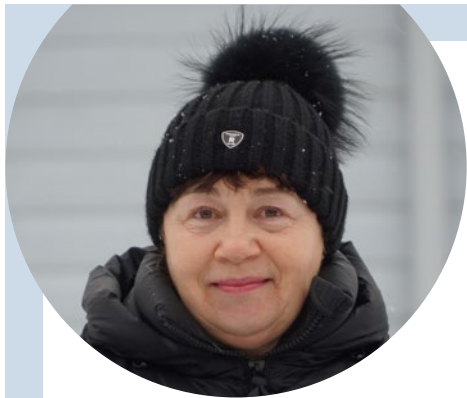
Few Estonian sailing ships have had such a long, colourful history serving under different flags, so it has certainly earned its dignified retirement. In the early 1990s, the Maritime Museum received

a proposal to buy the ship, then being repaired in Hobroelling, Denmark, but it wasn't possible at the time. It is all the more gratifying that in 1998, the Hiiumaa islanders finally managed to bring the ship to Sõru. From that point on, the ship has not fared that well, since financial constraints prevented several plans from going ahead. The faster the ship could be covered with watertight material, first taking down its masts, the greater the chance that the *Alar* could be restored and turned into an onshore museum ship. ■

Alar in 1939 with the Port of Tallinn yacht club in the background.
Photo credit: Estonian Maritime Museum



PHOTOGRAPH: KAJA HIIIS



Legendary beat police-woman Lydia Minajeva looks back on her long career keeping law and order on Hiiumaa.

"Hello," says the imposing presence before me, "I'm Lydia Minajeva, and I'm a beat police officer from the Kärkla police station in the Western Prefecture."

I find myself assuring my interview subject for some reason, stammering: "Hi. And I...don't have any blemishes on my record,"

"Not yet," Lydia says tersely, although there's a twinkle in her eye.

Police work is no joke, even on a small island. If you're new to Hiiumaa, you might hear talk and come away with the impression that diligent Lydia is the only police officer, but actually she has 40 colleagues who keep a lookout for the well-being of the visitors on land and at sea. They include patrol cops, maritime rescue, detectives and jailhouse police.

Lydia says Hiiumaa has always been one of Estonia's safest places and the reason is probably the insular community. "If there are people out and about, there are more eyes, and that's the way things go

LYDIA MINAJEVA: "The importance of minding one's manners"

on the island," she says, extolling Hiiumaa's informal neighbourhood watch networks.

RULES – TO BE FOLLOWED BOTH AT SEA AND ON THE ISLAND

What does this Hiiumaa cop say visitors from the mainland should remember? "Every action leaves a trace and offences committed on the island tend to be come to light more easily in the visitors' home place," she is quick to reply.

Are the rules of going out to sea codified on the island? "Naturally. There are rules just like there are for road traffic. Jet skis and recreational water craft operators have to present their boater's license if asked by the sea patrol. There is one small difference to driving on the mainland, though. At sea; the legal blood alcohol limit for skippers of recreational craft is 0.25 mg per gram of exhaled air and 0.5 mg per gram of blood," she says. (The limits are also lower for jet ski operators.)

"But lay off the booze," Lydia adds quickly. "Although the Maritime Safety Act does allow a wee dram, most people can't gauge this properly and they just as likely to be punished for it at sea as they are on land."

Can you be asked to take a field sobriety

test at sea? "Of course!" Lydia seems surprised at the question. "The sea has no love for drunks, for goodness sake!"

Do holiday-makers with alcohol on their beach picnic basket cause a lot of problems for local law enforcement? "It's great that people come to party here," Lydia says. "Where else are you going to go have fun, if not Hiiumaa? So yes, of course come out to our island for a good time. But every party should have a designated sober person who keeps tabs on the others and if needed, takes the wheel. Recently that's the trend we have been seeing, fortunately."

I ask whether offenders are always outsiders. "Well, we do have our own troublemakers in the Hiiumaa community, but yes, mostly the problems come to the island from the mainland. The ferry brings in good and bad for us."

"We've met before," Tiit Pruuli, who is sitting in on our interview, suddenly remembers. "15 years ago. It was on a nice straight stretch of road. It was a very pleasant encounter, even if it ended in a small fine."

"Well, you won't have any other encounters with our police besides pleasant ones," Lydia observes primly and adjusts her cap. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: KAJA HIIS

HIUINGEL

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Hiiumaa on imeilus ka mere poolt vaadatuna!

Meie saart ümbritsevad veed on põnevad ja vaheldusrikkad, peidavad endas lugusid laevadest ja meremeestest, tuultest ning tormidest.

Hiiumaa laiud ja loodus jagavad avastamisrõõmu.

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Esimese merekogemuse annab juba paari-kolmetunnine seilamine.

Heiskame purjed, saab proovida laeva roolimist ja kursil hoidmist.

Räägime lugusid vanadest aegadest, kui mehed olid rauast ja laevad puust.

Pikemad merereisid võimaldavad uudistada hüljeste elu-olu, külastada meie merendusajalooga seotud laidusid ja sadamaid, tutvuda Hiiumaa rannikumere kauni loodusega. Kui võtta kaks-kolm päeva aega, saab ka tiir ümber Hiiumaa seilatud.

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Tuuli Tammla and Imre Kivi are the proprietors of the well-known Kärkla fish sellers Kala ja Vörk and know the ins and outs of getting the best fish on the island.

What's the story with Hiiumaa's waters? Is there fish to be had?

"Sometimes there is, sometimes there isn't," said Tuuli. Imre agrees: "It can be one way or another."

"In winter," he adds, "ice fishing takes place, mainly for people's own larders, it's not possible to catch all that much. In the winter, the fish tend to be more passive, they put their feet up," says Imre.

It's February and you are selling fish. Where does it come from?

"In the winters, we eat sprat and Baltic herring, which are caught by trawl nets. Fish don't really put in an appearance along the shore. It's hard to catch fish with nets under the ice," says Imre.

The two of them explain, almost in unison. "The best fish is in the autumn. The fish is highest-value then, oiliest and the season runs the longest. Fishing is seasonal. People eat sprat and Baltic herring in winter, and in spring, the big Baltic herring fishing starts, when it unsuspecting comes near the coast. Roach and ide can also be caught in spring, when they approach the shore to spawn."

"Then the garfish appears, also known as a sea needle. It can be caught for a month or six weeks, until the summer solstice. It has become a popular fish, people eat more of it now. Very tasty!" says Imre.



TUULI TAMMLA AND IMRE KIVI: "Hiiumaa has more fish than just flounder!"

THE TOURIST'S FAVOURITE – FLOUNDER

Tuuli and Imre say the month after the midsummer holiday is calm. Then the flounder season starts, driven by demand from summer tourists. "Mainlanders come here always looking for flounder. They're always talking about smoked flounder, but I sometimes interrupt them and say we have other fish too!" Imre continues: "In the autumn, it's pike, ide again – many different species. October and November is the whitefish spawning season. A great amount of whitefish gets salted in barrels for the winter."

THE FISH SOMETIMES RUNS OUT

Imre and Tuuli say that in the summer, when the population swells and fish head for deeper waters, it sometimes does run out, but imported fish is available in larger shops.

But larger shops usually aren't experts when it comes to selling fresh fish. They try, but it's a little complicated. "As for us, we don't sell imported fish, we try to get our own fish!"

"Whatever we can't manage to sell, we try turn into fish products. Our fish is smoked, marinated and salted. Just so that none goes to waste. We even put fish in chocolate," says Tuuli proudly.

(We tried it, and it was good.)

HOW HIIDLASED RATE FISH

Imre is a native *hiidlane*, born and raised

here. Tuuli has lived here for 17 years.

They feel all species are held in high esteem on the island. "Hiiumaa folk eat whatever is in season," says Imre. Tuuli corrects him. "Whitefish is an everyday eating fish!"

FISHING TOURISM IS POPULAR

"Men from the mainland visit the island to fish. Sometimes they come in their own boats, but it's also possible to rent. You have to be careful: there are many shoals in these waters. Fishing for pike near the small islands is popular in summer. In the autumn, catching flounder from the shore. In the summer, this flat-shaped fish heads for deep water but in the autumn it approaches. When the ide season starts by Kõrgessaare River, that draws Russians from Paldiski," says Tuuli.

WHAT IS TUULEKALA OR "WINDFISH"?

"Every May, the Tuulekala Festival takes place in Orjaku Harbour. There's a tournament, a fair, workshops. *Tuulekala* is garfish or sea needle in Hiiu dialect. It comes from the Atlantic Ocean on south-west winds. It's the only fish that comes from the Atlantic to spawn in the Baltic.

Hiiumaa is a good destination for taking a couple weeks' holiday from the mainland. Get out from your four walls and hopefully catch some fish, too!" Tuuli and Imre say, offering some delicious smoked Baltic herring. ■

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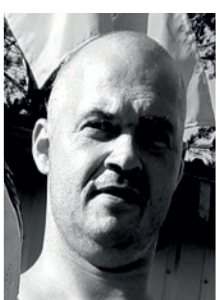
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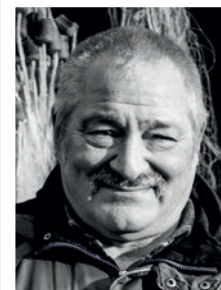


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Aivar is a native hiidlane, journalist, politician and the Hiiumaa people's representative in Estonian parliament. He also runs a restaurant out of his home on Saturdays. Talk naturally turned to culinary matters.

Right off, could you give us your favourite recipe from Hiiumaa?

"Why not? I have one for seagull soup," says Aivar with a grin. "So, basically, you take a stockpot, bring water to the boil, stick the bird in there, and simmer for an hour. At the end of each hour, you change the water. You do this three times. Then you taste it, pick up the pot, pour the water down the drain, discard the seagull, and finally throw away the pot."

Ladies and gentlemen, Hiiu humour at its finest.

"But speaking of real food, of course I have my own recipe for a fishcake from a fish called ide – take two fillets, add one-third part smoked jowl, two large onions and run it through a meat grinder. Add an egg, salt pepper and bob's your uncle." Aivar makes the patties only from a whole fish that he has scaled himself – the skin has to remain on the fish, though. That's key. the fish along with the ribs is all fed through the grinder.

Pahlakilu is one of Aivar's favourites. "The word *pahl* means skewer in the Hiiumaa language variety, but today it's a kind of grill that opens in the middle. *Kilu* is Estonian for sprat. The fresh sardine-like fish are simply grilled over glowing coals, au naturel. Aivar recommends not gutting them beforehand – no

AIVAR VIIDIK: "A Hiiumaa native won't be offended if you say 'pass the herring piss' at the dinner table."

need, they're tiny – and eating the whole fish, head and all.

"On one hand," says Aivar, "the Hiiumaa table has historically been similar to that of all the islands.. You had what the sea yielded, and what grew in the fields and forests. Since Hiiumaa cropland is pretty thin, a large part of Hiiu cuisine is connected to the sea," Aivar says, adding: "Yet life for the people of this island has revolved around food and sometimes in strange ways."

Traditional dishes in Hiiumaa have names that strike even Estonians as odd, like *silgupiss* (herring piss), *öunajügra*, *mandilaga* and *käkisupp*. "These are totally edible dishes, though – salted Baltic herring with the salty cooking water used as a sauce for potatoes, mashed potatoes with cream sauce, and a soup that contains barley flour and balls of lard. ("For Hiiumaa people, a snowball is also called a *käkk*.")

So people coming from the mainland don't have to worry about going hungry?

"It's a feast on the island! And we even have a Greek taverna operated by a Greek and an Italian restaurant run by an Italian. Just like going abroad!" he says with pride.

Aivar says that was a perfect solution for the pandemic era. Domestic tourists rediscovered the islands, and the season was a bit longer, boosting the local economy. It gave locals the courage to take decisions and many new restaurants have opened up. Aivar says as far as he knows, they are all doing fairly well. "If you're clever and have good work ethic,

you will get by. The quality of the content and service on Hiiumaa have risen over the years. No reason to be modest about saying so!"

There's also plenty of wild foraging, he adds – the best bilberry and lingonberry forests in the country. While cranberry and chanterelle places tend to be kept secret, ceps are a shared bounty – there are boletes everywhere! And Hiiumaa even has cloudbberries!"

Are fish stocks plentiful!

"Naturally. The morning's catch is available right away to everyone. We have the world's best fishmonger in Kärdla. They don't sell only raw fish, but turn it into different products that are utterly delicious. Like fish chocolate.

The inclination would be to assume he means a candy bar shaped like a fish: But no.

"Seriously?"

"Yes. Fish chocolate. One has pieces of dried pike and the other has chunks of ide."

Silence.

"... a must-try on Hiiumaa?"

"Of course!"

■



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HIIMUMAA SPORDIKESKUS

The notion that Hiiumaa's sports facilities are only those beloved forest trails and yacht marinas is compelling but not quite true. The new sports complex opened last year also has a full-court for various team sports with 650-seat spectator stands and an indoor athletics field for throwing events. The tennis arena includes three ITF Category 4 (medium-fast hard-surface) courts. The dressing rooms have saunas like any self-respecting locker room in Estonia, and the hostel with the seminar center has a capacity for 48 overnight guests.

The go-kart track set to open in Käina this year is designed to be able to host FIA championships and it's also open for amateurs on a daily basis - no driver's license required. The list goes on... swimming pool, indoor climbing gym, skate park, bike and jogging paths, illuminated ski tracks. There's a good chance that if it wasn't mentioned here, it may be in progress and set for completion in the near future.



WHAT'S ON

Highlights from the 2022 Hiiumaa calendar of events



APRIL

- 22–30 APRIL** Hiiumaa restaurant week
- 30 APRIL** open fishing harbour day at Hiiumaa ports
- 30 APRIL – 1 MAY** HiiuSurfShop OPEN stage I, windsurf slalom series

MAY

- 1 MAY** Kärkla town day
- 21 MAY** Suuremõisa Castle garden day
- 21–22 MAY** HiiuSurfShop OPEN stage II
- 28–29 MAY** HiiuSurfShop OPEN stage III
- 28 MAY** Tuulekala Festival at Orjaku Harbour

JUNE

- Nargenfestival: Cyrillus Kreek days
- 4 JUNE** book day in Kärkla
- 4 JUNE** theatre day for the whole family in Suuremõisa
- 11 JUNE** Children's festival in Kärkla
- 16–19 JUNE** Sõru Jazz
- 17–19 JUNE** Kärkla Race, a stage in the Estonian singlehanded cup series
- 21 JUNE** summer solstice observance in Kärkla
- 22 JUNE** midsummer run in Kõrgessaare
- 22 JUNE** Käina midsummer bonfire on Padarimäe

JULY

- 1–3 JULY** Hiiumaa Literary Festival
- 1 JULY** opening of the exhibition Genius Loci III. Teised 1948.1986 at Reigi parsonage
- 2 JULY** Suuremõisa castle days. 250th anniversary of Suuremõisa Castle / 45th anniversary of vocational school

6–10 JULY Hiking Estonia bike tour of Hiiumaa

8 JULY Hiiumaa fishermen's day on Kärkla beach

9–10 JULY Forgotten Manors, a visitor game at Kassari and Suuremõisa

21–24 JULY Hiiu Folk

23–25 JULY Dago Regatta

23–24 JULY open farms day

28 JULY Kimmo Pohjonen: Soolo, a concert on the slipway of Kärkla Yachts-Service

28–31 JULY Sõru Saund

29–30 JULY sparkling wine weekend (Vahuveini Viikend) at Kärkla harbour

AUGUST

4–6 AUGUST popup café day at homes in Hiiumaa

5–7 AUGUST 11th Pühalepa music festival

12–14 AUGUST Oti Regatta at Orjaku Harbour

13 AUGUST Lestafest (FlounderFest) in Kõrgessaare

13 AUGUST Puski Day

13 AUGUST 65th Hiiumaa volleyball tournament

18 AUGUST Kärkla Purjutuur, 7th stage of sailing cup

21 AUGUST Saunabuss party and Sauna Cup 2022 in Männamaa

SEPTEMBER

Nargenfestival: Arvo Pärt Days in Kärkla Church

1–30 SEPTEMBER Indian Summer events

4 SEPTEMBER Indian Summer workshop at Suuremõisa Castle

9 SEPTEMBER Indian Summer night hike "Love You to the Castle and Back"

9–11 SEPTEMBER autumn regatta, stage in the Estonian open-sea sailing cup

11 SEPTEMBER Muku hiking club mushrooming trip with Margit Soone

16 SEPTEMBER Indian Summer night hike "Love You to Paradise and Back"

17 SEPTEMBER Hiiumaa autumn fair on Kärkla town square

24 SEPTEMBER Rural living day 2022

24 SEPTEMBER MUHV village society autumn fair at Valgu community centre

OCTOBER

8 OCTOBER Coop Hiiumaa sports weekend in Emmaste, Öörrattaralli and Ööjooks (night bike and run events)

9.OCTOBER Paluküla bike race

21.–29 OCTOBER Hiiumaa restaurant week

29.OCTOBER closing of the Hiiumaa sailing season in Kärkla Harbour

NOVEMBER

4–5 NOVEMBER Hiiumaa Rahvaralli (rally racing)

DECEMBER

26 DECEMBER hike, titled "Make room in your belly"

Series of events this season

"Forgotten manors" in Kassari and Suuremõisas – three weekends in July and August

Seal watching trips depart from Kärkla Harbour every weekend from 15 May to 30 September

Hiiumaa Orienteering Club Thursdays from 23 April to 22 September

Sights on the map

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Pühalepa church; Contract Stones | 19 Kalana harbour, promenade |
| 2 Suuremõisa mansion and park | 20 Location of ancient Hüti glassworks manufactory |
| 3 Kallaste limestone exposure | 21 Vanajõe valley |
| 4 Storehouse in Suursadama harbour | 22 Mänspe chapel |
| 5 Kukka boulder | 23 Sõru harbour; Sea Centre; museum |
| 6 Soera farm museum; Exhibition of rocks | 24 Emmaste church |
| 7 Kärkla meteorite crater model | 25 Harju windmill |
| 8 Helmerseni boulders | 26 Kuriste church |
| 9 Tubala stake; boulder | 27 Hiiumaa museum, R.Tobias house museum |
| 10 Hiiumaa museum, Long House | 28 Windtower Experience;
Käina church ruins |
| 11 Ristimägi - Hill of crosses | 29 Orjaku birdwatching tower, nature trail |
| 12 Hiiumaa museum, Mihkli farm museum | 30 Orjaku harbour, i-point, Village House |
| 13 Hiiumaa military museum | 31 Sääretip peninsula |
| 14 Tahkuna lighthouse | 32 Hiiumaa museum,
Kassari museum house |
| 15 Reigi church; pastorage | 33 Kassari chapel |
| 16 Viskoosa factory buildings;
Kõrgessaare manor park | 34 Vaemla wool factory museum |
| 17 Kõpu lighthouse | |
| 18 Ristna lighthouse | |



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