

G HIIUMAA

2023

HIIUMAA'S
RESOUNDING
YEAR OF MUSIC

SAUNA IS SACRED

HIIUMAA -
SOUL SPA

*Paradise Island
in the Baltic Sea*

9 789916 416099





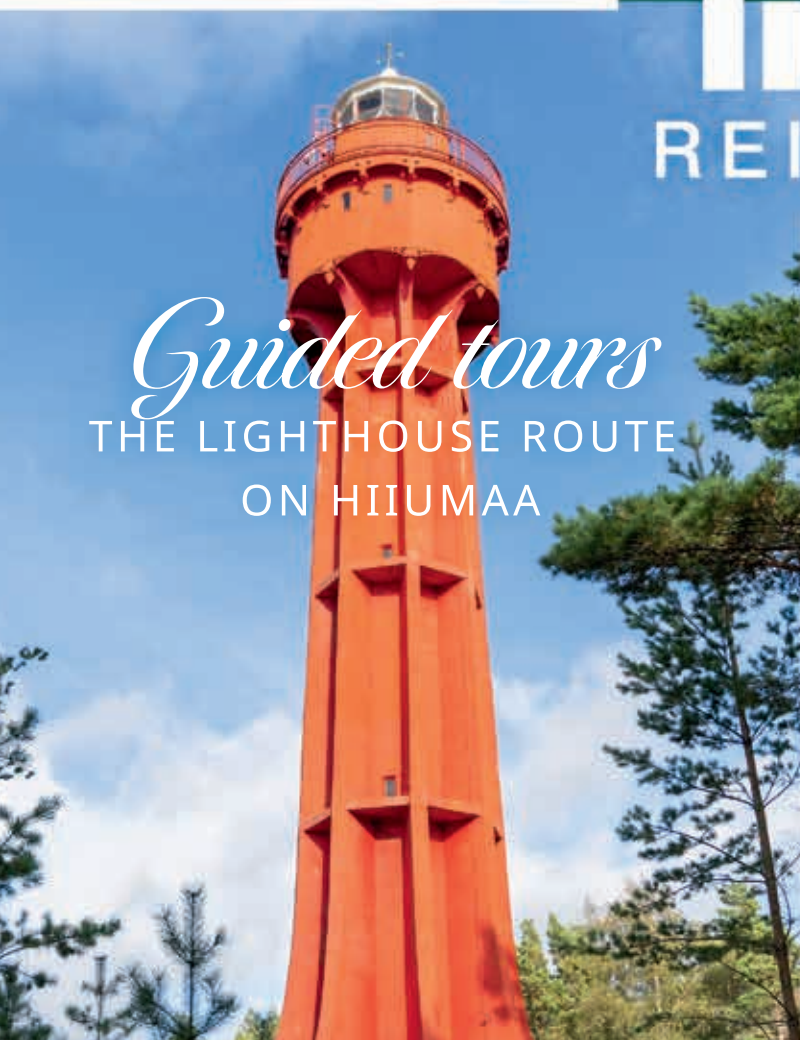
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A mosaic of communities

Hiiumaa is a place with special power. With the light from old Kõpu lighthouse, it shows the way to those approaching from the west and protects Saaremaa Island from the harsh north winds. Guests are received with warm words and gentle humour.

In the run-up to the last Christmas season, we organized the world's first mulled wine days, a more potent, winter version of the summer pop-up café days that take place on Hiiumaa. In the summer, we organized the first international Hiiumaa literary festival, which will have a repeat edition, and this spring, the first Hiiumaa tourism fair was held.

Hiiumaa people have plenty of savvy and imitative and we come up with fun things to do for locals and visitors alike. Every week features some fair, sport tournament, concert or other performance. Fish and lamb provide flavour for the Hiiumaa table and small producers turn out organic juice, soft drinks, Hiiumaa beer, bread and other delicacies. Our hiking trails are free and open year-round.

Last winter, even midweek visitor numbers were high and many said their first taste of the island in winter was worth it.

Conversely, summer ferry queues weren't as bad as their reputation. There are usually first-come-first-served places left, even when the booking systems doesn't have any more reserved slots.

This year is the sesquicentennial of composer Rudolf Tobias. The programme is extensive and will continue to be updated online.

The mobile sauna gathering has been held on the island for 17 years running. This year it coincides with Estonia's Year of the Sauna. It's also the year of getting active and sports-minded. Kärkla and Käina sports centres are open to the public and the whole island and surrounding waters are full of things to do outdoors.

The year themes change, but it's always a good Hiiumaa year!

KRISTEL ÜKSVÄRAV

DIRECTOR OF THE HIIUMAA TOURISM CLUSTER

The themes for this season's Hiiumaa tourist catalogue are COMMUNITY and COOPERATION.

From a distance, Hiiumaa seems small (1018 km²), but a closer look reveals just how many vibrant communities are getting things done on their home island. Colour and distinctiveness abound, but ultimately everyone's moving in one direction. Good examples include the revival of traditional Hiiumaa bread, the *Hiiu Leht* newspaper and sailing traditions, pulse of Kalana Harbour or the beat of local music festivals, the active handicraft scene and the readiness of volunteer rescuers at sea. The renown of Hiiumaa's communities with their craftspeople, café proprietors, coastal fishers, and the surfers who frequent the island, extends far beyond neighbouring Saaremaa.

Hiiumaa has old traditions and an exciting new vibe. On both fronts, the island boasts energetic local leaders who bring cheer to the locals and visitors alike.

Our thanks go out to those communities and their organizers for the way they're getting things done together.

TIIT PRUULI

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF GO TRAVEL MAGAZINE

PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASIUK



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* lighthouse was first lit
** altitude of the light



HELIN-MARI ARDER, SINGER

For me the most homey and special place in Hiiumaa is the historic house museum of Aino Kalda, where I spent the most beautiful part of my summer holidays as a child, and even when I visit now, I still sense the exceptionality of this place.

Almost every year my family and me visit the lighthouse at Kõpu, climbing up the high steps of which takes some doing. And before or after visiting the lighthouse, taking a nice trip to the forest and, should the blueberries be ripe, emerging from it with fingers and mouths painted blue also pays off.

There is a multitude of magical places in Hiiumaa. One more place I would recommend to visit is the Sääretirp headland, but one must take into account that travelling there by foot takes quite some time.



KEIT KASEMETS,

A SUMMERTIME NATIVE OF HIIMUMAA AND SHAREHOLDER IN HIUU LEHT

When in Hiiumaa, I stay at Orjaku, and that region is so lovely I rarely feel the need to go anywhere else. Thus, all my favourite places are also on the southern side of Hiiumaa.

Orjaku harbor with its restaurant Iiu Mekki, the cakes baked by Hiiumaa women, and the world's smallest museum situated on the pier is the coolest small harbor in the world. Sunsets on the Sääretirp headland – not a week goes by without them for me when staying in Hiiumaa. The busyness of hundreds of birds as a background noise during summer, the miraculous silence in the winter.

Paddleboarding on SUP boards in all the bays of Hiiumaa. The shallow and calm bays on the island's south shore are perfect for both shorter as well as longer SUP-boarding trips together with friends and family.

5x3

recommendations

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



JOONAS HELLERMA,

FAN OF HIIMUMAA, HOST OF THE TALK SHOW "PLEKKTRUMM"

There are many special places in Hiiumaa, and I'm not entirely sure I dare to disclose the most special of those. But maybe just a little is OK. First of all – the islet of Hanikatsi laid. I remember once, when staying on the island of Saarnaki laid, I stood on the shore and looked at it. The forest of Hanikatsi seemed mysterious, especially as some people were still telling stories of ghosts inhabiting it. A couple of summers ago I managed to voyage there; scenes from the rare limetree forest still stick to my mind. I found no confirmation to the ghost stories. Getting there, by the way, is a small adventure in itself – the weather and the waves have to be just right for the boatman to even agree to take you.

The other sight to see I would recommend are the dunes called Korbi mäed ("Korbi mountains") in the bosom of the beautiful forests of the Kõpu peninsula. Here, a persevering mountain-climber will be rewarded with a fantastical view of the Kõpu lighthouse, peeking out from among the treetops here and there.

The third place to consider visiting is the Luidja-Hirmuste hiking trail, part of the Heltermäa-Ristna-Sarve hiking route established by the state forest management centre RMK. Taking a walk there may turn out to be a great experience, if one is lucky. The hike coincides with animal trails through a thick, spiderweb-garlanded forest, winding through hillocks and small valleys, the whole trip accompanied by the ancient susurrus of the sea and constant lapping of the waves. All this combines to give the traveller a heart-warming and sense-delighting feeling of being right on the edge of the world.



PRIIT MIKK, ENTREPRENEUR

When I think of special places in Hiiumaa, the first thing that comes to mind is not the island itself, but the ferry that takes you there. Making it to the ferry fills you with a special feeling, because then you know you will get to Hiiumaa! There are some on board who may be arranging their final work-related tasks, feasting on the legendary pork chop or playing in the playing corner, but one thing is certain – soon you will be on the island paradise, which more than enough makes up for the voyage!

Since I spend most of my time in Hiiumaa on the Kõpu peninsula, my recommendations also come from around that "edge of the world". The lighthouse at Kõpu – Hiiumaa's symbol – is definitely worth a climb-up, since the view from up there is simply unparalleled. To those for whom one lighthouse is not enough, I recommend also visiting the lighthouses at Tahkuna and Ristna.

One of my favourite places, naturally, is the southern headland of Ristna, which is open to the main sea. There you can enjoy the most beautiful summer sunsets in Estonia.

As a final experience, I urge travellers to check out the schedule of the mobile store and catch it in order to buy ice cream or candy and socialize with the locals, whose home gates are the stops on the store's route – this way, you will certainly be partaking in the real Hiiumaa life!



DANIEL VAARIK,

HEAD OF LEVILA AND SHAREHOLDER IN THE NEWSPAPER HIUU LEHT

Hiiumaa has the kind of nature and many of the kind of places where, after a long absence, it is easy to connect to... oneself. Perhaps by going into the forest at Kõpu peninsula and finally thinking your thoughts to completion.

My personal favourite, though, is the very movie-like tower of Hiiumaa Eiffel in the municipality of Kõrgessaare. I go there every year.

If you're travelling with children, then I definitely recommend visiting the lighthouse at Käina and trying out the climbing wall; they have very good instructors there.

1 Pühalepa church; Contract Stones

- #### 4 Storehouse in Suursadama harbour

- ## 5 Kukka boulder

- ## 6 Soera farm mu

- ## 7 Kārdla meteorite crater model

- ## ●● Helmerseni boulders

- 16 Tubala stake; boulder

- 11 **Elkhorn Slough, 1888-9**

- 12** IIII AIIII II

- 13 Hää.....

- 14 Tobkune lighthouse

- 15** Boiqi church: pastorage

- 16** Viskoosa factory buildings;
Kõrgessaare manor park

- ## 17 Kōpu lighthouse

- ## 18 Ristna lighthouse

- 19** Kalana harbour, promenade

- ## 20 Location of ancient Hūti glassworks manufactory

- ## 21 Vanajõe valley

- ## 22 Mänspe chapel

- 23** Sõru harbour; Sea Centre; museum

- ## 24 Emmaste church

- 25** Harju windmill

- 26 Kurliste church

- 27 Hiiiumaa museum, R. Iobias house museum

- 26 Windtower Experience; Kalha church

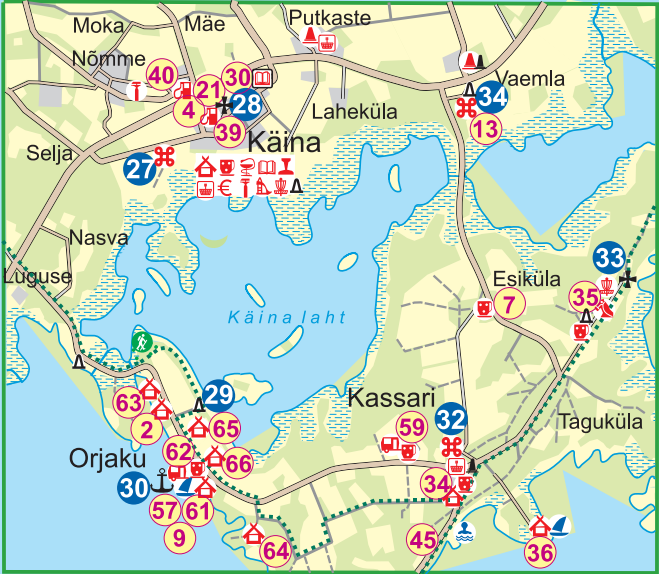
- 29 Orjaku birdwatching tower, nature trail

- 30** Oljaka Harbour, I-pc

32. *Ulmus minor*

- Kassari musc

- 33 Kassari chapel
- 34 Vaemla wool factory museum



- | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|---------------------|---|----------------|---|--------------------|
|  | accommodation |  | hospital, first aid |  | memorial |  | historic site |
|  | restaurant, cafe, bar |  | pharmacy |  | other sight |  | artesian well |
|  | harbour |  | filling station |  | beach |  | place for caravans |
|  | lighthouse |  | museum |  | aquatic sports |  | bank, ATM |
|  | church |  | school |  | horse riding |  | playground |
|  | boat or yacht harbour |  | library |  | shop |  | disc golf course |
|  | police |  | postoffice |  | car service |  | community boundary |
| | |  | bus stop |  | car wash |  | local municipality |



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Hiiumaa as you like it

Hiiumaa can be discovered in various ways: serendipitously with just a rucksack slung across your back, accompanied by a guide who takes you to most important sights, or by putting together your own itineraries from a guidebook and internet resources. Although it's just two-thirds the area of Gran Canaria and a lot flatter and less crowded, there are hundreds of sights and routes to choose from.

Yachters are drawn by the marinas, surfers flock to the breaks at Ristna and Kalana, hikers frequent the forest paths and connoisseurs visit restaurants in Kärkla, Kalana, Orjaku, Suuresadam and elsewhere. Hikers find peace and quiet on RMK national forest trails, swimmers and sunbathers head to the beaches.

The most authentic experience might be in the company of a knowledgeable local guide. But a DIY approach also works, using the hiiumaa.ee map app and audio guides. Ten themed itineraries were put together by a beloved local guide, Helgi Põllo. Here's a few of them.



PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASIUK

THE LIGHTHOUSE TOUR OF HIIUMAA

A new take on an old idea originated in the early 1990s by a young Peace Corps volunteer from Nebraska named Douglas Wells. You can read about his exploits in Estonia in a memoir he wrote a few years back. One way in which he left a mark was signposted features and an accompanying guidebook. It was all geared at car tourists arriving on the island, which had only a few years before that ceased to be a closed border zone. The signposts these days are new and modern, and some of the features are different, but the guidebook is still available and the concept remains – a tour of the island connecting between beacons of light.



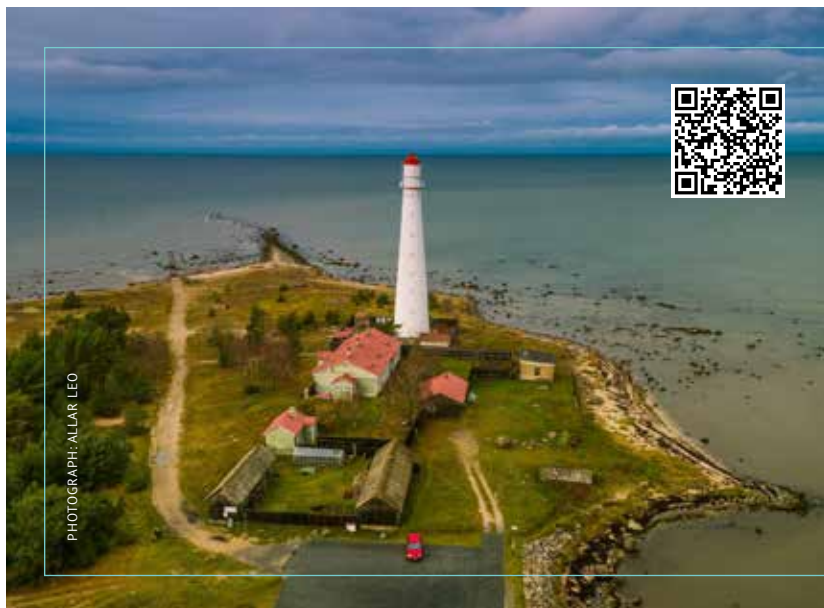
STANDING ON THE LAND, BUT LOOKING OUT TO SEA

Not all of us are born to sail the seas, but a little taste of it can be had by voyaging along the land. Especially if that land is Hiiumaa. What were the lighthouses built for, how are ports developed, when did iron hulls replace wooden ships and how are fish stocks?



PHOTOGRAPH: KAIA HIIS-RINNE





PHOTOGRAPH: ALLAR LEO



NORTHWARD HO!

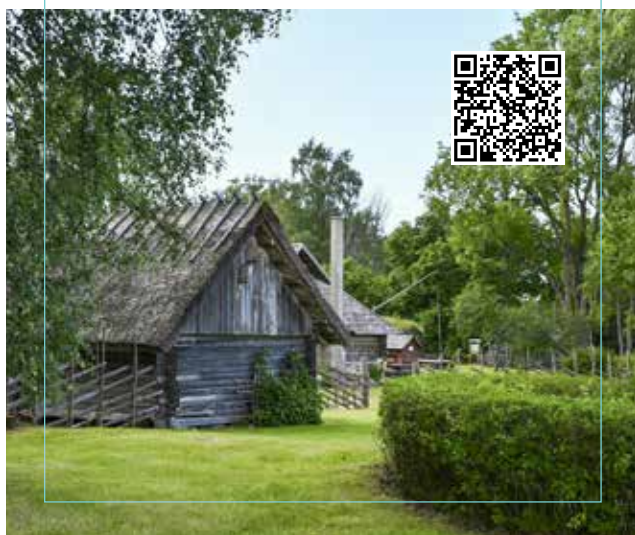
Hiiumaa is shaped a little like a compass rose or star. The northern arm includes naturally scenic Tahkuna peninsula, with a more fraught history. The former Hiiumaa Swedish areas can be explored, the impacts of 20th century wars can be felt, a small Orthodox chapel can be viewed and the tallest lighthouse on the island climbed. There may be other surprises in store by the sea and between the forests. Keep your eyes open!



CHARMING VILLAGE LIFE



The world is urbanizing at a fast clip. life hangs on largely thanks to well-functioning villages. Actually, Hiiumaa only has one real town, Kärddla, but more than 180 villages. The story of each one and the key dates in their history are different, of course. It can be fascinating to seek out the unique features of all of them. Sometimes it is an extant windmill, an old manor, a story of some great man or woman or a contemporary thriving business.

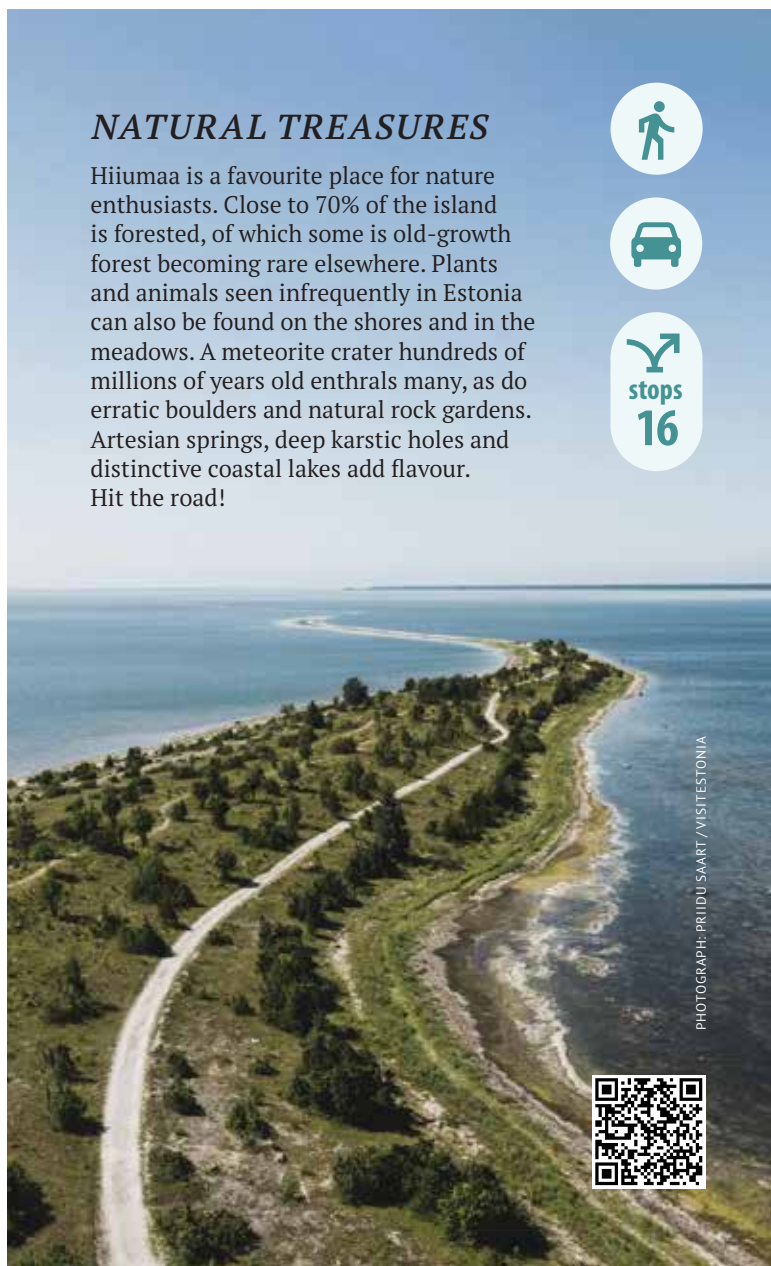


The complete itineraries can be found at:
www.hiiumaa.ee/teekonnad



NATURAL TREASURES

Hiiumaa is a favourite place for nature enthusiasts. Close to 70% of the island is forested, of which some is old-growth forest becoming rare elsewhere. Plants and animals seen infrequently in Estonia can also be found on the shores and in the meadows. A meteorite crater hundreds of millions of years old enthralls many, as do erratic boulders and natural rock gardens. Artesian springs, deep karstic holes and distinctive coastal lakes add flavour. Hit the road!



PHOTOGRAPH: PRIIDU SAART / VISITESTONIA



Green Destination

Hiiumaa holds the silver level of the international sustainable tourism organization Green Destinations' quality label.

All visitors to the island are impressed on to tread lightly and keep the island unspoiled. Camp and hike and make fires only in designated areas.

The island has a special waste collection bag system for visitors. The pre-paid orange 25-litre trash bags are 2 euros at Coop Hiiumaa stores, R-Kiosk on ferries and at the Wind Tower experience centre. Filled bags can be dropped off at waste points with ordinary waste container meant specially for the prepaid bags. The locations are marked on the bags (Emmaste – Ol-
lima; Käina – Mäe plats; Kõrgessaare – Tehase tee; Kärkla – Leigri väljak; Pühalepa – Suuremõisa; Hiiumaa waste centre in Ristivälja village).

Be considerate of your fellow road users and recreationists and don't hesitate to talk to locals.

If you have any suggestions or tips for improvement, leave those as well.

Naturally, you're invited to capture beautiful scenes from Hiiumaa. If you like, you can share them with us using the **#VisitHiiumaa** hashtag.

*And don't forget to enjoy
the local food! Enjoy!
And come back again!*

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The call of the path less travelled

When Pille Minev started their farm in Lääne County on the mainland, she realized that they would have less and less time to discover Estonia. But there is one place that Pille simply must get to at least once every year and that's Hiiumaa. The island's populated with good people, and that's not all!



"I am still amazed that although it's a small island, I'm able to find something new all the time. Last summer, I met up with adventurer Alar Sikk (originally of Everest fame), who decided to walk around the island. He had done that before, because he was the one who established the hiking trails. This time, he invited friends and I joined him on the day that the party was heading into central inland Hiiumaa.

Kapasto forest hut isn't a place you wind up in every day. After all, we tend to gravitate to seaside places, but I strongly recommend making a change in your itinerary and undertaking this hike.

Indeed it's a forest hut, and one well appointed with everything you need. It's open year-round, with a sleeping loft and hearth. And in the yard, a well with good water.

Since we made our trip in summer, we stayed in tents. There was actually another reason, too: As it happened, the next morning was my birthday. So I thought, maybe it would be great to wake up that morning in a tent. And it was. Part of it was because my companions prepared a fried egg breakfast and gathered wildflowers from the fields. I just took it easy and if I wanted to, issued orders too. What more could you want on your birthday.

What is the appeal of this hiking route. You'll discover how many different kinds of forest and soil there are on one Estonian island. The trail is fetchingly wild and you won't have to bushwhack through weeds in wet areas, as Alar has built little bridges over such areas. It's all so nice and civilised that it makes you feel a bit proud of our country and our people:

As a whole, Hiiumaa is really a microcosm: wild nature and great cultural events. We also managed to pop in to the Pühalepa music festival and the very impressive Oli Viscosa culture factory, which was hosting a concert of Erki Pärnoja's "Anima Mea" with conductor Endrik Üksvärav.

I always keep an eye on goings-on in Hiiumaa, and there are worthy events year-round." ■



Alar Sikk is leading the way.

‘A LEARNING PLACE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT’

Hiiumaa’s unique slice of nature, which has survived thanks to locals’ ability to live in harmony with the island’s nature and the vulnerable environment, is the reason that UNESCO recognized Hiiumaa as a model for sustainable life. Hiiumaa and the other islands in the Western Estonian archipelago have been part of the worldwide Man and the Biosphere Programme since 1990.

PHOTOGRAPH: INDREK ILOMETS

Hiiumaa's secret places

Photographer Kaja Hiis-Rinne has the smile of someone who has a secret. Perhaps this native of Hiiumaa knows some fascinating well-hidden place she's not about to give away just yet?



Õunaku salt holes.

Kaja mentions the Õunaku salt holes. They are in an overgrown place and hard to find. "When the snow is melting, they become very distinct for a time." They are places where water was steamed off to produce salt but there are a number of theories about their origin. She says it's doubtful enough salt was produced from the low-salinity Baltic Sea water to be profitable. They were probably places to launder smuggled goods that would later be sold to Sweden. The island still has a few lime kilns and tar production places that are recognizable.

SUBTLY CONCEALED PLACES

"The Hiiumaa meteorite crater is a good example of something that can be hard to make out. If you want to see it, you will, but if you don't, you won't. It's more impressive than Kaali on Saaremaa," Kaja opines and also mentions Hirmuste crater, although it's probably a non-meteoritic pond. The wild surroundings make it a worthy destination.

"We also have wandering dunes, but you have to know what you're looking for if you want to catch them wandering," she laughs.

"And I like seeing things in the forest that aren't immediately visible," she says, mysteriously. "Like plants that only live in few places. One such plant is the allseed flax. I know where it grows, but I don't guide anyone there.. As a hint, I can say it's sooo close to a major road. Seek and ye shall find," she teases. ■



Hirmuste meteorite crater.

PHOTOGRAPH: KAJA HIIS-RINNE



Model field of Kärkla meteorite crater.

HIDDEN HISTORY AND CULTURE

Kaja is surrounded by local young women who came to Hiiumaa at some point, have explored all of the corners and found fascinating places. "It's great when you look at the island with the eye of an outsider, it makes you see everything differently. One of her projects involved mapping heritage culture sites in Estonia in the form of a book. Photographer Tuuli Tamla and I set out to seek out places on Hiiumaa that I hadn't photographed yet," says Kaja.



Wandering dunes.

PHOTOGRAPH: KAJA HIIS-RINNE

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Domestic tourism



The many different faces of Hiiumaa beaches

The air is hot and the horizon is shimmering. In the distance, a dark line of forest seems suspended in the air. A white sailboat plies the calm waters. The sea is smooth, cerulean, warm, beckoning. A buzz of conversation from the shore catches your ear from the beach and floats over your head as you wade in the sea. Is it Italy? The Canaries? Greece? No, it's Hiiumaa – island of beaches.

Whatever part of the island you happen to be in, there's probably a beautiful, perhaps undiscovered beach close by. Some are pebbly and cloaked in juniper, others sandy, forested, or spacious and windy. They all have their own appeal, charm or story.

WARMER WATER

The south-west is your best bet if looking for balmy waters. Kassari Telliskivi and Lussuliiva are usually the ones with the warmest water, though Heltermäa, at a remove from the aforementioned ones, also fits the bill. Sometimes very warm water indeed arrives in late May, flirting with 20 degrees, which is extremely warm for Estonia, where many beaches are still 9-13 C during that time. The stony beach with low dwarf birches is a sight in its own right. Tip: it's a great beach for everyone who wants to swim as soon as the tyres touch road on the island.

KID-FRIENDLY

One excellent sandy beach to go with children is Tõrvanina near Kärkla. Older kids can also climb on the gnarled old stumps, whose shapes and forms fuel the imagination. The long, firm sandy bank at Prähnu is great for endless-seeming runs. There is also a village swing in the parking area. Luidja Beach, on the way to Kõpu, offers a good conditions for sand castle building and swings, jungle gyms and slides. If keeping the family car as sand-free as possible, opt for a pebblier beach. Another good beach for kids is Kärkla Rannapaargu – the sea is shallow, the water tends to be warm and there are swings right by the beach. A ropes course is nearby. The shrieks of frolicking children are sure to be heard at Kassari's Telliskivi beach. Lussuliiva is known for relatively warm water.

SURFING

Ristna, Ristna, and yet again Ristna. Besides the firm leader, Luidja can also have high surf and Tahkuna is almost always windy. Still, you won't find the breaks you see at Ristna anywhere else.

PIERS

Being able to jump into the sea off a dock is a pleasure. That's so particularly on Hiiumaa where sometimes it's a long wade to get out to deeper water. Kärkla's Hausma swimming pier is popular from morning to late evening and from early summer to the middle of fall. You'll see people in bathrobes and coffee mugs, people finishing up Nordic walking before heading to work. Swimming is after all the proper way to start a day, as one regular aficionado says.

PEACE AND QUIET

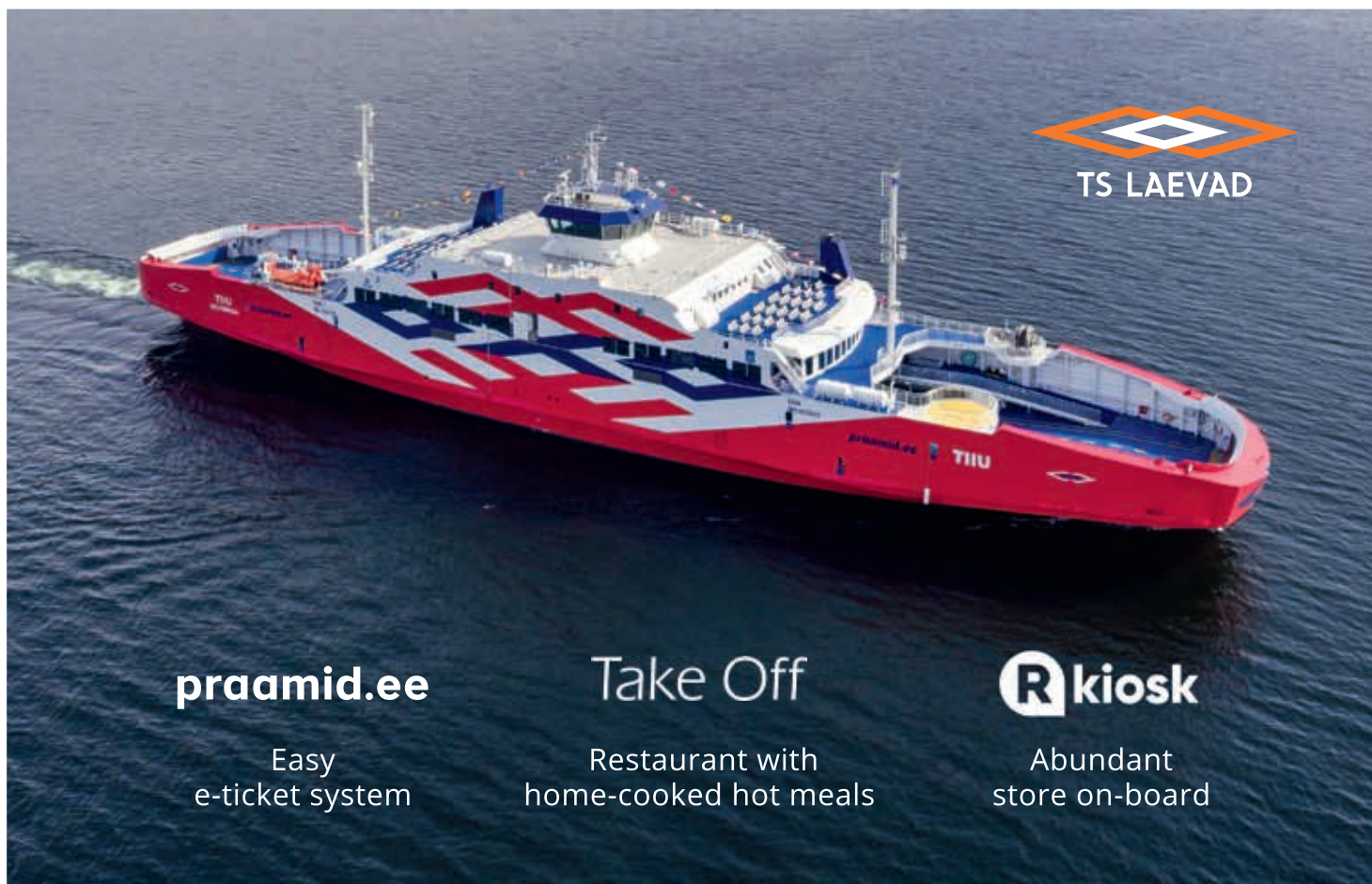
One of Hiiumaa's big draws not to be taken for granted is that it's quiet and largely devoid of crowds. Still, it can take a bit of a drive to do it right. During the occupation, Tahkuna's Lõimastu Beach was for long a totally off-limits military zone. The way there is not broad and grand, but getting there, you'll feel like you're the first to discover it. Follow the state forest ("RMK") hiking signs off the gravel road between Lehtma and Tahkuna. It's slightly easier to get to Palli Beach, which also has RMK primitive campsites and picnic tables. The long curve of the beach area is so quiet and deserted it defies logic. From Palli, a pleasant forest road leads in the direction of Kõpu Peninsula to Mägipäni. Cars, bikes and foot travel all options. Swimming opportunities abound along the way.


SUP

If you have your own stand-up paddleboard and are looking for a place to put in for a paddle among small islets, locate Naistlaiu port on Sarve Peninsula. Just be careful – the little islands aren't as they close as they appear, but the sea tends to be calm and a round trip to Kaevatsi is a longish day trip that should be within the abilities of beginners. SUPs can be hired from Endli Merematkad, a local company. For paddleboarding in high surf, head to Ristna.

PHOTOGRAPH: KAJA HIIS-RINNE

To keep Hiiumaa's beaches looking their deserted, gorgeous best, buy an orange trash bag and pack out what you pack in. Drop off the orange bag in at marked containers in Suuremõisa, Kärkla, Emmaste or Käina.





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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. Sadamad on külalislahked ja turvalised.

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.

Laevad saavad peale võtta kuni 12 reisijat.

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Composer Rudolf Tobias's Hiiumaa connection



We visit the museum located in the onetime childhood home of Estonia's first professional composer Rudolf Tobias at the outset of winter, trudging through the first banks of snow with the director of Hiiumaa Museum, Kauri Kiivramees, to reach the old farmstead.

"To be honest, the house has been connected to Tobias family for a fairly short time," Kauri explains. "The house was built to serve the sexton of Käina Church. It functioned like an ordinary farm. It was a rental house, the sextons would live here during their term and move on. As chance would have it, Rudolf Tobias was born here on 29 May 1873, son of the sexton Johannes Tobias and his wife Emilie. Rudolf spent his first 12 years here. The family continued on to Lääne County and Haapsalu. Much of Tobias's relatively short life was spent abroad – in St. Petersburg and Germany.

Only the original dwelling, a stone cellar and summer kitchen are left. The barn-dwelling and various barns and storehouses are gone. It's one of the few borough-type houses on Hiiumaa.

The house was in fairly poor condition in the 1950s. It's a wonder it survived. It's not after all directly connected to the church, which the Soviets would have frowned on. It was home to two elderly women who didn't have the energy for upkeep. The roof was starting to leak and the executive committee planned to install a memorial plaque at the site and tear down the house.

And then a local naturalist, a guy named Joann Kallas, made it his personal project to have a new roof installed. Kallas enlisted some others and the house was saved.

A nice example of a community working together.

Well, the men did have a falling-out finally...

But let's focus on the positive.

So, 1973 was Tobias's centenary. Although he had spent much of his youth in Kullamaa and Haapsalu, it was decided the museum would be on Hiiumaa.

Why?

Tobias was far from a ideological favourite of the regime, being from a church family and writing liturgical music. To top it all off, he took German citizenship in 1914. Yet he was a major figure. Maybe they thought the border zone in Hiiumaa was a good obscure place for the museum.

They gathered all of Tobias's worldly belongings left in Estonia. For example, the Tobias family's household property from Haapsalu and furniture Johannes Tobias had made himself.

The museum is part of Hiiumaa Museum?

The Hiiumaa local history museum was founded in 1967 and the Tobias House Museum became its first branch in 1973. The museum opening coincided with Tobias's centenary and major renovations were performed in the sexton's house. There are now four museums in the network, all around the island: Pikk Maja in Kärkla, the Kassari exhibition house on



PHOTOGRAPH: PIRET ALMISTE

Kassari Island, the Tobias in Käina and the Mihkli farm museum in Malvaste.

There's a rather imposing windmill here. You didn't mention that.

Yes, it was not owned by the sextons. It belonged to a neighbouring farm. It was actually this sort of movable windmill. It was originally in Ole village near Sõru and then it was moved to Hagaste village near Pühalepa. During property reform, the mill was on someone else's land. We brought it from there to the Tobiasese'.

When we entered the house, we saw something that could not have been anticipated based on the modest appearance.



RUDOLF TOBIAS

Composer and organist Rudolf Tobias is one of the leading figures in the inception of school of Estonian professional composer and national music culture. He was the first ethnic Estonian composer to acquire an academic education in composition. His activities and work significantly influenced Estonian musical life in its early period of development.

Tobias was born on 29 May 1873 in Käina. He was initially taught music by his father who was a sexton and organ builder and piano and organ repairer. Tobias's first extant forays into composing are from 1882, when he was only 9. Tobias wrote the first symphonic work in Estonian music (the Julius Caesar overture in 1896), the first cantata (John of Damascus, 1897), the first piano concerto (1897), the first piano sonata (1897), the first string quartet (1899), and the first oratorio (Jonah's Mission, 1909). The first serious Estonian piano works and first polyphonic works for piano and organ were also penned by Tobias.

Yes, the piano bought by Johannes Tobias where young Rudolf learned to play under his father's instruction. There's also Rudolf's broken baton, which attests to his temper – he did not shirk away from smashing his baton in two against the music stand when the choir or orchestra didn't meet his high standards. Johannes was not only a cleric but a talented carpenter, like many other people on Hiiumaa. He fashioned the Käina church organ, which is no longer extant. A few of his pieces of furniture can be seen in the museum. The museum has many items that Belonged to the family and to Rudolf himself, and a harmonium and an organ meant for home use, which are becoming rarer every day.

What is planned on Hiiumaa for his 150th anniversary?

From 29 May to 2 June, the museum will host an education programme week, with an opportunity to learn about Tobias's life and work. An education programme is available by advance arrangement year round at the Rudolf Tobias House Museum, "Helisev Seljaküla", which we encourage students from outside Hiiumaa to participate in. 29 May, the date of Tobias's birth, will feature a moment

Rudolf Tobias House Museum is open:

1 January – 29 May by advance arrangement or during special events

1 June – 20 August: Wed-Sun

21 August – 31 December by advance arrangement or during special events

of remembrance at the sexton's house, which opens the 150th anniversary festival events on Hiiumaa. In summer, plays and food-related events are planned for Tobias House, under the title "Encounters with Tobias" – the date and times can be found on our website and social media. Tours of the Tobias house led by Helgi Põllo will run all summer. Some of the Tobias events will take place at Pikk Maja – it will host a Postage stamp exhibit dedicated to Tobias and a Tobias book release event. The branches of the Hiiumaa Museums can be visited with advance arrangement outside regular opening hours – don't hesitate to make use of this option. ■

2023 is the Year of Music on Hiiumaa

This year marks 150th anniversary of the birth of Rudolf Tobias and the year has been accorded status as the Year of Music. Spring will feature the 15th Tobias piano competitions, the compulsory piece for which was composed by a young and talented composer from Hiiumaa, Marianna Liik. From 28 May to 17 June, a festival of Estonian music will

run in honour of Tobias, and an album of his choral works is due out. Besides now traditional summer music festivals, Kassari will host the smaller islands' song festival. All the concert activity doesn't change the fact that Hiiumaa is still a good place to seek out silence. After all, all music starts with silence.



PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASJUK

“Half-assed natives of Hiiumaa” Siim Nestor and Raul Saaremets

Hiiumaa is home to a variety of festivals and overall merrymaking most of the time. There is the Wind Fish Festival (“Tuulekala festival”), and the Sõru Jazz Festival, and even the Hiiu Folk event. On the mainland, a lot is being said about an event titled Sõru Saund. Let’s head over to Siim Nestor, traveling on the ferry to Hiiumaa, and learn more about it!



Siim Nestor.

Raul Saaremets.

land is divided between different owners, where to find connecting plugs and which way the wind is blowing. At the same time, we’ve had excellent cooperation with the sub-municipality of Emmaste and the community of the Sõruotsa village.

In addition to making the work of arranging the festival more circuitous, we are sorry that due to the move we won’t be able to work together with the people of that end of the Hiiumaa island again this year. Although humans have not evolved to live day and night in the vibrations of disco bass sounds, as far as we know, people of the Sõru region really like the festival (excepting one individual!); full farmsteads’ worth of people have been arriving together.

But we felt that in order to keep the festival fresh, visitors from afar should be accommodated in other wonderful places in Hiiumaa as well. The nature in each of the four sides of the island is totally different. In Suuresadama, even daylight itself falls in a manner different to Sõru.

This is also the reason for the new and overtly laconic name Saund. The festival that’s been taking place in July in Hiiumaa since 2017 will now move to its fourth site of happening, and we feel we’re still moving on. Probably we’ll arrive back at the Sõru harbor at some point, so that those who so wish can reacquire themselves with the good old juniper trees and rocks on the shore.

So, the Saund festival now has a new harbor, a new seaside site with Ungru, the best restaurant in Hiiumaa, smelling delicious right in the middle of it. The selection of music at the event will still be curated with the aim of making people dance themselves senseless, be amazed at everything they hear and see, and wonder breathlessly at all the beauty. We can assure that the musical programme of Saund will be so modern it will not fit in one’s pants. And thus the festival will bring to Hiiumaa the best audiences — since Hiiumaa is the best in the world, our audience must also be the best —, that together with the extraordinary music and the magnificent atmosphere of the island will provide a high class experience!” ■

“You’re the organizer, right?”

“Yes, me and Raul Saaremets,” says Siim, pointing at Raul who is currently ordering soup.

The guys, who ask to be called “half-assed natives of Hiiumaa”, explain:

“Everyone who has been going to the Sõru Saund festival, everyone who’s been there and done that, have to come to terms with the fact that they haven’t actually been there yet.” The simple reason

being that in the summer of 2023, the festival will not be held in the traditional Sõru harbor, but at the Suuresadama harbor all the way on the northern edge of the island. Also, the festival’s name will be shortened to simply Saund.

“Why so?”

“Mostly this is to make the organizers’ lives harder,” explain the organizers. “In and around the Sõru harbor, we were already more or less aware of how the

The background of the poster features a field of purple lavender flowers in the foreground. In the upper left corner, there is a large, stylized red heart. The sky is a gradient of red and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

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For Hiiumaa, sauna is sacred

2023 has been declared the year of the sauna in Estonia's rural communities. Hiiumaa is no less enthusiastic about sauna than the rest of Estonia, maybe even more.

EACH TO THEIR OWN

Saunas are pretty standard in Hiiumaa homes and at the least, most locals will have a neighbour whose facilities they use. As elsewhere, saunas are inseparable from refreshments, good conversation and robust Hiiumaa humour.

MOVE OVER, WORLD CUP AND RALLY RACING

Sauna is an important, almost sacred on Saturdays. Ott Tänak's latest WRC even or World Cup games might as well not exist. Sauna day also fell on Wednesday in the old days, but nowadays, the mid-week bathing tradition in the sauna is not as common due to modern showers.

SAUNA REQUIRES DEDICATION

Besides traditions, it's important to go to the sauna in a good mood. Socializing is important. You might here locals refer to a news agency called KKNRSR, which is an Estonian acronym for "some woman from Kärđla said". It is customary to greet the sauna upon entering, "Tere, sauna!" There were a few prohibitions, for example, one could not whistle in a sauna. Civility is required.



USE OF A BATH BROOM IS AN ART UNTO ITSELF

In Hiiumaa, the saying was that there were four things that made a person healthy: sauna, bath brooms, strong spirits and tar. The effect of the massage with the bath broom came not from the vigorous lashing but the surface area of the leaf.

Bath brooms can be made from twigs from any species of tree, each one having its own effect. Juniper has a tonic, stimulating effect. Birch was the most common. But on Hiiumaa, many different materials were used, even an old fishing net, or nettles. The bundle of branches was bound not with string but birch cord.

Bath brooms were repurposed after use in sauna, such as a broom for cleaning out bread ovens.

SAUNA FOR THE FAMILY AND GUESTS

There is a wide variety of saunas on Hiiumaa and probably all of the world's sauna types are represented on the island. There are igloo saunas, steam sauna, tent sauna, barrel saunas, Estonian/Finnish-type saunas. There are two working public smoke saunas that can be booked. Saunas on wheels and barrel saunas are portable and can be set up in woods, by the seashore or a snowy field.

AN IMPORTANT RITUAL

In the old days, the life cycle was bookended by the sauna – both in Hiiumaa and in the rest of Estonia. Sauna was also poor man's medicine for illness and various aches and pains – vigorous use of bath brooms warded off back pain, upper respiratory afflictions were treated with a bit of pine or spruce essence in the water thrown on the rocks.

In times of hardship, not every farm had sauna every week. Firewood was after all a valuable commercial product sold to the mainland and people economized by banding together in fewer saunas – the village's saunas were stoked in rotating fashion.

The process of heating the sauna was a ritual activity itself. It usually took all day with an old-fashioned stove. Five hours, plus time for cleaning and ventilation. Living spaces were heated with branches and confider cones, but saunas relied on more premium split birch and aspen. A well-heated sauna stayed warm until the morning and the water could be thrown on the rocks the second day. In the old days, a wooden bath was used, since the water was believed to be superior to that in ordinary bathtubs.

TRADITIONAL SAUNA PRODUCTS AVAILABLE ON HIIUMAA

Hiiumaa has its own local sauna soaps and products. A fine fishing net is used instead of a lufa. There is a specific back-washing accessory shaped like a length of rope, a bag for tossing water on the rocks, and mud from Käina Bay.

Old-fashioned sauna foods were barley soda bread, barley porridge, peas, dried apples and a kind of whole-wheat bread shaped into flat loaves.

Sauna bus festival invites inventors

For 17 years now, Hiiumaa's sauna club has held a moving sauna festival where the year's best mobile saunas are selected. Some are on trailers, some are self-propelled. It's a forum for sharing experiences on matters such as the proper temperature for use of a bath broom to what tyres to install on a sauna bus.

While there are self-propelled sauna vehicles elsewhere in Estonia, the annual gathering is a Hiiumaa tradition.

PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASJUK

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We catch up with educator and culture organizer Õie Laksberg at a theatre rehearsal.

“Well, Hiiumaa folk are a little conservative in regard to mainlanders. I got a husband from the mainland several decades ago and thought: dang it, he’s not going to leave, is he?” Õie laughs. She finds it amusing that we came to Hiiumaa to put together a special magazine.

It’s currently the Year of Music and Year of Sauna on the island. Tell us a little about sauna traditions on Hiiumaa.

Õie notes that she hasn’t studied the tradition but did grow up on a farm: her grandparents were from Sarve village. “It didn’t have electricity when my children were born – that was 1980. But there was a traditional sauna and everything was authentic. If anyone talks about a sauna, they remember the emotion of being in the sauna at grandmother’s by candlelight and then repaired to the room with home-spun, line-dried linens – how sweet they smelled! And also how good the sauna smelled with its tinge of wood smoke!”

“A sauna should smell like a sauna used to!”

What’s changed today?

“For one thing, those essential oils and extracts aren’t my thing. They aren’t part of sauna. If you want aromatherapy, go to a spa or bubble bath, but not to a sauna.”

In the old days, people went to sauna by candlelight and no one ever thought of any moral teachings like being in the presence of others naked. These are hang-ups that we have only ourselves to blame for.”

But today there’s no sexuality in sauna, either, is there?

Sure, there is. People take saunas in their clothes nowadays. But it wasn’t that way traditionally. The custom of a sauna being dimly lit should stay. Sure, you can have a small electric light, I wouldn’t insist on open flame, but a sauna should remain smelling like a sauna.

In the winters, sauna was every two weeks. In the summer, more often, there was more manual labour and the need to bathe: sauna was the only place to get hot water. But when the sauna was heated every two weeks, it lasted all day, ritualistically. Bread was also baked in a wood-fired oven. And an old cast iron pot of barley porridge was placed on the stovetop, that needed five hours of simmering. You can’t beat that aroma. You can prepare a Christmas roast in the oven, but it’s not the same! It’s too

bad that Hiiumaa doesn’t have a tourist spot that’s close to a real farm. They do offer genuine saunas but there’s no place where there’s traditional food and sauna – everything in one place...

Are people on Hiiumaa avid sauna-goers?

Yes, it seems that way to me. Sauna has been such a big part of our lives. Sauna and a summer kitchen were often together or close to one another. Water for bathing was heated in the summer kitchen and when someone died, the body was taken to the sauna: the last ritual washing of the body was done in the sauna, with a switch of birch branches. Women gave birth in saunas: life revolved around the sauna, because it was sterile. Sooty but sterile. And another tradition: bread dough was placed on a child’s skin, it was dried in the sauna and then peeled. It was believed it would keep children from becoming hairy. Seems pretty gross, but that is what they used to do!

Do you have a message for tourists?

“Please respect us. You don’t bring culture to us, we have lived here and You should follow us. It’s not our style to drive Up to the water’s edge and jump in. If you come to Hiiumaa, come to Hiiumaa, not to Selver. Get a bike and ride in the forests. Don’t speed around, take time off!” ■



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There's something special about Hiiumaa's winters

Tõnu Õnnepalu, the accomplished writer, who moved to the island after university, describes his connection to Hiiumaa.

Paris and Hiiumaa are two very different things. Yet it seems to me that you have enjoyed life in both places. Do you find peace of mind or is there some other shared quality you find good?

They have indeed become the twin poles of my life. From Hiiumaa, I went to Paris, and when returning from Paris, I always came back to Hiiumaa. On the island, I dreamed of the big city and in the big city, I thought of the small island. Not always, of course. But both places offered peace of mind, time for mindful presence, times where life – life and life only – was interesting and I didn't want anything else. These sorts of good periods when nothing else is needed were often related to writing. Maybe writing and the written word is my real homeland and home place. It is after all a place you can take with you everywhere; you don't even need a suitcase. A place that isn't a place always lies someplace else. "*Mujal kodus*" (~ "at home elsewhere") was the title of my trilogy and maybe only now do I understand what it means.

But why have they both grown so important, this island and this city? I can't really say. When you've made a place your own and it's become home, you don't really ultimately know why. There are 100 reasons and none is a perfect fit or the full story. Paris, because there you're met on all sides by people's life, the world. Hiiumaa, because there you are confronted with secret and mystery, your own life and soul. That's one way to put it, but there could be many others to express it. They have simply become the places in my life, places with very intense moments and

times but of course, all the rest of it well – tedium, melancholy, desperation.

You might say it's a coincidence, that it could have been other places instead of those ones. Maybe... Although I don't believe it. For me, there's some ironclad logic there, not that I can't completely account for it. Who could make a complete accounting of their own life, anyway? You live simply, without knowing what will become of it all, following your heart; your intuition, stake it on good fortune.... As best you know how.

Everybody knows what to do on Hiiumaa in summer. But in winter?

Oh, I could talk a lot more about Hiiumaa's winters than its summers. Summer is a settled matter, summer is summer everywhere, light and fair. In summer, you just live, and anywhere in the countryside there's so much work and activity that it dictates the rhythm of your days.

When I think about my Hiiumaa years, the winters come to mind first. There's something very special about them. The winter island is a totally different place than a summer island. The summer island is everyone's, while the winter island is yours alone. It is a sort of magical land you can invent, map and bestow a name on. Hiiumaa's winters have each been very different. Some, but only a few, have been seriously cold with deep snow. So those I remember due to that fact alone. The high blue walls of ridged ice on Laeste Bay, skiing on the sea ice, with bright frosty evening, northern lights.

But there have been a greater number of winters that tug and wrestle on the borderlines of two worlds. You can always lament the lack of snow cover but it comes with one big advantage: you can walk and hike freely. I have hiked and wandered Hiiumaa's woods in late autumn, winter and early spring more than I have in summer. Actually, I haven't really done it at all in summer. That's a time when the forests are hot, close and mosquito-filled, a time to dip in the sea and lie down on the sand again... Then, it's back home to mow and weed, or again to the forest to pick bilberries, because

the larder needs stocking for the winter.

Winter on the other hand represents freedom. The days are awfully short but that makes it interesting to catch the short day and the couple of bright sunrays that glimmer off the sea. Walk kilometres down the sand compacted by the waves or frozen solid, always with the eternal roar of the sea in your ears. What a form of meditation! Walking this way, you disappear somewhere so far away. With the leaves off many trees, there is better visibility through the forests, which sets the stage for interesting encounters. And a fire can help make the wintry day longer. In summer, or a dry spring, fires are inadvisable but in winter with snow on the ground, it's fine. You collect a few dry spruce branches, find a stout knob of pine oozing with pitch that has fallen from the treetops, and the flames will last well into the night.

If the moon is full, it's also not a problem to cover the distance home along the shore. The moon glints off the waves more mysteriously than the sun ever could, the crisp air makes your legs pick up the pace. At home, another fire, this time in the stove, and a hot nourishing meal... I immediately recall a classic Hiiumaa casserole prepared from potatoes and herring or sprats, popularized by legendary local Helmi, or even more basic, potatoes roasted in hot coals of the same stove with their skin on, served with butter and salt... Hiiumaa winter is a true wonderland, and I could go on exalting it. Of course, like all things, it finally ends. Spring comes. But that's another story. ■

“On the island, I’m in sync with nature, listening and observing.”

I'm in a Tallinn café with Edith Karlson and we're talking about Hiiumaa.



What's your link to Hiiumaa?

My partner and I have a house and a small tract of woodland on Hiiumaa.

Have you been there for a long time?

I found myself on the island ten years ago and started coming here every summer. Some very good friends of mine bought a piece of land at Kiduspe right by the sea and they had a camper van and I pitched my tent there. I had a rug outside the tent, inside a lantern. And that is how I lived all summer long. Living in a tent was an authentic primitive way to savour life. A liberating and pleasant experience. Every outdoor sound is right there in your listening room.

Then a new person came into my life, and they in the process of building a home on Hiiumaa.

Lucky you!

Yes, I hit the jackpot. I moved out of the tent and into the house and we continued building it. Those sorts of humble beginnings are, I think, the proper way to start out if you're not a native of the island. That gives you an understanding of whether you really want to be here and you can try out different places.

But did you get used to living in a house?

The first thing on my mind was what happened to all the sounds of the sea and birds. Then I would remember, ah yes, I'm now a house dweller. What was of course positive was that I can now be on Hiiumaa much more – half of the time on the island, the rest of the time in Tallinn.

The trip to Hiiumaa isn't too long?

No. You can get work done on the ferry or just stare at the grey sea and get attuned to the island life. And there's also the option of the plane. My friends bought a summer home in Karula National Park in the wilds of southern Estonia – now that is a long haul!

Has Hiiumaa inspired your work as an artist in some way?

In general, I try to disengage from my work on Hiiumaa.. I think about artworks, but it is different than you might think. I don't do the physical work of a sculptor on the island, but I'm in sync with nature, listening and observing. That's also part of my work as an artist. I have found some fascinating items for my work at Samaaria shop here.

My friend Nõka, who is half-hiidlane, has found all sorts of things while beachcombing and they can be given special meanings. What about you?

I do collect all sorts of things. Even things I don't know right away where to use them. Maybe the time will come years from now. I am currently collecting sea-oats, for instance.

I have found three messages in bottles.

Wow. I have sent some, but have never found any.

When I found my first one, I had just said, “let's go to the beach, I want to find a bottle with a message in it”. And lo and behold, inside an eggnog liqueur bottle I found a message that a German family had written in high spirits after draining the bottle.

But have you found art?

So, I found this dead seal on the beach. I went back to Tallinn. When I returned a week later, the eagles had left only a skeleton behind. Upon returning to Tallinn, I started regretting leaving it there.

My friend Kris Lemsalu urged me to go and retrieve it. So I went with my parents. The sea had risen, the skeleton was nearly under water. I dragged it up with my father. My father was upset but helped.

We dragged it to a pedestal where I also had a mummified fox.

Wait, you do realize we're writing a story about what a great and romantic place Hiiumaa is?

Well, sure, but Hiiumaa can tolerate one freak who doesn't shy away from the macabre for their artwork. My partner is sort of a minimalist, who doesn't like having more things than one needs – particularly dead animal carcasses – in the yard. I had to lobby hard for that seal.

Now the seal has become art: a man in a transparent suit made from greenhouse plastic sheeting, who has a dead seal before him. ■

Enn kunila, philanthropist

Enn, an entrepreneur and patron of the arts, says he has had a particularly warm connection and relationship with Hiiumaa for over 30 years. He's had a country home in Kärddla since 1990.



The exhibition "Four links in a chain" by A. Laikmaa, K. Mägi, A. Vabbe and E. Kits at the Long House of the Museum of Hiiumaa in 2013.

SUPPORT FOR ART EVENTS

The first exhibitions of works from Enn Kunila's art collection took place in 2007 at the Kärddla Cultural Centre and the Long House of the Hiiumaa Museum.

"On 29 May 2008, we opened the largest shopping centre in Hiiumaa anchored by a Selver supermarket, with 1640 m² of retail space. Since that time, Selver has been a constant sponsor of culture and sports on Hiiumaa. Some of the most important projects were the renovation of Kärddla Church, the Hiiu Folk Festival, Hiiumaa Homecoming Festival, Sõru Jazz, and support for Hiiumaa football and volleyball. There are many more. Selver closed-circuit radio and other channels Estonia-wide do free promotion of events on Hiiumaa."

"For all these years, Hiiumaa has been a place where I get spiritual contentment. I have usually managed to leave my everyday problems and cares at Rourkela harbour when I go to Hiiumaa," says Kunila.

"A massive comprehensive work published in 2015 was titled 'Hiiumaa. Nature. Time. People'. These keywords have very important for me and my family. Time spent on Hiiumaa, the relationship with the beautiful nature and people who love their island have always been irreplaceable."

In the early years, the bulk of his energy was spent on fixing up and maintaining our country house and garden and satisfaction came from the possibility of making a little patch of Estonia look better. As years went by, good relations developed with many people from different walks of life on Hiiumaa, which led to the first joint projects.



The exhibition "Olev Subbi's nudes and Lurich" at the Long House of the Museum of Hiiumaa in 2018.



The Three Basses at Kärkla church: Jaakko Ryhänen, Koit Soasepp and Priit Volmer. July 7, 2011.

concerts (eight in Kärkla Church and one in Käina Fine Arts School), featuring works by Tobias and other composers and performances by the most distinguished ensembles and soloists in the country. The Tallinn Chamber Orchestra conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste, the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (also Kaljuste), the Tobias string quartet, the Collegium Musicale chamber choir (Endrik Üksvärav), Hiiumaa Chamber Orchestra, Estonian National Symphony (Olari Elts), the Estonian National Male Choir (Mikk Üleoja), soloists Mirjam Mesak, Ain Anger, Raiko Raalik, Tamar Nugis, Ivori Ilja, Mari Poll, Mihkel Poll, and Piret Aidulo. The artistic director of the festival is Arne Mikk. Besides concerts, 29 May will also have a moment of remembrance at Tobias's birthplace in Käina and the release of a book and postage stamp at the Long House of the Hiiumaa Museum in Kärkla.

"It has been a great joy to see and experience the progress that has taken place in the field of culture over the years on Hiiumaa. I believe that continuous development of culture and sport is a determining factor for young educated specialists wanting to move here to live and advance life on Hiiumaa," said the art collector in closing. ■

PERSONAL ACTIVITY ON THE CULTURAL FRONT CONTINUES

All told, Hiiumaa hosted nine exhibitions of works in my art collection from 2007 to 2018. Six of them were at the Long House and three at Kärkla Cultural Centre," says Enn. See kunilaart.ee for more information.

"In 2011, we founded the Hiiumaa Culture Society, we purchased an Estonia concert piano and started concerts at Kärkla Church and Kärkla Music School. Over the years, many great musicians have performed on Hiiumaa: Ain Anger, Mihkel Poll, Jaakko Ryhänen, Koit Soasepp, Priit Volmer, Ivori Ilja, Annely Peebo, Piia Paemurru, Marko Matvere, Janne Ševtšenko, Aare Saal, Helen Lokuta, Kristel Pärtna, Rauno Elp, Oliver Kuusik and a number of others. The piano has also travelled across Hiiumaa to help carry out various music events.

In 2014, the Friends of Hiiumaa Society was founded and preparations began for the renovation of the Kärkla Church; which spanned 2018 to 2020. Many people made the renovation possible.

The church, completely fixed up and used year-round for concerts, now hosts many music events with different organizers. In 2022, for example, it hosted over 30 concerts.

One of the top events of 2023 will be the 150th anniversary of the birth of early Estonian composer Rudolf Tobias. There will be a festival organized by the Hiiumaa Culture Society, running from 28 May to 17 June, which will have nine



"A winter view of a farmstead" by Aarne Mikimaa (2nd half of the 1930s). From the collection of Enn Kunila

Jaak Adamson and the Legends of Hiiumaa

Artist Jaak Adamson's (1938–2022) son, — a historian, and an educational functionary Andres Adamson — says that although his father was born in Tallinn and lived the second half of his life in Slovakia, he considered himself a true Hiiumaa native until the day of his death. He spent most of his childhood, including the war years, at his grandfather's house in Orjaku, but left to go to school in Tallinn.

"Dad has said in a television documentary (1978) that he has collected some 50 legends from around Hiiumaa, which he then reworked and/or used as subject matter for his paintings. At the same time he held an exhibition titled "Legends of Hiiumaa", which included a printed booklet containing his reworkings of some of the legends," Jaak's son recalls.

Andres himself recently published a novella about 17th century Hiiumaa, based on the legends and stories that the author heard as a child from his father, or when travelling around the island together with him. "When I added photos of his paintings (only the ones that were usable, of course) to my book "The Sorcerer's Name Was Mats, They Say" ("Nõia nimi olnud Mats"), I accompanied them with the same texts, only changing them a little," Andres explains. ■



▲ "The Pig-Running Track" (1973). Private collection.

At one time, the old housewife at the Antsu-Jürna farmstead in Luidja was seriously ill, on her way out. Her son Priidu thought, "she's definitely going now", and decided to slaughter a pig for the upcoming funeral. The old lady, they say, didn't want to be a burden to her family, so she refused to eat or drink anything, and soon perished. Although she didn't want to be a burden, she didn't want to abandon her dear home and loved ones either, so her spirit went into the pig. When Priidu of Antsu-Jürna and Peeter of Pendi began to slaughter the pig for the funeral, the stuck animal wrestled itself free from the men's hands, trampled down the newly built roundpole fence, and ran into the woods, with the son following, axe in hand. Running hither and thither through the shallow carr, using its last strength to cross the high moor, the wounded pig made it to Pärnaku hill, where under a verdant oak, pure spring water was gushing from silver spigots. Delicious food was laid out on golden and silver platters placed on the velvet-green grass, mountains of pillows embroidered with tinsel were towering on purple carpets, awaiting any weary traveler to lie down and rest their bones. The pig drank, ate, and gave up the ghost. By the time Priidu arrived, he found only a dead pig; all of the witchcraft had vanished. Nowadays the road in the Rattagu wood between Luidja and Pärnaku is very winding. This stretch of the road is called the Pig-Running Track ("Seajooksurada").

◀ "The Fable of the Blessed Child" (1974). Private collection.

("This was actually painted on the headboard of my cot when I was a baby." — A. A.)

A Hiiumaa man, it was told, was very cross with his wife because she didn't have any children. They say he even promised to drown himself in the sea. One day, when the husband was away, the wife accidentally caught an owl. She had a bright idea! The wife called her mother from the village, and with her help swaddled the owl in a child's clothes. Then the husband returned home. The mother-in-law had good news to share: "Come, see, your wife has birthed a child!" The husband rejoices: "Where is it?" The mother-in-law replies: "Come, see, your wife is tending to it in the bed." The husband looks at the baby. "Yes, he seems to be good boy. Father's eyes, mom's nose, and the kind of nails one needs to hoop barrels!" On Saturday, the wife released the owl. The owl, they say, flew out the window and went its own way. Seeing this, the man cried: "Deary me! This child must indeed be blessed! He is flying straight up into Heaven!"



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#Kassari Puhkekeskus #Vetsi Talli Puhkeküla #Resto Lest & Lammas #Hiiu Õlle Koda



“We can find an artisan for just about every field.”

Many have heard about the arts and crafts fairs held on Hiiumaa in summer and winter and the Meistrite Maja shop in central Kärkla has also caught the eyes of tourists. That’s where we caught up with organization’s leader Nele Eller.

How many members does the society have and where do you find them?

We have 133 members. They usually find us, but sometimes you have to coax them. People are modest and might just say “it’s just a hobby I do at home”. We try to keep an eye on various offshoots of arts and crafts and steer people in the right direction so that they can maintain or rediscover their skills. One condition we have for selling goods in our shop is that the person has to be connected to Hiiumaa in some way and that also is an incentive for becoming a member.

Which categories of crafts are traditionally the most popular among Hiiumaa islanders?

The most common ones are knitting, crocheting and sewing. There are also quite a few rug weavers. I’d like to say there are male artisans but we have very few of them and we hold on to them as much as we can since they often do tiring physical work and don’t have much time to work on crafts for sale.

Do the men produce anything?

The men mainly do woodworking and blacksmithing, but it’s a fact that Hiiumaa also has men who enjoy knitting.

Are there any things that Hiiumaa men and women don’t make and which have to be purchased from Saaremaa, or China? Or something



The Hiiumaa Handicraft Society was founded on 12 December 1998, another nice example of Hiiumaa islanders banding together to generate benefits for not just participants but raising the value of the whole island and its people.

PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASJUK

you just think could be more of?

In general, we can find an artisan for just about every field. There are fewer leather workers. Ceramic artists are nearly all summer Hiiumaa people, but we really want ceramics to start to be made locally again. We are tolerant of our neighbours and there are some parts that really are cheaper to order from China.

Some nice books have been written about Hiiumaa handicraft. Which ones do you recommend to those with a serious interest?

The latest one is about Hiiumaa crocheted lace, which is completely devoted to Hiiumaa. We also hope to publish books about local handicraft in cooperation with Hiiumaa Museum. The museum is the best source of detailed information.

Where can tourists buy handicrafts?

In summer season, the Heltermaa crafts house, located at the gateway to the island, stocks a good range. It can also be found year-round in Kärkla, at the Meistrite Maja (Masters’ House) Vabrik

väljak 2. In winter, it is open certain days of the week but the number is posted on the door. If the lights are on, that means the house is open.

The shop gives our members motivation to make more crafts, since there is a retail outlet. They can meet their customers there, show samples. We also teach people various handicraft techniques there.

The online store is always up at <https://hiiukasitoo.ee/pood/>. Since we haven’t managed to list all of our wares on the online channel, just write us if you can’t find what you’re looking for. We might have it in the shop.

What are the most quintessential Hiiumaa crafts, in your opinion?

Certainly items with our characteristic stripes, our glove and lace patterns and anything modelled after antique items. Definitely also Hiiumaa folk costumes, which can be commissioned from a number of our members. ■

HIIMUMAA LIGHTHOUSES *Tahkuna*

Hiiumaa has a number of significant lighthouses – Kõpu, Ristna, Hiiesaare, Sõru, and various smaller beacons. Today Tahkuna lighthouse can be climbed by anyone (like Kõpu and Ristna), though that wasn't the case during the long occupation.

PHOTOGRAPH: ANNI JÜLGE

The lighthouse was built on Tahkuna peninsula after the St. Peterburg-Paldiski railway had been completed and a greater number of ships needed to safely navigate these waters. The 43-metre-tall tower was built in 1875. During the occupation, a whole team staffed the lighthouse – four families who were collectively responsible for keeping the light on – certainly they didn't want to fuel the old libel that the Hiiumaa folk lured ships on to the shoals for piracy in the traditions of the Unger-Sternbergs! Today only two people live in the historical dwelling under the lighthouse, Viktor and Liia Toom. Liia herself doesn't like to climb up to the top these days but answers questions with alacrity.

THE WORK OF A LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER IN THE 1970S

"My husband came here to work in the 1970s. It wasn't difficult work but it involved a lot of responsibility," she says. "When Viktor was hired, the lighthouse was on manual mode. There was a watchman room, with a schedule and it depended on the daylight when the light was switched on and off. During our time, the system had changed over to electricity but the old diesel tanks are still around, so when the power went out, they switched over to diesel. The light shone with a range of 13 nautical miles." She says the rules were strict in the old days. Dusting was performed regularly. The dome glass was kept spotless, cleaned with spirits. All of the lighthouses were in radio communication with each other. Sometimes they called each other several times a day to see how they were doing and whether anyone needed



assistance. The lighthouse keepers had to do weather and ice observation and the data were transmitted by telephone.

HIIDLASED – A SUI GENERIS PEOPLE

Viktor and Liia originally came here from southern Estonia but they have 54 years under their belt as locals. Was it hard at first? Liia says: "When I made the move, my friends in Põlva warned me that it was like going to Estonia's Siberia. But I got used to it quickly, the school where I worked had wonderful children and very dear parents." She says the Hiiumaa islanders are like a nation in their own right. "They're more introverted than other Estonians. They look at a stranger for a long time in an evaluative way until they finally accept them, but when they do it's for real. They don't intrude in your life, they're very observant. I remember I once complained that my TV was acting up – talking to someone outdoors. The neighbour guy came around not too long thereafter, tools in hand, said he had heard I needed help. They're also very cohesive, I saw that while working at the school – if someone gets in trouble, the social network is there for them. The community functions well."

The lighthouse became fully automated in 2012 and that was the end of the romantic profession of lighthouse keeper. When I ask Liia whether she ever forgot to light the beacon, she looks at me roguishly and laughs: "Well, sometimes we were a little late, that did happen sometimes." ■

For more information about the nautical side of Hiiumaa, visit <https://teejuht.halulaev.ee/>

“Hiiu Leht functions thanks to the strength of the community”



Hiiu Leht, the local newspaper just recently on the brink of closing down, has truly gotten its second wind. Having served a month and a half as editor-in-chief, Piret Eesmaa presents a closer look at the future plans of Hiiu Leht.

Please, say a few words about yourself. What is your connection to Hiiumaa?

I was born and raised in Hiiumaa and graduated from secondary school here. I was away for a while, but the connection to the island has always remained. Once I became a mother, I started spending even more time here, until we actually moved to Hiiumaa during the coronavirus pandemic. Basically, the virus was the last boost that pushed us back. I remember the moment very well; we had been quarantined in a flat in Tallinn for two months, and in May we came to Hiiumaa. Globeflowers were in bloom, and there were kilometres of land around to walk on without coming into contact with anybody... What freedom! Right around that time Hiiu Leht were looking for a reporter, and my husband, who is a Spaniard, told me that this was the moment for me to apply. He agreed to move to Hiiumaa at once.

At some point there were worries about Hiiu Leht being closed down. How was that threat averted?

I was not there for that exact moment, as I was busy with the job of being a mom to a one-year-old at the time. By the time I arrived in the picture, the threat was already averted. The newspaper was saved thanks to the efforts of 25 people with tight connections to Hiiumaa, who decided to lend a helping hand and buy up Hiiu Leht.

Why do you think those people did that?

Because of a sense of mission. They were convinced that Hiiumaa must have its own newspaper. At the Hiiu Leht disco in Kalana this summer Andreas Kaju, one of the new owners, cited a study done in the US that found that the fewer publications and journalists a municipality has, the fewer people will be running for local elections. In other words — if the local paper fails to keep a sharp eye on the local government, people start to become more passive.

Who are the main target group of Hiiu Leht?

The natives of Hiiumaa. We want to make a paper for residents of Hiiumaa of all ages, so that everyone will find something in it for themselves. It is also very important to make as many people with as many different opinions as possible feel that the paper reflects their voices. The paper should be a safe space for everyone to express their opinions, raise issues that are important to them, and also hold peaceful debates.

Tiit Pruuli: I, for one, am the kind of person who, when travelling to, for example, Jõgeva, will definitely by a copy of Vooremaa (Jõgeva municipality's local paper). In essence, I will buy the local paper in any municipality. Should I also buy Hiiu Leht when visiting Hiiumaa?

Yes, definitely. With exactly that demographic in mind, we published the Summer Paper (“Suveleht”) as a supplement to Hiiu Leht, so that people who come here and don't know Hiiumaa very well would have somewhere to start if they

were interested in learning about the more hidden parts of Hiiumaa. We wrote about the beaches one doesn't come across very often, the good places to eat and the cool events to go to, suggested books to read about Hiiumaa and libraries to visit on the island that are wonderful centres of local life, as well as good places from which to do remote work.

But, coming back to your question — yes, visitors are definitely recommended to read Hiiu Leht. Here you will find the stories of the local people as well as analysis of the more serious issues.

What do you yourself consider most important about Hiiu Leht?

One day our editorial office received a visit from a person who told us a cute story about why she needs Hiiu Leht. You see, her husband works on a ship, while she lives in Hiiumaa, so in order to still kind of be with each other they solve the crossword puzzle together on the phone — one from the ship, the other from home.

Sometimes the stories about why the paper is necessary can be quite unexpected. People often joke that death notices are the most useful part, but I'm sure there are many other reasons as well. (Laughs)

What inspires you?

That's the other joke — what do we have to write about, if nothing ever happens in Hiiumaa. But actually the office phone is ringing off the hook all of the time. A local priest publishes a collection of poems, youths from Emmaste perform at a big venue in the capital, a beloved general practitioner retires, a whole village is left without power after a storm — something happens every day. We are a community newspaper, and people must have the opportunity to share their news through us. These are our Hiiumaa news, from the people of Hiiumaa to the people of Hiiumaa. We help to make little things bigger and more important. I wish a native of the island would approach you on the ferry and tell you to read Hiiu Leht, because it is such a good newspaper! ■

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Dispatch from the forests

The number of hunters on Hiiumaa is a stable 260-270. We sit down with brothers Paavo and Marko Pruul at Emmaste hunting lodge and ask about how the multifaceted practice is faring.



"The less the media hears about us, the better. Usually, we get attacked," they say. "Hunters tend to have a negative image."

Why negative?

When someone buys a summer house or land on the island they forbid hunting in the area. That suits the wild pigs well and they go and visit the new residents. People build a fence – but the pigs get into the enclosure under the fence. A year goes by and the homeowner comes to us and relations normalize," says Paavo.

"A hunter is a tool, an instrument. We're not the cause of the problem but the solution," puts in Marko.

The brothers say Hiiumaa has more than 2000 wild boar. "If we didn't hunt for a year, there would be more of them than people here," he says and Paavo, nodding, adds: "Sometimes people call the police on us – because of the sound, but we don't know how to shoot without it making a sound. You can't tickle wild pigs to death, you know."

Have you tried?

Paavo laughs: "Of course! I've tried all the

different ways!"

There was an incident with hunting dogs on the island that still gets brought up sometimes.

"It's a lot of made-up noise. Some Italians had too many dogs in their car. Afterwards, someone started saying the Italian hunters shoot their dogs when they no longer needed it. That's foolish talk. They are expensive animals, they are cared for like you wouldn't believe. A hunting dog is like a valuable gun, why should you throw it away?"

What became of the bear on Hiiumaa?

The men venture that it might be sleeping. "But yeah, we've never had more excitement than with that bear. It was spotted by many people: It passed within 10 metres of some of them." There are no reports of the bear causing any damage on the island, say the Pruuls.

You don't hunt the bear?

"Goodness, no! It doesn't have to be bagged!" say the hunters, seeming cross.

What's required to hunt on Hiiumaa?

"The Emmaste hunting club has 38 registered hunters. In the early years of the lodge there were 8.

The club had a condition that all hunters had to be connected to Hiiumaa – from the island or own real estate here. The first year was a probationary year for Hiiumaa natives, too – to see whether they fit in and lived up to the ideals. Still; visitors from the mainland can also hunt. They just call ahead of time and the decision is made as to the exact arrangements," Marko says.

At one point, there was not much wild game on Hiiumaa.

Paavo: "There were originally foxes and hares: Hares, grouse and small game were the main species.

Roe deer came in the 1930s and they were hunted in the 1960s. Moose came in the 1960s. The first moose was bagged in a group hunt in 1968. Deer were introduced by the forestry organization and the hunting club in several tranches, in the 1970s."

But wolves?

"The last wolf is in the Hiiumaa Museum, shot in the early 1970s. There were none for a few decades." But sometimes wolves must be bagged as well. "The brothers say at one point, the sheep flock decreased from 4,500 to 3,000. It was because of the wolves.

"We pursued them but they fled on to the ice. We didn't follow them there. But the next day, we tracked them, we saw that the pack had run 2 kilometres toward Muhu Island but had turned around. We hoped they would just leave, but no!" says Paavo

What happens to wolves after they are bagged?

"The skin is tanned, and the carcass goes to the white-tailed eagles. But it is hard to hunt a wolf. They're an equal adversary for a hunter," says Marko. Says Paavo: "I also delivered a wolf's bones to an artist. That artist believes they are imbued with some kind of power once transformed into art. And incidentally, older mouth organs from Estonia are made from moose leg bones."

How do wolves get to the island?

"Across the ice," says one of the brothers, eyeing the interviewer thoughtfully. "A wild animal's life revolves around food, and there is plenty to eat on Hiiumaa," the other says, with palpable pride.■

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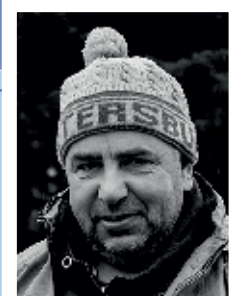
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Sarve

Puulau

Orjaku

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HIIUMAA
RANNAKALANDUST
ARENDAB



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Intrepid fishermen

The editors of GO Travel Magazine went out with a Hiiumaa native for some late-season fishing.



PHOTOGRAPH: JUSTYNA SENIUTA

“Is there fishing tourism on Hiiumaa?” one of us asked – basically what we were doing now – and Imre said yes, there were a couple men at this very port who were in this line of work and he himself sometimes took clients.



Winter had come to Hiiumaa. The night before, our fearless leader Tiit Pruuli told me to get mentally prepared – at first light the professional fisherman Imre Kivi would be taking us out to sea. At the time, we were sitting in a sauna and I figured that this must be just a fellow mainlander’s passing whim, and would not actually come to pass. Alas, it did.

Everybody showed up for morning roll call at Salinõmme Harbour. Tiit and Imre were all smiles: they had solid winter gear. And rubber boots. I was in white sneakers. My wife, still shaking off sleep, was with us as well. She wasn’t quite sure what she was in for (apparently the boat would “take a wave every now and then”, as Imre gleefully informed us).

A community non-profit operates at Salinõmme Harbour. There’s a staff of eight, and a little hut has been erected for cooking (most likely fish fries and the like) and a comfortable night’s sleep. “All

of the harbour berths are booked for the summer,” said Imre as he loaded a small generator on to our craft. A dead seal lay next to the boat.



SEALS ARE A CAUSE FOR WORRY

As Imre started guiding us to what appeared to be a certain hypothermic fate, I kept on staring at the departed sea mammal on the pier. “The shortage of fish people on the north coast talk about has not been the case on Hiiumaa,” said Imre. “The last eight years on the island have been good fish years. We don’t have a fish problem, but we do have a seal problem. They can be hunted, but hunted in places where they aren’t and at times when they don’t show up.” Should the rules on hunting permits be relaxed? “Something has to be done,” said Imre. “A record number has been counted. Here at sea, many places are off-limits to fishing. Spawning areas and so on. But the seals don’t know that. They have a field day!”

The seal on the pier had helped itself to ten whitefish from Imre’s trap net, had become tangled up itself and succumbed. Hiiumaa fishermen have a device that wards off seals, but it sank.

WILL WE CATCH ANYTHING?

The boat sped in a definite direction. “I wonder whether we will catch anything? Have you ever seen a push-up bra? “No,” I said, to be on the safe side. But you’re about to see a push-up trap net!” said Imre and sure enough, soon a generator was connected to a hose, it started humming and quite rapidly, like a kraken, a decent-sized net rose to the surface,



apparently with a fair catch.

Imre handed me work gloves and I carefully moved fish into a crate. I could see pike, perch, some ruffe, a few flounder. There was also whitefish, Hiiumaa fishermen’s nominee for fish of the year 2023 at the bottom, seemingly unaware of its celebrity status. The smaller fish were tossed overboard in a big arc, and must have been thankful that they could fly for once in their life.

Trying to conceal the fact that I was shivering, I asked Imre how long into the winter he would continue to brave these conditions. “I will go out until true ice forms,” he said, cheeks aglow. But fishing goes on even when there is thick ice cover. The net is inserted in one ice hole and removed from another. I had seen a

video on this in a warm room.

Catching fish under the ice didn’t appear to be easy work, but what work besides government jobs are easy? Try to cook dumplings five days a week, it’s not a milk and honey.

We thanked Imre for taking us out. “I was amazed that you wanted to come with me,” Imre quipped. I muttered to myself that I was amazed too, shooting a look in Pruuli’s direction. ■



Business consultant and fisherwoman

In her own words, Ilmi Aksli is a multitasker, meaning that she is involved in a lot of things.

Your name is an interesting one. Ilmi. Memorable. (She nods.) Are you a native of Hiiumaa?

Very much so! I do genealogical research and even as far back as 1600, they're all *hiidlased*! DNA tests show I'm also related to Finns. Ilmi (emphasis on the last syllable) is a name that happens to be common among older Finnish women.

So you are engaged in many activities. We're currently in a development centre ...

I'm a entrepreneurship consultant and a Credit and Export Guarantee Fund apartment building renovation consultant.

So if I want to do business on Hiiu-maa, I would come see you?

Definitely. We provide assistance if assistance is needed. Oftentimes, enterprising people don't need very much assistance. Much of our advice goes to business people just starting out for the first time. They're entering the business world and need help putting together a business plan or need financial support.

Are many businesses getting founded in Hiiumaa? Or do entrepreneurs come from the mainland?

Yes, there are definitely locals going into business for themselves, they're fed up with being wage-earners, some are out of a job and want to see if they have what it takes as entrepreneurs. But people also come from other places. They need consultation on how to adapt to local conditions. Over time, foreigners who have started a business on the island have also arrived. For them, the first query is often about getting an ID card.

You fish. Is that something you do as a sideline or as your main job?

I was about to say, the story of how I started fishing is an interesting one. I'm from a fishing family. My father was a fisherman and so was his father, and so on. My father was a professional fisherman in post-1991 independent Estonia, and a good one. My brother and I accompanied him to sea when we were small. It was fun and exciting. Seeing the fish flopping in the net. The fascination led to learning the trade: how to fix the bottom hooks, how to clear the nets.

After secondary school, I went to Tallinn for university, but my family was against me staying there in summers to participate in the student work programme, they saw it as a suspect place! When my father's partner had a health issue, I replaced him. But I didn't fish much, until my dad turned 80 and decided to retire.

You took over from him?

I started worrying that I wouldn't have any opportunity to go out to sea. So I applied for my professional fisherman's licence.

Ice fishing

I don't ice-fish. Father also gave up this area long ago. My father nearly lost his life that way. It was spring, and father went out to retrieve the nets under the ice, which was starting to break up. A wide strip of open water expanded between shore and the ice floe. He started running toward land, but fell in. It was quite a struggle to get out. He came out on top and vowed: no more ice fishing.

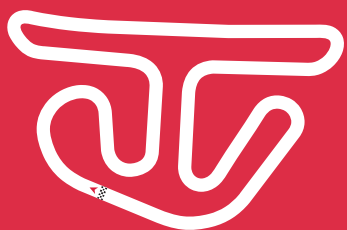
It was 2014 when I went to sea as a "real" fisherman. I go with my partner Jüri – it would be difficult solo.

Are there other fisherwomen on Hiiumaa?

Of course. There's quite a lot. I asked my dad how it was in the 1960s and he was like, yes, yes, there have always been female fishers. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASJUK



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Taavi and Birthe Liivandi:

“The hand of fate is in our story”

2023 is the anniversary year of Hiiumaa's lavender farm.

What is a lavender farm?

Birthe and Taavi: “Hiiumaa has one farm like it. Three total in Estonia.” The family mentions a detail with pride: Their lavender field was the first and symbolic gift for the Republic of Estonia's centenary.

20,000 LAVENDER PLANTS

Birthe: “When our first child was born; we bought a place in the country so that the child realized where cow's milk comes from. We're Tallinners.” Taavi corrects her: “Not any more. We're *hiidlased* for several years now.”

They acquired a fairly dilapidated place on Hiiumaa – these office rats needed a fixer-upper where they could get apply themselves.

THE LAVENDER FIELD CAN BE BLAMED ON THE FIRST PREGNANCY

Birthe: “I was a home-maker. We were looking for a reason to visit the island: maybe grow something? The first idea was to raise sheep but we didn't know anything about animal husbandry. So we took a different risk: plants.”

Birthe is all about action, she contacted the Horticulture Association and they told her to go for it: the soil sample results were in, they were in one of Estonia's sunniest places, sheltered from the winds, and the a stony soil on the edge of the meteorite crater. Ideal terrain for lavender.

On Valentine's Day, Taavi surprised his wife and ordered plants. “I was a realist, he was innovative. If he had been cautious, I would have written off the idea,” laughs Birthe.

Taavi said that he doesn't have to give flowers any more, she has 20,000 of them.

A HOBBY HAS SCALED UP

They have always welcomed tour groups. The first year, 20 tour buses. That's a lot,” chortles Taavi. During the flowering period in July, many people come specially to the island to seek out the lavender fields.

They don't accept drop-ins on a daily basis. But there are community activity days and other events where people can get their hands busy doing farm work. “This year we have many exciting events and we're hosting more people than usual,” says Taavi.

“Everyone's welcome in season. People call ahead and ask. If we're home, we're happy to tell the story of our farm. Some drive past, stop, take a picture. We don't mind, as long as they don't trample the plants,” says Birthe.

DO YOU PLAN LODGING?

“We've positioned ourselves as a production farm not a tourist farm. There are accommodations options nearby if a larger group wants to come.

“We'd prefer to focus on producing.”

USES FOR LAVENDER

“Fresh lavender is used as wedding decorations in season. A large part of it is collected to be dried for use in sachets. We produce lavender tea and lavender honey.

“We try to be as ecologically minded as possible. The farm works with the companies Hiiumaa Jäak and Praak. They make products of cast-offs and defective products with the help of special-needs people from the Hiiumaa Social Centre.” They also collaborate with a few local producers (Hiiumaa Gourmet, Lemmena Mesindustalu). Lavender hasn't reached the mainland yet – currently everything is sold on Hiiumaa.

A FASCINATING PAST

“The hand of fate is in our story,” Birthe says. “We learned that the first mistress of our farm was the healer of Pühalepa Municipality. She grew medicinal plants in the same place as our current field.

“And when we told our daughter she would be getting a sister; she proposed the name of Liisa. A relative of the farm's owner visited us and said that the descendants of the owner of the renovated farm where we live now are Liisa and Gustav. We're actually waiting for Liisa to visit right now.”



Flowering period: July,
with a peak in the 2nd and
3rd week of the month

Songs to lavender – 13 July
Open Farms Days – 15-16 July
Harvest Celebration – 22 July

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“Moving to Hiiumaa is a great idea!”

Sander Kopli, born in Hiiumaa, was away from the island for a long time, but returned in 2008 and has been residing in Kassari ever since, being confident that this will remain his living arrangement for the foreseeable future.

There are many, who say (amongst themselves) that you are “the only true tourism entrepreneur in Hiiumaa”. Is this true?

I am an owner of a company providing tourism services who does not have to manage the company's activities daily. The company is big enough to hire specialists to do the everyday work. In Hiiumaa, it is commonplace to engage in tourism entrepreneurship part-time, in addition to other labors, and due to short summers, actual development of tourism is seldom prioritized. Our company focuses on development of tourism services and maximizing profits.

You have ties to several providers of accommodation in Hiiumaa. What direction is tourism in Hiiumaa developing in? Is it possible to travel to Hiiumaa from the mainland in summer for an overnight stay, only to discover that there's not a single free room available? Or is the accommodation business able to supplement itself fast enough to ensure that such things don't happen?

I hope there will be days in 2023, too, when all beds in Hiiumaa are full. The number of beds available in Hiiumaa has grown nicely in the past few years, mostly thanks to smaller accommodation providers with ten beds or less. Booking.com has made starting an accommodation business very easy, and the market reacts quickly to the growth in demand. There is a dire lack of high quality hotel accommodation in Hiiumaa. Building hotels demands big investments, to which the short summer period is not conducive.

Suppose I were to come from the mainland to start a tourism business in Hiiumaa... Would it be a good or a bad idea?

Moving to live in Hiiumaa is a great idea!. A small accommodation business is suitable as an complementary economic activity in addition to other means of earning. But if you plan to survive only from provision of accommodation, you must have a very clear vision and a big wallet in order to make investments.

The Kassari Puhkekeskus complex has revived the tradition of local beer-brewing. After tasting a couple of beers from their selection, I can heartily applaud the results. Are the beers from Kassari currently the only locally-produced brews, or are there others on the island who are brewing beer for sale?

Currently, Hiiu Õlle Koda (the House of Hiiu Ale) is the only producing brewery in Hiiumaa. In 2023 we will move to the old drying house at the Kassari manor where we will build even bigger production facilities and cooler visiting rooms.

Can Kassari beer be bought on the mainland?

Kassari beer can be bought at our webshop at www.hiiuollekoda.ee. Unfortunately, shops on the mainland are not selling it yet.

Has the revival of Hiiu beer tradition been for you a question of cultural heritage or simply a business enterprise?

We are focusing on both. Hiiu beer has been an item of great interest to me and our brewing expert Ain Koor, and thus far experience has shown that this activity is economically viable. ■





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TÖÖTAV VANA VILLAVABRIK WORKING OLD WOOL FACTORY



Historian Ain Tähiste talks about Hiiumaa's military history attractions.

Ain Tähiste, what's new in your field?

In early 2022, Hiiumaa still had monuments installed by the communists: the famous Kivi Jüri (Stone Jüri), obelisks marking four collective graves and a few other WWII monuments. Now they will all be moved into the yard of Hiiumaa Military Museum in Tahkuna.

So anyone can see them, touch them in Tahkuna?

Yes, indeed. And on a different tack from monuments from old regimes, there's also news for armchair historians who only want to see the sites. In the spring, we will open a virtual guide to fishing and shipping. For example, very few have the equipment and skills to dive to site the sunken submarine *Akula* off the northwest coast of the island or the Finnish schooner *Gullkrona* near Sõru. Every day tourists won't see them. But

“In spring, we will open a virtual guide to sites in Hiiumaa waters.”

this guide includes the stories of the ships, how they sank and 3D images of the wrecks. They were produced by the Estonia's national Heritage Board.

How many sunken ships are in Hiiumaa's waters?

Probably 100 or so, we have detailed information on 50–60, meaning we know the name and the date of sinking. A hobbyist here also found WWII-era German Junkers aircraft wrecks in the coastal waters and – quite rare – minesweepers for magnetic mines. The first dives to

these sites have taken place, we have hands on hull.

What else would you have eyes on for your museum?

I'd definitely like to get a hulk of a tank destroyed in Ukraine. And of course, we are hoping that it will be possible to raise the Junkers aircraft. ■



Orienteering exercise

This is an old photo of the Paluküla church. In addition to serving as a house of worship, the church also has another purpose — its steeple, rising to 29 meters from the ground, is a navigation mark officially titled the Paluküla rear daymark. This daymark is one of the two in the range together with the lighthouse situated about 2,5 kilometers away. The azimuth of the range is 22,6 degrees.

If you take a picture of the lighthouse in question, you will participate in a raffle to win one of five books published as part of the Go Reisiraamat imprint.



Hiiumaa giidid

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“Hiiu natives have welcomed us with open arms!”



In October of 2021, a new sports centre was opened in Hiiumaa. Our travel magazine's editorial staff went to check it out, worked out a bit in the gym, had a look around the premises, and was left more than satisfied — conditions for engaging in sports are excellent, the building is comfy and convenient. We asked from the representative of the centre Martin Laur whether residents of Hiiumaa have embraced the new establishment and what are the overall sporting opportunities for those coming to visit Hiiumaa.

What has brought you to Hiiumaa?

I am a born Hiiu native, but due to working at the foreign office, for a dozen years I lived elsewhere, both in Estonia and abroad. It was actually the work challenge at the sports centre that brought me back to Hiiumaa. Running the establishment keeps me in good shape, there's always something to do. I am a recreational sportsman myself and will happily participate in sports events. For example, I attended one stage of the Ace Xdream adventure trekking series that took place here, and in January I participated in the winter endurance expedition Taliharja Vanakuri.

How have Hiiu natives welcomed the new sports centre?

With open arms! People are especially happy with the indoor tennis court, as they didn't have that option before; both locals as well as visitors from all over Estonia come to play here. The Estonian Tennis Association even awarded us the title of the Year's Best Development. The tennis crowd has definitely noticed us.

The gym has been eagerly greeted as well — even the older generation has come to work out, many people enjoy group workout sessions. In addition to that, the Hiiumaa Sports School organizes the checkers club, and facilities are available for playing football, basketball, volleyball, tennis, badminton and table tennis. The track and field are open for training, and our house even features a recording studio. After exercising, people can go to the sauna.

Do you have any other plans?

We would like to invest even more in summertime sports camps and provide various opportunities to kids during the holidays. During our first summer we were visited by 350 young people, and we organized 11 camps for those wanting to play tennis, basketball or football, or go orienteering. This kept the children busy. And, of course, Hiiu children are one of the most important target groups for our centre. For this, we have to thank the Hiiumaa Sports School, who have played a big role.

If someone visiting Hiiumaa would like to partake in the opportunities you're providing — work out in the gym, or play tennis or some other kind of ballgame —, what should they take into account and how long should they plan ahead?

Everyone is welcome here. Indoors tennis courts can be booked on our homepage, so people can reserve a suitable timeslot early on. Also, should it be raining in the summer, people can rearrange their plans and have a comfortable training session at an indoor court. There's always the opportunity to phone ahead and ask us about what is on offer and when. Our receptionists are super helpful!

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“We’re here to help.”

Riina Tamm, member of the board of Hiiumaa Hospital, has championed better care for the people of Hiiumaa for 32 years, yet this energetic woman still has enthusiasm to spare.

Let’s start off with a few words about yourself and Hiiumaa.

My parents are actually from Valga, not Hiiumaa, but I was born in Hiiumaa, went to school here, studied on the mainland for a while, and then returned. I believe myself to be a full-fledged native of Hiiumaa (smiles), and I believe my mother has also become a native by now. My mom has served as the mayor of Kärkla, and my dad used to captain a ship.

You studied to become a midwife. How did you decide on that subject field?

Health care has always been an interesting subject for me, and I’m still very pleased that I decided to study obstetrical nursing. I guess it must be in my genes — my grandmother from my father’s side worked as the head nurse at Elva Hospital, and my mother’s father drove the ambulance for Valga Hospital.

How many children have you helped bring to this world while working in Hiiumaa?

Oh, I don’t really know; I never kept a list. I started out in 1990 in Hiiumaa Hospital; back then there were a lot of births a year, around 200. In 1998, I became the Hospital’s head nurse.

These days the number of births in Hiiumaa is much smaller, but I’m very much convinced that the ability to receive births must be maintained, since any delivery can start very suddenly. Even pregnant visitors from the mainland have given birth here, since modern women



A 3D view of the emergency medicine department of Hiiumaa Hospital.

are very mobile. A midwife is working at our Hospital 24/7.

I am reminded of a case from the year when we had the ice road (between Hiiumaa and the mainland) for the last time, and a woman from Rapla drove across the ice especially so she could give birth in Hiiumaa. It was unforgettable.

Can a tourist or a “summertime native” come to Hiiumaa secure in the knowledge that medical help is guaranteed, should the need arise?

Yes, of course. One must simply take into account that we don’t have the whole lot of specialized doctors working at the hospital every day — they only visit at certain times —, but a surgeon, an internal medicine physician, and an OB-GYN are on site at all times. The department of emergency medical care is always ready to admit people with the more urgent complaints. And, of course, the Regional Hospital’s first aid service helps those in trouble; they receive over a thousand calls a year. Also, telemedicine works very well. For example, there have been cases where the Regional Hospital’s telemedicine doctor has already assessed the severity of the situation from EKG and commissioned a helicopter, so that a patient with a suspected myocardial infarction arriving by ambulance from Kalana will be greeted by a chopper at the Hiiumaa Hospital to fly them to the

capital immediately. In extraordinary circumstances, also the ferry and the pilot vessel have been used to transport patients.

I’m happy to announce to my fellow residents of Hiiumaa that by the end of 2023, the hospital’s emergency care department, obstetric unit, laboratory, kitchen and vestibule will get a spanking new look, and that a new isolation ward measuring up to all standards will also be established.

What are the complaints with which the tourists most often turn to you?

From mid-May to mid-September, when more people are visiting Hiiumaa, the emergency care department’s workload immediately increases, sometimes even tripling. The lion’s share of complaints is made up of all kinds of injuries. Quite often we come across so-called learned helplessness — people needing help with things like putting a band-aid on a small scratch. But we don’t frown upon them; we are here to help people, so let them come!

People also hurt themselves jumping on trampolines or riding around on electric scooters and bicycles. All sorts of respiratory viral infections are a concern to many who come to seek help from us. Sometimes we have to remove ticks, or write prescriptions to people who have forgotten to bring along their medicines.

Kärdla Airport: 100 football fields' worth of efficiency

*Many may not even know that one can travel to
Hiiumaa by floating through the clouds!*

The relationship between the island of Hiiumaa and the field of aviation originated during the first Estonian Republic. In the beginning, only flights carrying air mail took place: a solution was needed for mailing parcels. When circumstances disallowed delivery by sea, the parcels were literally dropped from the skies. And since all sorts of stuff needed to be taken from the island to the continent as well, people began thinking about building a proper airport.

THE AIRPORT TURNS 60 THIS YEAR

"The blacktop surfacing was installed in the mid-1960s, and in 1971 the first jet plane, Jak-40, began to make trips," remembers the airport's operations manager Allan Mäll, but fails to recall the exact speed at which the airliner of those times managed to cover the distance between Tallinn and Kärdla. The airplane currently in use will fly the same distance in 25 minutes.

"The number of regular flights — that is, of round trip flights — has been 12 per week for some time now. Two flights on every working day, one on Saturday morning, and one on Sunday evening. In the olden times, the airport operations manager was jocularly called "the station master", Allan explains, describing his

job environment. "Currently there are 18 people employed at the airport: flight information services officers, security guards, customer service providers, runway controllers, and engineers."

The airport's territory only covers 70 hectares, which is rather small and cute. As a comparison — the Pärnu airport covers 250 hectares.

THE 19-PASSENGER AIRLINER

We ask from Hiiumaa municipality's transportation services specialist Piret Sedrik whether they might need a bigger plane. "Looking at the number of passengers, it would be ideal to use a bigger plane during summer and a smaller one in winter," says Piret. "Summer flights have to be planned several weeks in advance, while in the winter, some flights are almost empty. But different aircraft demand different flight teams and a maintenance service that's much more expensive than making regular flights with only one type of plane. But when costs rise, the state is prone to raise the ticket price. So, considering the financial circumstances, it would be a big step forward to establish a tighter flight schedule for the size of planes currently in use."

"Members of the community would then be able to choose between different times

for arriving at the island," explain Piret, assuring that additional departures on Friday and Sunday afternoons would definitely be considered useful, as those flights are sold out even in the wintertime. She envisions additional Saturday evening and a Sunday morning flights as the next step, pointing out that during bigger events on the island, the state has approved additional flights, which have achieved very good cabin factors.

At the same time, experience with the bigger plane providing a regular service between Saaremaa and the mainland has shown that the number of passengers has grown quite considerably. When 11 months of 2021 saw only slightly more than 26 000 airline passengers travelling to Kuressaare, then by the time of the writing of this article, even before the end of 2022, the number has already exceeded 35 000. "It might work out the same for our service as well," believes Piret.

SUPPORT TO HIIU HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

"There are 15 doctors on the island of Hiiumaa, and the local hospital is part of the Regional Hospitals network. The current flight schedule — departure from Tallinn at 7.15 AM and an evening flight from Hiiumaa at 5.45 PM — helps people receive health care services from specialized doctors, since the doctor travelling to the island to work can make it to reception by 8.15 AM, and back home at a convenient time as well," Piret describes the workings of the Hiiumaa Hospital.

Piret considers it important to stress that the airplane is currently the only means of transport allowing residents of Hiiumaa to reach the capital at half past eight in the morning, and that the tickets cost the same for both residents of the island as well as those of the mainland; no-one is being discriminated. ■



Good fences make good logos



The year was 2018, and the old logo design of Hiiumaa Köök ja Pagar (Hiiumaa Kitchen and Baker) was looking increasingly stale. “It was time to change something,” says Kaja Antons, the charismatic director of Hiiumaa Köök ja Pagar.

This is where the new, now widely recognized sticks-and-crossbars design spelling out “Hiiumaa” was born. The design is based on the kind of roundpole fence that can be seen everywhere on the islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa (mostly on the Sõru side of Hiiumaa).

“We reached the finale of Kuldmuna (Estonian Golden Egg Awards, a national marketing awards event) in the categories of both product packaging and company branding, and came in second and third!” Antons, who has often been recognized for rebranding Köök ja Pagar, proudly exults.

We are now on the premises of Köök ja Pagar, yet the sign on the building says “Coop Hiiumaa”...?

“This is something that confuses many people,” Kaja directly addresses the reporter.

Actually, it’s all pretty simple: Coop Estonia is the “hydra” owned by the Estonian consumers, but instead of monstrous tentacles it has consumer cooperatives.

The Hiiumaa Consumer Cooperative started out in 1907, when the Consumers’ Association of Kärkla, formed at the initiative of the workers of Kärkla Frieze Textile Factory, opened its first store. Similar associations cropped up elsewhere in Hiiumaa and began to merge. Then, all of the consumer cooperatives came together as one Cooperative of the Consumers of Hiiumaa Raion, which changed its name into Hiiumaa Consumer Cooperative (Hiiumaa Tarbijate Ühistu) in 1992.

As long as commerce has been happening in Hiiumaa, hot baked bread has been lifted out of ovens as well. Nowadays, this is being done by Hiiumaa Köök ja Pagar, a former subdivision of the cooperative,

which became a separate enterprise in 2007.

Hiiumaa Köök ja Pagar has many products, the prime article among which is Hiiumaa bread. The naturally leavened black rye bread is made on the basis of a recipe originating from a local farmstead.

Köök ja Pagar offers both black and white bread products, as well as a wide variety of salads, meat products, and other food-stuffs. All in all, more than 200 different products are being constantly produced here.

The travel magazine’s editorial staff enrobe themselves in the kind of white protective clothing reminiscent of the garments of dairy workers, and proceed to take a look at how all these hundreds of provisions are being made. First, we attentively observe the baking of gingerbread cookies, and then witness the preparation of head cheese. Each plastic tin is filled with exactly the same amount of meat.

The building is fronted by the Bakers’ Park (“Pagarite park”) designed by Hebe-Kai Kanni.

Kaja tells us that before the construction of the park the space was filled with a so-called bread house built in the 1950s, which by 2015 had become so dilapidated that the company had a choice — close down food production for good, or build a new facility. Here’s where the island’s community lent a helping hand. “Both fishing and dairy industries had already left the island, but we just could not give up the bread industry!” rejoices the director.

Among other installations, the park features two benches, one dedicated to the food technologist Ivo Einmaa, the other to the journalist Harda Roosna. Kaja paraphrases something Harda said in one of her columns: “Any Hiiu child must have the opportunity to be born in Hiiumaa and to be raised on bread produced in Hiiumaa!” — a citation definitely worthy of a bench.

We asked, so you, dear readers, don’t have to — yes, although the benches are dedicated to Ivo and Harda, regular people are allowed to sit on them, too. ■

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UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Program can help people to choose sustainable lifestyle. To make good choices, be wise in what you eat. Good food is local, grown nearby. By choosing local food, you support local food production.



Lühikeste tarneahelate või kohalike turgude kaudu põllumajandustoodete ja toidu turustamisvõimaluste arendamise toetus (MAK2014-2020 meede 16.4)

In Hiiumaa, nobody ever stays hungry



PHOTOGRAPH: PRIIDU SAARTS / VISITESTONIA

Iiu Mekk.

Kadri Taperson provides a small overview of Hiiumaa eateries and opportunities for vegan eating on the island.

“Come hell or high water, or may even the ferries stop entirely, we will still never starve here,” a Hiiu native may very well tell you when asked about such things. And probably not only because under such circumstances a local resident would simply go and get more food from their garden or cellar, but also because eateries in Hiiumaa are keeping up with the times, providing everything a Hiiu native or even a tourist might wish for. Since the latter only visit us for a short (or sometimes slightly longer) period of time, restaurants here are open seasonally, and sometimes this may mean “whenever” or, to put it more precisely — whenever the owner can be bothered. Thus, it always makes sense to check ahead whether the establishment is open, or whether there’s a notice on the door saying something like “Closed

due to nice weather”. During home café days, open farm festivals, or other kinds of bigger summer events it may instead happen that the number of eating establishments becomes overwhelming, it’s difficult to make choices, and those who have come to the island for only a short stay might leave with the impression that hospitality industry is the only thing Hiiu natives engage in.

VEGANS WILL NOT BE LEFT WANTING

Keeping with the times also means that many Hiiumaa eateries offer great vegan food, or at least “veganized” versions of their meals. Vegan versions being listed on menus doesn’t necessarily mean that all Hiiu people are extremely environmentally conscious animal lovers; instead, it probably shows that each and every client here is very important (despite the fact that summer patrons are quite different from winter ones).

So, for example, during the winter Rannapaargu café’s menu is aimed more at the local residents, featuring seasonal tastes and produce, with a focus on more substantial meals. Meat-free dishes

include potato gnocchi, although those are not entirely plant-based. Vegans can replace the meat or fish part of any dish with a Beyond Meat patty made of pea protein. During the high season in summer, Rannapaargu’s menu has been 90% gluten and lactose free, and vegan substitutes are on offer for most dishes. In addition to Beyond Meat, also truffles and Portobello mushrooms are used for making entirely plant-based dishes. In the coming summer, the café will continue emphasizing the importance of healthier foods — the menu will include a lot of fresh local produce and a nice vegan selection.

In the main square of Kärdla, Mamma Mia pizzeria offers authentic Italian pizza with vegan cheese.

When travelling further from Kärdla to Käina to visit the Windtower Experience (“Tuuletorn”), it pays to stop by at Ruudi Café operating on its premises. For the couple of years they’ve been open, their selection has always been very interesting; the menu has featured French fries and sweet potato fries since the beginning, but the rest of it has been constantly in flux, because people like variety. The good folks at Ruudi intend to tweak their Caesar salad recipe in a way that



PHOTOGRAPH: PRIIDU SAARTS / VISITESTONIA

Ruudi Café at the Windtower Experience.



will make it suitable for both omnivores as well as vegans. This will definitely not be the only option, as the establishment also plans to widen their selection of vegan dishes. As Ruudi Café welcomes people with all kinds of preferences, it's always possible to inquire about one-of-a-kind specials.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF KÕPU PENINSULA

In order to sketch at least a proper triangle on the map of Hiiumaa, one should

pick a third eating establishment from among those on the Kõpu Peninsula. One of the places to definitely try out there is KalanaÄÄR, whose menu this summer will feature among other delectable fare the vegan salami and cheese pizza that became a hit last year. KalanaÄÄR is among the restaurants featured in the 2023 Nordic White Guide, whose list also includes Ungru Resto, the restaurant that, at least in 2022, offered the most exciting dishes. Their Pappardelle pasta with roasted paprika and almond sauce, crunchy nuts and chervil is one to die for, and where else in the world can you get crème brûlée with chaga mushrooms and cucumber?

In any case, it pays to visit Hiiumaa during summer, because the number of pleasantly surprising food establishments here keeps growing. In between the weekend festivities it is recommended to keep an eye on the Kassari Rahvamaja cultural centre. Rookopli bakery sells scrumptious breads and pastries, and the champagne bar Kork has great music and the kind of easygoing elegance probably not found anywhere else on the island. Those craving simple home food should step by at the Sadama Café at Kõr-

gessaare harbor, or Rannu Pub in Käina. This summer it will be interesting to see if they welcome vegans as well, because if one misses anything at all, it must be the most pedestrian home cooking without any animal-based ingredients at all. ■



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hiiumaa.coop.ee



“Cooking is a hobby, not a business!”



It's not polite to write with one's mouth full, but what can I do — at the moment, as it happens, my mouth is full of an extremely tasty gyros. We're visiting Ioannis Basdanis and Diana.

We were looking for some of the more exotic places to eat in Hiiumaa. At some point during the process Diana, the spouse of the local Greek Ioannis Basdanis, wrote to us to tell that while we're very much welcome to their family restaurant, we should first read what has been written about Basdanis elsewhere. “He has already told everything, so there's not much else to talk about,” Diana surmised.

We enter the small restaurant at twilight. How nice that some exotic food can be found in Hiiumaa, so that we don't have to eat only oatmeal porridge all the time! One can have a taste of Thai cuisine — and get burned by hot chilies — at the Kao Thai restaurant in Käina. Or, should

you be overwhelmed by cravings for authentic Italian pizza or pasta, you're also in luck: a nimble Italian called Michele Parrucci will see to it that you won't be disappointed by the offerings of his restaurant Mamma Mia.

Greek cuisine in Hiiumaa, however, is taken care of by Ioannis, who appears from the kitchen wearing an apron, a beret jauntily askew on his head. “What will you be eating? We have a long menu!” He exudes Greek vivaciousness and hospitality, right away generating the right atmosphere for a proper home restaurant.

“Has living in Estonia changed a Greek's character?” we enquire. “Now that you mention it — yes,” agrees the man. “In Greece, we like to be loud. In the evenings, people have drinks, and when someone explains something to someone else, they do it... in a lively manner.” After a short pause, he continues: “But now, when I was recently on board of a ferry in Greece, I started groaning, because the family sitting next to me was so loud! So loud! But, what did I expect — they were Greek, after all...”

“Are Estonians quieter?” I ask Ioannis. “Is there anything else about Estonians that

you've noticed?”

“Let's say, a couple of friends announce that they will come to visit us at some point. When?! On what day?!” Ioannis slaps the palms of his hands forcefully down on the counter, making everyone flinch. “I want to know exactly at white time of day and which date I can expect them!” He adjusts his hat. “I guess it's an Estonian tradition to never ask additional questions? My wife also never wants to bother anybody!” (Diana smiles suavely.) “I, for one, would definitely ask! I want to understand!”

During our hour-long visit, only a single person passes by the front of Ambrosia café. I am almost certain it's Aivar Viidik (a local politician, head of the Kärkla sub-municipality), but I wouldn't bet on it.

Does today's scarceness of clients reflect the overall wintertime business situation in Hiiumaa? “Well, yes, sure,” explains Diana, assuring us that they nevertheless refuse to close shop during the cold season. Someone is always hungry! Even if there aren't very many of them. “But how's the situation during summer?” we ask, already suspecting the answer. “Summer is... crazy!” shouts Ioannis, arms flailing like a true Greek's.

In summertime, the restaurant features a barbeque, which is not viable to keep open during winter; apparently, this attracts people in throngs. Ioannis is not too miffed with the brumal lull, because for him cooking food and running the café are less a business than a hobby. And what a wonderful hobby it is, we must concede after filling up our bellies.

Then, Ioannis grabs a *buzuki* from the wall and proceeds to perform on it a couple of the warmer Greek tunes to thaw out a bit of the Estonian midwinter frost. “In summer you will visit us! We will grill fresh fish and drink *tsípouro* like there's no tomorrow!” vows Ioannis, and we promise to do just that, without specifying exactly which summer and at white time. ■



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“I’m a Zen person.”

“Can we speak in Estonian?” “Yes, of course, but slowly please,” says Michele Parrucci – the Italian, who runs Mamma Mia Restaurant in Kärkla.



HIIUMAA AS A SMALL COMMUNE

Michele describes how he went looking for a cleaning business and while trying to find it, someone told him he could go through his wife – it’d be faster. He was surprised.

He was told that the cleaning service provider had a child who was in the nursery school where Michele’s wife is a kindergarten teacher. “I realized it was like a little commune and I’m a part of it.”

BACK TO ITALY?

I wouldn’t have achieved what I achieved here in Italy. And I’m spoiled by Estonia. You can’t imagine how bad the bureaucracy is in Italy! I really like it on Hiiumaa, I don’t plan to go back to Italy. Plus, I always say: ‘Leave it or double it,’ meaning that I plan to open another restaurant.”

Asked whether he’d recommend his Italian friends to move here, he says: “I recommend spending the entire winter on the island before deciding to buy a home. Winter might be hard for some people.” ■



HOW HE ARRIVED ON HIIUMAA

Michele arrived in Estonia 11 years ago as a volunteer. He was based in Tallinn at first but, busy by nature, he found there wasn’t enough to do and he wanted more. Eager for action, the young man was posted to Hiiumaa to teach Italian. “That was my first contact with the island,” he says. It turns out it was also his first contact with his future wife, with whom he now has four children.

COMPLICATED TIMES

After the Italian course ended, Michele wasn’t in a hurry to get back to Italy but ended up in Tartu. After they had their firstborn, moving to Hiiumaa was a temporary solution for saving on rent. “I also wanted to get to know the bride’s mother,” he grins. It wasn’t all roses in the beginning, since it was hard to get a job for a non-Estonian-speaker.

A RESTAURANT OF HIS OWN

Then he got the idea to open his own place to eat. “I thought I would pay myself a wage if others didn’t want to do that. At first we had a family business but there weren’t enough workers and we had to recruit more.”

Michele uses local products as much as he can, but has to import a thing or two from the mainland.

DOING BUSINESS ON A SMALL ISLAND

“If you become a part of the social fabric here, it’s easy. I hope that I have been accepted,” says Michele and adds: “In the winters it’s a little harder, since there are fewer customers. But I’m a Zen person. I don’t worry much.”

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Happening in Hiiumaa – event calendar for 2023

JANUARY

JANUARY 14–15: Taliharja Vanakuri Winter Ultra 2023 – a 101 km winter endurance race from Kõpu lighthouse to the Hiiumaa sports centre

FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 3: piano recital by Sten Lassmann at Käina Culture Centre

FEBRUARY 4: winter adventure rally Talvine Hiiumaa Autoseiklus starting at Kärkla town square

FEBRUARY 11–12: Winter Paddling Weekend at Kalana

FEBRUARY 17: celebration of a century of volleyball in Hiiumaa at the Hiiumaa sports centre

FEBRUARY 24: singing of the National Anthem on the steps of the Reigi parsonage

FEBRUARY 24: dance performance “Village Road Folk” at the Hiiumaa sports centre

MARCH

MARCH 10: opening of the exhibition “Mystery of Creation. Paintings of Hiiumaa by Jaak Adamson” at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

APRIL

APRIL 21: performance by Trad. Attack! on their 2nd Estonian tour at Kärkla Culture Centre

APRIL 22–29: Hiiumaa Restaurant Week

APRIL 29: Open Fishing Harbors Day in Hiiumaa harbors

MAY

MAY 1: Kärkla Day

MAY 1: Hiiumaa Tourism Fair at the Hiiumaa sports centre

MAY 13: Emmaste Spring Fair

MAY 13: seal spotting voyage starting from Kärkla harbor

MAY 13: Mothers’ Day performance by Tiina Dance Studio at Kärkla Culture Centre

MAY 20: seal spotting voyage starting from Kärkla harbor

MAY 20: grand opening of Kalana yacht harbor

MAY 27: seal spotting voyage starting from Kärkla harbor

MAY 27: Wind Fish Festival at Orjaku harbor

MAY 28 – JUNE 17: Celebration of Estonian music in Hiiumaa. Rudolf Tobias 150

JUNE

JUNE 2–4: Suuremõisa Castle Days

JUNE 9–11: Hiiumaa Literary Festival

JUNE 10: Hiiumaa Children’s Festival

JUNE 15: guided tour at the summer home of Aino and Oskar Kallas in Kassari

JUNE 15–18: jazz festival Sõru Jazz at Sõru harbor

JUNE 21–24: 3rd Summer Trumpet Academy by Neeme and Aavo Ots

JUNE 24–25: smoke sauna days at Mihkli Farm Museum

JUNE 29: the band Dagö performs at Orjaku harbor

JULY

JULY 1: opening of the exhibition Genius Loci IV at Reigi parsonage. The exhibition will stay open until August 20. On Saturdays, curators hold guided tours together with the actors.

JULY 5: “Twirling of Striped Skirts” – a folk dance night at the Mihkli Farm Museum

JULY 6: guided tour at the summer home of Aino and Oskar Kallas in Kassari

150 Rudolf Tobias

CELEBRATION OF ESTONIAN MUSIC IN HIIMUMAA MAY 28 – JUNE 17

May 28: presentation “Rudolf Tobias – a composer transcending time”. A musical vespers service. Organist: Elke Voelker (Germany), soloist: Raiko Raalik (basso)

May 29: a moment of remembrance at Tobias’s childhood home. Presentation of the jubilee postage stamp and the Estonian translation of Elke Voleker’s monograph “Rudolf Tobias” in the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum. Exhibitions “Musical instruments on pictures” and “Music in the life of Hiiumaa natives”.

Performance by Tallinn Chamber Orchestra and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir; soloist: Mirjam Mesak (soprano, Germany). Conductor: Tõnu Kaljuste

June 2: chamber concerto by Tobias String Quartet and soloists

June 3: performance by the laureates of the XV Rudolf Tobias piano competition, Hiiumaa Chamber Orchestra and the chamber choir Collegium Musicale. Conductor: Endrik Üksvärav

June 4: performance at Käina Culture Centre by Hiiumaa Choir, and students of Kärkla Music School and Käina Culture Centre

June 9: chamber concerto by Aet Ratassepp, Mart Ernesaks, Amanda Ernesaks, Greta Ernesaks and Paula Ernesaks

June 10: performance by Estonian National Symphony Orchestra. Soloist: Tamar Nugis. Conductor: Olari Elts

June 16: chamber concerto by Johan Randvere (piano), Ain Anger (basso), Mari Poll (violin) and Mihkel Poll (piano)

June 17: performance by the Estonian National Male Choir. Organist: Piret Aidulo. Conductor: Mikk Üleoja

JULY 6-9: Hiking Estonia bicycle trek around Hiiumaa

JULY 7: guided tour of the town of Kärkla

JULY 8: Small Islands Song Festival at Kassari Swing Square

JULY 13: family day at the Kassari museum house

JULY 14: Midsummer "Simman" Party at Soera Farm Museum

JULY 15: 7th stage of the Muhu Strait Regatta: the Kärkla Round, conclusion of the regatta, and the awarding ceremony

JULY 15-16: Open Farms Days

JULY 19: "Twirling of Striped Skirts" – a folk dance night at the Mihkli Farm Museum

JULY 20-23: 18th Hiiu Folk Festival

JULY 21-23: 5th Dago Regatta – Hiiumaa open-sea sealing open masters cup stage of the Estonian Masters Cup for ORC 3 and 4 yachts

JULY 22-23: smoke sauna days at Mihkli Farm Museum

JULY 27: guided tour at the summer home of Aino and Oskar Kallas in Kassari

JULY 27-29: Sõru Saund festival at Sõru harbor

JULY 28-29: Sparkling Wine Weekend 2023 at Kärkla harbor

AUGUST

AUGUST 2: "Twirling of Striped Skirts" – a folk dance night at the Mihkli Farm Museum

AUGUST 3-6: Hiiumaa Home Café Days

AUGUST 4-6: 12th Pühalepa Music Festival

AUGUST 4-5: 5th Oti Regatta featuring Hiiumaa Optimist class sailing Masters Cup, LHV Series stage at Sõru harbor

AUGUST 11: guided tour of the town of Kärkla

AUGUST 11-12: Sauna Bus Party at Männamaa

AUGUST 12: Puski Day

AUGUST 12: "Loojangu lood" ("Sunset Stories") – a performance by V. Eplik, J. Pehk, M. Avandi and P. Võigemast at Roograhu harbor

AUGUST 16: "Twirling of Striped Skirts" – a folk dance night at the Mihkli Farm Museum

AUGUST 17-20: Kärkla Race – a stage in the Estonian Masters Cup and Estonian Championship Cup in single-handed sailing

AUGUST 19: Hiiu Fish and Ale Festival at the Kassari Holiday Centre

AUGUST 19-20: smoke sauna days at Mihkli Farm Museum

AUGUST 25: guided tour of the town of Kärkla

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 1-30: "Indian Summer in Hiiumaa" event series; Arvo Pärt days of Nargenfestival

SEPTEMBER 9-10: 3rd Autumnal Regatta

SEPTEMBER 23: Great Sauna Day of Hiiumaa and the Solstice Night Fire Festival

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 14: Hiiumaa Public Rally and 1+1 public rally sprint

OCTOBER 21-28: Hiiumaa Restaurant Week

OCTOBER 28: ending of the Hiiumaa sailing season at Kärkla harbor

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 9: 2nd Mulled Wine Cafés Day

SEE MORE:



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SIRELI HOSTEL

Sireli talu, Suureranna küla, Hiiumaa
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sirelihostel.ee



GO Hiiumaa 2023

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Euroopa Liit
Euroopa
Regionaalarengu Fond



Eesti
tuleviku heaks



SÕRU YACHT HARBOUR

+372 514 5206

45 berths ♦ 5 camping car places
restaurant ♦ max depth 3,0 m
max LOA 24 m ♦ max width 6 m

KÄRDLA MARINA

+372 5666 2514

88 berths ♦ 15 camping car places
2 restaurants ♦ max depth 3,0 m
max LOA 24 m ♦ max width 10 m

FOR CAMPING CARS

Buy 3 nights and
the 4th night is
for free!

HIIUMAA  **HARBOURS**
KÄRDLA • ORJAKU • SÕRU • KALANA

SPECIAL PRICE!

FOR YACHTS

Buy 7 nights
with the price
of 6 nights!

ORJAKU HARBOUR

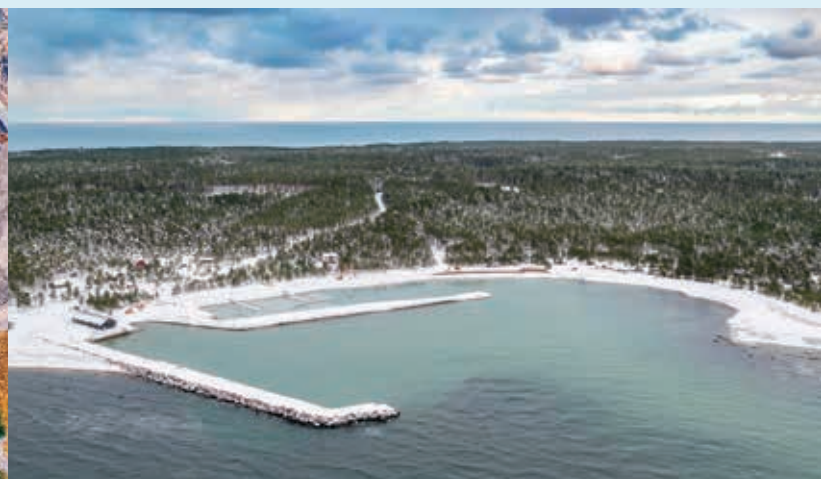
+372 5345 5059

75 berths ♦ 5 camping car places
restaurant ♦ max depth 2,7 m
max LOA 24 m ♦ max width 10 m

KALANA YACHT HARBOUR

+372 5300 6343

30 berths ♦ 2 camping car places
restaurant ♦ max depth 3,0 m
max LOA 24 m ♦ max width 6 m





ELAMUSKESKUS TUULETORN

WINDTOWER EXPERIENCE

Elamuskeskus Tuuletorn pakub põnevaid tegevusi nii peredele kui sõpruskondadele läbi kuue korruse.

Windtower Experience offers exciting activities for both families and groups of friends on six floors.

- Sukeldu salapärasesse Hiiumaa veealusesse maailma.
- Avasta Hiiumaa loodust.
- Õpi tundma hiidlasi, nende keelt ja kultuuri.
- Tunneta Hiiumaa ilu ja erilisust.
- Lusti koos lastega spetsiaalsel mängualal ning roni Baltikumi kõrgeimal sise-ronimisseinal.
- Dive into the mysterious underwater world of Hiiumaa.
- Discover the nature of Hiiumaa.
- Get to know the locals, their language and culture.
- Feel the beauty and uniqueness of Hiiumaa.
- Have fun with kids in the special children's area and climb the highest indoor climbing wall in the Baltics.

Avatud / Opening times:

15. mai–aug: E–P 11–21 / sept–15. mai: T–R 15–21, L–P 12–21
15 May–Aug: Mon–Sun 11–21 / Sept–15 May: Tue–Fri 15–21, Sat–Sun 12–21
Mäe 4, Käina, Hiiumaa



tuuletorn.ee