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2024

A YEAR
OF ART

A GREEN ISLAND
OF HERITAGE

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Hiiumaa – quiet, home-like... and international

When a small Estonian island has Italian, Greek and Thai restaurants, it's a sign that it's a world island.

When a small Estonian island is home to a renowned composer like Erki-Sven Tüür and writer like Paul-Eerik Rummo, it's an international island.

When a small Estonian island counts places like Viscosa Kultuuritehas, Tuuletorn, prime surf breaks and a handful of modern marinas among its destinations, it's not some obscure backwater.

When a small Estonian island has given the world Ülo Sooster and Rudolf Tobias, and when Jaan Kross, Riho Sibul and Tõnu Õnnepalu have written novels and songs here, the island is long a fixture on the world stage.

And yet it's still peaceful and quiet here, with ample opportunities for solitude, away from the madding din of the world, surrounded by nature.

That duality is why we love Hiiumaa as much as we do.

TIIT PRUULI

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF GO TRAVEL MAGAZINE

Hiiumaa has the time

While the light at the top of Hiiumaa's symbol, Kõpu Lighthouse, still flashes at a constant 103.6 metres above sea level, this green island in the blue Baltic Sea seems to have elevated itself. Newly boasting a Gold Level Green Destination certificate, Hiiumaa is seeing growing interest from prospective visitors.

Since the number of places in the world boasting genuine folk culture and pristine nature is dwindling, it makes a kind of sense that people's interest in rare islands like Hiiumaa keeps growing.

Something important, something unique and worthy of participation is always happening in Hiiumaa. Even if it means simply being, doing nothing, letting time pass one by and reloading one's mental batteries in the process. Mental health specialists are saying that idling, sleeping and simply hanging around are the best cures for stress in our fast-paced modern world.

Hiiumaa is a place where one can learn to really relax, where there's no need to be online all the time or keep track of one's daily schedule in Excel. Heating a smoke sauna for five hours, followed by a slow process of sweat bathing in a room redolent of tar is a pretty good form of therapy. Suggestions for where to enjoy such luxury can be found on the website at hiiuma.ee.

At the same time, we also offer high culture, music and art. 2023 was for us a year of music; this year we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Hiiumaa-born artist Ülo Sooster. The programme will be diverse, combining visible events with many hidden activities – creative residencies, inspirational retreats and meditation.

So, Hiiumaa is worth a visit, even if you don't have the time. Because we have the time – enough of it to also share with visitors.

KRISTEL PEIKEL

DIRECTOR OF THE HIIUMAA TOURISM CLUSTER

EST. **HIIMUMAA** 1850
PRUULIKODA

LOCAL BEER AND TASTY MEALS



Brewery and gastropub on the island of Hiiumaa



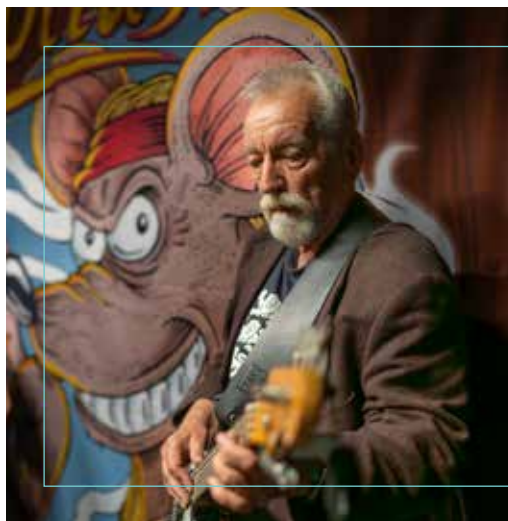
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Local expats reflect on Hiiumaa

We asked some of the foreigners living on Hiiumaa why the life is good here and what makes the island special. It turned out that everyone finds something special here, but the common denominator for everyone is the nature and the quiet.



HARRI RINNE,

MUSICIAN AND SONGWRITER, FINLAND

Hiiumaa is made special by its long history of being isolated from the world, which is still reflected in people's mindset. It's good to live here, because everything is on the right scale. The people, the houses, the nature, the traffic, the shops and so on. I have been a summer resident on Hiiumaa since 1999, and permanently since 2015.



PHOTOGRAPH: KLUR KAASIK

JARI LINDROOS,

OWNER OF ROOGRAHU HARBOUR, FINLAND

I moved to Estonia in 2002, at first I was in Tallinn and Lääne County and now I have been tied to Hiiumaa for 13 years. The first and most important was the fact that Hiiumaa was by the sea and is easy to get out to sea. The second important nuance for me was that it is a very peaceful and natural place. I really like Hiiumaa!



HECTOR JIMENEZ OTERO,

CONSTRUCTION SPECIALIST, PÜHALEPA MUNICIPALITY, SPAIN

I came to Estonia in July 2010 and arrived on Hiiumaa in May 2020. I am an architect. It was my partner Piret who brought me here. We met during an exchange programme in Greece, of all places. What makes Hiiumaa special is the calm, quiet and nature that is all around you on Hiiumaa, helps you be better attuned to yourself. In the city, more attention is on the external but here it's within you. Since the community is smaller, you more easily sense your role or influence in society – on the people around you.

And it is easier to feel how you are connected to other people. It is great to see how children go out the door and are in the midst of nature, they know the names of plants, can recognize the edible berries. They can be with their grandparents, spend summers on the beach.

THILO FÜRSTENBERG,

TEACHER AT PALADE SCHOOL, GERMANY

There's a lot of room on Hiiumaa, time runs at a different speed. That's what makes it good to live here – there's less stress, more freedom. Nature still smells like nature, there are a million stars in the sky, you can be alone on the beach and the forest is full of mushrooms and berries. People have a enjoyable sense of humour when you finally figure it out.

I have lived on Hiiumaa for 12 years now, I work as a teacher in a small rural school. My favourite activities are splitting wood and surfing.



Sights on the map

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





0 1 2 3 4 5 km

- Eurovelo cycling route
- local cycling route
- RMK hiking route
- hiking/study trail
- camping area
- bonfire site
- forest hut
- rest area

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Hiiumaa –

a green island of heritage
in the midst of blue seas



Hiiumaa is an ideal place where to really take time off and relax in the most direct sense of the word. On this island, one can find a unique symbiosis of diverse cultural life and the quiet serenity of endless forests and stretches of seashore.

Hiiumaa is part of UNESCO's West Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve and has been awarded the Gold Level as an international Green Destination. Every village street and forest grove here is inundated with natural, cultural, architectural and other kinds of heritage. Tourism directly benefits providers of accommodation, catering and experiential tourism attractions, but indirectly it also fosters the kinds of industries that have otherwise been created for mostly servicing the locals.

Fortunately, Hiiumaa has retained most of its cultural heritage in a rather authentic form. Unfortunately, the principle "we see what we believe instead of believing what we see" also applies to heritage. Sometimes it seems that we don't actually believe in the true properties that Hiiumaa has.

"THE PEACE AND QUIET ARE GREAT ENOUGH FOR EVEN TIME ITSELF TO GO ON VACATIONS HERE"

PHOTOGRAPH: RIVO VEBER / VISIT ESTONIA



PEACE AND QUIET – A HIIU KIND OF VACATION

According to mental health specialists idling, taking time off and simply hanging around – either in nature or in the corner of a room – are becoming an increasingly important therapeutic measure in our fast-paced modern world. Alas, it is also becoming more unavailable. In that sense, smoke sauna is a good example; one can't just heat up and enjoy a smoke sauna on the go – hop in, have a quick sweat bath, and scurry on. The tasks and rituals associated with a smoke sauna take several hours.

Hiiumaa is free of noise and light pollution, of hotels equipped with elevators, massive shopping centres and night-clubs flashing with neon lights. Instead, it possesses beaches, forests and seas empty of people. The peace and quiet are great enough for even Time itself to go on vacations here. Hiiumaa is a spa for the soul.

The serenity and timelessness intrinsic to Hiiumaa give us the unique opportunity to be an island of creativity. It is an ideal place to delve deeply, a place where thoughts can be allowed to become clearer and emotions more settled.

Hiiumaa is suitable for all kinds of residencies – for writing, painting, or composing music, but also for planning business activities or even political measures. Perhaps politics would take a turn for the better if before taking a stand at a lectern, politicians came to count the waves at Ristna beach for a week or two.

2024 IS A YEAR OF ART IN HIIUMAA

The more visible side of the celebration of the year of art will include many exhibitions, participatory activities and other public events, but it will also have room for being by oneself, meditating and engaging in creative endeavours, the fruits of which may not become evident until a few years have passed.

But vacationing and idling in Hiiumaa does not have to have an end goal. One can simply live and connect to the spirit



Ülo Sooster. Self-portrait. 1955.

of the place. Anyone can choose their own manner of relaxing; Hiiumaa simply provides the opportunities for that.

Also, vacationing opportunities must not necessarily be limited to the hot and mosquito-plagued month of July. Hiiumaa offers ways to rest in every season. The beaches and the starry skies are not locked up; the pine forests are green and fragrant all year round. Any time is good for a visit. And those who dislike winter swimming do not have to jump into the icy waters. Forest bathing (what the Japanese call “shinrin-yoku”) is also a very healthy form of exercise. One does not even have to jog or do stretches. Even a couple of hours spent in the woods with no phone can lower the anxiety and stress caused by technological pollution.

It can actually be a daunting task to travel here and simply do nothing. Usually

people go to places in order to see and do as much as possible. Fortunately, Hiiumaa also provides various activities and events for those going on more active kinds of vacations. There are cultural events, sports competitions, sightseeing sites and other experiences here that allow one to convince oneself that they didn't come here for no reason at all. But before and after these activities there is plenty of opportunity to practice fruitful inaction.

The message of Hiiu natives to “learn to actually relax” is based on a claim by psychologists and brain scientists that not doing anything is the most effective way of restoring mental health and balance as well as relieving stress.

HERITAGE IS A MATTER OF HONOUR

We have reached a point in the modern times where the native tribes being researched by anthropologists actually crave the same standard of living that the anthropologists themselves have access to.

Generations have changed in Hiiumaa, too. The truly native locals – the kind that have spent their entire lives with both feet planted on the island – are becoming a rarity. In their stead have appeared new Hiiu natives, whom the Võru folklore researcher Marju Kõivu-puu calls “one-legged locals” – people who for a stretch of time have travelled elsewhere and remained there to study, earn a living, or simply settle down, but have retained some sort of connection to their roots, and have returned either temporarily or for good. And then there are, of course, the summer natives and the neolicals.

The chemical composition of the aroma

of a smoke sauna can be figured out and nicely packaged, but the true feeling of enjoying a real smoke sauna is impossible to bottle. Living heritage cannot be concocted in a Petri dish. Which is why it's good that we still have some of the true heritage. Hiiumaa really is different; it does not have to be up to EU standards and cannot be properly fit into any models. Let's take for example the Hiiu language and the ability of locals to paint pictures with it, or simply their everyday conduct based on traditions, myths and taboos.



And one more thing. Time. We tend to complain that we don't have enough time to do everything we would like. One either has or hasn't the time. Hiiumaa HAS THE TIME. What you see but don't believe, doesn't exist. It's time to start believing. ■

XIII Pühalepa Music Festival

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KULTUUR

TEHAS

The tourism cluster director speaks of *Hiiumaa and herself*



” *WHEN YOU’RE DOING
A GOOD THING, YOU
DON’T SWEAT THE
TIME OR MONEY“*

The house is nearing completion. Does your whole life now revolve around Hiiumaa? As in, maybe you’ve even looked for a place to eventually be buried here one day?

The house turned out nice, a symbiosis of old and new, though there are a few smaller details that need to be hammered in place. I find my other activities and work on the island inspiring as well, so, you know, I’m not really looking for the cemetery plot yet. But there is a good selection. Ancestors are important. If a person doesn’t know where at least three generations of forebears are buried, they are rootless. My clan has a several family plots on Hiiumaa.

Are your kids happy you moved to Hiiumaa?

I’ve done a lot of travelling in this world and I have to say Hiiumaa is one of the coolest places there is. Secluded and under strict conservation rules. But for the most part there’s internet and hot water everywhere. My children are also well travelled but they can appreciate what makes Hiiumaa special. They attended school in Tallinn for the first few years and are happy about moving to Hiiumaa – they can keep in touch with their friends on their screens, too. They enjoy the bus that is a store-on-wheels and comes by our house twice a week, and also our sheep who are all bottle-fed – our boys have been singing them to sleep every since the lambs were born.

*“Ute, ute, ute!” calls out **Kristel Peikel** at the gate of her house, but what races to her is not an ute (sheep) right away but a humongous dog. Then come the ovines, all of them with names; a few of the littlest ones have even slept in a human bed. “We’re engaged in a bit of lamb therapy here,” Kristel laughs.*





I have caught a glimpse of your high workload getting things done on Hiiumaa. Do you do your work out of a sense of mission, for money, or some other reason?

When you're doing a good thing, you don't sweat the time or money. My basic nature is that if I take on something, I get it done. And I tend to increase my pile of my responsibilities, because there are constantly cool ideas that beg to be carried out.

Now Hiiumaa is on the map for German and Finnish target markets as well, and the next question now is who will open the kind of hotel that can accommodate more than one busload of tourists and where it should be opened. I also wonder if I shouldn't start practising what I preach in the advertising slogans I come up with and actually take some time off.

Can you name one reason that someone should visit Hiiumaa – something that hasn't been mentioned in a Hiiumaa magazine. Something completely

from your observer's perspective?

Well, on Hiiumaa, you can be completely by yourself. I get that it can be a bit intimidating if you're new to genuine solitude. But it's worth trying, seeing if it works for you – to be alone, and savour the taste of doing nothing and just being.

Here's a question that's bound to be controversial. Does a mainlander who moves to Hiiumaa for good become a *hiidlane* or... ?

The shoaly coasts and phantom lights that lead mariners astray have made many a foreign sailor a *hiidlane* involuntarily and quickly. Perhaps that is why our gene pool is rich and spawns so many brilliant and outstanding people. Myself, I'm a native islander in that despite my activities on the mainland, my roots are deep in the Hiiumaa soil. Many a devoted summer *hiidlane* has become a real *hiidlane* with the passing decades, although the older locals might still call them "the fellow from Tallinn" – after all, they bought their farm only in 1972, and so

on. Even some committed non-Estonians can become a pretty passable *hiidlane*, although a true-blue *hiidlane* will always be one who was born here.

Do you long for something back on the mainland?

Poet Hando Runnel said that "soil doesn't matter that much to you once you learn to walk on parquet floors". That's not the case for me. Although the modern New York City life is extremely cool, historical Lebanon has tasty food and Tallinn is a totally liveable city, I always long to be back on Hiiumaa. If I have a yen for opera, a stadium rock concert or gallery exhibition, there are ships and planes for that. If I want to go to a cafe or zoo, I can visit my mainland friends. But it tends to be the other way around – my mainland friends are so keen on coming to visit me on the island that there are hardly any days in summer to family time by ourselves. ■



Hiiu Vill

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TÖÖTAV VANA VILLAVABRIK WORKING OLD WOOL FACTORY

A man and a woman are standing in front of a white house with a thatched roof. The woman is on the left, wearing a black dress, and the man is on the right, wearing a black t-shirt and black pants. A black and tan dog is sitting in the foreground on the grass. The house has several windows with shutters and a chimney.

Vaemla wool factory

**” A SMALLER FOOTPRINT
MEANS USING OLD
MACHINERY AND
LOCALLY SOURCED
MATERIALS.“**

Near the ruins of Vaemla Manor, I turn onto a smaller road. Before me is the manor's hay barn. Printed on the low-slung building is VILLAVABRIK – wool factory. I park, stride into the limestone-coloured building and ask the proprietor Kadri Valdma whether wool is indeed produced here.

I'm in a room full of iron work horses. "These wool processing machines are 120 years old, says Kadri. Back before electricity, there was a steam engine outside. Now each machine has an electric motor.

EVERYTHING HAD TO BE BUILT FROM SCRATCH

The production activity got started right after the property reform of the 1990s, when Kadri's parents-in-law took possession. Everything had lain idle for a long time, and everything needed to be tuned up.

How often is the machinery in motion, I ask. "Every day but as needed." The machines don't work eight hours straight and each of the seven workers has several different jobs to do.

The wool comes from Hiiumaa sheep farmers; they factory doesn't have its

own flock. Except for sheep borrowed from friends who spend the summers outside the building.

I ask a city slicker question: aren't all sheep siblings, is the wool different in quality? "Young animals have softer fleece but most wool is high in quality: Sometimes there is a wiry quality and you wonder what breed it is. Because we don't see the animals, the wool arrives in a sack."

THE ORIGIN OF THE LAMB LOGO

I mention that a member of the Hiiumaa tourism cluster attended the Viljandi Folk traditional music festival and counted 30 sweaters with a little lamb symbol. "That's our logo," crows Kadri. The first logo came out of needing to conceal a defect. We had to put something there. So it was a little lamb.



The company has been operating for 31 years and it doesn't sell large volumes on the mainland. Most of the products are sold on the spot in the summers. They attend two fairs on the mainland and also get online orders. Some people come and check out sweaters and socks but don't buy them before the weather turns cold. The website has pictures and you can order if you send measurements. But it takes a wait, not right away.

SUMMER IS PLEASANT

Kadri says they try to keep prices down as low as possible. "We're small, can't produce much so it's a fair price. There's a lot of work with lamb's wool. I can't even begin to describe washing the wool, it's hard work."

The "propaganda corner" as Kadri calls it is an interesting area of the operation. Soviet-era newspapers pasted on the wall emerged during renovations. There's also a sign: wool and flour industry. Flour was also ground here in the interwar era and during the occupation.

Kadri herself is from Tartu. Husband Mihkel, who has a rare day off work today, is from Hiiumaa. Does Kadri ever feel the call to return to the mainland? No. I wouldn't want to live there anymore," she says, and I notice a small lamb on the windowsill, who also looks like it is quite content. ■





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



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Viscosa Culture Factory

One of the people behind Viscosa Culture Factory in Kõrgessaare, Marco Pärtel, talks about moving to Hiiumaa and ambitious plans for the complex.

"It seems that we hadn't even planned anything, but everything just happened," says Marco Pärtel, who bought the giant former factory with two friends in August 2022 and established a foundation called "Utoopia nr 9". And indeed, much has happened from that point on. "Twelve concerts, 10 theatre performances, one permanent exhibition and one very cool musical event with an Indian DJ. We were able to try out all the different concepts," says Marco about his activities over the first season.

Viscosa is set in a giant complex of buildings that was once home to an artificial silk factory and later, a fish cannery. It is popularly called Viskoosa but the official name is Kõrgessaare. When you first alight at the parking lot, you don't grasp the scale of the buildings but the wow effect kicks in once you enter the courtyard. It's really a massive historical

In 1912, the Petrograd company AS Viscosa built an artificial silk factory in Kõrgessaare. The place would be popularly known as Viskoosa. Historical sources have listed the owners of these grand factory complex as De la Gardie, Stenbock, Ungern-Sternberg, Stackelberg and Bodarevskaya. In 1984, the Hiiu Kaluri tinned fish plant began operating here, producing such products as the iconic Tallinn Sprats.

industrial area. “There is about 12,000 m² covered space and in summer 2023, about 3000m² of it was in use,” says as he leads me into the complex. This allows them to think big, there is spaciousness and the imagination tends to take flight about the possibilities.

AN EVENT VENUE IN PLACE OF BIOSFÄÄR

For a long time, the idea was to establish a visitor centre for the biosphere reserve. “The goal was to combine nature education and tourism, with room for learning spaces,” says Marco. “Unfortunately at that time there wasn’t anyone who would be a leader for the topic on such a scale. Which doesn’t rule out space for nature education in the future. But since the Biosfäär was promised, we substituted the Peosfäär (celebration-sphere) in our minds. To that end, we brought the best minds in our field aboard and had our first season.”

Everything about the culture factory is based on recycling and re-use. You can see it everywhere – for example the impressive black box theatre was created for no euros at all, some of the bar furnishings are from the former restaurant Vertigo in Tallinn, the barstools were homemade, and so on. Marco wants to involve locals and local projects as much as possible. “The environment dictates a great deal of what we are involved in,” says Marko. The culture factory serves various beers by the local Viskoosa craft brewer and it is planned to grow hops and raise chickens on the grounds of the factory. In future, they also plan also an affordable capsule hotel.

FROM TALLINN TO HIIUMAA TO CREATE VALUE

How is Marco, who studied real estate planning and ecotourism and was long in real estate business in Tallinn, connected to Hiiumaa? “My wife and kids,” he says. His wife Triinu studied and worked in Tallinn but Hiiumaa kept calling to her and finally came the decision to move here. The pandemic was a catalyst – it seemed a wise idea to rear the children in a pleasant environment such as Hiiumaa.



Marco Pärtel.

” AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, VISCOSA CULTURE FACTORY BECAME MY LIFE’S WORK!“



They were fortunate to stumble on a country house about 10 km from Viskoo- sa that fit the bill. “It will now be our fourth winter in Puski Village, the winter firewood has been delivered and stacked. Life in Puski is more active than ever before. “One family came here six months before us and others came two months before us. Puski was chosen as Hiiumaa village of the year, Marco tells me.

For Triinu, she never had any question on how to realize her ambitions. The main question was how Marco could find some outlet. Again, as chance would have it, he became involved in brainstorming on the future of the factory complex. Now he is

so busy he doesn’t have a chance to rest. His background in ecotourism and real estate was tailor-made for this project. Actually the whole family, including Marco’s teenager in Tallinn, is on board on Viscosa “There’s plenty of things to do for everyone: Three years from now, we envision Viscosa as a thriving entrepreneurial environment where local artisans ply their trade and which hosts quality cultural events and people have embraced the venue. Our concept is to create new value, keep the environment open to ideas and improve it gradually as we’re able.” ■

How did you end up living in Estonia?

I'd visited Estonia with my Estonian boyfriend plenty of times over 10 years. I was taken with the country a little more with each trip. When it occurred to us to move here, I embraced the idea.

You often say that Hiiumaa is one of your favourite places here. How would you describe the island to people who have never been?

It's small enough to cover the whole island in a few days, but if you have more time, you can start leafing through the different layers and there are plenty of them. It's an island where much of the good parts are hidden and not visible at first glance.

Your favourite memory from Hiiumaa?

I have a countless number of memorable experiences on the island, some of them especially emotional. For example, I have had the fortune of meeting the legendary Ave Alavainu, whose colourful personality really resonates with my soul and stayed there. It looked like the start of a long and beautiful friendship but Ave passed not too long after our visit.

Hiiumaa has no end to natural splendour. What are you most drawn to, the forests or the seaside?

I adore water so I am especially enamoured of activities related to the sea. I recently had the good fortune of putting my fishing skills to the test with a genuine Hiiu captain and landed three pike. A first

Hiiumaa fan Justyna Seniuta

*You might spot
a young Polish
woman wearing a
fleece emblazoned
with Hiiumaa,
singing the praises
of the island.*



for me! I had the honour of embarking on a voyage on a genuine wooden ship with Marek Rätsep. Last winter we went net fishing with Imre Kivi. *(Sighs rapturously)* Everything connected to the sea on Hiiumaa is magical!

How would you describe Hiiumaa culture and people?

A major part of Hiiumaa's culture was hospitality. The people here are so open, talkative and social, always invite you back to their homes.

How do you like the pace of life on Hiiumaa?

Ha! The pace here is astonishing and slower than anywhere else. Considering that I tend to be "blind" to time and clocks, it's an ideal fit!

Are there any lesser known places you would recommend checking out?

I don't know if it's exactly hidden but I found the tiny and cosy Kassari Museum congenial, its permanent exhibition named after the four ancient elements is extremely intimate and warm. I would also recommend Reigi Parsonage for a visit.

Your favourite season for visiting Hiiumaa?

To be honest, every season offers its unique experience. I have been to the island often in winter and although it's not the tourist season as we know it, there are moods that need to be discovered.

If you had to sum up Hiiumaa in one sentence, what would you say?

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Four Corners Gallery

*The Nelja Nurga
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Gallery is a worthy
destination for
anyone interested in
the art of the islands.
The gallery operators
make an effort to
bring the island's
distinctive creations
to visitors in all
genres and forms.*

We find the gallery in the centre of Kärkla, similar to a bird's nest. The local council member Tuuli Tammla, who is an authority on all things Hiiumaa, says as she directs me to the gallery: "This is yet another must-mention place on Hiiumaa!" Inside the gallery, we are greeted by artist and teacher Liia Lüdigi-Algvere, one of the key people behind the gallery.

How might we introduce you to readers of GO Hiiumaa, without using the words "painter" and "teacher"?

I'm a Hiiumaa native, born here, the child of a mother and father from Hiiumaa. We lived in Kärkla. Before our whole family moved to the mainland, I attended school in Suuremõisa for about 15 months.

After graduating from the art academy, I came back to Hiiumaa with my husband. We settled on Põllumäe Farm in Haldi Village in southern Hiiumaa.

There's an odd-sounding word that ties in with Nelja Nurga Gallery - hiku! What does it mean?

HiKu is an abbreviation of the word Hiiumaa and art in Estonian. It covers people who live here and are engaged in the fine arts, as well as art and culture aficionados. It was founded in summer 2008 at the initiative of Märt Rannast. There were 15 founding members and on 15 June 2015, HiKu opened an experimental gallery, the first of its kind on Hiiumaa.

Is there anything else like it on the island?

To my knowledge, there isn't another gallery like it!

How does it work, do the exhibitions rotate and who selects the works?

The gallery operates year-round and is volunteer-driven. Whoever is free, opens the doors and is on duty for four hours. Usually that's on a Friday and Saturday, and in summer months, Thursday and maybe other days as well. It's by appointment on other days – call the phone numbers of the Kärkla based HiKu members posted on the door. Each exhibition runs about a month, and there have also been exhibitions of several days between two longer-running shows.

Does the gallery play a role in developing cultural tourism in Hiiumaa-Give us more details.

Without a doubt. It's hard to say what details might be of interest to you, but I pursue my own art and I HOPE that the gallery has a role.

Are you inspired by Hiiumaa?

In my case, the ethnographic watercolours have the most direct connection with Hiiumaa. Starting from the Hiiumaa calendar pictures and continuing with the "Triibulised" series. I have copied a number of striped patterns of old jackets for the Hiiumaa Museum: As regards oils on canvas, I have painted the Hiiumaa beach and sea on the spot. I have produced portraits of various cultural figures of Hiiumaa in local settings and recently, "Visitors" to Hiiumaa.

Could you describe the "Hiiumaa art landscape"?

I realized while drawing and painting during a summer practicum at Kiduspäe on Hiiumaa when I was at ERKI (now the Academy of Arts) that I was inspired specifically by this island, its people and nature. Hiiumaa people are very sensitive to aesthetics. My return to Hiiumaa coincided with Tartu Art School graduate Ott Lambing's (1955–2019) work posting here. Love and passion for art and Hiiumaa led him to organize exhibitions of Hiiumaa artists and ones where professionals and independents and were together – these were held twice a year for almost 20 years running starting from the early 1980s. ■



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Ülo Sooster. Self-portrait.

Ülo Sooster

— 100 —

*Hiiumaa native Ülo Sooster was one of the most influential Estonian artists. We talked with his son **Tenno Pent Sooster**, residing in Israel, about the importance of Hiiumaa to himself and his father, as well as Ülo Sooster's art and Hiiumaa's influence on it.*

You speak excellent Estonian. How have you managed to retain your grasp of the language?

I read, and try to listen to radio and watch TV programs. Compared to my previous level, though, it must have deteriorated – I don't get much practice.

How often do you manage to visit Estonia and Hiiumaa?

Before COVID, I visited once or twice a year. I certainly always visited Hiiumaa and Pendi farm while staying in Estonia. For a long time, my nephew used to live there, but he has now moved to a place a little way away from Pendi. Due to the currently complicated situation in Israel it's hard for me to travel these days, but I hope that circumstances will change so that I will be able to attend the celebration of the centenary in person.

What does Hiiumaa mean to you?

This place lives in my heart; my family and my surname originate from here. Although I was born and used to live in Moscow, nothing in me stirs when I think about Moscow or Russia. But when I come to Estonia, especially Hiiumaa, I feel that this is the place where I'm originally from. This place is mine! I have a dream of buying a farmstead in Hiiumaa – I could stay in Hiiumaa during summers, and move to Israel in the winter –, but I have yet to pull it off.

Which locations in Hiiumaa have a special meaning to you?

My grandfather's other place of residence was the village of Emmaste where I spent more of my childhood than at Pendi farm. All of the fascinating places – like the village of Sõru with all its fishermen – are near Emmaste, which is why I am currently interested in the Sõru Jazz festival.

Lighthouses are very interesting; I myself have made drawings of the Kõpu lighthouse. I like windmills, and, of course, the sea. Hiiumaa used to be a closed "border zone", so it was extremely fascinating to visit these locations that had for so long been inaccessible. I like the monument to MS Estonia, although it also evokes great sadness. Käina is an interesting place.

What kinds of impressions of Hiiumaa do you perceive in your father's art?

My father made his way in art through the junipers of Hiiumaa. Juniper trees are clearly prominent in his earlier work – and I don't mean the surreal junipers of his later oeuvre, but the real, genuine juniper trees. I remember finding a location that seemed familiar while staying at Pendi farm; dad had used just that location in his art. I began

Estonian modernist artist Ülo Sooster was born in 1924 at Pendi farm in Ühtri village, Käina parish. After graduating from Ühtri elementary school he continued his studies at the Kärkla secondary school of science, continuing them later, starting from 1943, at Pallas Art School. His teachers at this art academy (later renamed Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic's National Institute of Art in Tartu) included distinguished masters like Ado Vabbe, Aleksander Vardi and Elmar Kits. After graduating from the Institute in 1949, Sooster was arrested for being an "obdurate decadent". In 1956 he was released from a prison camp in Soviet Kazakhstan, and in 1957 went to live and work as a freelance artist in Moscow, where he died in 1970.

taking more notice of junipers myself; there are just so many shapes and forms of them.

Do you think Hiiumaa always remained important to Ülo Sooster?

Yes, definitely. Hiiumaa and Estonia were very close to and very important for him. When he moved to Moscow, he took Estonia along with him.

Where in Hiiumaa do you feel the greatest connection to your father's artistic expression?

Where else but Pendi farm; he drew there a lot. We had an enormous garden that he often captured in his paintings. Another motif from Hiiumaa that found its way into his work were the fish, especially flatfish. He had a tremendous penchant for plaice. Flatfish are very interesting and unique creatures, with both eyes located on the same side of the body.



Since times immemorial, fishermen have marked their catch with personal "house marks" in order to distinguish it from the others'. I only recently discovered that the Pendi family has its own mark, somewhat reminiscent of an anchor. These days I am using it to sign my own works, too.

The number of artists and other creatives with connections to Hiiumaa seems disproportionately large; why do you think that is?

A number of different ethnicities, including the Swedes, have intermingled here. I don't know if there have been any actual pirates in the lineages of Hiiu natives, but I like the gist of the narrative that Hiiumaa was at some point attacked by pirates who settled here and introduced their genes to the local pool, which is now producing interesting results. (Laughs) There is also an alternative explanation. The

centre of Hiiumaa has been hit by a meteoroid. My father used to say that it must have brought along some sort of cosmic forces, which have made the locals special and their appearance different from that of the Estonians.

What else did your father tell you of Hiiumaa?

He used to talk about his family. Pendi farm used to be big – ten cows, six horses, and a drove of pigs. The whole male lineage was composed of men with a penchant for creative arts; my grandfather was a musician, his brother a composer. Most of the farmwork had to be done by women.

In his later years he used to say he'd like to return to Estonia and maybe establish a master's workshop at Pendi where he could work in serenity. He really yearned for the calm and quiet of Hiiumaa. ■

"ÜLO SOOSTER 100" CELEBRATION IN 2024

- An exhibition opening on March 8th at the Estonian History Museum's Great Guild Hall in Tallinn will consist of three parts: Hiiumaa and Tartu, Kazakhstan and Karlag, and Love and Freedom. The same exhibition being held in September in Hiiumaa will be complemented with Ülo Sooster's works focusing on his home island.
- Starting from October 18th, the exhibition "Sooster 100. A view from private collections" will be held at the Mikkel Museum in Tallinn. The exhibition presents a selection of Ülo Sooster's works owned by private collectors.
- In April, the international exhibition of surrealism "Surrealism 100. Prague, Tartu, and other stories..." will be held in the temporary exhibitions' hall at Estonian National Museum in Tartu. The exhibition will include works by Ülo Sooster.
- There are plans afoot to erect a monument to Ülo Sooster in Kärkla. There already is a monument to the artist near his birthplace at Pendi farm. In the future, Tenno Pent Sooster also plans to establish an art residency at Pendi farm.
- Tenno Pent and associates have established the Sooster Foundation and created a Facebook page for the centenary, "Ülo Sooster 100".

Glass artist *Kalli Sein*

” *HIIMUMAA IS A PERFECT PLACE FOR BEING CREATIVE!*“



We enter an establishment in Kärddla called KlaasiPank (glass bank). Most of the space inside is filled with glass objects, each of which looks more fascinating than the previous one. Hustling and bustling in the middle of all this gleaming splendour is glass artist Kalli Sein.

Is this place more of a gallery or more of a workshop?

I'd say it's an open studio. I maintain a workshop at home; it is meant for the rumblrier kinds of activities that are not that attractive. At KlaasiPank – named so because the building was originally built on a cliff (pank), and the studio with all of my glass-melting furnaces, blowtorches for manufacturing beads,

and glass cutting tables operates inside a banking hall. This allows me to do the more attractive jobs and small servicing tasks here.

I have heard about your glass art courses. What are those about and who are welcome to participate?

They are more like workshops, lasting one to two hours, for one to four people. The youngest learners have been eight years old. People contact me and tell me that they wish to attend. We can experiment with making beads with the help of blowtorches, learn to cut and blow glass, or even combine all of these techniques. I have had to refuse bigger groups of people due to the activities being rather high-maintenance when it comes to health and safety requirements – although I have entertained bigger groups with presentations about the beginnings of Estonian glass art history in 1628 in Hiiumaa at Hüti, as well as about different glass art techniques.

You and your husband Valev Sein came to live in Hiiumaa in 1986. Were you sure back then that you would definitely stay on the island, or did you initially plan this as some kind of

temporary stage?

That's not exactly the case. Both of Valev's parents were Hiiumaa natives, and although in the 1960s they had moved to Tallinn, in their desire to return they bought an old farmstead here in the 1970s. Valev has visited Hiiumaa and vacationed here since birth. In 1986, I started accompanying him on these vacations, and we finally settled here in the autumn of 2009. By then we were very sure we wanted to stay, and we haven't regretted this decision once.

How does Hiiumaa influence your art?

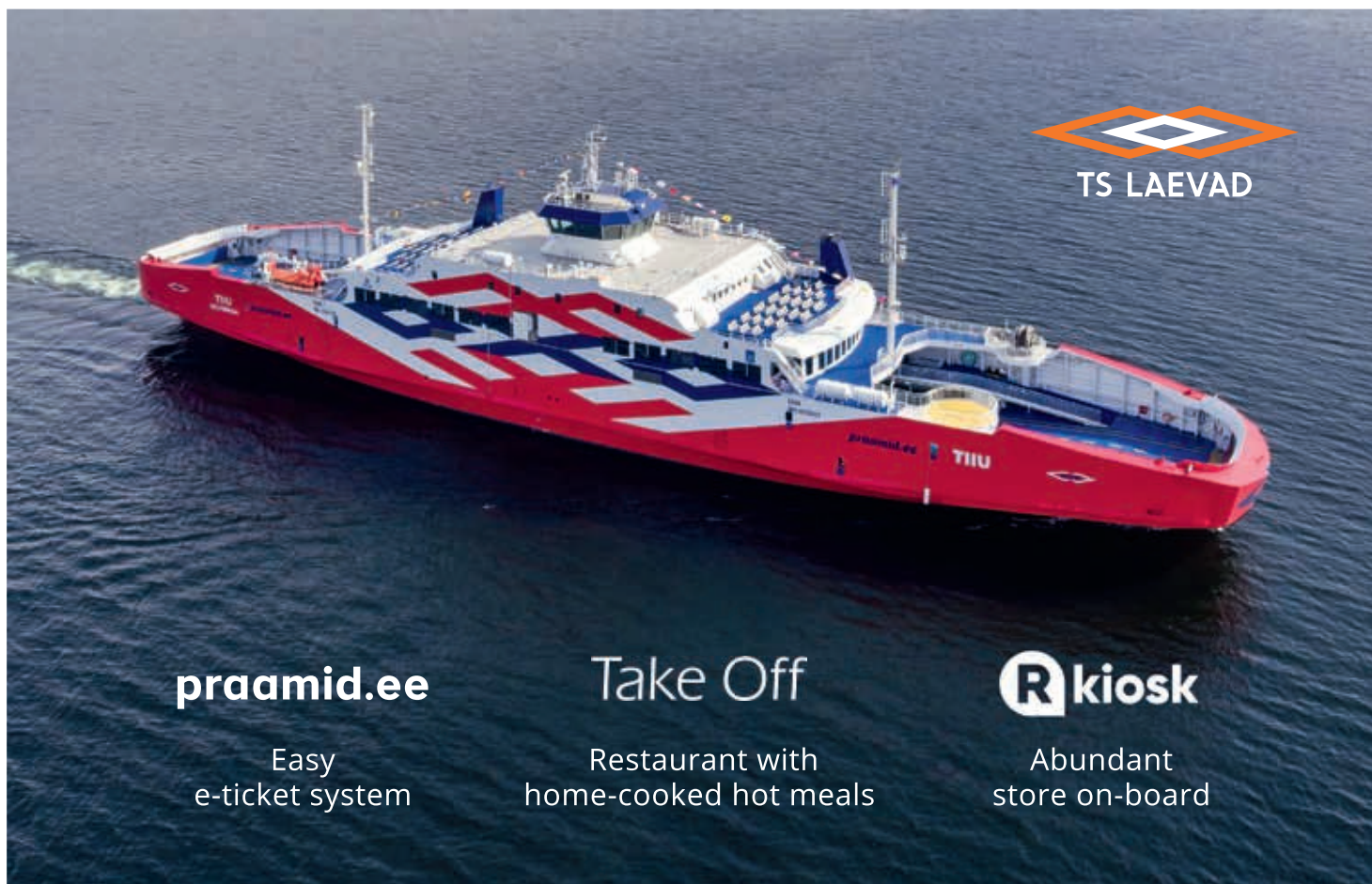
When I think about it, I guess it has become more playful. In the past I didn't use much colour in my work. In addition to making life more colourful, Hiiumaa also makes it more expansive. There is enough room and freedom here to be and think, and through that, also to be creative.

Does your work carry a social or cultural message that you wish to convey?

I am definitely not an artist with a social message, but life around me certainly influences me. Throughout my whole life I have been fond of old things and activities close to nature. Glass is a material that takes a lot of energy to produce, but luckily it is also eternally reusable, which is what I have been concentrating more and more on in recent years. I do try to verbally direct people towards taking their broken glass objects to the right place where they can be reworked into something new.

How would you characterise the state of artistic activity on the island? Are there enough people here engaging in creative endeavours?

More and more of different kinds of artistic people have been coming here, and Hiiumaa is a perfect place for being creative. In addition, Hiiumaa natives are among the most healthy and wholesome people not only in their humour, but also when it comes to health statistics. I have never been connected to so many cultural events – either as a spectator or as one of the organisers – as I am now when living in Hiiumaa. ■



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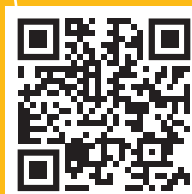
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ACCOMMODATION (150m):



Maret Kukkur

keeps her nose
to the cultural
grindstone



2020. Genius Loci I. Külalised (Visitors). 1877. 1910. 2020. painting, sculpture

Maret greets us in a somewhat mystical place, the Reigi parsonage. In addition to meeting a woman deeply devoted to her endeavours we got to see an interesting glass art exhibition curated by Maret.

Please, tell a bit about yourself. I am mostly interested in your connection to Hiiumaa.

Since becoming a Hiiumaa native is complicated, which has often made continental folks hot under their collars, I will not even try to fool anyone and will admit in all sincerity that I come from the Mustamäe suburb of Tallinn.

It has been said that you “keep your nose to the cultural grindstone”. What does that mean?

(Laughs.) You should ask that from the person who originally said it. I’m not sure what keeping one’s nose to the cultural grindstone means; maybe, that I both make art as well as curate art exhibitions. Then again, when taking a broader look at the field of culture, I must admit I have participated in a working group for an amendment of a law concerning creative entrepreneurs, and a few lines in that law constitute my personal contribution.



Let’s talk about *Genius Loci*, your series of exhibitions. What has been achieved; what is afoot? And what does *Genius Loci* even mean?

Genius loci means “spirit of place” in Latin. Using the name stems from the location in which the exhibitions take place. The main reason being that during the first art exhibitions in the years from 2013 to 2015, visitors constantly asked what the facility had been used for in the past. Having delved into its past a bit, it became clear that its history is so dense and so full of events and persons that it’s impossible to convey it all in one go.



2021. Genius Loci II. Legend. 1781. 2021. textile art



2022. Genius Loci III. Teised (Others). 1948. 1986. 2022. ceramics



2023. Genius Loci IV. Elu (Life). 1628. 1928. 2023. glass art

So, instead, we focus on one event, period, or group of people. This is the thing that, in combination with modern art, fills the house and brings forth a new spirit of place for all who have spent time inside this *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Or, at least I hope so, and this – creating a unified whole – has always been the objective.

In the year 2024, the focus is on the Rinne family, which has been represented here by several people during various periods. The pieces to be exhibited will be works of graphic art.

The way we curate modern art may be referred to as old-fashioned. Separating art into different styles, categories and disciplines – painting, graphic arts, textile arts, ceramics, etc. – is a tradition dating back from the 20th century.

Self-expression in the 21st century does not establish such limits. If one were to ask how to talk about art to people unfamiliar with art in a way that would be comprehensible, unintimidating, and attractive – well, we (Kalli Sein, Valev Sein, and me) could not come up with anything more profound.

Did you choose the Reigi parsonage as the location for the exhibitions for purely pragmatic reasons – because of the suitable rooms –, or does this place have special significance for you personally?

It was pure coincidence. In 2012 the local municipality, which back then was called Kõrgessaare county, was figuring out how and when to celebrate the anniversary of the creation of the Hüti glass factory. Katrin Kivivuori (née Sarapuu) solved the task very simply by bringing together the glass artist Kalli Sein, the painter Valev Sein, and the scenographer Maret Kukk, negotiated the terms of using the building with the Church of Jesus in Reigi, and the rest is already history. It does indeed also have a personal meaning, but that's a bit of a long story. To tell it short: my grandmother told me to do it. By now, something else has grown out of all this; the location has become the backbone of the whole series of exhibitions.

How would you characterize the cultural scene in Hiiumaa? Are there more positives than negatives, or vice versa?

No cultural scene can exist without the people. And how can you have only positive (or only negative) impressions of anyone? As a rule, every one of us contains both. I'm just happy that there are still people around, that there is still an "us". ■

Margit Kääramees

” TO US, ORJAKU IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SMALL HARBOUR IN THE WORLD.”



Margit Kääramees, a culture organizer with a fiery spirit, is responsible for a whole slew of popular cultural events in Hiiumaa, but one of the things she is most full-heartedly committed to is the charming Orjaku harbour with its village community centre.

An acquaintance once told me that you are “a colossal person who does a thousand things in Hiiumaa”. What would be these thousand things? Can you name the first hundred – and are they all connected to culture?

Oh, it's been a long time since I managed to do a thousand things... But, yes, there have indeed been periods in the past when I've focused concurrently on very many issues that have directly or at least indirectly been related to culture. During the time I was employed by the Hiiumaa

Museum, I edited publications about crochet lace, was involved in establishing the tradition of handicraft and community produce fairs a couple of decades ago, and have organized some of them for the past ten years. As the culture councillor at Emmaste parish, I have created and organized the wooden boats festival Puulaevade Pidu, which has been awarded the title of a Cultural Pearl of Hiiumaa. I have arranged the dry land portion of the annual celebration dedicated to garfish, Tuulekala Festival, for eight years; and, as a board member at the Hiiumaa Tourism Association, I have promoted our home island to the outside world for many years. Since 2008, I have participated in community efforts to develop the Orjaku harbour into a community centre. In 2023, I celebrated a decade of having organized the event series of Cultural Thursdays at Kassari.

Let's talk about Orjaku harbour. I have heard say of it that it's the most beautiful small harbour in the world. Is that a joke, an advertising slogan, or pure and simple truth? Be honest!

All of these things! To us, Orjaku is the most beautiful small harbour in the world, because it is our home harbour, and because as a community, we have invested so much of both our time as well

as financial resources in it – for years, the members of the board of the village association mortgaged their assets, underwriting bank loans in order to carry out the developments in the harbour. For years, we have exerted ourselves in order for the harbour to make as positive an impression as possible by organising public events, entertaining study trip attendees, buying ad space or distributing tourism information on-site, always inculcating the idea that the location at Orjaku is first and foremost a harbour, not a village community centre (it was even registered in the land registry as “the village community centre at Orjaku harbour”). This means that for years we have produced good publicity for the harbour, without the owner of the harbour having had to contribute much time or money. But the moniker of “the most beautiful small harbour in the world” has taken effect. Even the country's president Alar Karis used it with official pictures of his visit to Hiiumaa this spring. So, I would say – if you yourself believe in what you're saying, others will start to believe in it, too!

What sort of a place is the Orjaku village community centre? Is the harbour part of the centre?

Created by the community in 2009 and completed in 2014, Orjaku village community centre is a multifunctional establishment that includes an information centre and souvenir shop operating in the summer, serves as a venue for cultural events, and lets out rooms to other event organizers as well as private parties. Käina parish as the owner of the harbour was included already in the planning stage of the community centre, and the project was called “village community centre at Orjaku harbour” from the start, which means that the multifunctionality of the establishment has been a priority from the beginning – it is meant to serve and service both locals as well as visitors. Things have changed with the recent institution of the foundation of Hiiumaa harbours (Hiiumaa Sadamad), but it should be evident that everything happening at the harbour has remained a single whole for both Hiiumaa natives and the visitors, and we wish this to also continue in the future. ■

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Kalana

– a place
you'll never
want to leave

At the end of Kõpu Peninsula is Kalana, an area of Hiiumaa with a variety of landscapes and beautiful beaches known for its strong and cohesive community.

The proprietor of Kalana Harbour and the originator of the KalanaÄÄR restaurant, Jüri Tamm, tells us more.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JANIS SPURZINS

Even someone who's not a local senses Kalana's unique rhythm. Over time, a cohesive community that shares many of the same values has taken shape. Could you describe its members?

It is truly sui generis. We have people from all sorts of backgrounds. Musicians, bankers, artists, fashionistas, businessmen, advocates, builders, brewers, founders, doctors, and more. The big advantage and disadvantage of this place is that it's far from everything else. Those who come here usually don't just stay a weekend. People who tie themselves to Kalana have to make time for themselves to get the most of Kalana. Kids have a grand time, too. In the morning, the kids all go off somewhere, are away all day having adventures only to finally re-appear. There's none of that "I'm bored" and "screen time" stuff. We can offer our children summers and childhood in nature, and they somehow find things to do in the forests and beach the whole time. The community tends toward sports and active lifestyles. Meeting over a wine glass is in balance with trail running get together.

What do you have in common? You have developed some definite

annual traditions. Say a few words about them.

As soon as a Kalana resident arrives, they slip into their Kalana skin. The necktie is discarded, we're all one and the same here, even when remote working. We've held an antique market in Kalana, a midsummer bonfire on the Kalana harbour breakwater, this summer too, certainly. The fourth of July celebrations are our village speciality. Something like a chaotic parade, eating of hotdogs, a football game between kids and parents and so on.

Kalana and California. Similarities and differences.

Some time ago, a group of people from the community came up with the idea of a Republic of Kalana. Like a new discovery. In other words, Kalana is like California and the whole "American dream" in its purest incarnation, a free world. People arrive and welcomed, it is easy to assimilate into the community because people come for the same values. We have primeval, unique nature and a feeling of being at the edge of the world, a different kind of existence. So if there was a republic, it was only appropriate to have a patriotic observance. We designed a Kalafornia flag



based on California's flag, and started celebrating the 4th of July. I apologize to the founders if something is inaccurate in that description, but that is the version in my head and that is how I feel accepted.

Kalana stands out from the rest of Hiiumaa. For a long time, it was even almost an hour's drive from Kärddla, the island's capital where only surfers and other adventurers ended up. How long is the history of Kalana, have you looked into it?

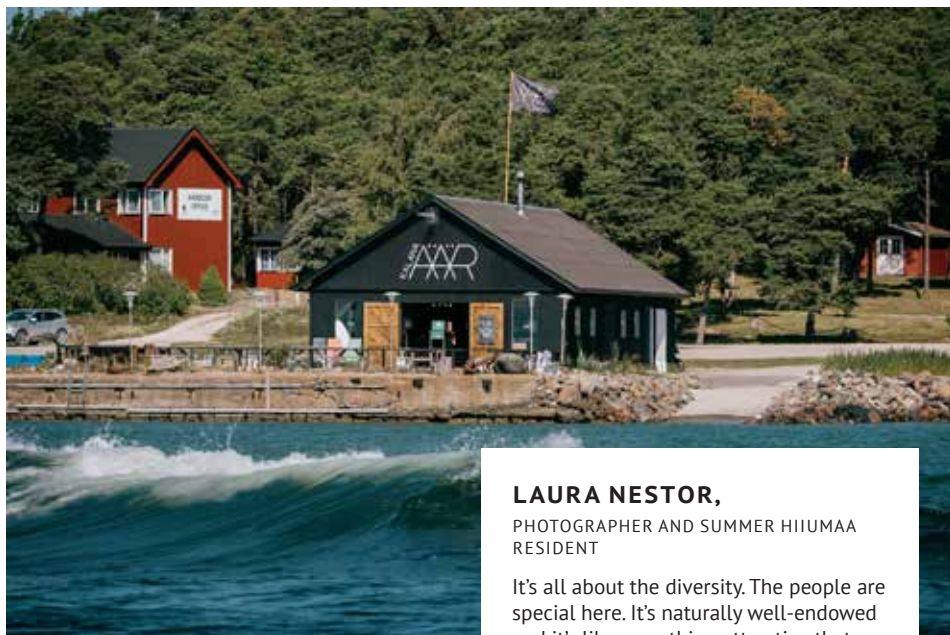
In Soviet days, the area was off-limits and before that, it was a little too rugged a place to attract such Estonian settlement. The sea was stormy for fishing and the soil too rocky to grow anything. It seems that the history of Kalana is not very long and there are few natives so the newcomers feel at home here. So that is a similarity to California, where big shots from the Old World showed up, but in our case, big shots from the mainland and start developing things and rolling up their sleeves.

We, the new settlers in Kalana have an immense advantage over the conquerors of America. We can avoid the mistakes they made when they built their civilization. Plus, our priorities are quite different. The new Kalanans are here to use the unique natural resources sustainably, caring about what forebears and local history there are.

I really hope that I haven't given any offence to the natives, but that is how I sense our existence here. Last summer, some archaeological finds were made here, however, which show something else. So we look forward to what archaeologists say.

How many in the community are surfers, and how important a role does water sport play? The scenery and the highest wave crests on the Baltic Sea make for ideal conditions...

Yes, By Estonian standards, it seems quite surreal, but a large percentage of the people who have moved here surf. Unique waves right in your backyard. We have a chat group where the participants discuss whether and where to surf. If there is a good day on the way, Kalana changes, especially in summer. Many cyclists in wetsuits charge toward Kalana port breakwater or Ristna. Tourists who have come to eat at a restaurant or just enjoy the Kalana scenery sit on the



LAURA NESTOR,

PHOTOGRAPHER AND SUMMER HIIUMAA RESIDENT

It's all about the diversity. The people are special here. It's naturally well-endowed and it's like everything attractive that you would want in your surroundings is represented here. A particular feeling of freedom and strong natural power, and peace and quiet, too!

Traditions...there are quite a few. A place to go with the family, where time stops. Aquatic pleasures and barrel saunas. Pigging out on pizza at Kalana ÄÄR with friends and the Amapiano party held every summer with the sunset in the background.



KRISTJAN LEPIK,

ENTREPRENEUR

Kalana is a curious place; I recognized it as mine already 20 years ago when I first came here. But the world here is distinct in its own right – you take a right from the house, and you'll get to the village and a couple of really nice cafés; you take a left and all you'll see for the next 20 kilometres is woods. I go to the woods here in order to think my own thoughts when I have some kind of big issue to resolve – I come to Kalana alone and get my thoughts straight while wondering around in the woods. The business idea for Arbonics was born in these woods here, too. I come here every year with my team to set our strategies right.



breakwater, watching the surfers as if they were on a seal watching trip and wonder where the heck they are. The new marina brings the sea much closer, and sailing is also starting to get off the ground.

How much of the community is year-round residents and what is life in Kalana like outside the classic tourist season?

A few do live here year-round. But there are plenty of visitors in seasons outside of summer. A large part of the houses were built in the last 15 years, when the summer home buildings were built more for year-round use. I come here quite a bit year-round because of KalanaÄÄR. I always finagle a few days extra because my productivity and focus are often better in Kalana than in Tallinn. I know many others use the same model. Actually the climate is quite mild year-round, snow cover is rare and the evergreen nature calls back all the time. Autumn flounder fishing brings many fishermen, Christmas brings people from the community and friends. Spring is usually pleasantly dry and warm. Outside of summer, Kalama is beautiful and quiet.

Any fascinating facts about Kalana that aren't very well known...

Maybe the fact that it isn't actually stormy or windy all the time, but quite calm. The windy weather just tends to be more intense than elsewhere in Estonia and we have the lowest precipitation though you'd have to check with a meteorologist. And in August, spiders grow unnaturally large.

This summer, a marina was opened. What are the expectations?

I think the marina gives another dimension, brings people closer to activity on the water. We recently discussed it and agreed that the next summer, the marina would organize sailing lessons for younger Kalana residents. There aren't very many yachters here in the community but I've heard that some are planning to take courses for captain's certification, while some scan the ads for boats for sale.

The KalanaÄÄR restaurant has received some acclaim already. The taste of the food must be key, but what else?

Falstaff recently picked us Surprise of the Year in Estonia for 2024 and we ranked 27th best in Estonia. It's nice to be recognized and noticed. As I understand, the criterion wasn't only food. When we came up with the concept I described it as a place where you can come from surfing in eat oysters and have a refreshing beverage before changing out of your wetsuit, with no fussiness or awkwardness. Though a woman in a nice summer dress wouldn't feel out of place either. Or someone in sandals living van life. I think the key, besides the good food, is the sense of being on an edge (äär), it is simply so convenient and free. Thanks to everyone who has put in the effort to make it happen!

Describe Kalana in three sentences, please.

The sea at its most powerful, with its different faces, a unique paradisiacal beach, primeval nature in fairly unforgiving conditions. Plus great people doing good work, for the sake of the above. Free, primal and sunny, it's a different place from what you might have seen elsewhere in Estonia. ■

★ HIIUINGEL ★

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.

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Ristna Lighthouse

Eiffel's masterpiece

*Architect **Indrek Laos**, a summer resident of Hiiumaa, has spent countless hours studying Ristna Lighthouse, which was developed in Eiffel's studio, and popularizing it all over the world.*

Studying Ristna and Eiffel is something dear to your heart. 2023 is a year of great import – the 150th anniversary of Ristna. What does the date mean to you as a student of architecture?

When I factually established the origin of Ristna Lighthouse, it seemed unbelievable to me, too. How is it possible that by the 21st century no one had studied the works of one of the world's greatest engineers to discover the fact that the work on the world's highest structure was preceded by decades of testing and development of technical models. These superb examples are still standing in a number of places in the world, like Ristna Lighthouse (1874). The marvel of the Eiffel Tower overshadowed his numerous technical accomplishments. Increasingly, people have



PHOTOGRAPH: IVO PANASJUK

Indrek Laos at Ristna lighthouse.
Photograph: T. Baranovski



started noticing and other, not as well known buildings and the anniversary of the lighthouse gives us reason to celebrate it in a worthy manner.

Why are you fascinated by the Ristna-Eiffel connection?

My study of Hiiumaa lighthouses was inspired by a lecture delivered by Helgi Põllo in 2010 at the Night University „Power and spirit of the lighthouse”: Right after that, I climbed up Tahkuna Lighthouse, and when I descended I couldn't miss the amazingly masterful detail richness that the building holds in store. It is nevertheless very utilitarian at the same time, just a metal pipe with a technical box attached to its end would suffice for today's purposes. Why such care and attention to detail at a time when construction was many times more complicated and labour-intensive? These aesthetic attitudes and intensions seem light years away from each other. Yet then, too, civilian infrastructure contracts were awarded at tender to the lowest bidder. And that was the case with Ristna Lighthouse, it was a stroke of luck that it originated in Eiffel's studio.

This year France is commemorating Gustave Eiffel. A French magazine devoted to it also covered Ristna. That is

a major recognition. And in fact could it be said that our small lighthouse made possible the famous big tower?

Indeed. The special issue of *GEO Histoire* devoted to the 100th anniversary of Eiffel's death also mentions Ristna. The extraordinary nature of the selected site is underscored by the fact that Eiffel's records mention manufacturing lights for major lighthouses only 12 times. Despite the destruction of wars and natural disasters, six of Eiffel's lighthouses are still standing. One is Eiffel Tower the Paris,

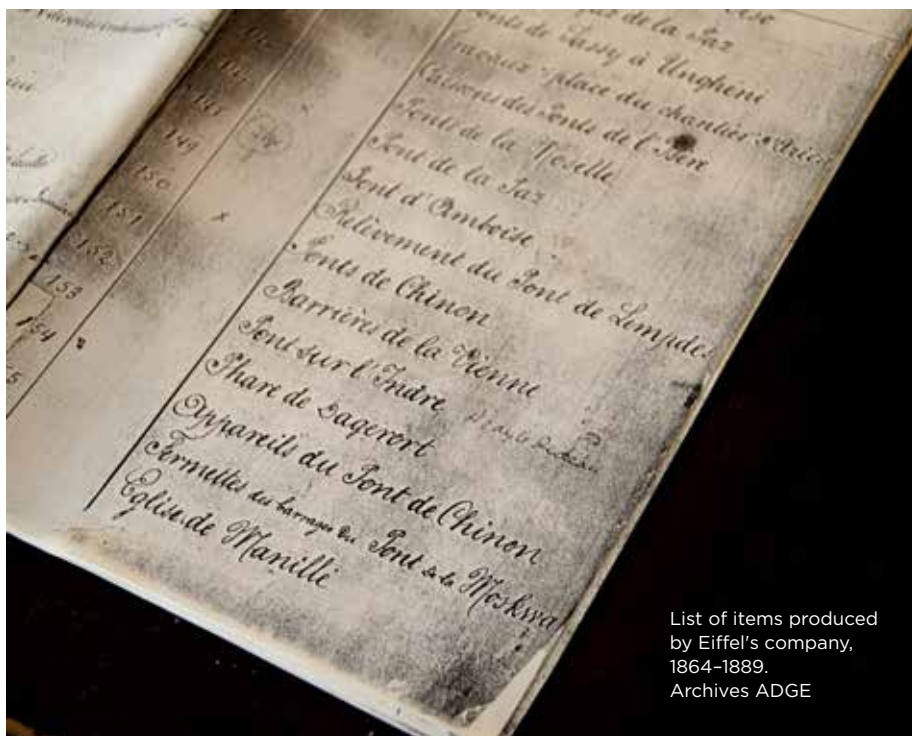
the other is the Statue of Liberty in New York and a third is Ristna, which pointed the way for the former!

What is your personal connection to Hiiumaa?

I've spent most of my summers on Hiiumaa as far back as I remember. My first memories are related to long ferry trips across the sea. My parents bought an abandoned far min Pühalepa in the 1980s – my mother worked there as a restoration specialist on the renovation of Suuremõisa Castle. It was a good deal,



G. Eiffel, WALERY Photographer to the queen. November 1889.
Photograph: Indrek Laos' private collection



List of items produced by Eiffel's company, 1864-1889.
Archives ADGE

because lands in the border zone had been abandoned and were undervalued. Time takes on a different measure here. I remember how during one of the summers I mastered four years' of recorder music. At least once a year, we undertake an obligatory lighthouse tour and climb Tahkuna, Kõpu and Ristna to be surprised yet again as architects by some ingenious detail.

You also brought the descendants of Eiffel to Hiiumaa, how did that go?

In May 2022, the fourth-generation descendant of Gustave Eiffel visited Hiiumaa – Myriam Larnaudie-Eiffel. Myriam is an antique dealer and the chairwoman of the Paris-based Society of the Descendants of Gustave Eiffel. She has been a champion of one of his endangered works for years, the historic Bordeaux metal bridge. She came to Hiiumaa out of

her desire to see her great-great-grandfather's masterpiece with her own eyes. There are lot of spurious claims that various works were by Eiffel. More basic civilian structures were at the time usually built anonymously and it is not easy to determine their authorship. One of the goals of the society is to verify and popularize the sites that are verified.

How many hours have you spent on this subject, and in which archives?

Lighthouse research has led me from Jamaica to new Caledonia. I found that the various French private and state archives were invaluable. and penetrating the walls of bureaucracy to visit them is a walk in a park. Most documents are publicly available and it is also possible to photograph materials on site, which is unlike, say, Madrid's history archive where it is prohibited to take photographs and

DID YOU KNOW?

It's customary in France for famous people who have been dead 100 years and whose accomplishments remain significant in society to be honoured by reburial in the Panthéon. Gustave Eiffel would be the first engineer thus honoured. It would be a curiosity in a number of senses – from 1790 until the Eiffel Tower was built in 1889, the Panthéon dome was the highest edifice in Paris. Over his 60-year-long career, Eiffel built large-span metal structures – over 500 works in a total of 30 countries, The Garabit viaduct in France, Nyugati station building in Budapest, the Nice Observatory, the Arcia House of Culture in Chile, Maria Pia Bridge in Portugal to name only a few. Ristna Lighthouse, built 150 years ago, is one of the few lighthouses designed by Eiffel.

it can take up to a year to order copies. True, many documents today are already scanned but finding records depends on the cataloguing decisions made by many archivists. Browsing through original documents, you can chance on some interesting information that has not been deciphered. For example, in the private archive of the descendants, I managed to find a reference to the building of Ristna lighthouse that no one had made the association.

What do you have planned next as a researcher?

I am planning a lighthouse trip to Baku and in May 2024, we are holding an exhibition in the Lighthouse Experience Centre in Käina. You can keep up to date with new discoveries on the website www.ristnaeiffel.ee ■

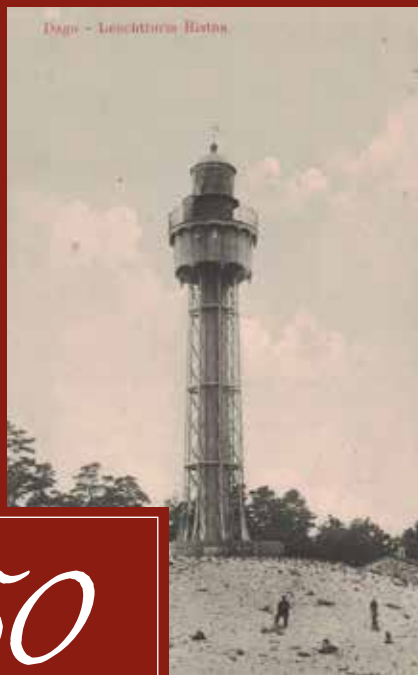
The study of the Ristna lighthouse is part of architect Indrek Laos' broader study of historical metal lighthouses. If you want to know more about the Ristna lighthouse or support the research, visit the research homepage www.ristnaeiffel.ee



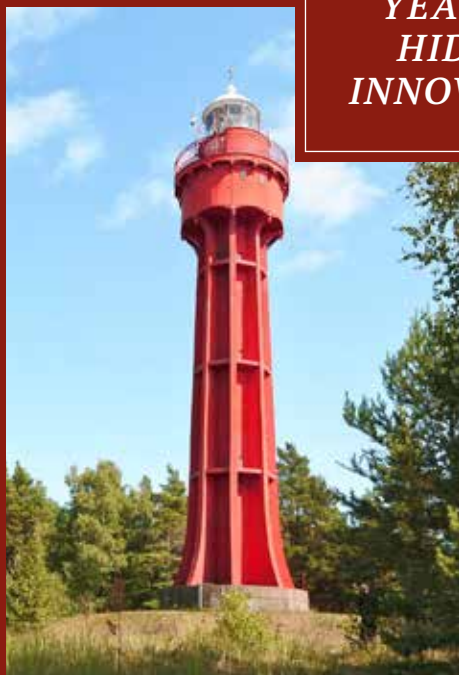
Myriam Larnaudie-Eiffel at Ristna lighthouse, May 2022.
Photograph: V. Guigueno



A quatrefoil on the decorative frieze of Ristna lighthouse.
Fotograph: Indrek Laos



150 YEARS OF HIDDEN INNOVATION



1. Dagerort lighthouse, Annales Construction 1880. Indrek Laos' collection
2. Ristna lighthouse in spring 2020. Photograph: Indrek Laos

3. Dago - Leuchtturm Ristna 1904-1917. Postcard: Indrek Laos' collection
4. 3D model of Ristna lighthouse. Flux Project OÜ 2020

From May 1st it is possible to get acquainted with a virtual model of the tower in its original form of construction at the foot of the Ristna lighthouse. The interactive installation and pop-up exhibition "Eiffel in the Ristna Lighthouse" is open in the lighthouse **from May 1st to October 1st**.

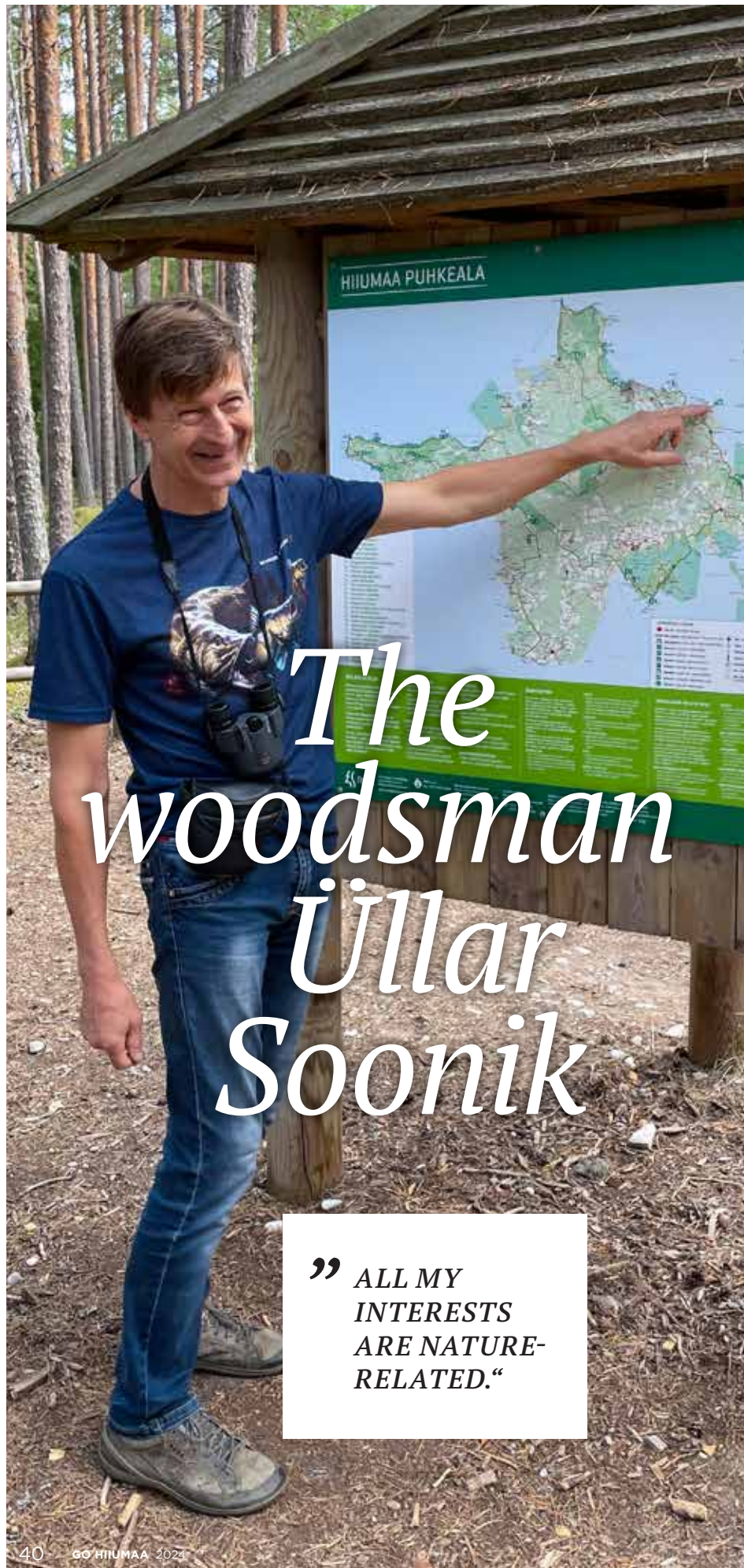
The exhibition **"French lighthouses in Estonia and the legacy of Eiffel"** is on display in the gallery of the Tuuletorni experience centre from May 1st to 31st.

A hidden masterpiece rises above the pines of the Kõpu peninsula, the Ristna lighthouse designed by the famous French engineer Gustave Eiffel. Many people know the Eiffel tower in Paris, which bears his name, but this masterpiece, which overshadows the rest of his work, is far from the only building designed by him. During his 60 years of activity, Eiffel built a total of over 500 works in 30 countries, among them several large-bridged metal structures as well as metal structures aspiring to heights.

Certainly no less important than the tallest tower in the world at the time, are these steps and the experience gained from the company's activities, which led to the implementation of this technical solution that pushed the limits of human capabilities. However, without this tower, Eiffel would probably have remained as anonymous a creator as many of his contemporary engineers. After all, the metal mast of the Ristna lighthouse, designed in the Eiffel workshop in Paris, was also completed as a subcontract to Sautter, Lemonnier & Cie, one of the leading lighthouse manufacturing companies operating in Paris. As the main contractor, Sautter countered the Ristna lighthouse with a 3rd-order optical apparatus, the light of which was first lit on October 1st 1874.

Eiffel's participation in the construction of the Ristna lighthouse is evidenced by a manuscript document in the archive of the Association of Descendants of Gustave Eiffel (ADGE) in Paris, where the production of the metal mast of the Dagerort lighthouse is mentioned in 1874 in a detailed list of the products of the Eiffel factory. Before the Estonianization of place names, Ristna Cape was called Dagerort, so connecting it with the current location of the tower has not been self-evident. Eiffel's collaboration with Sautter is also reflected in their jointly registered patent in 1868 for a new way of building metal lighthouses. The patent describes in detail the technical solution of the metal structure of the Ristna lighthouse as we know it from postcards issued before 1921.

The Ristna lighthouse is given its modern appearance by its peculiar ribbed concrete silhouette. The work of concreting the original metal tower was carried out to eliminate the damage that the tower suffered during the First World War. During the repair work, the openwork metal structure of the lower part of the tower was covered with a concrete sarcophagus. However, Eiffel's handwriting is still legible in the tower's newly restored guard room with neo-Gothic ornamentation and the lantern surrounded by a metal balustrade, reminding us of the genius engineer's unforgettable contribution to the history of cross-border construction engineering and maritime safety.



We accompany the head of RMK's Western Estonia region visitor area Üllar Soonik to the picturesque paths of Vanajõe valley.

Üllar starts with a hiking legend. "As folklore has it, an old man was heading home from work with a shovel on his shoulder. He sat down on a grassy spot to rest, stuck his shovel into the ground and fell asleep. When he woke up, he unplanted the shovel to continue on his way: From the spot where he pulled the shovel out, a spring began to flow, forming the Vanajõgi River." Actually it's much more prosaic, says Üllar. "In the 18th century, the Vaemla Manor mill was on a stream that flowed through the neighbouring count's lands, and when there was a change of owner and a hostile neighbour took over, the greedy one decided to ask for a fee for use of the flowing water. No agreement was reached. Hence the decision to dig a straight riverbed and let the water flow freely to the sea. Over time, the new Vanajõgi has become natural looking."

The action of the water has produced a masterpiece of nature. We walk along the bank of the river, the water a mysterious greenish brown colour, the trees light green all around, making it look like a secret forest. Total silence around us; no one else is here besides us. This is Hiiumaa privilege: the possibility to walk through nature in total peace and quiet.

THE COMMON POLYPODY AND THE COMMON STINKHORN

Our athletic guide walks ahead of us with a light step, not content to remain on the trail. So we find ourselves in fascinating off-piste areas, each with its story. "Let's go up here, I'll show you the old riverbed, too," says Üllar cheerfully and hops over a low barrier lining the trail and disappears. "I'm now at the bottom of the old valley," a voice sounds from somewhere following by an apology: "Sorry, I always take flak for having such long legs that

"ALL MY INTERESTS ARE NATURE-RELATED."

I'm hard to keep up with."

I ask where Üllar would take visitors to Hiiumaa first. "If they haven't been to the island before, there's a definite itinerary: Kõpu Lighthouse, Tahkuna Lighthouse, Ristna Lighthouse, Sääre nina peninsula, Kärda meteorite crater model park and some trails too –Rebastemägi, Vanajõgi valley, Kassari. But I'll take my best friends in places with no trail, they're the most interesting places," he says slyly.

He says he never goes into the wild without binoculars, since you never know who you might encounter. "Well, I saw a kingfisher only last week, like a stunningly beautiful pearl. The European mink can be found on the Vanajõgi, and it was here that Tiit Maran and Madis Põdra helped give the species a new lease on life. It is a big success story because it is endangered due to the American mink and the Estonian islands were found to be the best habitat."

A NATURALIST WITH A BIG N

Üllar is an observant guide. We bush-whack, look for yew trees and the phallic and odorous stinkhorn mushroom. I learn that the root of a species in the fern family, the polypody is very bitter with a surprisingly sweet aftertaste. Only an experienced nature observer can find so many otherwise imperceptible things to draw attention to on a short hike. Somewhere in the crown of a tree is a bird's nest, we see tiny fish in the river bed, since the Vanajõgi is a spawning river for

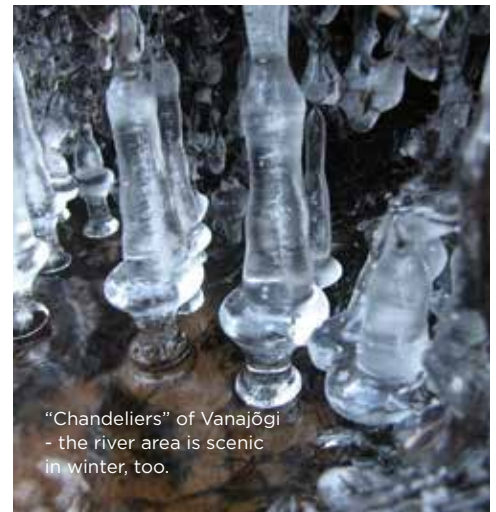
the sea and river trout, but since the water level is low thanks to drought, some hatchlings have been trapped. "During spawning in October and November, it's pretty interesting to watch the trout's spawning behaviour, creating a hole."

"I am of the forest persuasion. The forest is, will be and must be," says the woodsman in his own wry low-key manner. Üllar is a native Hiiumaa islander who has left the island only for military service and university studies. (Of course, he studied forestry.) His wife Liis shares his interest and they are colleagues as well, since Liis is the long-time information head at the RMK Ristna visitor centre. Forest topics are also conversation fodder at home.

THE FOREST BOUNTIFUL

Changes in nature are astonishingly swift: one second we are walking in a dry pine forest and then we are in a tall broad-leaved forest, interspersed with a pine health forest. And yew trees can also be found in these parts; sandy areas as well. "Hiiumaa is more delicate than Saaremaa. It is basically a pile of sand, so all nature trails are very sensitive, which imposes certain restrictions on nature tourism, a separate team at RMK does landscape tolerance studies."

The trail is worth visiting in winter when it's very beautiful, says Üllar. "These amazing ice formations develop on the stream. Just mind the slippery conditions."



"Chandeliers" of Vanajõgi
- the river area is scenic
in winter, too.

Vanajõgi (literally Old River) is the name of a river that flows through Tihu protected landscape. It rises in the Tihu lakes and Öngu Bog and flows into Mardihansu Bay.

The length of the instructional trail through the river valley, administered by the State Forest Management Centre (RMK), is about 1 km, and the shorter loop is 0.4 km.

The nature here confirms that Hiiumaa has it all – rivers, lakes, hills and valleys.

What is the best part of living on Hiiumaa? "Peace and quiet, great people, but nature is at the heart of it all. And Vanajõgi is a special place for solitude, I advise just taking time out, going at your own speed, sitting on a bench and savouring it." ■



Common stinkhorn.



Common polypody spreading its spores.

Retro in the style of Hiiumaa

“We have six places of accommodation...” “Only six?” asks the interviewing journalist Rene standing in the living room of one of these places. “All are retro-themed,” continues Maria, unfazed. “First and foremost, the accommodation has to be comfortable, but a lot of retro elements come to the fore, too.”

A cassette tape of Modern Talking is lying on the dresser; others have also expressed their joy over this find. Someone has written in the guest-book regarding the tape: “Sorry, we listened to it so much it was worn to shreds!” The young people explain that sometimes they come to greet the guests themselves; then it’s nice to hear exclamations of praise like: “Oh, this closet looks exactly like my grandmother’s!”

I inquire if it’s possible that “retro-themed places of accommodation” are a result of... laziness? “The first apartment was a coincidence. From then on, we have turned everything retro intentionally,” admits Madis, pointing towards a closet that looks just about ready to start its journey towards a museum. “It’s not like we would buy a shabby place and simply leave the old stuff lying around! But neither are these sense-of-nostalgia-tickling items bought! We don’t purchase them; everyone just gives them to us!” laughs Maria. “Frequently we get letters from people saying they found something in the attic that they are unwilling to throw out. We have too much of this retro stuff already! A whole garageful!”

Madis got a “Willys” – a knock-off vintage Soviet army jeep. “I bought it semi-secretly,” he confesses, casting a quick glance at Maria. “And we needed to use it for something.” The young lady nods. “We started offering an authentic tour of the village. We take people to the beach during summer, or to get home-



Madis and Maria are working on many fronts to promote the island’s tourism industry – and they really love the word “retro”.

brewed ale from somewhere,” explains Madis. Maria adds: “People like it! We’ve been doing it for eight summers already. Tourists love to find things in Hiiumaa that they wouldn’t otherwise discover on their own. They want things to be a bit wild.” Impressively, they provide the service all year round, not just during the summer season. For winter journeys the jeep can be fitted with a soft top roof.

“We also have retro-style bicycles. Or you can rent an old-timey scooter. This one’s a bit of a hassle – its engine keeps flooding. Crappy Russian tech,” Maria explains. Every year she comes up with new mini-projects. For example, sometimes when a customer arrives at a place of accommodation, they will find waiting

for them a bunch of sprats together with instructions for cooking a delicacy called *pahlakilud* (barbe-cued sprats – Ed.). What on Earth are *pahlakilud*, you ask? You’ll find out.

For discovery-oriented families, the diligent couple have compiled an adventure map of Hiiumaa. Thrill-seekers have to locate 26 spots. For example, one is instructed to find the famous Kukka boulder and do a dance on it, or go somewhere else and answer some questions. This is a paper map – a brochure, not a smartphone app. Nice!

What else is retro?

“When people go to Palada, we send them to the last surviving village store in Hiiumaa, where purchases can be made only with cash.” “Does its counter have behind it a good old fierce retro-style shopkeypress?” I inquire from the tourism entrepreneurs. “More or less,” the young people smirk, although it’s pretty clear that no fierce shopkeepresses can actually be found in the quaint and lovely Hiiumaa store.

Maria and Madis are no frauds; both are real Hiiumaa natives. “And we will probably never leave from here!” they assure in a single voice.

Why?

“Because there is no superficiality in Hiiumaa,” says Maria after a moment’s consideration. ■



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Beloved musician and actor Lauri Saatpalu has been spotted a number of times on the ferries between the mainland and Hiiumaa. What's going on?

Lauri Saatpalu

”BE PREPARED FOR EVERYTHING!”

Some people don't like being addressed as “Hiiumaa friend”. How do you react?

Me, I'd be a little weirded out if I was addressed as Doctor or General Saatpalu.

What is your personal connection to Hiiumaa and how has it affected your work?

I found myself on the island for the first time in summer 1984, for a festival called Environment, the predecessor of today's Hiiu Folk. I went to visit Ave Alavain, and after serving in the military, I was in a student camp in Kassari and so on. Since I had a good rapport with the people in Kassari I've had the chance to go on creative retreats there, both solo and group ones. Life comes down to happenstance. Some people and occurrences also made their way into lyrics. My great-great-grandmother Ingel Roasto was born in 1848 in Ühtri, in Käina Municipality.

Tell us about one of your best-known bands, Dagö, the old Swedish name for Hiiumaa!

Not much to tell, we started doing it and it was born. We were sort of nibbling at it quietly in the beginning on Hiiumaa, since Kikas was playing the game called “I will survive the winter in Hiiumaa because I'm a romantic”. Peeter is a Hiiumaa native. We chose the name as a parallel to Ultima Thule, since according to one theory it was supposed to be Saaremaa.

What's your department store business on Hiiumaa?

Our sprawling commercial complex will be called D1 (a play on a mall in Tallinn that went bankrupt for a time, T1 – *Translator*). Peeter and I are the major investors, we have a construction work supervision report and a design that has been cleared with the Heritage Board! D1 is located

in the Kassari community centre cinema ticket box office. The “D” stands for Dagö and the 1 is the floor space. One square metre. We sell local handicrafts, books, honey and anything even slightly tied to Kassari and Hiiumaa. Since the department store lacks labour costs, overhead and running costs, we can't go bankrupt. There is a theatre and concert all, library a great cafe called Hõng and nature all around! D1 is open whenever the community centre is open. Leave the payment in the box and record what you took in the book.

Describe Hiiumaa to those who haven't ever been there.

I've been to a number of islands around the world so I won't start pitching the tired “unspoiled nature” spiel. There's unspoiled nature in many places. But I'd ask how much they planned to spend, and then think a bit. I'd recommend renting a car; because public transport is non-existent in the sense of the real world. Just do some exploring, and enjoy and be ready for anything: people's stunning local humour, hospitality, sincerity, wildlife, sea water and Pärnu service.

Is Hiiumaa different from other Estonian islands?

Hiiumaa, like Saaremaa, are different from other Estonian islands in that they have civilization. Other islands have only civilian communities.

Any future plans related to Hiiumaa?

Performing a show on Hiiumaa once or twice a year has become tradition and it's a good one.

What's the funniest thing about Hiiumaa?

There's *jäättee* in the shops. (*jäättee* is both iced tea and a winter ice road – one of the distinctive features of the Estonian islands – *Translator*) ■

An unreal place

12 miles
from
Estonia

*Coordinator
of the development
of the network
of small harbours
Jaano Martin
Ots writes about
Hiiumaa's
exceptional charm.*

There are a million islands in the world's seas, and people inhabit only a few more than 10,000 of them. Hiiumaa is one of a kind. It's hard to explain what makes this patch of land just half an hour from Rohuküla on the mainland. You have to show up, sit down by the sea or in the forests, close your eyes and sense it. Sometimes the mainland thoughts don't get out of your head right away, and it takes time before the right feeling comes upon you. An engrossed state, a focused kind of *dolce far niente*, that let the things of the world take their right order of priority. The old slow ferryboats were better in that sense – by the time the ship got to the island through the ice, city problems had long been forgotten.

Hiiumaa is just far enough from the mainland to not become the kind of tourist place that is taken for granted. On the surface it is like an ordinary Estonian county, but it is special enough to stoke passions. I have left quite a few roubles, kroons and euros in the pockets of the Rohuküla-Heltermaa ship operators, I have seen Hiiumaa back when it was a Soviet border zone, a periphery of the newly independent country during the early capitalism era and now rising holiday area for the elites. Some things have changed over time, but the special something is still here.

New and cutting-edge Kalana marina with a top-calibre restaurant and new residential area is modern; the high surfing waves at Ristna have been washing the tip of Kõpu

peninsula for 10,000 years. Some things on Hiiumaa still are old-fashioned, like the way the locals say *jovaadab* ("we'll see") in a carefree way or the way farmers mark their fields. And the people of Hiiumaa. Without them we would just be talking about some place not too far from the western coast of Estonia. If someone has to consider that the sea is all around and power, internet and a ferry link are not free human rights, that will change your mindset.

On the face of it, Hiiumaa folk are like people everywhere. Even for an experienced eye and ear, it may be hard to tell the difference. But at some point it will be revealed and then you can't unsee the distinction. Some of the people who have proved important in my life are Hiiumaa folk. I knew some back in school, that they lived in some unique place, and in the case of another, their inner Hiiumaa core revealed itself over a long period. That has helped me understand the phenomenon a little better.

Like Kõpu peninsula stoically lets itself be pounded by the breakers that become the Baltic Sea's highest waves during southwesterly winds, the rest of Hiiumaa remains implacable in the face of hardship. A non-Hiiumaa person might not understand that completely. Even Tõnu Õnnepalu and Fred Jüssi managed to describe the essence of Hiiumaa somewhat, but they didn't stay here permanently. The sterner stuff is not for everyone. ■



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Hiiumaa's Swedes



Reigi church.

Many readers will probably know that Hiiumaa has been home to quite a few Swedes over the years. The old name for the island also suggests the Swedish link. Where did they all go? Helgi Põllo helps us find out.

Let's start from the beginning or at least from what we know. A few 1500-2000-year-old gravel tombs in Kõpu come to mind, bearing a similarity to burial sites in Gotland, Öland and central Sweden. They demonstrate quite convincingly that people lived on Hiiumaa

year-round.

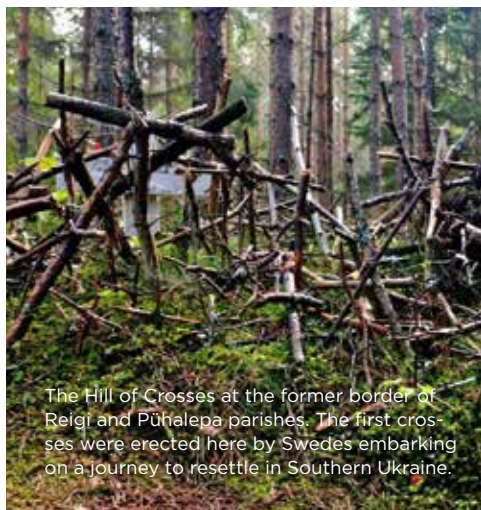
There's a fascinating story from Gutasaaga (Gutalagh). It was recorded in the 13th or 14th century, but talks about Gotland inhabitants – the descendants of Thielvars who around 500 CE were forced to leave their island in search of a new home. They reportedly settled on an island they called Dagaith and which is today's Hiiumaa. But Hiiumaa couldn't feed the newcomers for long, and so the Gotlanders continued on to Russia and from there to Greece. It's another question whether traces of the fortifications can still be found from that period. Nor is the time of the arrival of the next wave of Swedes completely clear. Sometimes the 14th century is proposed as a possible date, but it varies.

TWO LARGER COMMUNITIES

Little by little, two larger communities of Hiiumaa Swedes developed. One was in Reigi and the other in the small villages of Tahkuna Peninsula, while another group settled Kärkla. The reasons for settling these areas may have simply been the availability of vacant land, but one emphasis has been placed on the need to use their assistance to defend the mariners against pirates living on the island. In the late 16th century, Swedes made up close to one-seventh of the island's population and in the second half of the 18th century, close to 1500 Swedes lived in the villages of the northern coast of Hiiumaa. The proximity of Sweden as the former motherland was of course increased by the long era of Swedish rule (on Hiiumaa extending from 1563 to 1710), when the island was part of the Kingdom of Sweden. And in the early 17th century a vassal of the King of Sweden, the Tallinn-born military commander and governor-general of Estonia Jacob De la Gardie (1583-1652), acquired nearly all of Hiiumaa.

It was during De la Gardie's time and that of his descendants that Swedes' freedoms were curtailed increasingly, sparking revolts and protests. During the Jacob Pontus Stenbock (1744-1824) era (after whom the seat of national government is also named), the dispute escalated and the Swedes around Reigi faced eviction, which was carried out in August 1781. About 100 Swedes living on church lands were allowed to stay. But 1000 men,





The Hill of Crosses at the former border of Reigi and Pühalepa parishes. The first crosses were erected here by Swedes embarking on a journey to resettle in Southern Ukraine.

women and children began their journey, as dictated by an ukase from Catherine II, to an area of Ukraine near Herson. The trip was an arduous one and only about half made it there in spring. There were even fewer still alive a year later; but then the village called Gammalsvenskby started growing gradually. Another attempt to migrate was made in 1929, when an appeal to the International Red Cross gave the small ethnic group permission to return to their historical homeland, Sweden. Close to 1000

Hiiumaa Swedish descendants availed themselves of that opportunity. Some of them travelled onward to Canada, fearing that they would be forcibly sent back to the Soviet Union after the war.

A TEXTILE MILL BRINGS CHANGE

The Swedes of Kärkla (Kertell) were displaced by a textile mill built by the Ungern-Sternbergs, estate owners. In 1810, a majority of the earlier residents of the village were sent packing. New homes for them were found in Haapsalu, Noarootsi and Vormsi Island. More than 300 Swedes were resettled on Vormsi and the island even started being called Hiiu-Sweden. Only five families and a few artisans and church figures managed to extend their agreement to reside in their existing homes. When the mill was in operation in 1830, the agreement expired but being mill workers, some of them managed to stay in place.

The relations between the two islands are also evoked by an old story where the hero Leiger met encountered Vormsi men on Hiiumaa driving piles. Upon seeing Leiger, Per and Ter ran for the boat. Fleet-footed Ter got there first and

started rowing away from shore. Per kept on shouting: "Helpa, Ter, Helpa, Ter" - (*Hjälpa, Ter!*) The frightened Ter kept on rowing until Leiger himself caught up to Ter and deposited Per in the boat. The locals started calling the place Help Ter Land, and that is how Hiiumaa's main sea portal Heltermaa got its name. ■



Marker of the Swedish cemetery in Kärkla

Hiiumaa giidid

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Yui Yui & Kao Thai

Yet again, a solid Estonian guy has found love on the far side of the world. That can only be good for Hiiumaa, since that love story has led to a wonderful cosy addition to the restaurant scene just across Käina's municipality building – Kao Thai.



” **WHEN I CAME TO ESTONIA, I ATE SNOW.“**

Veikko Martin and Yui Yui got married in Thailand. Watching their wedding video, I have to marvel at the exotic splendour of the ceremony. The couple left what many might see as paradise and moved to another one – Hiiumaa, Estonia's version of an exotic island.

Yui calls out from the kitchen that she is out of onions. I shout back to ask if she is very tired. “Yes!” she answers with a broad smile. “It’s hard being on your feet all day cooking?” Yui smiles her assent again. “But you like it?” “Yesss!” she says with real enthusiasm.

It turns out that Yui's family back home is a little bemused that she of all people has become a chef. In Thailand it was her sister who ran home-style restaurant and Yui helped out.

Since orders from Hiiumaa's burgeoning Thai food fans keep Yui busy all the time at Kao Thai, they will be trying to get her sister into the country to help. So far, no luck. She has been turned down for a visa, and the way it is, the government doesn't have to say why. But they'll try again, because the restaurant is getting popular.

“No dish leaves the kitchen without Yui tasting it first,” says Veikko proudly. “An Estonian chef can't capture that real Thai taste – there has to be the real Thai dedication.”

Is this Veikko's first foray into the restaurant business? It is. “Actually, I'm a potter,” he says. The restaurant was to give his wife enough to do on the island, and something that she was

drawn to. Kao Thai stays open all winter.

It all started with cooking for friends. It was a hit. Then they started a food tent by Coop supermarket. They tested the waters – would the distant foods catch on with locals? “Spring rolls and a few other things.” He often sings the praises of Yui's spring rolls. Finally I get to try and....oh yes. I get it.

When asked if she likes it on Hiiumaa, Yui brims with the same enthusiasm. Even in winter? She bursts into laughter. “I like it at home. It's warm and cosy.” She said she ate a bit of snow the first time she experienced an Estonian winter, but no longer.

Anything hard to get used to on Hiiumaa? “Silence. I didn't have that in Thailand.”

Will they stay on Hiiumaa or maybe move to Thailand some time. Definitely not anytime soon, the kid is enrolled in school and both agree that education system is better in Estonia than Thailand. But at some point...? “I don't know,” wavers Veikko. “Sure, we'll see,” wavers Yui and both exchange smiling glances. ■






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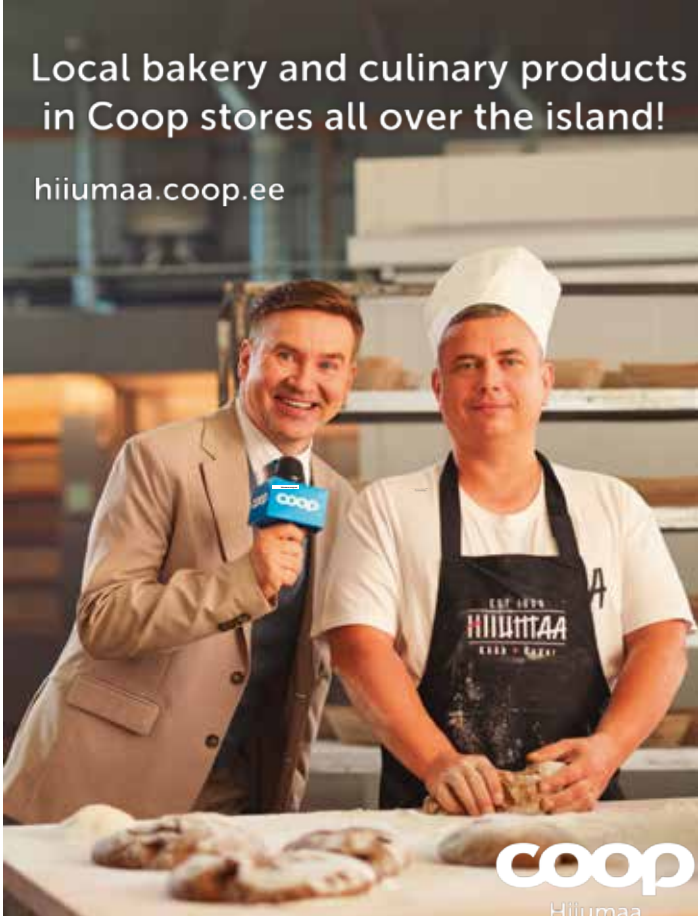


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Tahkuna Lighthouse calls rappellers

It's summer. I have just read on Hiiumaa.ee that people can descend from the top of Tahkuna Lighthouse on a rope – for fun. I decide instantly that I wouldn't do it. But – since I was interested in checking out what was going on there, I signed my wife up for the abseiling and signed myself up for writing the story.

“There was a girl who was so afraid of heights that it would make her cry. I told her, look in my eyes, don't look down. She was trembling all over. I asked her if she was sure she wanted to rappel down. Once she was beyond the edge and was in the sitting position, she gave a thumbs-up and smiled,” says Kajar Martin, one of the instructors at Tahkuna, whose job also includes providing encouragement.

THE ACTION STARTS

I was with my wife – she had a harness and a helmet on (supplied by the lighthouse) and had climbed to the top. Tahkuna rises about 43 metres above sea level; the rappelling starts from a platform at 39 metres.

I can't continue interviewing Kajar, since he is belaying my wife. He's holding her lifeline. My wife has, (to my surprise) smiling broadly, backed over the iron railing back and disappears from view. Kajar looks down from time to time, shouts instructions and recommends in a friendly voice: “Relax and take it easy. Enjoy the view!”

I wonder to myself what I would feel if I were suspended 30 metres from the





ground and someone told me to take it easy. Probably struggling not to feel faint. Others have also come to rubberneck. A mother with a small child steps on to the platform and she asks: "Do you want to see people go over the edge?" The little tyke answers: "Of course!" Both look over my shoulder, I am emboldened and peek – my wife is nearly down on the ground.

HOW DID IT ALL START?

Tanel Põldma is the second instructor here. Both Tanel and Kajar talk about how the idea came to them while they were on the highest indoor climbing wall in the Baltics, in Tuuletorn, they took courses, got certificates, applied for permits for use of the lighthouse.

The rappel time slots are booked in advance, and depend on weather. Groups are allowed to book blocks of time. "No drunk people allowed," warns Kajar as the conversation turns to the topic of social gatherings.

I ask about safety. The rope system is described to me: if anything goes wrong, like the abseiler lets go of the rope, there is a person in the lighthouse who controls the second security rope. There is no room here for error, so precautions are taken.

I ask whether I would start spinning if I let go of the rope with both hands. The instructors say nothing will happen. They are in complete control.



The boys chat with gusto. They recall all the happy customers who made it to the ground and gave rave reviews. They aren't doing it just for the money. This is Hiiumaa entrepreneurship in its finest form.

I look down from the top again. I start feeling dizzy but don't show it. ■



"BE CALM AND ENJOY THE VIEW!"

Tiiu Masing

In 2023, the legendary Hiiumaa tennis coach Tiiu Masing received a personalised commemorative lapel pin from the Estonian Olympic Committee for her life's work. In 35 years she has trained over a thousand pupils and built up a tennis club renowned all over Estonia.



**”TIME SHOULD
NOT BE WASTED!”**

**You were born and raised in Tallinn.
How did you end up in Hiiumaa?**

I came here to attend the Kärkla volleyball tournament – an event with a long history –, which left me enough free time to visit an acquaintance who had come to live and work in Kärkla and was renting a room here. The master of the house (*a well-known checkers player Raivo Rist. – Ed.*) also happened to return from a work trip at the same time. This meeting resulted in me moving in and living in the same house since 1985.

You were studying food technology, but became a tennis coach instead. How did that happen?

I started playing tennis in August of 1959, a bit before my eighth birthday, at the Sports School of the Mere district of Tallinn, and was trained by the highly acclaimed coach Rein Sander. Although I was initially employed by the Hiiumaa Kalur (“Hiiumaa Fisherman”) kolkhoz as a manager of public eateries, this was complemented by tennis starting in March of 1987. At first I did that in the form of courses, but starting in September I also started holding tennis trainings for kids at the gym of Kärkla Secondary School and the Health Centre at Viskoosa (now Kõrgessaare). Thus I became a part-time tennis coach, and not just for children. Adults were also very interested. In a way, it was as if an avalanche had been unleashed. In January of 1988 we established the Hiiumaa Tennis Club. By the time Hiiumaa Kalur forwent ancillary activities in the autumn of 1992, I was already only a vice-coach there. But we still had the club, which allowed us to continue our activities.

Over time, you have built up a whole world of tennis, which includes popular country-level competitions and tennis camps. How have you managed this?

I have been following the example of the tennis-friendly milieu in Tallinn that moulded myself into a tennis player. Mostly it was Rein Sander and Alfred Keerd who inspired me with their dedication, but the same can be said of all of the coaches that I met during my years in the youth team. In addition to teaching tennis, all of them managed to also broaden our minds in other ways.

I wanted the people of Hiiumaa to experience the same kind of tennis life, which is why we built and opened the Hiiu Kalur tennis court in 1988, and four more clay-and-sand courts in the heart of Kärkla five years after that. We started organizing tournaments in order to make it possible for the tennis players from the mainland to impart their experience to our pupils and grown-up tennis players. This was successful, as Hiiumaa became then and currently still is a place that draws people. We didn't have to invite camp groups; they themselves desired to come here. Soon our training sessions were joined by children and the "summer locals", and every year since then more and more vacationers and tourists have been coming to play on our courts.

Allegedly, you have been a rather strict coach. What are your principles of teaching tennis?

I have never been the playful kind, focusing instead on developing work habits – in order for my pupils to develop a good hitting technique, and learn the rules and the etiquette of tennis. I find time to be of great value and do not think it should be wasted. I find the greatest joy in pupils who initially may not have exactly what

it takes to become a great tennis player, but who refuse to keep up, and instead keep working and honing their skills, until the both of us – me as a coach and they as pupils – are successful. One has to believe in one's pupils.

How many pupils have you trained over the years?

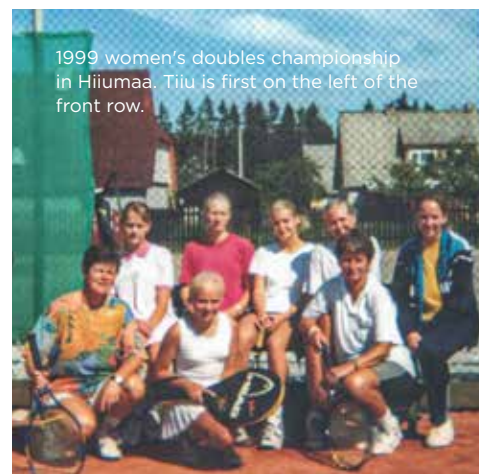
I hope to figure the exact number out in the process of putting together the chronicle of the Hiiumaa Tennis Club, but at the moment I can only give you an estimate of about a thousand.

I have two distinct memories of tennis in Hiiumaa. A few years ago I accompanied some tennis players from Tartu on their trip to Hiiumaa, and now recall a gutsy coach called Tiiu and a very well organized competition. What have been your personal goals?

My wish has been to raise a school of tennis players in Hiiumaa according to the best tennis practices and tennis ethics. There are many things that can spark from a single idea and become years-old traditions; this also applies to competitions. The best known of those is Hiiumaa Open, launched already back in the 1990s, initially for men, and a couple of years later also for women. The 1990s also saw the birth of the open youth tournaments; somewhat later came many of the quick tournaments like Mikstuur series and others. My wish for the inhabitants of Hiiumaa to have a chance to participate in the same kind of traditions that I once experienced in Kadriorg has become true, because my colleagues in Tallinn were happy to help, bring their pupils to play here, and thus participate in shaping our tennis scene.

I have another memory from this year (2023). When playing tennis in Hiiumaa during the summer and visiting the tennis hall in the winter, I became convinced that tennis in Hiiumaa is still very much *en vogue*. How have you managed to create such viable progeny?

I'm not sure I'm the one who has created it. The Hiiu natives who have become to love the game have also wished to keep tennis alive here. At some point in time I realised that one court is not enough; now, when there are three indoor courts in Kärkla, my pupils are thinking of ways to realise their dreams in these excellent circumstances. For me, they are one big tennis family, and I am very glad that in addition to keeping the club's traditions



1999 women's doubles championship in Hiiumaa. Tiiu is first on the left of the front row.

alive they are also developing them further and further – organizing events in their own way, giving the club new life!

Looking back at your years as an active coach, how would you summarize this time, and what are you most glad about?

Naturally, I wished Hiiumaa to produce great competitive tennis players, and in the 1990s, we even managed to remain competitive with some of my pupils, but soon indoor courts began to crop up everywhere else. For a long time, Hiiumaa did not have those. Thus, it has been our aim to produce high-level club players, and by now we have achieved it. I am glad that we have managed to captivate so many Hiiu people with tennis, and have had the chance to teach it to local kids and adults, as well as the devotees arriving from mainland. As soon as the borders were opened, we were glad to welcome anyone – both the children to the training sessions as well as vacationers and other rambles to simply play the game. We have always been a part of the tourism landscape of Hiiumaa.

What do you do these days? Do you still have time to play tennis?

I have a small weekly tennis group in Käina, but I don't play much tennis myself anymore. I am engaged with putting together the chronicle of the club. I go to concerts. I did try to find time for both while working, but now I can invest in them in full (aside from home-related activities). We have had such a wonderful cultural life in Hiiumaa for the past few years! Even today, I am planning to attend a bell mass to celebrate the All Souls season.

We congratulate Tiiu on receiving the Estonian Olympic Committee's commemorative pin! ■

RANDO REINING, TIIU'S STUDENT, HIIUMAA TENNIS PLAYER AND TENNIS ORGANIZER

I'd go as far as to say that if there weren't Tiiu, there wouldn't be tennis on Hiiumaa. I started playing tennis in the late 1980s and Tiiu retired from active coaching only last year. She has been the alpha and omega of the local tennis world, looked for talented youngsters, coached them, went to tournaments, built tennis courts – everything, basically. She lived on the courts. As a coach, she is quite demanding. She still roots for me at my matches, and I've managed to be Hiiumaa champion the last four years.

Our Hiiumaa tennis club has over 100 members, tennis is super popular on Hiiumaa with players of all ages. The tennis traditions she started continue in full swing.

We worried, if she ever retired, how she would live without tennis after being on the tennis courts 24/7. When that moment rolled around, another Tiiu emerged, roaming around Kärkla on a red bike in her Sunday best, attending concerts, going to the movies, visiting friends, in Tallinn, Pärnu and Saaremaa. She started living the life she couldn't lead before when she was completely devoted to tennis.

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Happening in Hiiumaa in 2024

Since in 2024 we will be celebrating the centenary of the Hiiumaa-born Estonian artist Ülo Sooster, the whole year is dedicated to art. With such themed years we wish to appreciate the people bound to Hiiumaa, its culturally important locations, and anniversaries connected to them.

JANUARY

New Year's exhibition by Hiiumaa creatives at the Four Corners Gallery

FEBRUARY

"HORIZON": a personal exhibition of landscape paintings by Santa Zukker at the Four Corners Gallery

FEBRUARY 24: celebration of Estonia's Independence Day; singing of the National Anthem on the steps of the Reigi parsonage

MARCH

"Future Art of Hiiumaa": an exhibition of origami by students Lisethe Kask, Simona Rätsep, a. o. at the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition "Valev Sein 60" at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

APRIL

Anniversary exhibition of Maret Kukkur's scenography at the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition "Valev Sein 60" at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

Exhibition "Kaljo Põllu 90" at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

APRIL 20–27: Hiiumaa Restaurant Week

APRIL 26: Provincial Theatres Day

MAY

Exhibition of paintings by Robin Nõgis-to at the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition "Kaljo Põllu 90" at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

MAY 1: Kärkla Day and Kärkla town running race

MAY 1 – OCTOBER 31: interactive installation and pop-up exhibition "Eiffel at Ristna lighthouse" at Ristna lighthouse

MAY 1–31: exhibition "French lighthouses in Estonia and Eiffel's legacy" at the gallery of the Windtower Experience

MAY 16: 1st stage of Dago Sailing Cup

MAY 24–26: Kärkla Race — a stage in the Estonian Championship Cup in single-handed sailing

MAY 25: Tuulekala Festival ("Windfish festival") – a festival celebrating the garfish

MAY 30: 2nd stage of Dago Sailing Cup

JUNE

"Skulls and Carcasses": an exhibition of graphic prints in the traditional Japanese gyotaku technique by Ott Kadarik at the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition "Kaljo Põllu 90" at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

JUNE 1: Hiiumaa Children's Festival

JUNE 6: 3rd stage of Dago Sailing Cup

JUNE 7–8: Hiiumaa Literary Festival

JUNE 7–8: Suuremõisa Castle Days

JUNE 13–16: Jazz festival Sõru Jazz at Sõru harbour

JUNE 14–16: Dago Regatta

JUNE 20: 4th stage of Dago Sailing Cup

JUNE 21–AUGUST: exhibition "Konrad Mägi and his contemporaries. Golden Age Estonian art from the collection of Enn Kunila" at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

JUNE 21–AUGUST: exhibition "Olev Subbi. Paintings from the collection of Enn Kunila" at Cultural Centre of Kärkla

FIND A LIST OF ALL
EVENTS ONLINE:




FIND INFORMATION
ABOUT THE YEAR OF
ART ONLINE:



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in Hiiumaa*




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JUNE 22: regatta for experienced sailors “Vanade kalade regatt” at Kärkla harbour

JUNE 22: Midsummer Night’s bonfire at Käina

JUNE 24: Midsummer Night’s bonfire at Kärkla

JULY

“10×4 CORNERS”: a group exhibition of artists connected to Hiiumaa; celebration of 10th anniversary of the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition “Konrad Mägi and his contemporaries. Golden Age Estonian art from the collection of Enn Kunila” at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

Exhibition “Olev Subbi. Paintings from the collection of Enn Kunila” at Cultural Centre of Kärkla

JULY 1–AUGUST 25: exhibition “Genius Loci 5” at Reigi parsonage

JULY 3: 5th stage of Dago Sailing Cup

JULY 18–21: Hiiu Folk Festival

JULY 18: “Laulud lavendlile” – “Songs to the lavender”

JULY 20–21: Open Farms Days

JULY 25: 6th stage of Dago Sailing Cup

JULY 28: “Lavendli lõikuspidu” – a lavender harvesting festival

JULY 25–28: Saund 2024 music festival at Suursadama

JULY 26–27: Hiiumaa Sparkling Wine Weekend

AUGUST

“10×4 CORNERS”: a group exhibition of artists connected to Hiiumaa; celebration of 10th anniversary of the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition “Konrad Mägi and his contemporaries. Golden Age Estonian art from the collection of Enn Kunila” at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

Exhibition “Olev Subbi. Paintings from the collection of Enn Kunila” at Cultural Centre of Kärkla

Exhibition “Genius Loci 5” at Reigi parsonage (until August 25)

AUGUST 1–3: Hiiumaa Home Café Days

AUGUST 2–4: Pühalepa Music Festival

AUGUST 7: 7th stage of Dago Sailing Cup

AUGUST 9–10: Oti Regatta

AUGUST 10: “Lestafest” – festival celebrating the flatfish

AUGUST 16–17: Sauna Bus Party

AUGUST 17: Hiiu Fish and Ale Festival

AUGUST 22: 8th stage of Dago Sailing Cup

AUGUST 25: “Paluküla XCO”, the 4th stage of the Husqvarna Estonia cross-country Olympic XCO

SEPTEMBER

“Graphic Art is Colour is Surface is Room”: group exhibition by young graphic artists Paul Rannik, Triin Mänd, and Sandra Puusepp at the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition “Ülo Sooster 100” at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

SEPTEMBER 1–30: “Indian Summer in Hiiumaa” event series

SEPTEMBER 5: 9th stage of Dago Sailing Cup

SEPTEMBER 14–15: Autumnal Regatta (“Sügisregatt”)

SEPTEMBER 19: 10th stage of Dago Sailing Cup

OCTOBER

“Ain Toim. Engineering art”: exhibition of art made from repurposed fast-aging lab equipment at the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition “Ülo Sooster 100” at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

OCTOBER 19–26: Hiiumaa Restaurant Week

NOVEMBER

“Ain Toim. Engineering art”: exhibition of art made from repurposed fast-aging lab equipment at the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition “Ülo Sooster 100” at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

DECEMBER

Christmas exhibition by Hiiumaa creatives at the Four Corners Gallery

Exhibition “Ülo Sooster 100” at the Long House of Hiiumaa Museum

DECEMBER 7: Hiiumaa Mulled Wine Cafés Day





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