

# G HIIUMAA

2025

*Hiiumaa –  
bigger on  
the inside*



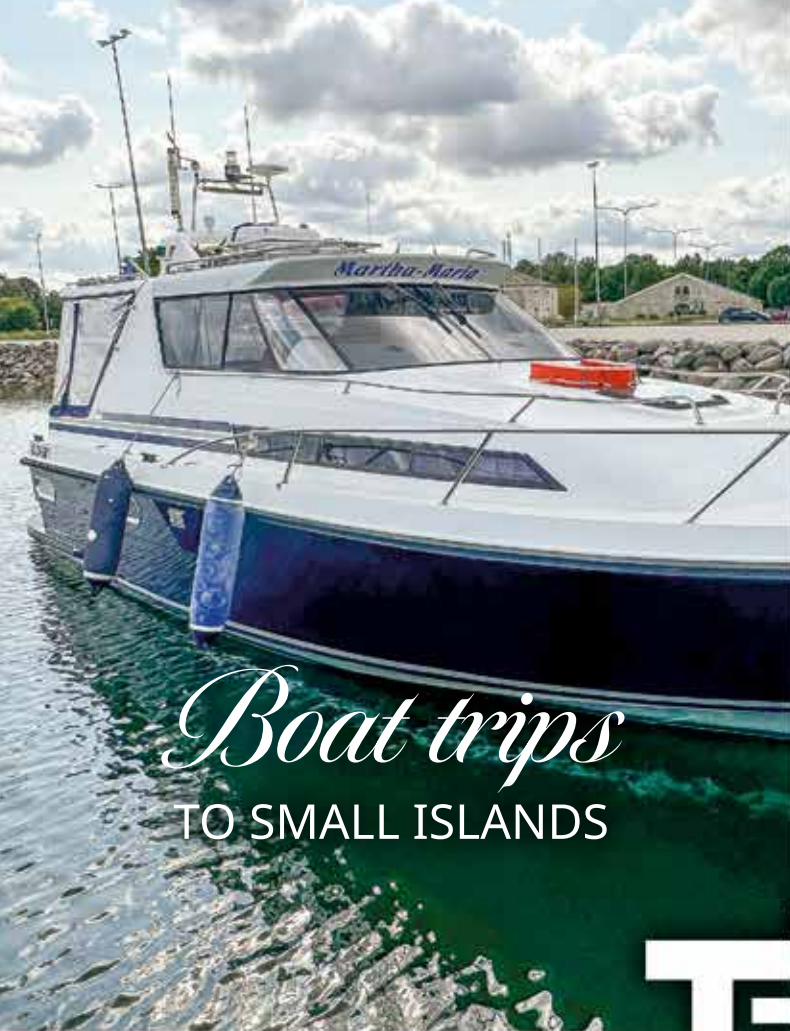
SOUND OF THE SEA

STARRY SKY

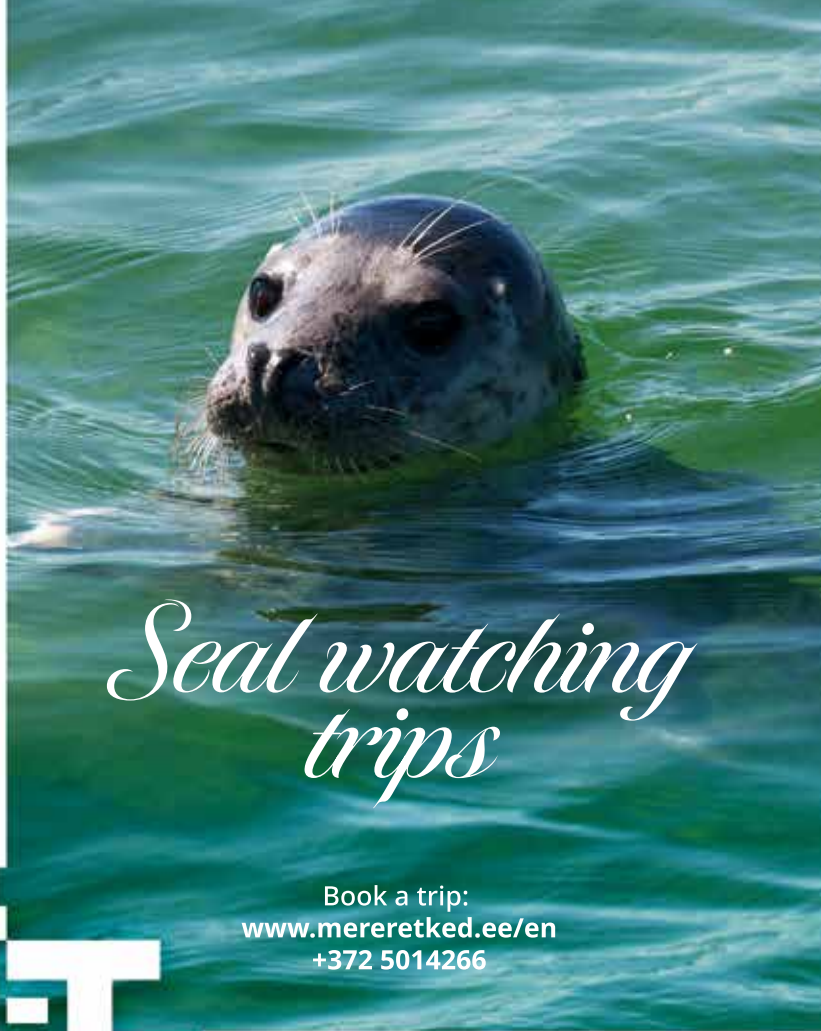
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# Hiiumaa – surprising and changing

Just a couple years ago, Hiiumaa still relied exclusively on qualities like “peace and quiet” and “solitude” to market itself, but things have changed. Estonia’s second-largest island now has much more to boast of. Not that it has sacrificed any of its potential for tranquility, but it has been spawning just as many new and vibrant ideas as there are seals in its coastal waters.

It should be credited especially for its skill in courting shoulder and off-season tourists. Spring and autumn brings restaurant festivals, December has a pop-up cafe day specializing in glögg (mulled wine), and there are a number of promotions for the late autumn school half term. Hiiumaa’s belief in sustainable progress can also be measured in the number of members of the island’s tourism cluster, now more than 50 strong.

The marketing of Hiiumaa as a destination for mainland and international tourists has also ramped up. Many mainlanders have developed a taste for distinctive traditional Hiiumaa food and drink. Islanders have led a push to champion Estonian beacons and establish an international lighthouse association, the European Route of Lighthouses.

Ambitious ideas germinate on Hiiumaa according to their own ineffable logic. When we put together the creatives who draw on the island as a muse, from composer Erkki-Sven Tüür to Ojasoo and Semper of theatre fame, to visual artist Edith Karlson to writer Tõnu Õnnepalu, we get more variety than the colours of the rainbow.

One of the best recent ideas to come out of Hiiumaa was to declare naturalist Fred Jüssi’s birthday a holiday devoted to taking time to do nothing – a fitting way to honour the author of *The Beauty of Being* and ideally suited to the island’s longstanding image of a tranquil, small and solitary crucible for new ideas.

## TIIT PRUULI

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF GO TRAVEL MAGAZINE

# Bigger on the inside

Return to Hiiumaa a second or third time and you’re bound to feel that you’ve come back to a new island. It’s not just the length of the hiking trails and beaches that surprises you. Some visitors, even locals, will tell you there’s nothing on Hiiumaa, really. But we have so much of that nothing.

Hiiumaa has lots of places devoid of humans. Stop and hearken for a second, and you will realize that insignificant humankind is part of a great natural domain, and time will stand still. The forests, sands, marshes, rivers and lakes all emanate a sense of grandeur. The inhabitants also seem larger than life, as quiet and introverted as they might seem.

Hiiumaa naturalist Fred Jüssi once said that if you want to see something new, you have to walk the old paths. You haven’t seen a place unless you’ve visited it in all seasons. Take a selfie at the very end of Ristna cape on each of the solstices and equinoxes and see for yourself.

If too much peaceful wandering in the forests and on beaches makes you antsy, you can satisfy your need for speed at Käina go-karting track, ride across the shallow bay to Kassari’s islets on horseback, take the helm of a sailboat or fishing boat and listen to seals, or climb up the Windtower’s climbing wall or abseil down the outside of Tahkuna Lighthouse. There’s classical music concerts, modern music festivals and museums, theatre and exhibitions. Take a turn on the dance floor at a village festival and get decked out in traditional clothing for this year’s thematic celebration of traditional clothing – even if you’re not from here.

Fresh fish and lamb are served up by restaurants as well by cafes operated out of homes, but Hiiumaa is also cosmopolitan enough to now have Greek, Thai, Italian and other cuisine. Craft breweries pour Hiiu’s characteristically mellow suds, and the tasting room at Kärkla Harbour is the place to enjoy Estonia’s best juniper berry infused distilled spirit, Ouk.

If you go off by yourself and sit in the woods or by the sea and prick up your ears, you’ll discover something many writers, artists, composers and others have found: subtly but surely, Hiiumaa will pull you back, as if with an invisible elastic band.

It’s then that you realize that from afar, Hiiumaa may appear remote and small. But on the inside it’s big and sounds a powerful call. Those who’ve heard it make their way back.

And when you do, your spirit will sing.

## KRISTEL PEIKEL

HEAD OF THE HIIUMAA TOURISM CLUSTER







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# GO Hiiumaa 2025

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## HIIU LEHT



HIIUMAA  
· Giant by Nature ·



# Fred Jüssi:

## A man's life is measured by his ease

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS

*After the multifaceted Fred Jüssi died this year, Hiiumaa declared his birthdate, 29 January, to be a day of general idling. That's because alongside everything else he was known for – from nature writer, photographer to scientist – Jüssi was a devotee of the art of doing nothing.*

Jüssi would have turned 90 this year. In typical fashion, Fred left the party just a few months before his round-number anniversary. Instead of a celebration for the ages, the world would have to settle for his huge trove of nature photos, recordings of nature sounds, books, articles and pearls of wisdom.

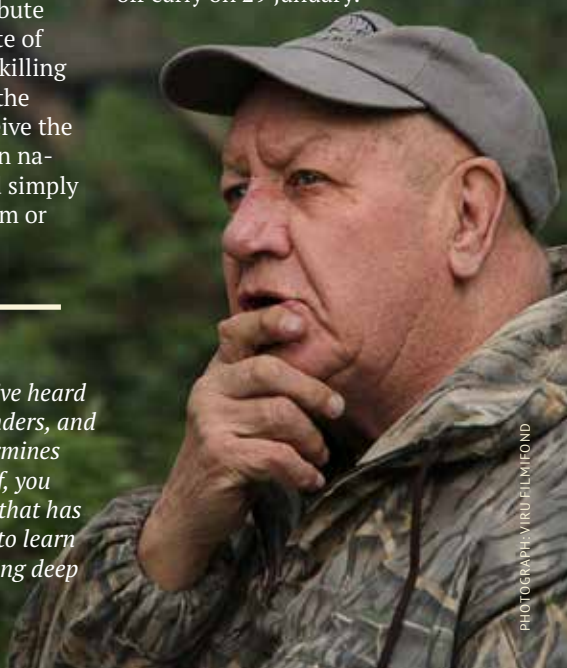
Jüssi often noted that people shouldn't constantly be toiling away but need to find time for just existing. Constant haste and busy-ness, he maintained, takes us farther from ourselves; doing nothing brings back contentment and balance.

Nature, in which Jüssi was always at home, is an ideal place for taking time out, being in the thrall of silence and natural rhythms that contribute to deeper meditation on the state of things. We're not talking about killing time here, but chance to notice the deeper nuances of life and perceive the beauty of the world around us. In nature, we can let our mind go and simply float, in the moment, without aim or expectations.

So, 29 January will be a day on which to stop rushing around, and find moments to just *be*; a day to fast from employment duties, social media, tidying the home and other activities that take up our attention constantly – and focus on silence, nature and ourselves.

As to whether you do it in the backwoods, as Jüssi suggested, or around a fire in your backyard or your own room or garret, that's up to you. What's key is that the doing of nothing has to be genuine, not just taking a day off work and filling it with other various substitute activities. Though certainly taking off work is important: the islanders also call on employers to give people an extra day off work or letting employees off early on 29 January.

*"In my time living on Hiiumaa, I've heard some good sayings from the islanders, and one of them is that laziness determines longevity. By knowing how to loaf, you preserve yourself. It's something that has to be learned, it's not at all easy to learn to laze around. It's a path for going deep into the essence of things."*



PHOTOGRAPHY: IRU FILMIFOND



## Sights on the map

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Pühalepa church; Contract Stones                    | 19 Kalana harbour                                  |
| 2 Suuremõisa mansion and park                         | 20 Location of ancient Hüti glassworks manufactory |
| 3 Kallaste limestone exposure                         | 21 Vanajõe valley                                  |
| 4 Storehouse in Suursadama harbour                    | 22 Mänspe chapel                                   |
| 5 Kukka boulder                                       | 23 Sõru harbour; Sea Centre; museum                |
| 6 Soera farm museum; Exhibition of rocks              | 24 Emmaste church                                  |
| 7 Kärkla meteorite crater model                       | 25 Harju windmill                                  |
| 8 Helmerseni boulders                                 | 26 Kuriste church                                  |
| 9 Tubala stake; boulder                               | 27 Hiiumaa museum, R.Tobias house museum           |
| 10 Hiiumaa museum, Long House                         | 28 Windtower Experience; Käina church ruins        |
| 11 Ristimägi - Hill of crosses                        | 29 Orjaku birdwatching tower, nature trail         |
| 12 Hiiumaa museum, Mikhli 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                                  |  |



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







# Folk costume as an inheritance

TEXT: HELGI PÖLLO

”IT’S GREAT THAT WE HAVE THIS ONE OLD THING THAT CONNECTS US



*2025 is Folk Costume Year on Hiiumaa! It’s a time when people will be encouraged to sew and wear folk costume and think about their roots. Helgi Põllo wrote her final thesis at university on Hiiumaa women’s folk costumes. Although she’s been exploring the topic all her life, fascinating new knowledge keeps on coming to light.*



Folk costume is a term we use to describe sets of clothing that were basically the very last ones before people changed over to tailored and store-bought attire. The last striped skirts and all the accoutrements – that’s what we think of as folk costume. But in the first half of the 1800s, women on Hiiumaa were still wearing a dark monochrome brown skirt, which we also see on a number of paintings by Johann Köler.

The stripes of a skirt are like a barcode that can be used to identify various regions, and Hiiumaa people can also recognize other *hiidlased* by the skirt stripes – whether someone is from Pühalepa, Reigi, Emmaste or Käina. It’s great that we have this old connecting link that is so visible whenever

there’s a song or dance festival. In fact, outsiders have become envious of our particular stripes and started wearing our style of traditional clothing.

Folk costume is akin to an inheritance that is passed down the generations.

It’s something old, but since song and dance festivals live on, so does the search for identity. Young people look for their roots and they also make folk costume based on where the roots lead. And so a new heirloom is created, to be passed on.

Unlike some other smaller nations, Estonians don’t wear folk costume from day to day, but there are many things we perpetuate or use as accessories with other clothing, such as *rõhud* (the decorative chains hanging from a belt), a leather belt or jewellery that in some way or another reflects Hiiumaa. The stripes on traditional striped skirts have been turned into a printed fabric and used to make new clothing; people prefer their own traditional motifs in this form, too. If you want to wear something to a summer fair or the midsummer holiday that accents Hiiumaa and it isn’t folk costume outright, you’ll probably opt for striped fabric that signifies your home region.



The Spinner. Johann Köler.  
EKM j 461 M 1787, Art Museum of Estonia





Hiiumaa Keina (Käina) mixed choir at the Haapsalu song festival.,AM\_13813 F 11684:78, Estonian History Museum

## FULL CLOTHING ENSEMBLES

Back when people were still wearing folk costume from day to day, the “upper stories” – the head coverings and outerwear that were more impractical – were the first to start disappearing. They were just replaced with simpler ones. The number of layers kept decreasing. Today we’re starting to bring back the overclothes and head coverings. The feeling is that if there’s a set, it should be the full ensemble. For a while, it was only the *küitkuub* (the skirt), detached sleeves and apron, and there was almost nothing left of folk costume. We’ve really had to make an heck of an effort to create fuller sets, to popularize the other items among more

people. And all that makes the whole field richer.

I remember when I came back to the island after university, almost every was wearing a simplified Pühalepa folk costume that was made in Ars (an applied art production facility in Tallinn) or the skirt fabric was woven in a local service enterprise. The head coverings were no longer the authentic ones, some other components had been omitted as well. I started talking about how the clothing style in Reigi was completely different and pointing up the difference in the Käina and Emmaste area as well – after all, it’s different there, too. There is no one single “Hiiumaa folk costume”. ■



The bride from Reigi Parish is wearing a formal skirt, and on her head she has a *penik*. In the frontal view, the *penik* is over a headcloth.



Hiiumaa man dressed in mid-19th century clothing.

## FACTS ABOUT HIIUMAA FOLK COSTUME

In the late 19th century, Hiiumaa consisted of four parishes and each had its own style of clothing (folk costume, as we call it today)

The Hiiumaa women’s skirt with vertical stripes is called *küitkuub*, which literally means “striped jacket”, because it used to include a bodice part

Men’s vests were made of women’s skirt cloth, but the stripes ran horizontally.

The detached sleeves and aprons of Pühalepa Parish were lavishly adorned with embroidered lace, which was otherwise rare in 19th century peasant culture

People on Hiiumaa wore shoes with sewn-on leather soles, with curved iron pieces often installed under the heel and toe point.

All Hiiumaa women wore their hair in braids decorated with ribbons. Later on, all the other head coverings (there was a dizzying array of them, with names like *seppel*, *penik*, *tanu*, *nuutislina*, *vallislina*, *att* and *karbus*) were fastened to them.

Hiiumaa women and men wore a knife on their belt. The women’s sheath was made of tin; the men’s was of leather.

Instead of a patterned belt, women had a leather belt with copper chains dangling from them – the *rõhud*.

Summer clothing for both women and men were made of grey or white linen fabric, often pleated all over for the women.

On their heads, men wore a variety of hats with names like *malkadega müts*, *käkmüts*, *lakk*, *notiga müts* and *üll*.



# Nele Eller

*The Handicraft Association of Hiiumaa recently turned 26. Represented at many fairs and an organizer of its own regular events, including the popular summertime Kila-kola fair, the organization strives to preserve traditional local handicraft and pass on the know-how to the younger generation. We spoke to its director, Nele Eller.*

TEXT: RENE SATSI

## **Tell us a little about your organization.**

In 1998 a group of seven people started out, two of them are still with the association. The average age is currently 43, when you count both the young and the old. We have leased a building that was a workshop at former baize factory, and that is a great fit for the topic we deal with. Another building will be added because we don't all fit into one, we have nearly 130 members. Our members include people working on the mainland but who are themselves natives of the is-

land and have parents here. Summertime Hiiumaa residents are also welcome, but they have to own real estate here.

## **Do you send out invitations to become members?**

We don't. We already have too many members (*laughs*) I do my work as director as a volunteer, no one pays me for it. It's very time-consuming interacting with 130 people – I always feel bad that I might possibly neglect someone. But writing project applications, doing reporting – one document after another – takes time. The building that we're in Kärdla was on a brushy plot of land; there was no water or sewage. Now the roof has been fixed up, and the insulation and foundation as well. We're proud of it: this house is our nest! We've operated a shop there in the summers, and in the winters, we're open on weekends. It's all powered by volunteers. There's a lot of work. We also have an online store.



PHOTOGRAPH: KRISTEL PEIKEL

## **Doesn't being involved in such a massive undertaking tire you out?**

Of course, sometimes I'm weary, sometimes I've even thought I'll hand over the running of the organization to someone else, but we have all these people... (*voice warm and full of feeling*). If I announce that I'm planning to come in on a given day, people make a special trip: some might bring syrup, or bake some bread. At the end of every month, we take stock of how everybody has been doing. I generally know what people are working on and it's fun to experience that vicariously. I'm proud of all these people and it's because of them that I don't want to give up my position. I have thought about asking for financial advice from someone who sees the big picture better, but when I talk to others, they claim that I'm the one who has the clearest picture of the situation. At a Saint Martin's Day fair, someone characterized me by saying that I put together the team, organize everything, and I still have energy left over to think about whether we brought stuff like extension cords to the fair. I think that's my strength, being aware of the little things on which everything depends. I'm a huge list maker. At busy times, I'm like a clown with a lot of balls in the air at the same time. None of them can be allowed to fall to the ground but I never know which one is about to drop first. (*laughs*)

## **Do you do handicrafts yourself?**

I sew and knit. When the spirit moves me, then I do it. I'm also not one to throw anything away, I simply have to use it up in some way. That sort of thriftiness is a general characteristic of our organization: giving things new life. We even buy the bare minimum in terms of packaging, we make packing materials ourselves. The building is full of old things that we use for that purpose – junk mail, wallpaper that people have brought in. ■

## **XIV Pühalepa Music Festival**

1.–3. August on island Hiiumaa, in Pühalepa and Kärdla churches

# Arvo Pärt 90

Extra: Estonian National Male Choir – Tormis 95  
27 July in Kärdla church



## **Additional information:**

[www.keremakultuurikoda.ee](http://www.keremakultuurikoda.ee)  
[www.facebook.com/keremakultuurikoda](https://www.facebook.com/keremakultuurikoda)

# Practical information



**Hiiumaa.ee** is the website for information on lodging, restaurants, transport, services, events, concerts, travel recommendations, special offers, and much more. The information on the site is in English, Estonian, Finnish and German. There are 10 itineraries, which can also be accessed on a map of the island on the Hiiumaa mobile app. There's also an audioguide in various languages for the lighthouse touring route.

## TRANSPORT



Ferries named after mythological heroes Tiiu and Leiger connect the Hiiumaa port of Heltermaa to Rohuküla on the mainland. Tiigi on Saaremaa Island is linked to Sõru on Hiiumaa by the ferry *Soela*. It's recommended to buy a ticket in advance online: for the Rohuküla-Heltermaa route, go to **praamid.ee** and for Saaremaa-Hiiumaa, **veeteed.com**.

**Ferries from the mainland**  
+372 6181310

**Ferries from Saaremaa** +372 527 2974  
or +372 443 4500

**Port of Kärdla** +372 5666 2514

Kärdla, Hiiumaa's main town, can be reached by a flight from Tallinn, which has daily departures – twice a day on weekdays and once a day on weekend. The trip on the 33-seat SAAB 340A takes half an hour.

**Bookings:** flynyx.com

**Kärdla Airport** +372 463 1381

Kärdla Airport is 6 km from Kärdla and is easily accessible by county bus, taxi, car or even on foot.

Intercity coach lines to and from Hiiumaa are operated by GoBus and LuxExpress Estonia.

**Bus schedules:**  
vald.hiiumaa.ee/bussiliiklus

**Gas stations** are in Kärdla, Käina, Emmaste, and Kõrgessaare.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS



**Emergency services** 112  
**State helpline** 1247

## MEDICAL CARE



**Emergency room** at Hiiumaa Hospital (Rahu tn. 2 Kärdla) +372 462 2782

**Information on dentists** on Hiiumaa is posted on the Hiiumaa Municipality website. For dental emergencies, go to the hospital emergency room.

**Emergency services** 112  
**Family Doctor Advice Line** 1220

## VETERINARY



Hiiumaa veterinary clinic (Linnumäe village; +372 5670 6709)

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## PHARMACIES ON HIIMUMAA



Apotheka: Kärdla Keskväljaku apteek (Põllu 1, Kärdla; +372 463 2137)

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Apotheka: Käina apteek (Spordi 9, Käina; +372 463 6154)

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## SUSTAINABLE WASTE COLLECTION



Hiiumaa has a waste sorting system for full-time residents and visitors. Every district has a waste collection centre that accepts at least three types of waste free of charge: plastic and metal packaging, beverage packaging, glass packaging, and scrap paper. Visitors can buy prepaid trash bags for household waste. The 25-litre orange bags are sold at Coop Hiiumaa stores, aboard ferries at R-Kiosk, Kõpu Lighthouse and Wind-tower Experience. The filled bags can be dropped off at Emmaste, Käina, Kõrgessaare, Kärdla, Pühalepa and Hiiumaa waste collection centers.

## BANKS AND ATMS



Hiiumaa's only bank is a Swedbank branch on the central square in Kärdla. Visits must be booked in advance. ATMs can be found on Kärdla's main square, the Tormi Konsum and Selver, and Käina, Kõrgessaare and Emmaste.

## GROCERIES



Hiiumaa has a network of Coop stores, which also carry local Hiiumaa products. There's a server just outside Kärdla and six days a week, island towns are served by a traveling shop operated by Selver (information line: +372 56 296 300. Kärdla also has a Rimi supermarket. Kala ja Võrk specializes in fish. Kassari and Palade have quaint village general stores.

**Crafts** are sold at Heltermaa port and on Vabrikuväljak in Kärdla. Souvenirs and crafts can also be purchased at the Hiiumaa tourist information office on the central square in Kärdla, Suuremõisa Castle gift shop, Windtower Experience, the community centre at Orjaku Harbour, Kõpu Lighthouse crafts house, Hiiumaa Kaubamaja department store (second floor of the Coop on the central square), and aboard the ferries.

## TOWING AND ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE



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## RESCUE AT SEA



Hiiumaa Volunteer Sea Rescue Society +372 5818 2238  
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# Hiiumaa Literary Festival

CHAPTER 4

JUNE 6-8

KÄRDLA, VABRIKUVÄLJAK

[hiiumaa.ee/kirjandusfestival2025](http://hiiumaa.ee/kirjandusfestival2025)





# In the meadow, in a timeless state

**HIIMUMAA  
CULTURAL  
PEARL 2024**

TEXT: MAIT JOORITS

PHOTOGRAPH: PRIVATE COLLECTION

Once again, it's summer. My ninth summer here in Hiiumaa, in Ojaküla, in the middle of the meadow. This very same meadow I retreat to in my thoughts during the winters, closing my eyes and imagining myself in a pleasant and safe place. A place where the sun always shines, where it's perpetually summer, where we go swimming and sauna, then swimming and sauna again, and it always feels like life is just beginning. Every summer like that. And it really feels like a fresh start every time.

Every year is slightly different because you yourself have changed a little, but it's always wonderful. Some years the season start with a tinge of melancholy, knowing that summer will soon end. Another week gone, then another... Even though we're usually here for nearly three months. Most people only get two weeks of summer vacation. I can't fathom how anyone lives like that, and I hope I never have to endure such a grim fate.

But this summer my head feels strangely empty. Even though, for the first time, "work" came to me here on Hiiumaa, and we created the play *"Mere laul" (Song of the Sea)* with our troupe. Despite having previously declined all summer theatre offers, saying I didn't want to do theatre during the summer, I wanted to be on Hiiumaa. But in the morning of the first rehearsal, as I stepped out of my little cottage, the meadow in bloom, birds chirping, and realizing I only had a 20-minute drive to the rehearsal space – about the same as taking the train to the theatre in the city – I thought to myself, this is a way I could live.

And so, the production came together, and it went well. Just as I had dreamed. The story resonated with people, and it touched them. Even the lighting technician, Robin, told his mother afterward that although he had seen it five times, he still struggled to hold back tears. In short, we did our "work" well. "Work" is

in quotation marks because I've never thought of theatre as work. It's more like a beloved, someone I feel fortunate to always be with and fall in love with over and over again. Just like with Hiiumaa and my meadow.

This summer feels a bit like an exotic holiday, where at some point, you lose track of the days, the world, and whether anything is happening at all. I've stopped reading the news – it's not like there's a whole lot new, as Tõnu Õnnepalu once said.

You retreat into your cocoon, your small inner circle, your own little Bullerby village, and think occasionally, "If only this could last forever." An entire lifetime. Or better yet, several.

Sometimes, I play a thought game to practice gratitude: I imagine the present moment, wherever I am, as if it's already part of the past, long gone, and I'm revisiting it, reliving it as a memory. It's best when I'm lying in bed at night, surrounded by my family, the way we sleep – piled on top of each other like little cave people. And then I picture that all of this, this life, this world, is already a memory, and this moment is my chance to step back into it and experience it once more.

Every time, it hits me with a profound sense of existential gratitude, from head to toe, and I realize what a blessed life I live. That I'm alive at all. And alive like this. And the kids are still small. Still nestled close to me. Breathing softly, seeking my hand, stroking it, and drifting back to sleep.

In some ways, Hiiumaa itself feels like one endless summer. One endless summer day, repeating in slightly different variations. And when I'm here, everything in the city feels like a dream – a vague memory that has no connection to me.

And it's the same in winter; the entire Hiiumaa summer feels like one endless day. Which inevitably ends. When the autumn storms begin, the red deer start to roar, and the tune of Jaan Tätte's song begins to play in your mind:

*"Oh, cranes, don't rush into your flocks yet, our hearts and the sea have just warmed."*

Then we still come on weekends, snatch the last moments, watch the flocks flying south from Kaleste, and think every time: should we fly with them or not? ■

# Mikk Saar

is trying  
fishing on  
for size

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS

PHOTOGRAPH: PRIVATE COLLECTION

*Vocal stars and husband and wife Mikk Saar and Tanja Mihhailova-Saar are planning to finish work on their second home on Hiiumaa this year. They had visited friends in different parts of the island for years before the idea to put roots down came to fruition.*

"My parents are from southern Estonia, inland but for me the sea exerts a powerful pull. I considered whether to start up a farm on my father's ancestral lands, but in the end, the sea drew us to Hiiumaa," says Mikk.

## FRIENDS' SUMMER COTTAGES FROM KÕPU TO KÄRDLA

Mikk and Tanja have been coming to Hiiumaa for over 10 years – they would most often go to Kõpu but also explored other places, hopping from one friend's cottage to the next, and also frequenting B&Bs and camping. Many of their friends with

second homes have since become full-time residents of the islands themselves. Mikk points out that Hiiumaa isn't just a summer place – he likes the peace and quiet that reigns supreme from September to May, a time when the beaches and woods are devoid of people. For Tanja, tranquility is also the first thing that comes to mind. "It's that feeling that you're not in a hurry to get anywhere. Time flowing a little slower; time to just enjoy being alive." The reason that they sought out their own little piece of heaven on the coastline was actually the proliferation of private property signs, which blocked access to the sea.

## A STONY BEACH, BUT UNQUESTIONABLY HOME

"It's been more than five years now since we decided to look for a second home on Hiiumaa and started shopping for plots of land. We also looked at seaside locations in other counties, too, but Hiiumaa was the one that felt like it was for us. We knew right away when we had found our plot of land. Since I had been to the island so many times with Tanja, it wasn't hard to sell her on the idea of peace and quiet, and here we are.

"The first years were all business, installing electrical and plumbing and other preparations that took a lot of time but we couldn't see too much. We lived with

neighbors and a couple times I set up a tent in my own yard as well. When the neighbours' house was sold, we had to get serious and increase our pace. This year, we'll have a place to hang our hats," says Mikk. The first to be completed will be the sauna, which is ready for wintertime living. Mikk doesn't give any promises about the house itself or guest quarters, but hints that anything is possible.

## BOTH DRAWN BY THE SEA

Mikk has loved the ocean since he was a child, whether just walking by the shore, boating or windsurfing. A surfing village called Ranna is just a few clicks from their new Hiiumaa home, offering windsurfing, paddle boarding and kitesurfing and water skiing. Tanja says she already has a favorite place but is coy about the location. "There's so much yet to discover, but I do have one quiet beach I like where I can just soak in the sea views in peaceful solitude."

Mikk has been shadowing his new neighbors on Hiiumaa to learn about the fishing trade.

"I currently go out on the water as a first mate kind of guy and help out with some basic tasks. The nets themselves – the locals handle those. But I'll learn eventually," Mikk chuckles. The house is nearing completion but one element that is still missing is a smoker oven for the fish. For now, that part of the preparation process takes place at the neighbours'.

## NO PLANS TO BECOME PERMANENT ISLANDERS

Mikk and Tanja have no aims to go full native and haven't committed to a permanent move, either, since their work is elsewhere.

They have four neighbours on the island, and two are multigenerational *hiidlased* (people of Hiiumaa) who live there year-round and two who are usually elsewhere and visit the island during holidays.

"We try to get along well with locals – both the neighbours and the local leaders. Everything in our construction project is up to code and by the book. It takes more time, but it's not worth the potential trouble to be in some grey area," says Mikk. The couple also vow to get involved in local cultural life once they get settled.

"It would be nice to be in Tallinn as little as possible and maximize our time on Hiiumaa," says Tanja. ■



# Ene-Liis Semper and Tiit Ojasoo

”

**"WE'RE NOT SURE WHY WE EVEN LEAVE HERE FROM TIME TO TIME"**

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS



PHOTOGRAPH: PRIVATE COLLECTION

We talked to the NO99 theatre tandem about their life on Hiiumaa.

**Have you developed some ritual or tradition that you do first when you arrive back on Hiiumaa?**

**Tiit Ojasoo:** At first, practical stuff has to be taken care of: heating the stove, turning the water back on. Taking the dog for a lap in the woods. From the point on, we start ditching the practical part behind, because walking the dog can easily turn into a couple hours' meander through the forest. That is, if we manage to arrive on the island while it's still light outside. If it's the dark season, we can curl up by

the stove reading the latest Vikerkaar or installment of Looming's library that we packed in a bag along with the bread when we came. The main thing is to do as little as possible. Not start mowing or replying to letters.

**Ene-Liis Semper:** A drawback for me is that I don't drive, so from time to time, when Tiit isn't free to travel to the countryside, I fly to Kärkla and then hitchhike to Kõpu. There is a bus route that goes all the way to Suurepsi, where our hideaway is, but the schedule usually doesn't work out with the flights and buses so catching a ride with someone is faster. And you

meet many interesting people that way, because there are almost always pit stops along the way. Once I the first car that passed stopped for me and took me to Kõrgessaare nursery school, where they were having picture day. I waited until the session was over and then got my next ride. Everyone at the school gave me a warm welcome and the director even gave me a tour before we left. I have also wound up at Viskoosa port, where I was served a tasty breakfast before the place actually opened. Or once I sat down with some local village men by a fire while they made inquiries if anyone they knew was heading in the direction of Kõpu. Last winter; I even managed to catch a ride on a snow plough.

At some point, I think I'll get my licence and then I'll be more independent in moving around, at least on the island. But for now, since I don't have time, hitchhiking has its charms. It requires you to be not on a schedule where you have to arrive somewhere by a set time, and I enjoy that aspect, too. I've noticed that it's easier to get from Kärkla to Kõpu than from Kõpu to Kärkla. Don't know why.

**How did you find your way to Hiiumaa in the first place, how long did you think about the decision and looking back, is everything the way you dreamed of or have you had to reassess anything?**

**TO:** Hiiumaa has always been on my mind, maybe even since I was little. spent a hot summer in Kassari at the age of 7-8, I remember swimming, the spit of land called Sääre tîrp and Hiiumaa's last wolf, preserved by a taxidermy in a museum...but maybe it all seemed like too beautiful a dream, a bit too far, complicated, impractical. So for years, Ene-Liis and I frequented other places. We dreamed of Hiiumaa, but didn't do anything to make it happen, just waited. And then one day, an opportunity opened up to actually move here, and then everything started moving very fast. And now the five-hour trip from our home in Tallinn to our home in Hiiumaa is more positive than negative. The farther, the better.

Hiiumaa also loomed as a mythical place in my family folklore – my father was the leader of a *malev*, student work camps back in the day, before I was born. My brother and sister say it was a really amazing time, barrelling down gravel

roads in the collective farm's jeep. In my mind's eye, it looks exactly like OrWo colour slide film from the Soviet era: yellow-tinged and sunny.

**ELS:** My maternal grandfather was from Hiiumaa and is buried in Emmaste cemetery. And my great-grandmother sleeps there as well. So my relationship with the island goes way back: But my grandfather's old homestead in Harju Village was sold off in the 1970s since Hiiumaa was in the border zone back then and it was hard to get to the island.

Nature was the main quality that led us to our current location in Kõpu. We lived near Virtsu in Lääne County in the west country for around 15 years, which is also an incredibly beautiful place, surrounded by coastal pastures and juniper. But I longed for something more primeval, old forests. The place we found on Hiiumaa is on an old rock garden that dates back to the Ice Age and borders on a forest conservation zone. The sea is a 10 minutes walk away. We had long been right on the seashore in the west country; where most days tend to be very windy. Here in Kõpu, the trees block most of the wind. Pleasant.

**Does Hiiumaa nurture creativity and being active, or, like Fred Jüssi recommended, just laying about and doing nothing?**

**ELS:** Since our everyday work involves scores of people, quiet is the main thing I look for in a country home. So I would count myself a member of Fred's Leisurely Bliss Party. Existing harmoniously in nature erases not only the stress of the city, but wipes away the creative intensity, and I have learned to value that. After ultra-intense artistic spurts, I take deep contentment on the island in these periods where the days just proceed at their own pace. And I take joy in rou-

tines and practical things like morning swims in the sea year-round, stoking the sauna, gathering berries or mushrooms... Paradoxically, the covid lockdowns were a blessed time for our family, a time that was a real nightmare in big cities. Since we had just found our Hiiumaa home, we had the huge privilege of spending that spring in the forests watching nature wake up.

**TO:** Our work – both the teaching and directing for the stage – is people-centred. There are fewer people on Hiiumaa, but in turn they're more humorous, approachable and practical. That makes our country home a place for gathering ideas, reading, walking; but also for interacting with the local community, who have a slightly different way of thinking and talking. It's very refreshing.

**Tourist surveys show that people value calm, silence and solitude here. But when asked what could be different on Hiiumaa, they answer there could be a spa, more hotels, more concerts, performances, festivals, restaurants and other crowded places. What makes Hiiumaa special for you and what is there too little of or too much of here?**

**ELS:** The greatest rarity in today's world is unspoiled nature. When you travel the world, you see that environmental change is unfortunately all too noticeable. We don't yet fully perceive it or want to perceive it.

But it's true that everything that people manage to build dwindles in comparison to the virtues of the environment which aren't in our power to restore. So I would emphasize the silence and tranquility that characterize the island as the supreme quality that should be preserved at all costs, not succumb to the pressure to be ever creating new attractions.

One way or another, cities are going to have spas, hotels, malls and nightclubs so the little out of the way hideaways should be valued just as they are, and not make them densely filled like everywhere else. Different places could and should remain different in terms of ambience and function.

Everyone knows that the endless information streams and expectation that you have be available on all channels 24/7 is something that brings us all to the physical brink.

The slowness of life on an island on the far side of the water helps you see things from a different perspective. It teaches you to distinguish the essential from the inessential.

**What sums up the essence of Hiiumaa for you?**

**TO:** Wandering with no particular aim down deer trails to get to the sea and go for a swim. Something like that. Although our first photos of Hiiumaa are from Kassari, the pine trees and hummocks of Kõpu Peninsula now seem to epitomize Hiiumaa even better.

**How is your Hiiumaa home sited and laid out – what was it designed for, what is it conducive for and what activities are definitely not feasible?**

**TO:** Our home is in Suurepsi Village, at the forest's edge. It isn't too big or too small. The most important quality is cosiness, it retains warmth well and is pleasant to be in. It requires its fair share of upkeep but not too much. It has the Estonian village ideal that the neighbours are out of sight but actually nearby if needed. You can be here alone or host guests here, get some work done if necessary, or just be... usually when we start heading to the city, we wonder: why are we leaving, anyway? ■



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*Risto Kõrgemägi spent years surfing the world before coming home to run the Ranna Surf Village resort in what he considers one of the best destinations for the sport, Hiiumaa.*

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS

“Hiiumaa is great. It has it all. Great natural scenery, friendly people, a safe environment. No poisonous snakes or other dangerous critters or crime, everything’s laid back and chill. Suureranna is especially safe as a surfing area – it has a shallow sandy bottom, you can ride barefoot. It is south-facing, and never too cold. The bay is a well-defined expanse of water and you can keep your eye on the students at all times. Our surfing complex is screened by big trees, which keeps wind down in the yard. And if conditions are better on some other beach due to wind direction, we can load up get to Paope on Luidja Bay, or Ristna or Kalana in half an hour.

“We offer totally conventional lodging too, you don’t have to just surf. But people staying with us tend to want to try surfing after coming all this way.”

Ranna may be a good four hours from Tallinn, but that’s part of the charm: “The distance is in some ways a very good selling point, this is a secluded and private place that allows you to disengage from the nervous action of the mainland. If you want to hold a children’s camp, we can arrange for it to be device-free with the focus on real-life activities on the water, in the woods and on the beach.”

#### **ALL STYLES OF SURFING AVAILABLE AT SUURERANNA**

Ranna surf village is surrounded by good berry and mushroom foraging forests. It has basketball and volleyball courts, a disc golf course and a 40-metre-long zipline. There’s a sauna, of course. The Surf & Chill Cafe is open daily. Last year in fact our chef was a Balinese, and this

year we have some food from distant lands on our menu.”

Kids and teens can also engage in creative pursuits, with a lineup of various instructors teaching crafts, playwriting, songwriting and poetry labs, and film-making, among other art forms. The complex can accommodate up to 50 people, and camps for different age groups can be held here.

“We started out with exclusively camps for younger kids and teens and separate surfing instruction retreats for adults. Then we experimented and saw that father and child weekend surf camps were really popular and we’re trying to have more of those,” said Risto. Water sports continues to be the main specialization of the camps.

“There’s kitesurfing, wingfoiling, skimboarding and SUP on both bigger water

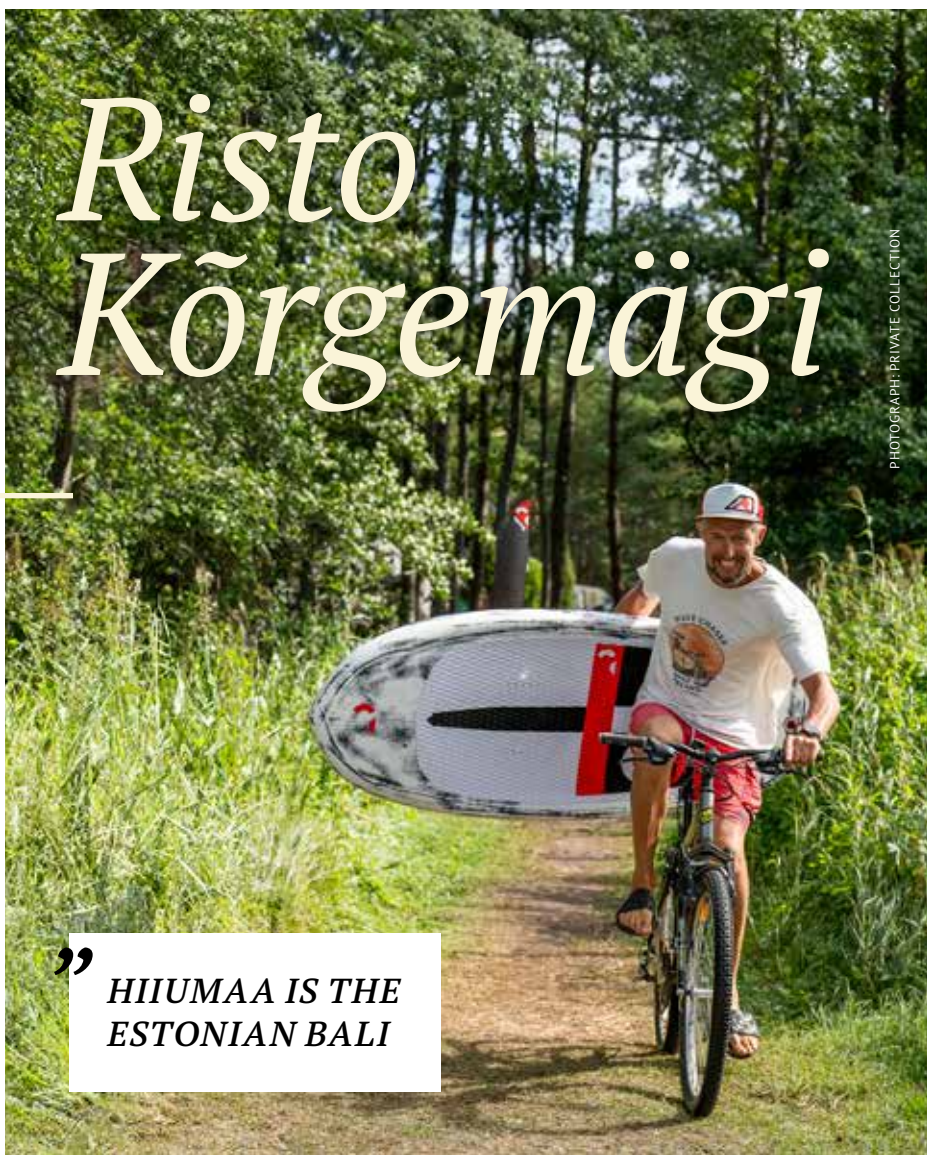
craft and solo boards. This year, we added sports wakeboarding and tubing where the rider is towed by a boat. No one is bored here. We keep on coming up with new things,” says Risto.

Risto doesn’t have any ancestors from the island. But he’s planning to put down even more roots here, now that he has kids and there is less time to travel the ends of the earth. In the summer, his young kids, the oldest a first-grader, can also be found at Ranna, taking part in everything.

“In the future, I see myself as a ‘citizen’ of Hiiumaa along with my family. I’m currently here from spring to autumn and in winter I hold ski camps in southern Estonia. But it isn’t ruled out that I will move the camps to Hiiumaa as well, if the local ski trails and complexes can handle the increased traffic.” ■

# Risto Kõrgemägi

PHOTOGRAPH: PRIVATE COLLECTION



” **HIIUMAA IS THE ESTONIAN BALI**





”  
**YOU’VE GOT  
TO TOUCH  
A PERSON’S  
SOUL**

# Karin Poola

*We visited the director of the Palade Environmental Education Centre, Karin Poola, in the run-up to Christmas, catching up to her just outside the Soera Farm Museum where, sporting an elf hat, she was in charge of the “Christmasland” attraction.*

TEXT: RENE SATSI

## **Nature is something you are deeply engaged with?**

When I taught at school, I was a biology and chemistry teacher. But then I started looking for a new outlet. I found some fantastic folks to set up the environmental education centre with. The one here on Hiiumaa was one of the first of its kind, dating back to 2007. And the State Forest Management Centre project was in parallel to that and they also had a nature education centre, but that one has been modified into a visitor centre to cover all needs.

## **Your work at Palade is aimed at kids?**

Not only! We work with everything and everyone! Educational programmes are the goal.

They’ve become so broad that we don’t know what to do next. Hiiumaa children who attend free of charge, kids from the mainland who attend in the framework of project funding, kids from abroad who come to us via Palade school... We have hikes, concerts, conferences. No matter what we do – and we do a hundred things – it all stems from an ethos of drawing attention to nature. We try to get out of the world of do’s and don’ts and touch people’s soul. If we don’t succeed at moving them at their core, then nothing succeeds! If people have made the trip out to us, we don’t want to keep on harping on global warming and or lecturing against littering. That part has to be a secondary message that filters out of our talks and events.

## **How many of you are there?**

Not many – me and Marge. My husband Tiit has been a big help. Without Tiit, nothing would have ever got off the ground at all. Together we established the nature education centre and we have been working together all these years. We are also busy with the farm complex that was added to the nature centre a few years ago.

## **Vacation is a foreign concept for you guys, I imagine?**

I’m a traveller – I’ve been all around the world in fact! I go on group tours and I am concerned about slowing the whole group down, although I try to persevere. When I travel, that’s where I feel that I am free as air. My dream was to get up to 5000 metres altitude but I didn’t make it – the trail got too hard. That was in east central Africa – in the Mountains of the Moon.

## **The kids here at Christmasland are running you ragged...**

I just love working with kids! That’s probably where I get my energy from. They’re so great! Who ever said this generation is doomed?

## **What’s the most authentic thing in Hiiumaa?**

Where the sea meets the forest. For instance, the Tõnupsi dunes are amazingly beautiful. You will hear real silence there. Silence is the most important keyword of the island. The Korbi hills are incredible, but you don’t see signs leading you there from the road – that’s intentionally that way. And our starry sky is special, something you don’t see in cities anymore. Not even in Kärđla, all that much. The roar of the sea, starry sky and silence are the words that speak to me in Hiiumaa.

## **Are people who move here ever accepted as native?**

I do! There really ought to be a few more people here. But Hiiumaa folk keep their distance. It’s unimaginable that there would be another house right next to our own house. It could be said, jokingly, that when people from Tallinn come here, they get down to building a city right away. God forbid that they have to be in solitude here! So people come to the island, and they build a summer cottage and leave for the winters. For us, the criterion is three winters on Hiiumaa: those who stick it out will probably stick around for good.

Newcomers have to be able to appreciate what there is here. Otherwise there’s no point in moving here. It’s different here, and I would recall the words of Fred Jüssi, who was a friend of my husband. Fred said that if he’s alone somewhere on a farm here or visiting us, he sometimes likes to go out, takes a wider swing out to where the sea is roaring and the trees are talking, and then he slowly returns to the farm and beholds: ah, there is a light coming from the window, someone lives here! ■



# Bear encounters on Hiiumaa?

By April 2024, reports started surfacing about Hiiumaa's "celebrity" bear moving actively across the island. At the beginning of May, two distant trail cameras captured the bear almost simultaneously. The narrow timeframes led hunters analyzing the photos to suspect that there might be two bears on the island, as had been rumoured for some time. Sightings ranged from Kapasto to Kalana.

The first bear sighting last year was on 12 April, when the animal was caught on camera in the Emmaste area near Harju village, where it knocked down a salt lick post meant for elk. Two weeks later, on April 26, the bear was on the other side of the island in Sigala village. "At first, I thought it was a large boar, because who would believe they'd see the island's only bear in their village," said Jõrgen Novitski, who filmed the bear running in front of his car. Most sightings last year were near Emmaste, except for one in Paope.

Subsequent trail camera images raised hunters' eyebrows. On 4 May in the morning, a trail camera in Poama on the Kõpu peninsula snapped a picture of the bear. By midnight on 5 May, it appeared near Kapasto, between Kärkla and Käina. Just two hours later, at 2:10 AM, the bear was captured on video by a trail camera in Kalana, also on the Kõpu peninsula. The two locations are 40 kilometres apart. According to Peep Männil, an Estonian large game



PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK / PRIVATE COLLECTION

TEXT: HIIU LEHT

*Since the summer of 2022, bears have appeared dozens of times on the trail cameras of Hiiumaa hunters. Initially, it was thought to be a random young male bear from the mainland and that it would soon leave the island upon realizing it wouldn't find a mate here. However, the bear kept reappearing in trail camera footage.*

researcher, it's highly unlikely a bear could cover 40 kilometres in two hours. This confirmed the presence of two bears on the island.

Männil doesn't believe a larger bear population could establish itself on Hiiumaa. "This could only happen if a female bear were to arrive. It's more likely that the newcomers would be young males – driven by a strong urge to roam – and could end up anywhere," he said. The chance of a female bear settling on Hiiumaa is slim. "Female bears are much more territorial and rarely undertake long journeys."

Observations suggest the bears have divided Hiiumaa between themselves. According to Anu Sarapuu, head of the Hiiumaa Hunters' Society, the larger bear was seen in the western Kõrgessaare area, while the smaller bear stayed in the eastern part near Emmaste.

"Unfortunately, we're no longer certain there are two bears – there might be, or there might not be," Sarapuu admitted. The smaller bear was last seen in the Salinõmme area, and it's possible it swam back to the mainland or to Muhu Island.

Despite all this, there's no reason to be afraid of a run-in with a bear in the wild. Bear-watching tour organizer Bert Rähni advises: "If you do meet a bear, it's best to speak calmly and back away slowly. Bears fear humans the most." ■

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# Let's go to the beach!

TEXT: MARIA RUUBAS

A Hiiumaa local is drawn to the sea regardless of the season — to bask in the sun and salty water, chase storm winds, explore what the gale has washed ashore, or simply gaze at the sea. Hiiumaa boasts over 400 km of diverse coastline—something for everyone! Here are five beaches to ensure there's something for every corner of the island.

## RISTNA BEACH

Ristna Beach, also known by names such as Kaldalauka or Paradise Beach, offers a surprise every time. First-time visitors often exclaim, “This doesn’t even feel like Estonia!” The views from the high shoreline extend across the bay and far into the open sea, making for stunning sunsets and a favorite spot for storm watchers.

Small trails allow you to explore the high shore. Nearby, the former Ristna military structures attract adventurers. It’s a beach worth

traveling to, even from the opposite side of Hiiumaa.

**Location:** At the westernmost tip of Hiiumaa.

**Accessibility:** Accessible by car from Ristna. From Kalana harbor, the beach is a 500 m walk or bike ride.

**Features:** Open to westerly winds, the beach has a deep bowl shape. Unlike many Estonian beaches where you wade through shallow waters for ages, Ristna’s swimming depth begins at the second step. The water is clear and often brisk.

**Waves:** Known for powerful foamy waves, especially with southerly or westerly winds, earning it the nickname “Estonia’s surfing mecca.”

**Children:** Keep an eye on kids as the water deepens quickly and strong waves can sweep them off their feet.

**Nearby beaches:** Kaleste Beach and camping area (6.5 km).

” **A BEACH WITH A POWERFUL OCEAN-LIKE VIBE!**

PHOTOGRAPH: MARIS HELLERAND

” **THE KÄINA LOCALS’ HEALTH RESORT**

PHOTOGRAPH: PIRET EESNA

## LUSSULIIVA BEACH

Popular in the '70s and '80s, this was once Käina’s most beloved beach. After a quiet spell, it’s now lively again. The beach gained wider fame when former First Lady Evelin Ilves sent her legendary social media greetings to Kalaranna Beach in Tallinn from here. The name itself sounds so inviting — Lussuliiva (Smooth Sand)!

This charming little beach offers a lovely view of the sea, reeds, and birds, with a slightly wild and secluded feel. A cow herd grazes in the distance. A truly cozy little spot for a swim.

**Location:** From Käina, turn left towards Orjaku. The parking area is across from the former Padriku shop (a dark brown house).

**Accessibility:** Accessible by car to the parking lot, but no shaded spots there. It’s a short walk from the parking lot to the beach.

**Features:** A small grassy shoreline with a sandy-muddy, seaweed-covered bottom. Shallow and perfect for children. Facilities include lounge chairs, a changing cabin, an info board, picnic tables, and trash bins.

**Waves:** Calm and peaceful cove, not ideal for wind enthusiasts.

**Children:** Excellent for kids, as the water is warm and shallow, and the small beach ensures they can’t wander far.

**Nearby beaches:** Kassari swimming area (approx. 9 km).

## PRÄHNU BEACH

Many claim Prähnu to be Hiiumaa's most stunning beach, and while that's debatable, it's undeniably gorgeous. There's plenty of space, the sun sets into the sea, and the seabed is pure sand. A creaky swing adds charm — a true paradise.

Swimming makes you hungry, so bring snacks or a picnic basket. The nearest shop is about 2 km away. On the way from Emmaste, you can stock up on snacks and reading material from the local library.

**Location:** 13 km from Emmaste towards Kõpu. Turn left onto a village road before Nurste shop.

**Accessibility:** There's parking on the grassy area by the swing.

**Features:** A long sandy beach with seemingly endless space. The shallow waters make you walk a bit before you can swim, but the beach's beauty compensates.

**Waves:** Mardihansu Bay doesn't produce big waves, but surfing is possible in the right conditions.

**Children:** Ideal for children as the water deepens gradually and there's ample space for building sandcastles.

**Nearby beaches:** Liivalauka Beach (approx. 15 km).

**” ARGUABLY  
THE MOST  
BEAUTIFUL  
BEACH IN  
HIIUMAA!**



PHOTOGRAPH: PIIRET EESMAA



**” SOME PEOPLE  
VISIT HIIUMAA  
JUST FOR THIS  
BEACH!**

## PALLI BEACH

An exotically solitary beach stretching over 2 km. It's a favorite for both hikers, as there's a camp site and lucky locals who consider it their private beach.

The water is often refreshing but never too cold to enjoy. Impatient visitors can complement swimming and sunbathing with walks along the beach or forest trails. Lucky visitors might even find mushrooms in the right season!

**Location:** Turn right from Luidja towards "Palli camping area," then follow the signs (approx. 5 km).

**Accessibility:** The road is a forest path, so plan accordingly. In summer, the parking area can get crowded.

**Features:** A stunning long sandy beach. The sea here can be chilly because it is very exposed, but the beach is easily forgiven even by those who prefer warmer waters, thanks to its beautifully firm sandy seabed. It also deepens quickly, and the water is generally crystal clear.

**Waves:** Exposed to the open sea, so waves can be substantial at times.

**Children:** Families with kids might prefer nearby Luidja Beach (6 km), which has a playground and warmer water.

## TÖRVANINA BEACH

Törvanina Beach features singing sands, camping spots under pine trees, and views of Lehtma Harbor and Kärddla. The RMK camping area is located along the beach.

Swimming is at your own risk, as it's not an official beach and lacks lifeguards.

**Location:** Drive from Kärddla towards Kõrgessaare and turn right towards Lehtma after 5 km. After 8 km on Kärddla-Lehtma road turn right to parking.

**Accessibility:** Yes, with a gravel parking lot accommodating up to 14 cars or 1 large bus. In addition there are several parking slots next to campsite.

**Features:** Famous for its white singing sands and sandy seabed.

**Waves:** Fairly calm bay.

Children: Safe and suitable for families.

**Nearby:** Kärddla swimming area (approx. 11 km), Hausma swimming area (approx. 11 km), Mangu Beach (approx. 13 km).

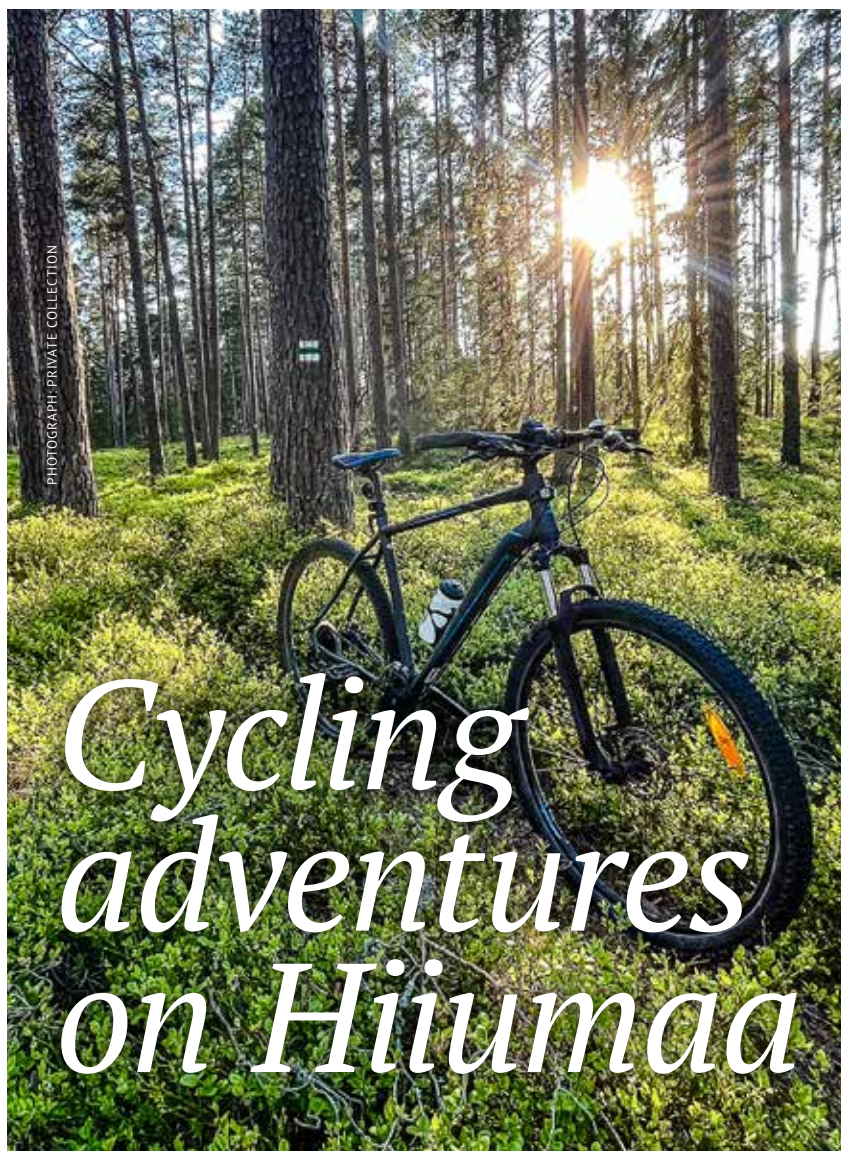
**” THE CLOSEST  
SANDY BEACH  
TO KÄRDLA**



PHOTOGRAPH: ENRIKA VUNK

Read more about Hiiumaa's beaches at [www.hiiumaa.ee](http://www.hiiumaa.ee)





PHOTOGRAPH: PRIVATE COLLECTION

# Cycling adventures on Hiiumaa

TEXT: RAUL VINNI,  
MARIA RUUBAS,  
SIIRI KRUUSMÄGI

*If you want to experience the island in its most authentic form, forget motor vehicles. Hiiumaa's perfect size and idyllic roads offer the most scenic views and discoveries on a bicycle.*

## EXPLORING TAHKUNA BY BIKE

The hiking trail running from Heltermaa to Sarve via Ristna is recommended by RMK for walking. However, in the Tahkuna area, some trails are quite suitable for mountain bikes.

In Tahkuna, you actually don't need to stick to marked trails. The forests are crisscrossed with paths, though they can be confusing. Without GPS, you might find yourself at an old demolition site, in a field of blueberry bushes, or on narrow trails through heather meadows.

You can cycle to Tahkuna peninsula from Kärkla along a bike path or take your bike by car to a preferred starting point, such as Lehtma Harbour. From there, you can explore the peninsula in several ways:

**Seaside trails:** Follow paths parallel to the sea, with stunning coastal views and routes along northern dune ridges. For a more challenging workout, cycle up and down these ridges.

**Historic routes:** Gravel roads lead to WWI and WWII military sites, providing a unique experience for cycling history enthusiasts.

**Lighthouse visit:** After approximately 6 km of cycling, you'll reach the asphalt road leading to Tahkuna Lighthouse – one of Hiiumaa's landmarks. You can return via scenic seaside paths or gravel roads.

A great starting point for a summer ride is Mangu Beach, where you can enjoy a swim after your trip. Park your car, take out your bike, and follow forest trails northward towards Tahkuna Lighthouse. Soon, you'll intersect with RMK's hiking trail, which is navigable with a mountain bike. The green-and-white trail markers make the ride feel like an orienteering adventure.

Seven kilometres of forest trails, some as narrow as footpaths, lead to the lighthouse from the west. Be warned: the views are so captivating you may need frequent photo breaks.

Those who prefer to avoid forest paths can return from the lighthouse via smooth, winding roads. These are just two examples of how to explore Tahkuna by bike. You can easily spend hours wandering the crisscrossing forest paths in the heart of the peninsula, occasionally encountering a wild animal in the tranquil woods – or spotting a suspiciously large pile of dung on the trail and wondering, "Where was that bear last seen?"

## CYCLING THROUGH LAYERED KÄRDLA

Kärkla can surprise you, offering moments and views that might initially be overlooked or passed by. Kärkla invites a slow-paced cruise, where each stop offers new perspectives.

**Artesian wells:** Stop at one of Kärkla's artesian wells (Tiigi, Aia, or Vabaduse streets, and Keskväljak). Wash your face with this "magical water" for an instant mood boost.

**Cultural highlights:** The main square is great for a break for people-spotting and checking out the tourism info booth. Take a break at Kärkla Cultural Center, home to the town library and cinema. The Vabrikuväljak (Factory Square) absolutely demands exploration; its charm is hard to let go of. There's the Pikk Maja, the main building of the Hiiumaa Museum; the nearby Baabade Café, open in summer; and a row of shops where you can take a piece of Hiiumaa home with you.

**Hidden gems:** As you crisscross through the garden town, make sure to find all the Kärkla *trummid*. The name is borrowed from the Coastal Swedish language (*trumma*), used to denote a bridge passable by cart.

**Relaxation spots:** Ride towards Kärkla Har-





bour, stopping at Rannapaargu café and the beach, with its shallow waters and nearby adventure park for kids. End the day at Hausma Beach, dangling your feet from the pier or taking one last swim.

### ROMANTIC RIDES IN KÄINA AND A PICNIC AT SÄÄRETIRP

Stock up on warm pastries and coffee from Käina, and head towards Sääretirp

for a scenic 10 km ride. Cycling along the roadside, you'll pass immaculate gardens that showcase Hiiumaa's love for home and nature.

When arriving at Sääretirp at the height of summer, you'll find fields of wild strawberries. Otherwise, enjoy a picnic by the sea, with waves lapping at your feet and swans gliding nearby.

Hiiumaa offers a wealth of natural

treasures: forests, seas, open spaces, and serene wildlife. Here, you can truly connect with nature and feel the richness of this land.

For lunch, there's smoked garfish and Hiiumaa beer in Kassari. What more could one want from life?

We wish you enjoyable and safe rides. Follow the traffic rules, stay on the right side of the road when cycling on roads, avoid riding in the middle of the lane, and, for your safety, wearing a helmet is strongly recommended.

### ADDITIONAL TIP FOR MOUNTAIN BIKING ENTHUSIASTS

If forest trails and rides in town aren't enough, visit Paluküla, where the top-notch trails offer hours of adventure. Adjacent to the health trail parking area, you'll find a 300-metre mountain biking park for skill-building, suitable for beginners; the 500-metre "Voograda" trail, inspired by Ristna's waves; a skills park with nearly 600 metres of challenges, combining diverse tracks and Hiiumaa's unique flora for an extraordinary nature adventure. ■

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*If anyone in high school had told him he'd be working for a museum in five years, Kauri Kiivramees wouldn't have believed it.*

TEXT: RENE SATSI

# The motorcycle man who thatched the Kassari Chapel roof

## How does one end up as director of the Hiiumaa Museum?

First off, wind up in a bus with a historian. Once [museum research director] Helgi Põllo sat down next to me on a bus – the only person I knew at the museum. I made conversation: “You work at the museum? Maybe you have an opening for an intern?” At the time I was building thatched roofs. Half of the roof on Kassari chapel was by me, I’m the one who covered the roof with reed. It’s hot in July, I didn’t have much of a desire to go up on the roof, so I got my foot in the door at the museum. Various opportunities opened up there, I parlayed

it into a job. I was a research fellow for many years, then a board member. Now I’m the director.”

## What were your other interests?

“After I graduated from primary school, I began studying to be a car mechanic. I realized right away it wasn’t for me. The theoretical part was boring. I went to see the director of the upper secondary school instead, and said, I need to get in, come up with something! And they made a place for me. Nothing had changed at the end of secondary school – back then I liked motorcycles and still do. I applied to a

technical college. Then Tallinn University offered a study place in the history department, tuition paid for by the state. That was interesting, I focused on the history of economics.

## What is work at the museum like?

It’s often physical. Putting up exhibitions, moving them around, moving things. I don’t do much sitting at a desk on account of being busy with exhibitions. There’s no chance of a routine setting in. There are practically no days where I’m reluctant to come to work.

## Your family name has an interesting ring.

Yes, after hearing it for the first time, people often ask me, “could you repeat that?” Not very common in Estonia. It’s a German custom to put *mann* after the place where a person lives. So a once upon a time, the manor lord of Putkaste decided do the same with “*mees*” in Estonian. My ancestors were sharecroppers on Putkaste Manor and they were named after their home villages. Kiiverra Village, nearly all the way to Kõpu, is my namesake. The village was named after some *kivivare* (cairn or stone heap), which hasn’t been found, maybe inside some hill.

## Did you ever want to leave the island when you were younger?

Yes, I considered going to Kuressaare on neighboring Saaremaa. It didn’t come to pass. I looked for work on the mainland but there were always some reasons why I couldn’t go. But I can’t complain, it’s been so interesting living here!

## What’s your current involvement with motorcycles? Any other activities?

Last year I received my motorcycle driving licence. Before that, I wasn’t totally street legal. I like repairing stuff, I like working on Soviet-era motorcycles. I buy them and fix them up. Once I even bought a tractor that had been started by pulling. I fixed it up, and that felt rewarding. I towed an old sauna to my place, all in one piece. I’m working on construction on that project. And I’m also member of the building association.

## When’s the best season on Hiiumaa?

Spring, when the migratory birds arrive. You sleep with the window open and hear the geese on the fields. Barnacle geese, specifically. When something startles them, they take off in a flock. That’s the sign that tourist season is coming. ■



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# Reet Roos

” **IT IS NOT  
RATIONAL TO  
THROW AWAY  
OLD WISDOM**



*“Trust in the Heavenly Father, but don’t forget to tie up your own horse.” That’s the credo of Reet Roos, an entrepreneur living in Luidja Village. She has built her summer cottage to be livable in all weather and taught her children to cope with country life.*

Educated on the mainland and with a career in Tallinn, Reet has spent the summers on Hiiumaa and whenever her work permits, weekends as well.

“I returned to the island on a part-time basis when I was expecting twins. My own childhood summers had me taking an express bus to my grandma’s on Hiiumaa and then back to Tallinn on 31 August. I never missed Tallinn during the summer; instead I missed Hiiumaa when I got back to the city. My grandmother recalled that when I was in nursery school I would tell people it was always summer on Hiiumaa. After all, I never visited my grandmother in the countryside in winter,” says Reet.

When the twins were born, Reet wanted the same for them: long summers, being able to sleep in and not worry about a little country dust and dirt. Her kids have seen winter here and have celebrated a number of New Year’s Eves here.

## **ROOTS THAT GO WAY BACK**

Although as fate would have it, she was delivered in Haapsalu on the mainland, Reet considers herself an old *hiidlane*, with roots going back to the 17th century.

“Maybe even further back, but my forebears are in the historical documents from the year 1600 as Hiiumaa people. On my grandfather’s side, they lived in Rootsiküla, Metsaküla and Reigi and on my grandmother’s side in Luidja, Lilbi and Kiivera.” Her grandparents married in 1930 and made a home in Isabella Village, which had a National Romantic ambience.

## **HIIUMAA DIALECT AND MANNERS ARE INGRAINED**

Reet can speak the local language variety and her speech is laced with the subtle humor of the island folk as well.

“At home, my grandfather spoke Hiiu dialect. My grandmother considered herself an educated woman, she spoke standard Estonian. But when they quarrelled, it would be only in dialect. Maybe they hoped I wouldn’t understand. But actually, for me, this was a crash course. The vocabulary of arguing and quarreling I know. The best-known meme for *hiidlased*. The best-known meme in Hiiumaa is the story about a guy who finds a dead crow on the road. Ever resourceful, he sticks it in his pocket just in case. “My first bit of wisdom is that I hold on to everything just in case and only then a year later I might throw it away.

## **AN ENVIRONMENT FOR THE HARDY AND RESOURCEFUL**

Hiiumaa is an ideal place for self-sufficient communities. It feels like it’s beyond the reach of the world, especially when times are tense around the globe. “You have to get by somehow when the power is out and there’s no water in the pipes.” All of the essentials have to be on hand. The old knowledge, such as distinguishing edible fungi from poisonous species, and how to make bread and cheese, is cherished.

“Hiiumaa’s special point is its peace and quiet, which is hard to find elsewhere.” Reet says. During an era of over population and pollution, Hiiumaa is like a “green sapphire” that might even have to be kept concealed from others.

“For me, Hiiumaa starts with the embarkation at Rohuküla. Hiiumaa means that something doesn’t have to be happening the whole time. Being a *hiidlane* is perfect for someone who is able to thrive for a week in utter peace and quiet, without missing cultural events and guests. It’s someone who gets along with themselves very well. And they have to have that Hiiu sense of humor. There are ordinary jokes and then there are Hiiumaa jokes. You can tell a Hiiumaa joke by the fact that if I make a joke, no one but me laughs.” ■

# Reelika Kasemägi

doesn't want to leave the junipers



*Reelika is the author of the book My Hiiumaa and has run Soonlepa Manor for 10 years. Has island life changed this woman from Mulgimaa, Southern Estonia in Estonia's heartland?*

TEXT: RENE SATSI

"Hiiumaa has definitely changed me, and the wisdom gained over these ten years on the island is now under my belt," Reelika nods and asks the reporter to turn off the recorder, as its blinking light reminds her of a terrible story about Soonlepa's master, Tõnis Kasemägi. His phone, inside her handbag, started ringing in the middle of a theatre performance, and Reelika didn't know how to turn it off.

## MORE ENERGY AT FIRST

"I used to wonder why islanders, after stepping off the ferry – where we've just talked about all the exciting things happening on the island

– disappear into the woods. Now, after years of bustling around, I'm just like them. I adore Hiiumaa, and when I'm there, I don't want to leave the junipers – I'm happy in Soonlepa! Being by myself is so good," says Reelika, adding, "I never expected this to happen. I don't even want to go to the shop from among the junipers!"

Reelika doesn't have a driver's licence, and the topic ignites her. "Most normal people don't drive! Fred Jüssi didn't drive, Andrus Kivirähk doesn't drive! I always remember from interviews who can't swim or who doesn't have a driver's licence – I absolutely love those people."

For people without a driver's license, there's the *lavka* – a mobile supermarket – on the island. "In our village, the 'lavka' used to stop by the old distillery, but then Vilma's health declined, so the supermarket moved there instead. When Vilma passed away, the stop moved in front of Aino's house. Now Aino is gone too, so I don't even know where it stops anymore... I hope it will eventually come to the Soonlepa barn because one day my legs will be bad too."

## ISLAND FATIGUE

Reelika admits that lately, she has been thinking a lot about "island fatigue." "It used to be said that five years is the time frame – people come, they are fascinated at first, and then their energy starts to fade," she explains thoughtfully. "We slowed down two summers ago, maybe that will prevent the sudden 'That's it, I'm done' moment," she says optimistically.

## THE UNIQUENESS OF HIIUMAA

Reelika is worried: "Islanders have become very welcoming to new things. But isn't there a risk that Hiiumaa's uniqueness will disappear? If we have things that are also available on the mainland, won't tourists start wondering why they should even come to Hiiumaa?"

The reporter suggests that they probably won't.

"I don't want all the trendy things to dominate the island – that's not Hiiumaa!" Reelika laughs.

"The best thing about Hiiumaa last year were the TikTok videos of the fishmonger Kivikala! The island and its people cannot be like an open-air museum! Kivikala's social media is a perfect example of how to use modern tools to showcase local uniqueness. Someone like me, a drylander, doesn't even know how to clean a fish. Those videos have genuinely helped me, but more than that, they brighten my mood. The way Imre shares his simple, island-style instructions is fantastic. Like how to make *pahl-akilu*, for example. If I'm feeling down, I just watch one of their old clips." ■



TEXT: RENE SATSI

# Raido Randmaa

”

**TIME PASSES  
TWICE AS SLOW  
ON HIIUMAA**

*Hiiumaa local Tiit Randmaa founded a business called “Tiit Reisid” (Tiit Travels) in the early 1990s in Tallinn. Now it’s a family affair and has become a “totally Hiiumaa tourism company”, says Tiit’s son Raido. Both men are back on the island.*

“Tourism is something new for me,” says Raido. “I’m actually from a different field, trained as a road engineer, and made a career in that field. At some point, I felt I needed a change – I’d been in the public sector the whole time, I didn’t join Tiit Travels right away, my dad didn’t put out the call just yet. So I went to Verston, which is one of the country’s biggest road construction companies and spent 1.5 years there. Then my dad started making noises about retirement, and said I should join the gang.” Our interview with Raido touched on what sorts of principles he abides by in his life.

**Your dad expected you to join his business?**

When I graduated from secondary school and announced that I was off to study

tourism, he forbade me to do that. “Learn a proper profession and you can always get involved in tourism later on.” Metaphorically speaking, road construction is a tourism business symphony. Since June 2024, I have been working as director of Tiit Reisid. My sister is on board, too. And my dad didn’t leave the stage completely, either, just asked for more hands on deck.

**Are you a businessman with nerves of steel who crunches numbers, or are you passionate about the world of travel?**

I have emotions inside me. Even a pencil pusher civil servant can’t be a robot.

**Does work make you stressed out?**

Of course. I’m a perfectionist, although I try to put it aside.

**How do you de-stress?**

Basketball. In that hour and a half I spend on the court, I don’t think of anything else. The sea is also a place I can relax, but I’m a pleasure cruiser there, not a fisherman or a surfer. We go out in a motorboat, take people on seal watching tours. Once we were doing just that, and a passenger asked: “Is this work or a hobby for you?” I said it was work, and he sighed and said I had the world’s best job: sit in a boat and watch seals. But when I travel out to the seals for the 85th time in the autumn, I don’t really want to see them anymore. Every job breeds a routine.

**Do you yourself travel abroad?**

I’ve crisscrossed Europe thanks to my dad. I’ve been to America and Asia a few times. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, too. South America is undiscovered for me.

**How much do you identify as someone from Hiiumaa?**

Being a *hiidlane* is super-important for me. When I introduce myself, I always immediately say I’m from Hiiumaa – from a small island.

**What’s the best thing about Hiiumaa?**

Time passes twice as slow as in Tallinn.

**Plans for the off-season?**

I should try to attract business clients. Offer to take someone working in Tallinn out of their daily routine. After all, we have a good flight connection! You can go to the airport in the morning and be in Hiiumaa in half an hour. You can hold a team training and throw in some bird watching and sports. The peaceful time when autumn is turning to winter should be marketed to people more. It’s a time when you don’t see other people. You can rent a cabin in the woods and unplug for a while. ■





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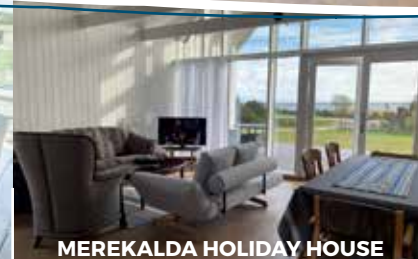
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*Ten days and 234 kilometres. Leene Korp wandered around and through Hiiumaa.*

TEXT: LEENE KORP

Hiking seems serious to people. What to carry? What to eat? Will the solitude and physical exertion be too much? Indeed, there was a lot to consider before a 10-day hike, but then again - no more than before any typical trip.

Where I could, I made decisions based on who I am. I decided that if the trail didn't suit me - for example, if it was too asphalt-heavy or crowded - I'd gladly leave it unfinished. That took the pressure off. While hiking in Hiiumaa, I found there was indeed quite a bit of asphalt, so at times I forged my own path. Still, I counted the number of fellow hikers I saw over ten days on one hand.

Even though I'd explored Hiiumaa many times and read a fair share of trail descriptions, stepping off the ferry at Heltermaa, I still had no idea what those 234 kilometers would bring. It's one thing to hear someone else's story and another to experience it yourself. Wandering for days from one white-green-white trail marker to the next, observing chicory and alfalfa, pines, heavily laden apple trees, villages, and cattle. Trying to avoid spider webs in the Tahkuna dunes, feeling the heat of the Kaibaldi sands, and watching Pihla bog transition into knee-deep water and startled horses at Vesimaa.

The protected areas, with their endlessly varied and stunning landscapes, were especially delightful. Mixed in were the occasional monotonous gravel roads and ditch slopes.

My accommodations were as varied as the journey. Half the nights, I slept in my hammock at campfire sites. At Ränkaja in the Tahkuna Nature Reserve, the hot sand radiated warmth even at midnight. Tõrvanina seemed busier than Kärkla, while Laasimetsa was so dusty and dim I wouldn't recommend anyone sleep there.

Some nights, however, I stayed with friends. This added a touch of human interaction, proper meals, and local stories. I heard that a Viking ship supposedly lies in one of Tihu's lakes. Or that during World War II, a man who fled to Sweden returned a couple of years later in a speedboat to fetch his bride, only for her to be too busy to leave that day, so he returned on his own.

Such stories, much laughter, and the kind people of Hiiumaa greatly enriched my ten-day journey. When I finally reached the last trail marker near Sarve and glimpsed the ferry, there was a moment of sadness, but joy was far greater - and my pockets were full of Hiiumaa apples. ■

## RMK HELTERMAA-RISTNA-SARVE HIKING TRAIL

- Established: autumn 2021
- Created by: Alar Sikk of mountaineering fame
- Length: 234 km on Hiiumaa Island
- Marking: white, green and white blazes
- Mode of travel: The trail is suitable for foot travel only, bicycles not allowed
- Start and end points: Heltermaa Harbour and the Sarve alvar grasslands, just 3 km apart
- Download the RMK app for trail data, water sources en route and GPS tracks

## TIPS FOR HIKERS

- Set aside time and plan accommodations or campsites in advance.
- Prepare for long stretches of walking.
- Check weather conditions, especially for the coastal sections.
- Enjoy the diverse landscapes and scenic views, but be ready for some solitary stretches.
- Don't forget your water bottle, and stay hydrated!

## TRAIL DESCRIPTION

### Heltermaa – Kärkla

Starts at Heltermaa Harbour.

Follows village roads and local highways, ending in Kärkla town centre.

### Kärkla – Tahkuna Peninsula

Over 100 km of wild nature trails, passing:

- Tahkuna Peninsula forests, northern dunes, and sandy beaches.
- Military structures.
- A detour into Hiiumaa's heart: Kaibaldi sand dunes and central wetlands.

### Kõpu Peninsula – Ristna Cape – Kõpu Lighthouse

One of the most beautiful sections:

- High coastal dunes and stunning beaches.
- Visit to Kõpu Lighthouse.

### Vanajõe Valley – Leemeti Hills – Tihu Forest Hut

Lonely yet picturesque:

- Vanajõe Valley.
- Leemeti Hills.
- A side trail from Tihu Hut leads to Sõru Harbour in southern Hiiumaa.

### Kassari Island and coastal crossing

In bad weather, expect knee-deep water or use the road as an alternative route.

### End point: Sarve alvar grasslands

The trail ends at the Sarve camping area, about 3 km from Heltermaa Harbour.

For more information, visit [www.loodusegakoos.ee](http://www.loodusegakoos.ee).



# Kassari laht – a Most Beautiful Bay

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS

*With its unique biota and some of the most pristine waters in Estonia, Kassari has been nominated for inclusion as one of The Most Beautiful Bays of the World, a network of 42 sites in 25 countries that aims to improve the state of all coastal waters and promote sustainable tourism.*

PHOTOGRAPH: PRIIDU SAART

Kassari was once an island that is now connected to Hiiumaa. The bay that shares the name with the peninsula is a reach of the Väinameri Sea that extends from the Sarve-Seanina line to the straits of Soela. Its waves also lap the shores of Saaremaa, Muhu and Hiiumaa's smaller islands. From east to west it is 35 kilometers long and from north to south, 22 kilometers, and the bay has various sub-regions. The greatest depth is just 10 metres. Its abundant smaller shoals, islets, rocks and reedbeds, making it a good habitat for many species of flora and fauna. Kassari was first placed under nature conservation 75 years ago, and now the whole area is part of Natura 2000 and the Western Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve programme area.

Paradoxically, human activity contributes to the good status of Kassari Bay. The algae collected here (*Furcellaria lumbricalis*) is a prized ingredient in the confectionery and cosmetics industries, and is a sink for nitrogen and phosphorus compounds that would otherwise lead to eutrophication and overgrowth.

The heads of the association caught a TV program about Hiiumaa on French TV and were impressed by the nature on the island. They sought out the Hiiumaa tourism cluster at a tourism fair in Berlin and invited them to be a member. Kassari Bay is quintessential Hiiumaa – peaceful, quiet and unspoiled, offering a chance for introspection. ■



# The Parisian roots of *the 150-year-old Tahkuna Lighthouse*

TEXT: INDREK LAOS

The stories of how several of Estonian lighthouses came to be are veiled in mystery even though they used technology that was very innovative for their time. Perhaps it is because the beacons were mainly built on essentially the edge of the world, the border between land and sea, away from populated areas, in the intersection of natural forces and the areas of greatest risk for shipping lanes. One such site is Tahkuna Peninsula near Hiiu Shoal, where the peninsula's tip juts out far into the Gulf of Finland. The plan to build a lighthouse here

crystallized in 1868, when the planning of the St. Petersburg-Paldiski rail line made it critical to improve navigation safety in the area.

A number of popular legends have circulated about the inception of Tahkuna Lighthouse. Some of the best known ones are that the lighthouse originated in Eiffel workshop, that it was purchased at the Paris World's Fair of 1871, and that it was accidentally swapped with the lighthouse intended for Ristna. It is sometimes difficult to ascertain the true story due to the anonymity that often characterizes engineering works, spotty archive records due to regime change and changes in place names over the years; undoubtedly the cloud of secrecy surrounding what was a strategic structure in the Soviet-occupation-era border zone for much of the century also plays a role. For hard evidence, we have to journey back to the era in which the lighthouse was built, when Hiiumaa was still known as Dagö and Tahkuna was called Tackerort.



*Journal de Senlis*, 12 November 1874

## SERIAL NUMBERS ON METAL PARTS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE EIFFEL TOWER'S STEP NUMBERS

When the wood panelling in the lighthouse's guard room was removed during restoration work in the summer of 2015, it fleetingly revealed serial numbers on metal components, their typeface identical to the numerals on the steps of the Eiffel Tower. This wasn't just a coincidence, since both structures were inspired by the late 19th century spirit of the Industrial Revolution and technical progress and made in Paris. However, that is not enough to allow us to attribute the lighthouse's origin to Gustave Eiffel, whose plant specialized in steel and puddled iron latticework structures, with cast iron being used only for decorative details. The technical design of the lighthouse, assembled from cast iron plates, was the brainchild of English engineer Alexander Gordon, who built the first of its kind in Jamaica back in 1841. Amid stiff competition with other industrial enterprises, Gordon's advantages came from his innovation. The pioneering use of lighter and easier-to-assemble structures allowed to save on production, transport and material expenses.

One thing that is clear is that no lighthouses were purchased at the 1871 World's Fair in Paris, because there was no Exposition Universelle that year due to political and economic unrest and



Fastening detail for a decorative element of the stair railing. Photograph: Indrek Laos

the Paris Commune. Archive sources show that it was in fact commissioned after Russian Tsar Alexander II visited the fair in Vienna in 1873, just two years before the tower was completed in 1875. It is rather amazing how rapidly such a superb result could be executed so long ago.

The beginning of the construction on the tower in 1873 is confirmed by an 1875 report from the St. Petersburg hydrography department describing the need for the Tahkuna Lighthouse: "The decision has been made to build two lighthouses on Dagö, one on Tahkuna [sic] cape and the other on Dagerort Cape ... visibility of the lights on both the existing Odensholm and the one to be established on Tahkuna Cape must be increased so that their horizons would intersect", which means that the light from one of the lighthouses cannot be out of view before the other's becomes visible. If Tahkuna Lighthouse were swapped with much lower Ristna lighthouse, that would not be possible. The construction process was well organized, with potential penalties keeping the builders in line, and involving large-scale and labour-intensive operations with no room for chance. The report shows that the heights of the lighthouses were carefully considered, so it is not conceivable that such strategic landmarks with distinct heights could have been mixed up with each other.

## REFERENCES TO A FRENCH LIGHTHOUSE MANUFACTURER

In general, engineering firms would mark their work in grand style with factory labels, and this was also the case for Tahkuna Lighthouse. But at some point Tahkuna's label was removed. Whether this happened during Soviet times because they wanted to disguise the foreign origin of the structure, or for other reasons, is a matter of conjecture. In any case, there is only an oval-shaped trace, but oval labels were a specific hallmark of French lighthouse manufacturer Barbier et Fenestre. While this is less than ironclad proof, more definitive evidence of authorship can be found in the form of a name engraved on the metal frame for the optical components: Barbier & Fenestre.

The Barbier et Fenestre engineers not only designed and manufactured the optics but the entire metal structure – when Gordon's patent expired, they were free to use and develop the new technology. This is confirmed by a design that the company published in a product catalogue for the 1889 Paris World's Fair, a copy of which is extant in the archive of École des ponts ParisTech. The drawing depicts an elevation, plans and detailed elevation cutaway of a 35 m high cast iron tower designed by Barbier et Fenestre. An attached explanation states that the lighthouse was built for the construction of the first-class Tachkona Light-

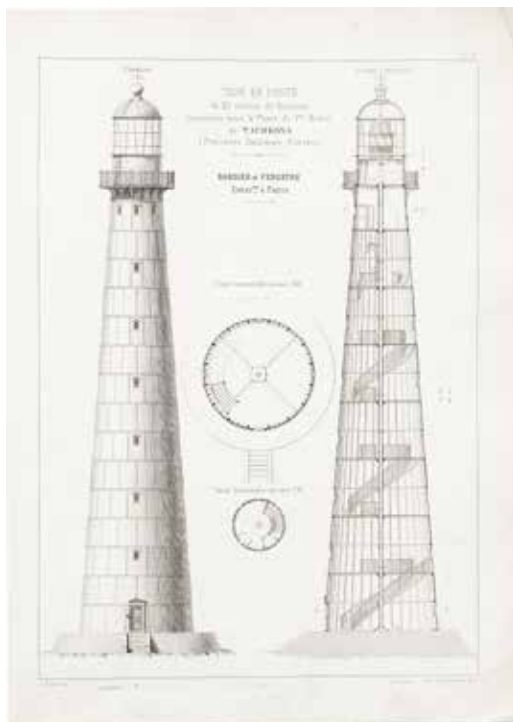


Cast iron plate assembly numbers, July 2015. Photograph: Indrek Laos



Manufacturer's name engraved on the metal frame for the optical equipment. Photograph of the writer, May 2016





Drawing of the lighthouse by Barbier & Fenestre  
"Tour en fonte de Tachkona". ParisTech archive  
École des Ponts. Photograph: Indrek Laos

An article on the origins of the lighthouse is illuminated by an article published in *Journal de Senlis* on 12 November 1874

house – this is of course recognizable as the name Tahkuna.

Barbier et Fenestre, which later was called Barbier, Benard et Turenne (BBT), was, alongside Henry-Lepaute and Sautter et Lemonnier, one of three major 19th century Paris-based lighthouse manufacturers and had a storied history. The three companies controlled the whole French market both for lighthouses in France and abroad – they also executed major international contracts in the US, Ottoman Empire and Russia. A large proportion of the optical apparatuses used around the world were made by these three companies in Paris, until they faded from the scene the 1970s.

A sign of innovation and the desire to technically improve the previously developed solution was shown by a joint with a covering batten for improving the Gordon design, which was also put to immediate use in the manufacture of Tahkuna lighthouse. The Barbier & Fenestre patent for "improvements for cast iron lighthouses" was registered by the Patent Office on 24 December 1872. The innovation calls for strips that would cover the joints between panels without a need for additional fastening elements. It was this

solution, applied for the first time for the manufacture of a lighthouse, that gives the Tahkuna lighthouse its characteristic appearance, as if it was built of stacked square blocks.

As we examine the legends behind the Tahkuna lighthouse, we realize that this is a monument with a distinctive industrial heritage and engineering technology – the first fully equipped metal lighthouse made by Barbier & Fenestre. The lighthouse's cast iron plate skeleton, the original cupola replaced with a more modern one about 25 years ago and original optical lens components are still extant today, still in a condition where they could be restored integrally. And Estonia's Eiffel Tower – the lighthouse actually made by Eiffel's atelier – is not far from here, either: it's on Ristna cape, the very tip of Kõpu Peninsula. ■

*Indrek Laos is a practising architect at Flux Projekt, certified as authorized architect and architectural heritage specialist. Since 2020, he has been pursuing a doctorate at the Estonian Academy of Arts.*

[www.ristnaeiffel.ee](http://www.ristnaeiffel.ee)

#### LE PHARE DE L'ÎLE DAGO

On annonce l'arrivée à Revel des dernières pièces composant le phare des îles Dago et informant les constructeurs que, vu la rigueur de la saison, il ne serait pas monté avant la fin d'avril prochain.

Ce phare, en effet, est parisien, car il a été construit à Paris, près de l'usine à gaz de la Villette, dans les ateliers de MM. Barbier et Fenestre. Il est destiné à être placé sur les rochers de Tackona, en avant de la passe du port de Tewenhawen dans l'île Dago.

C'est donc un devoir pour nous d'occuper à cette place de ce qui peut contribuer à faire porter haut à l'étranger le drapeau de la France, car c'est le gouvernement russe qui a commandé ce phare à des constructeurs français, après la visite faite par le czar à l'exposition universelle de Vienne.

La tour, entièrement en fonte, d'une épaisseur de six centimètres, et dans la construction de laquelle il n'entre pas une seule cheville de bois, est haute de quarante-sept mètres de la base au sommet de la lanterne, c'est-à-dire plus élevée que la colonne Vendôme. Elle mesure douze mètres de diamètre à la base et sept mètres à la galerie supérieure. Elle est formée de plaques en fer fondu, et, chose non moins curieuse, elle se monte intérieurement autour d'un axe, sans qu'il soit besoin d'échafaudage extérieur. Huit plates-formes intérieures forment huit étages auxquels on parvient par un escalier en fer forgé alternant à chaque étage.

Le logement du gardien se trouve au sommet de la tour et, en raison de la rigueur des froids de la mer Baltique, la muraille est doublée avec des lames de bois et l'intervalle bouché de feutre comprimé. Des ouvertures pratiquées à chaque étage permettent au gardien de monter ses provisions à l'aide d'un ascenseur.

Cette sentinelle de la mer, comme on appelle si pittoresquement les phares, est de premier

#### DAGO ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

The last pieces of the Dago island lighthouse has arrived in Revel, and the builders say that due to harsh weather conditions, it will not be possible to build it before April of next year.

This structure is a true Parisian, as it were, since it was built in the atelier of Messrs Barbier and Fenestre in Paris, near the Villette gas plant. The lighthouse is planned to be erected on a hill in Tackona, near the entrance to Tewenhawen on Dago Island.

We have the honour to care for the location, which will allow the French flag to be hoisted very high here abroad in a lighthouse commission from French engineers at the Vienna World's Fair.

The lighthouse is made of cast iron, without a single sliver of wood between it, it is 47 metres high from base to the lantern, this higher than the Vendôme monument. Its diameter at the base is 12 metres, and at the upper walkway, seven metres. The lighthouse is made of cast iron plates joined internally around its axis without the use of external scaffolding. The levels within the tower amount to nine storeys connected by cast iron stairs.

This maritime sentry will begin illuminating with a fixed white light of the first class. The

tower structure is supported by a granite foundation laid without mortar, like a glass sitting on a table. Its immense mass is sufficient for ensuring stability and protecting it against storms. Without the lantern, the tower weighs 4.6 tons.

Just six months ago, this gigantic work began to be manufactured and delivered by the builders within a year. It took a month to disassemble it and package it, after which all components were sent on a special convoy along the railway to the port in Le Havre.

So, four months from now, the French mariners cross the Baltic Sea reefs, they can proudly hail this beacon that guide their way, knowing that the light was lit by Frenchmen.

Thursday, 12 November 1874

Translated from French via Estonian by the author

\* The journalist probably made a decimal point error here – the weight of the lighthouse is about 460 tons. Although the metre was introduced in France in the 1890s, the kilogram standard was established only on 20 May 1875 with the Paris Convention. The metric system came into force in Estonia on 1 January 1929. –I.L.



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# Three encounters with Hiiumaa's orchids

TEXT: TAPIO VARES

*Hiiumaa is rich in various orchid species. Although several species are struggling, and their populations are declining, the island still holds many intriguing orchid habitats. An attentive wanderer might encounter orchids classified as second-category protected species.*



## THE RESILIENCE OF EARLY PURPLE ORCHIDS IN NÕMBA

Early purple orchids (*Orchis mascula*) were once found in my home village of Nõmba, as evidenced by an old distribution map marking several dots in the area. I assumed the species had long vanished from here due to the near disappearance of the Nõmba wooded meadows. But I was mistaken.

In late May 2023, I discovered that the early purple orchids were still present in Nõmba, alive and thriving! I had walked along the southern slope before, admiring the occasional oaks and lindens, but always at the wrong time of year, after the orchids had finished blooming.

That late May visit turned out to be perfectly timed. What I saw seemed almost unreal – early purple orchids! Sometimes standing alone or in pairs, but also in clusters of up to 20 or 30. I carefully counted the flower stalks and arrived at an impressive 256. It was one of Hiiumaa's largest populations! Most were the usual deep purple, but some were pinkish or even nearly white – each more beautiful than the last.

Unfortunately, this landscape is gradually becoming overgrown. While early purple orchids can tolerate some shade, they thrive near trees and shrubs, avoiding the open meadow. However, they cannot survive in dense shadows.

When I revisited the site in late May 2024, I counted 194 blooming stalks – a slight decline likely due to the previous year's drought. However, I found an almost entirely white-flowered form, a rare and delightful discovery.

## THE LAND OF RED HELLEBORINES IN SARVE

Hiiumaa's primary habitat for red helleborines (*Cephalanthera rubra*) is on the Sarve peninsula. Despite several attempts, including visits to well-known sites, I had yet to find them. Were these simply bad years?



2024 was another poor year for orchids, with populations of some species declining by up to half due to the previous year's drought and this year's dry May. Nonetheless, I decided to try again, armed with new tips pointing me toward the central part of Sarve peninsula.

On a mid-June Sunday morning, I found myself on the right track. After only a short walk, there it was: a red helleborine in full bloom! That alone would have been satisfying, but soon I saw another, and another... The entire clearing beneath a power line was full of them, with dozens more on nearby birch groves. I counted 288 flowering stalks – a spectacular sight!

Surely, quite a few were likely overlooked, hidden under bracken ferns or in the more concealed corners of the hazel grove and birch forest. But even so, this number is truly remarkable. In more favorable years, there are probably even more red helleborines there. Unfortunately, traces of wild boars rooting around were visible – those snouts have certainly had their impact.

While most plants were modestly sized, a few stood out, reaching knee height or higher. One particularly robust individual

stood nearly 70 cm tall. It was awe-inspiring. Decades ago, a record-setting 103 cm tall red helleborine was found in Sarve – a reminder of how magnificent these orchids can be.

Walking along those power line clearings, I couldn't help but feel, what kind of rarity is the red helleborine anyway, when it's thriving there like some kind of fireweed! As I continued exploring, the orchids gradually disappeared from view. I came across two more along a forest path, but that was all. Still, with nearly 300 seen in one day, it's fair to say that Sarve truly is the land of red helleborines.

### BOG ORCHID: ONE OF HIIUMAA'S RAREST ORCHIDS

The bog orchid (*Malaxis monophyllos*) is one of Estonia's most inconspicuous orchids. Though it can grow up to 30 cm tall and produce dozens of flowers, they are so tiny that a magnifying glass might be needed to appreciate them. These flowers, however, contain nectar that attracts mosquitoes for pollination.

Bog orchids are rare in Estonia, with only a few known locations and no abundant populations. They are even rarer on the islands, with Saaremaa having just one remaining site and Hiiumaa hosting three.

On the last day of June, I set out to find the bog orchid, choosing Kukka as my target due to its relatively accessible habitat. Past searches had yielded over a dozen plants there. Starting near the Silma Spring in Palade, I wandered through the mosquito-filled bog forest, searching diligently.

Finally, I reached a slope dotted with muddy patches and mossy mounds, surrounded by withered spruce branches. And there it was – the elusive bog orchid! Nestled in the moss, it stood like a tiny miracle. Battling the mosquitoes, I managed to photograph it and noticed how its modest appearance held a certain charm. Its single leaf and delicate flower spike shimmered in the dappled sunlight.

This was my first encounter with a bog orchid, and it was unforgettable. Though I found just one plant that day, it was enough to make the journey worthwhile.



PHOTOGRAPH: PRIVATE COLLECTION

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A SIP OF HIIUMAA

Hiiumaa Puulikoja Resto is a cozy restaurant right in the heart of Kärkla, on Vabaduse Street, which is open every day. The à la carte menu focuses on both local and foreign food and lunch offers are available every weekday from 12-15.

Our team takes care of both a delicious menu and a cozy atmosphere, so that Your experience on the island is as special and memorable as possible.



## Good food and the best beer in Hiiumaa Pruulikoja Resto



Brewing beer has always been an honor in Hiiumaa. A proper Hiiumaa beer should not be too strong, so that the drinker does not get drunk too quickly, nor too light, so that the taste seems a bit watery. Good beer was always the kind that "keeps you going". Our beers are simple. When creating them, we have bottled the beauty of Hiiumaa's nature, its peace and quiet.



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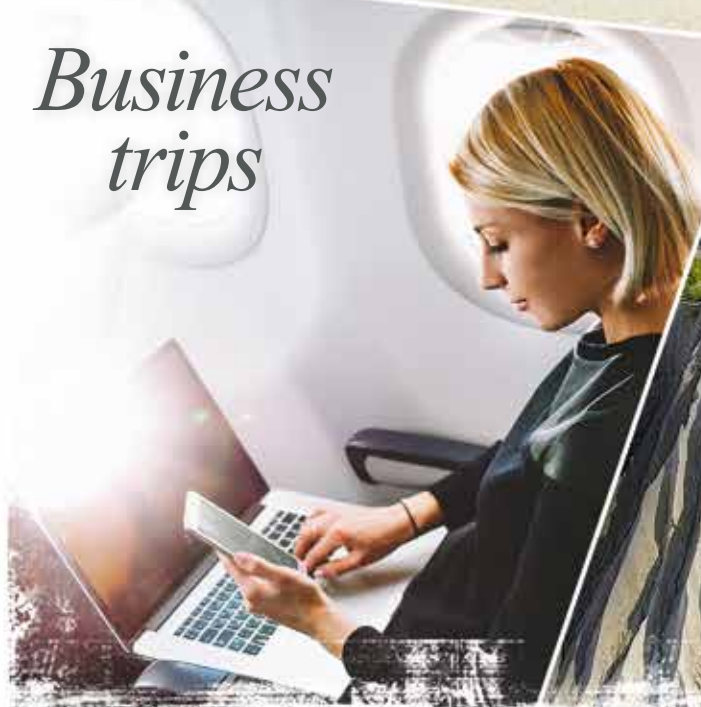
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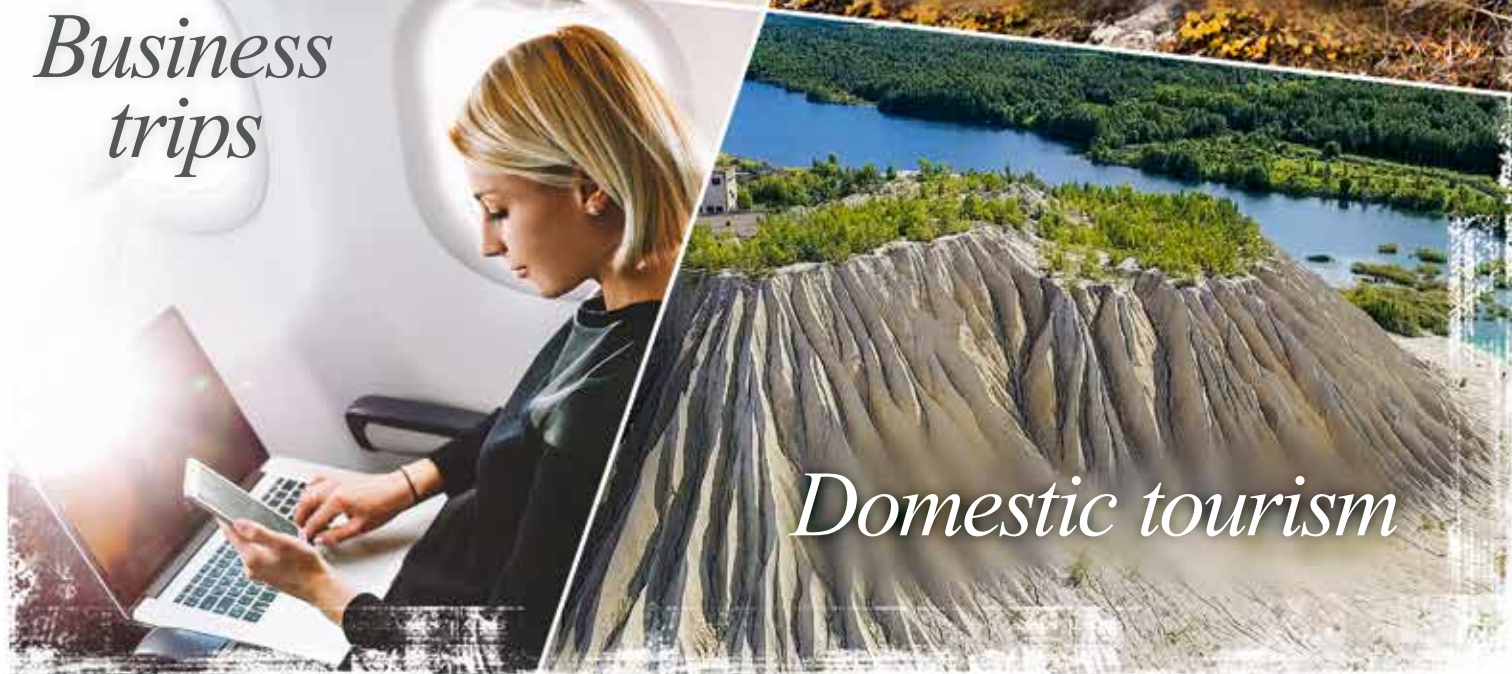
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”  
**KÄINA AND  
KARTING JUST  
BELONG TOGETHER!**

# Heikki Hõbemägi

*The town of Käina boasts  
Estonia’s most modern  
karting track, 931 meters  
long and fully up to FIA  
standards.*

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS

We asked the non-profit operator’s director, Heikki Hõbemägi, how did a relatively distant offshore location like Hiiumaa get this calibre of track? “It’s true that it’s unusual,” says Heikki, “since larger Saaremaa Island doesn’t have one, nor do many other counties.”

The track went through several iterations in different locations as far back as in the late 1980s. By 1997, though, the old facility was defunct. But new hopes were kindled along with the renovation of Kärkla airfield.

As the young head of the kart racing federation, Heikki, originally from the mainland, took part in that overhaul and has been involved in earnest with Hiiumaa and the Käina racetrack ever since. The new and improved Käina track was opened on 19 September 1998 to host the Polaris Cup. In 2005, the municipality mayor Üllar Padari reached out to Heikki and made him an offer he couldn’t refuse – either he take the helm of the operation or they would have to close the facility. Closure would have been incon-

ceivable for him, and thus Heikki became the manager.

In autumn 2020, that track was retired, having hosted the Hiiumaa Cup 26 times, plus a number of other tournaments. Under the leadership of the Käina municipality mayor Omar Jõpiselja, a new town service centre for Käina was built, which included the Windtower Experience, a Coop-anchored shopping mall, and a new karting track. “It was a protracted process, but in cooperation between the Hiiumaa Municipality government and the track operator MTÜ Kartdagö, we managed to open the new facility on 9 July 2022, with many stakeholders on board.”

## **A KEY PIECE OF THE HIIUMAA RECREATIONAL LANDSCAPE**

A fast-paced and rewarding activity, karting has proven popular with tourists and locals alike. Käina track’s karts are powered by 9 hp Honda engines and they top out at more than 60 km/h. (For beginners and kids, speed can be throttled back.)

“Karting is something that is suitable for solo enthusiasts and larger groups, for birthday parties or company bonding events. Käina can host events with 30-40 participants where everyone can get sufficient runs in. An automatic system clocks everyone’s times and thus allows groups to hold tournaments modeled after the real thing, including training runs, qualifier heats and finals. An event

like that can take one or more hours depending on the group size.

European experience shows that an outdoor track like the one in Käina is practical at a population size of 60,000-70,000. (Hiiumaa has less than 10,000 permanent residents.) Like many other activities here, tourists provide the critical mass to make it feasible. Without tourists, Heikki notes, there would be far fewer great restaurants in Käina, and no Coop shopping centre or Windtower. “Some of our groups head straight to the track while others hit the climbing wall at Windtower, or play a round of disc golf. Coop enjoys good sales on tournament days at the track. It’s thanks to tourism that these sites exist and have synergy with each other.”

Heikki says that Hiiumaa is a long way from over tourism or overpopulation: “Me, I enjoy Hiiumaa’s peace and quiet and there’s plenty of it even in summertime. But families need activities for their kids. I’m pretty sure the more IT and AI we have, the more people will need these kinds of active pursuits. Karting is one of many such activities on Hiiumaa.”

## **TRACK DESIGN: MADE BY A RACER AT HEART**

Heikki has been racing pretty much all his life. At first, he was behind the wheel, and later in the role of tournament organizer and director of the umbrella organizations. He has also designed many tracks himself.

“Now I’m out of the competitive part of the sport and I’m devoting myself completely to track operations. Renovating tracks and designing new ones is a creative outlet for me and I feel that any design has to have a real-world outcome, just like a book for a writer or building for an architect. Käina’s karting track was a case like that. There’s no use in a fanciful idea that only exists on paper. Despite some challenges we had to overcome, this track turned out really well. I’m a karting fan at heart and I want Hiiumaa to host some big competitions – bring in people who’d also get a chance to sample some of the island’s other sights and later come back as tourists again. This track makes life in Hiiumaa richer.”

This season’s new feature is the construction of a service block. The karts themselves can tolerate the rain just fine and people race them on wet surfaces, but it’s more comfortable for visitors and people waiting on deck to race to have a place to get out of the rain. ■



”  
**I LET HIIUMAA  
COMPLETELY  
CHARM ME**

# Jaanus Rohumaa

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS

*Hiiumaa is where Jaanus developed a broader view of historical heritage. It gave him the self-confidence to apply for the post of director of the Estonian History Museum and to and to bring to life the stories of Estonia in the museum's locations and affiliates in the Maarjamäe Palace, Great Guild, Film Museum and Theatre and Music Museum.*

“When my first child was born in the 1990s,” says Jaanus, “I asked where they might flourish in summer. My friends Erkki-Sven Tüür and Roman Baskin invited me to Hiiumaa. I went, looked around. The place seemed safe. I bought a farm on Hiiumaa. The people are different there. Like, it’s really hard to get the islanders to take money for work they’ve done. After a job was complete, everyone preferred to just talk. They said *ah, next time, you’ll help me*. There’s a special sense of humour, warmth and helpfulness. And of course, the nature, and desolate beauty. I let Hiiumaa completely charm me.”

One of the most vivid examples of Hiiumaa humour was an idea proposed from Hiiumaa during preparations for the national centennial in 2018. “We were canvassing the counties for ideas. Hiiumaa contributed a great idea. With a straight face, they proposed a permanent ice road between Hiiumaa and Saaremaa. Install a cooling element and you can travel across all year round for cheap,” Jaanus laughs.

From then on, he planned his work schedule to maximize his stay on the island in summer. Jaanus even managed to be on the island with his family for four straight months one year.

“I’ve been to dozens of islands. Hiiumaa is special in terms of its minimalism and emptiness. It’s hard to describe that unique Hiiumaa feeling to people who haven’t experienced it. It comes over you as soon as you step on the ferry. You leave your worries behind. Things suddenly seem manageable; life is in tune. It may be an illusion but the feeling that you are in a place that is beyond the world’s reach, but in safe hands and in a secure place – that feeling is very real!”

## THEATRE, TV AND MUSEUMS

“Once we got more of a solid footing here, I started putting on theatre productions locally. The Suursadam harbour summer theatre, and a play based on the Lindgren character Tjorven in Kalana. I teamed up with Kiur Aarma to produce a TV series, ‘Farm’. Many members of our team later bought houses on Hiiumaa,” Jaanus recalls. His most recent and most exciting project was the Windtower Experience, where Jaanus was the creative director of the indoor exhibit.

“I was invited to join the development team there. It was an exciting challenge, to try to tell the story of Hiiumaa through all five stories of the structure. I conducted many interviews and that unmistakable Hiiumaa feeling was a recurring motif. It can’t be confused with anything else. That was a fun project, I was able to put my love of Hiiumaa into a clear form. We had an awesome creative team, everyone had Hiiumaa ties. And the result was great: Hiiumaa natives have also received it well and recommended it to their house guests. The Windtower Experience is a good addition to all the other great things, and tourists can get their first taste of Hiiumaa there,” said Jaanus with pride in his voice. He says the vision developed in designing the Windtower exhibition helped him gain clarity on what approach to take at the History Museum. ■

**Beautiful handicrafts  
from the masters of  
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# Meelis Pielberg

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS

*Entrepreneur and sailboat racer Meelis Pielberg says sailing is one of the island's biggest success stories. Meelis, who learned to sail as a young boy at Orjaku aboard an Optimist, a sailing dinghy, is now a European Offshore Racing Congress (ORC) champion. He's the skipper of Sailing Team Olympic and member of the board of the Dago yacht club.*

"Hiiumaa's yachters, mainly sailing under the flag of the Dago yacht club, have represented Hiiumaa in the best possible way in Estonia and abroad. Sailing has an extremely important role in image-building and marketing for the island, above all in maritime and adjacent fields. Sailing has helped forge business contacts, build trust – it's made Hiiumaa bigger," says Meelis.

Meelis and friends pooled their efforts to build a boat launching facility at the Port of Kärkla – Yachts Service Kärkla. It can be glimpsed from far off, especially when coming from the sea. As someone who is emotionally invested in Hiiumaa's success, particularly when it comes to sailing and nautical pursuits, Meelis also sits on the supervisory board of Hiiumaa Sadamad, the port authority, and considers it his mission to develop ports to meet the needs of visitors arriving by sea and competing in regattas.

”**SAILING IS PART OF HIIUMAA'S IDENTITY**

## A MARINA IS A MAGNET

"The sea just draws people, even those who don't themselves sail. They'll frequent the port restaurant, enjoy a concert at the port building or just go for a stroll on the quay. It all attracts business, event organizers and concerts. All these jobs wouldn't exist but for sailing and the yacht club."

Meelis is a *hiidlane* or Hiiumaa native through and through; born, raised and educated. Both his mother and father's clan have roots here. He learned to sail at a young sailors' camp in Orjaku, back when Kärkla didn't have the impressive marina it does today. Besides the sailing dinghy, he also surfboarded. At some point, he also dabbled in motorcycle sport. Only when he went off to university did he leave the island for a time. He made news in 1995 when he became Estonian champion in the truck class of rally racing. In 2005, he pivoted back, swapping the throaty roar of engines for fresh sea breeze again.

## THE X-41 OLYMPIC – FROM AMATEUR TO CHAMPION

"Sailing is an area where you can't fake it. Show-offs don't get far and only the serious contenders are in the medal hunt. To be honest, our Olympic would not have become the 2024 European ORC sailing champion in either the professional or amateur competition

without an experienced crew working in well-oiled fashion. The strength of the Olympic is not that it's high-tech or has expensive gear or hired pros – it's good teamwork. Many were surprised that such a fun crew made their appearance at the championships, and they put a lot of expensive yachts with hired hands through their paces."

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"For a small club from a small island, it's impressive that four Dago yachts have won medals from international offshore sailing regattas and that our youth contingent are competitive at Estonian and international events. Youth sailing is important for maritime education to continue. So that Hiiumaa would have good sailboat racers in future who are skilled at negotiating the waters, use our harbours. And it would be great if Hiiumaa folks made it into the international elite in some Olympic class."

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# Martin Lauri

TEXT: RENE SATSI

*Hiiumaa's greatest concentration of recreational trails can be found in Paluküla near Kärđla – there's mountain bike trails, a 1.8 km and 2.7 km jogging and ski trail, a 9 km hiking trail, a sledding hill, a 2.2 km bike path and a disc golf course.*

*We chatted with Hiiumaa sports centre director Martin Lauri as we explored the network.*

“**I'M A SPORTSMAN AT HEART**



“My job,” he says, is to create harmony between the recreational trails and the sports centre,” which manages the trails.

There's a 300 m long beginner's mountain bike trail by the entrance to the trail areas, by the parking lot. “The building is a place to recuperate and shower after competitions. It can also host award ceremonies. There's a high-quality sauna, too – that's a must in Hiiumaa.” A semi-nar room has capacity for 30 people.

## **A CAREER AS A SPORTS CENTRE DIRECTOR**

Martin has been at the centre for four years. Not alone of course, there's a team, too. And support from the municipality, he notes. “I worked as an administrative specialist in various foreign embassies as a Foreign Ministry contractor. My first posting was Moscow, Then four years in Athens, three years in Paris. My plan then was to spend three years in Riga, but the Hiiumaa sports centre was nearing completion and I was invited to participate

at a tender. I thought to myself: now or never. I applied and got it,” he chuckles and adds: “I am a national athlete at heart. A little less in recent years,” he admits. “I ride a mountain bike, and have completed many a running marathon. When we had another kid, somehow time became scarce. Now our daughter Saskia is four, and it's easier to go places and with her.” When snow falls, he says, he immediately puts on his skis.

## **LIFE ON HIIUMAA AFTER BIG-CITY LIFE**

“All the cities and work were valuable experiences. Each place has had its share of crises. Our time in Moscow was in the shadow of the riots in Tallinn over the removal of the Soviet-era statue. When I was in Athens, Greece experienced a cash crisis. In Paris, that was when the yellow-jacket protests were going on. Every place I've been has been exciting but I don't know anywhere better than Hiiumaa to raise children. I have seen the teeming crowds in the big cities, how

in the morning the masses rush in one direction, and in the evening they go in the other. Everything is a swirl of activity, cyclical, like a wheel. Here I take my bike to work in the morning and I feel that I'm home again. I don't feel a pull to go anywhere else.”

## **WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE ON OFFER FOR VISITORS IN THE WINTER?**

“If the weather is normal, the hiking trails are amazing in winter. Kilometres on end in a wonderland. At the sports centre, there's tennis. The Windtower in Käina, climbing – the highest climbing wall in the Baltics – swimming. There's definitely things to do here if the spirit is willing. We are actively working to get people to the place that's best suited for them.”

## **ARE THE LOCALS PHYSICALLY ACTIVE?**

“Certainly! We keep moving!” ■

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PHOTOGRAPHY: MIKE MERESMAA

# The cormorant epiphany

TEXT: RAUL VINNI

*The cormorant is a bird that elicits strong feelings – you either like it or you hate it. It leaves no one indifferent. In 2024, on the island of Hiiumaa, inspired by the Baltic Sea islands, locals explored whether the black bird could actually be eaten.*

A gray Wednesday morning at Orjaku Harbour. Not a soul in sight, except for hundreds of black-cloaked, yellow-billed cormorants silently perched on the breakwater and pier. Occasionally, one flaps its wings, one leaves, another arrives. They stand tightly packed, like a scorched crust on a loaf of bread.

This is the view from the window of iiUmek harbour restaurant. Chef Mihkel Heinmets has been simmering a cormorant stew on the stove for three hours.

"Let's write a piece about eating cormorants," I suggested to Mihkel when we first met a year ago.

"Is it even edible?" he asked, raising an eyebrow. It was the same look contestants feared during the first two seasons of MasterChef Estonia.

"They eat it in Åland," I offered, sharing what I knew.

Without hesitation, Mihkel grinned, "Let's do it!"

A year later, hunter-fisherman Virko Martin bagged eight cormorants – 16 breast fillets in total. The day before our scheduled meeting, Mihkel texted me: "Expect meatballs in tomato sauce, cured meat, pre-marinated and fried meat, meat in perpetual sauce, and simply seasoned with salt and pepper. Sound good?"

It all started in Åland. Rumors circulated about people eating cormorant stew or using the meat as a pizza topping. So why weren't we eating it?

Michael Björklund, a celebrity chef

from Åland and owner of the restaurant Smakbyn, praised the idea as a bold experiment. On Instagram, where he boasts over 44,000 followers, Björklund recommended boiling the bird for a long time before adding spices, onions, carrots, and letting it stew. Chanterelle mushrooms, he said, make an excellent side.

Johan Eriksson, Estonia's honorary consul in Åland, directed me to Silverskär restaurant for cormorant recipes. There, chef Gustav Eriksson shared several ideas, including cormorant leg confit and fried fillet. Silverskär had originally gleaned their knowledge from northern Norway.

One might assume a bird that consumes half a kilo of fish daily would taste fishy. Both chefs refute this. Björklund describes cormorant as tasting like a sea bird, while Gustav notes fried cormorant fillet tastes surprisingly mild. Silverskär's manager Johan Mörn echoes the sentiment, calling the meat very good.

Upon entering Iiumek, you're greeted by the typical aroma of a restaurant kitchen, making it hard to believe cormorant is on the menu.

"Hey," Mihkel greets me, placing a bowl of cured meat strips on the counter. The moment of truth. The brown strips look like regular cured meat but are surprisingly tender. Mihkel says he enjoyed the taste.

"It's all in your head," Mihkel remarks. He admits he had reservations about the bird the previous evening but changed his mind after tasting it. He believes it's best if people don't know what they're eating.

In the kitchen, the stew simmers in a brown sauce. Mihkel hands me a spoonful to taste. The flavor is strong – not fishy, but distinctly different.

Describing the taste further, Mihkel explains that he minced some for meatballs and even raw, it lacked any unpleasant flavor. As proof, he pulls a bag of bright red minced meat from the fridge and offers a piece to taste, noting he sampled it raw the day before and is still well and alive.

The first course is the stew. The tasters are won over immediately. The meat's strong flavor is reminiscent of game.

The second course features meatballs in tomato sauce with pasta. The firm-textured meat doesn't reveal its origin as a bird visible from the restaurant window. Paired with pasta and sauce, it would be a hit with any child.

Finally, two pan-seared fillets arrive – one marinated, the other seasoned with salt and pepper. Mihkel joins us at the table, slicing into the medium-cooked meat, its juices pooling on the plate. He samples a piece and nods, "This is good! Surprisingly good. Incredible."

The cooked cormorant fillet delivers the mild flavour Gustav had predicted. There's a faint hint of gamey liver, though that could be subjective. The meat is somewhat tough to cut, but Mihkel reminds us that cormorants are not cows leisurely grazing in pastures. Despite its firmness, the meat melts in the mouth.

The verdict: proven. A bird that often evokes disgust in people is not only edible but delicious.

"Maybe one in ten would order it," Mihkel initially doubted whether cormorant would sell in a restaurant. Two hours later, he's a believer.

The rest is history. Mihkel and the cormorant took off on television, and by now, most of Estonia knows this black bird is edible.

However, by the summer of 2025, you won't find cormorant on restaurant menus. The hunting season runs from August to November, and after discovering its edibility, there wasn't enough time to stock up for the following year. Food handling regulations on the island also posed challenges. But there's hope that by late summer 2025, cormorant will feature on restaurant menus.

No longer such an annoying bird. ■

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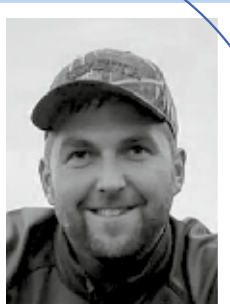
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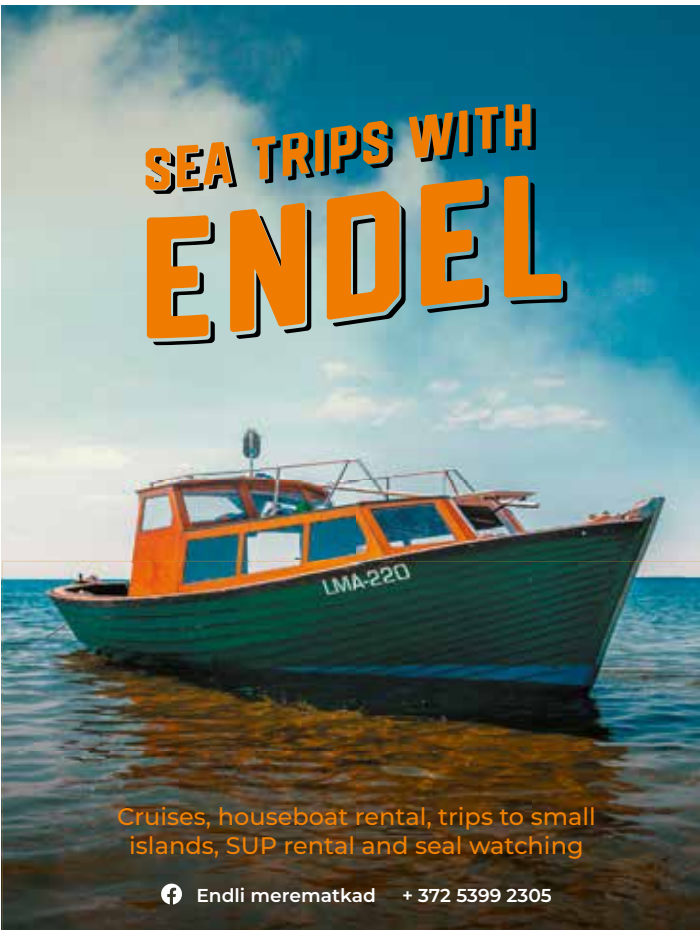


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# Jari Lindroos

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS

## putting the marina in the marinara

*Jari Lindroos's decision to purchase a seaside property next to Kärkla Airport – where the planning allowed for the construction of a harbour – turned out to be life-changing.*

Roograhu is a small marina on the northern coast of Hiiumaa, a couple of nautical miles east of Kärkla. The harbour's fairway is narrow and shallow, making it suitable for motorboats and sailboats with a draft of less than two metres.

Larger vessels dock at Kärkla harbour, but their crews often visit Roograhu as well – either by a smaller boat, car, or bicycle. Jari's restaurant at Roograhu is famous beyond Estonia.

### FROM INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EXECUTIVE TO A HARBOUR TAVERNA OWNER ON HIIUMAA

Jari's journey to Hiiumaa sounds like something out of a self-help book. The Finn was sent to Estonia to develop Caterpillar's business in the Baltics. What was initially planned as a short-term assignment of a few months stretched into a long-term stay – Jari met his wife in Estonia and settled in Tallinn.

While searching for a summer cottage, a real estate agent friend introduced him to Roograhu. The property came with an obligation to build a harbour, but since

Jari had previously managed a marina, restaurant, and hotel in Inkoo, Finland, together with his daughter, he thought, "Why not? Let's do it."

His dream of a seaside summer cottage quickly grew into something much bigger. Jari renovated the harbour and built a boathouse. Then came the harbour building, which now houses not only the harbour master's office but also a restaurant and a five-room hotel. However, Jari still got his seaside retreat – one room in the Roograhu hotel is always reserved for him. But with it comes the responsibility of maintaining the property, taking care of the harbour, and mowing the lawn.

### AUTHENTIC PIZZA AND LOCAL FISH

Looking for ways to stand out from other restaurants, Jari had a real Italian-style pizza oven built – the first of its kind on Hiiumaa. Roograhu quickly became one of the island's most popular eateries. The boathouse was converted into an event hall, hosting larger gatherings in the summer while serving as a winter storage space for boats in the off-season.

Local fishermen set out to sea from Roograhu, and their fresh catch plays a key role on the restaurant's menu. Jari recalls that Roograhu was one of the first places to start offering ide patties. Previously considered a "trash fish," ide has since gained popularity, and many other restaurants have now added ide patties to their menus.

### FINNISH SAILORS AND GERMAN PILOTS

Jari remembers how Roograhu quickly became a favourite among Finnish sailors. From Hanko, it takes just two to three hours to reach Hiiumaa by motorboat and a full day by sailboat. Jari himself is a sailor and motorboat skipper, though he no longer actively sails or fishes.

"I sold my motorboat to local fishermen with the condition that I can still use it for three hours every summer when I want to go out to sea," he laughs.

"The Helsinki Boat Show has been a great place for Finns to learn about Hiiumaa. An Estophile sailor, Kalevi Westersund, has visited Hiiumaa many times and done a fantastic job promoting it. Word has spread, and now people even call me directly, asking about the weather and whether they can come for a meal. I always say, 'Everyone is welcome!'"

Jari also recalls a time when a group of German pilots dined at his restaurant after landing their small aircraft at Kärkla Airport just out of curiosity.

"An article about it was published in a German aviation magazine, and after that, several private plane owners started visiting us," Jari recalls. To this day, a few private pilots from Finland make an annual weekend trip to Roograhu just for pizza.

### A HARBOUR LIKE IN THE OLD DAYS

Roograhu is a modern small marina in every way. Crews arriving by sea can get a hearty meal, a cold drink, and, if desired, a warm sauna and a comfortable bed. Water and electricity connections are included in the dock fee, and motorhome visitors can also use these facilities. The slipway for launching boats is free of charge, as is mooring for restaurant guests.

And Jari is always happy to introduce visitors to the unique character and sights of Hiiumaa. ■

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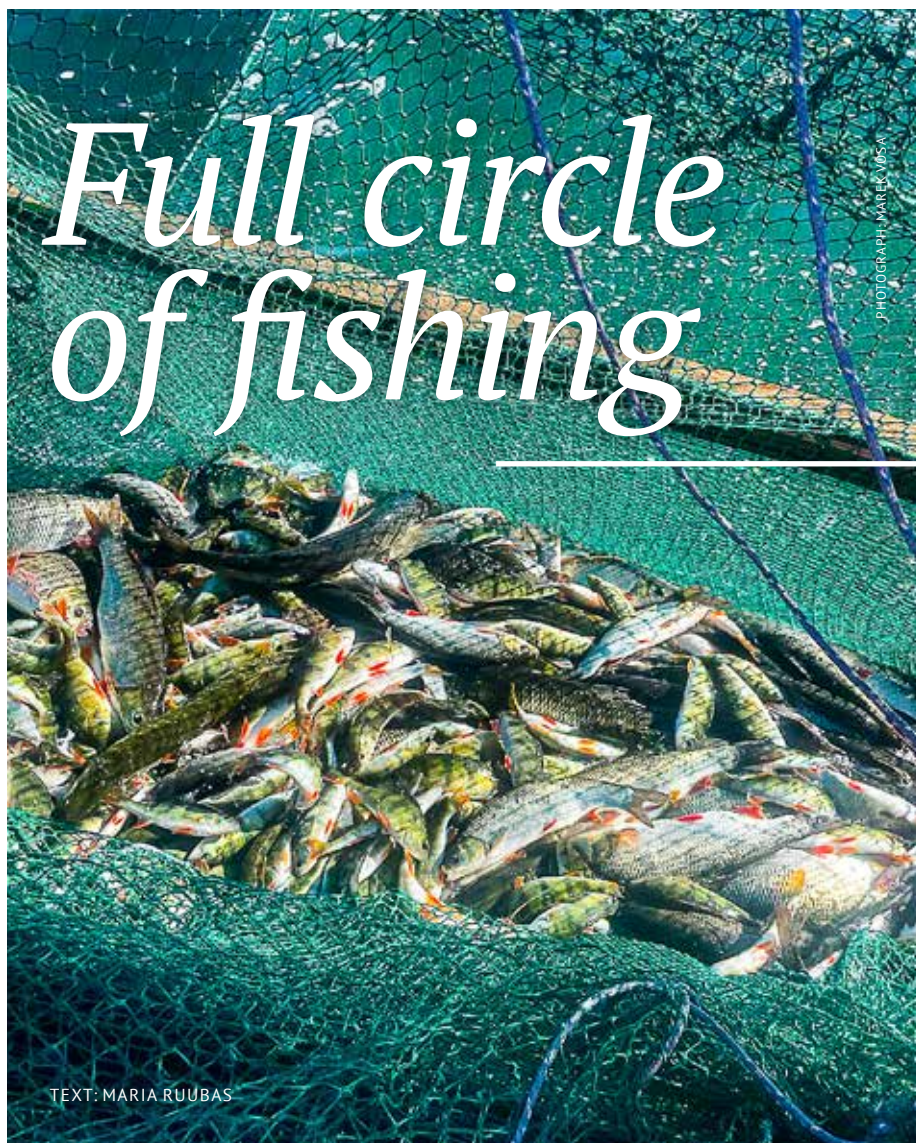
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## SPRINGTIME BRINGS GARFISH

Every spring, the arrival of garfish (*tuulehaug*) signals a fleeting yet eagerly awaited season. Recognized for its distinctive green bones and pointed beak, the garfish is treasured by islanders for its unique flavour.

Whether fried, dried as a summer snack, smoked, or pickled, garfish offers endless possibilities. A quick fry with a light seasoning is perfect for a simple meal, while dried garfish pairs wonderfully with a cold home-brewed Hiiu beer. However, smoked garfish, a hallmark of a true island summer, deserves special mention.

For those who appreciate a gourmet touch, pickled garfish is a must-try. Its distinct flavor and long shelf life make it an ideal delicacy for special occasions.



## PICKLED GARFISH (MARINEERITUD TUULEHAUG)

### Ingredients:

- 500 g garfish fillets
- 200 ml white wine vinegar
- 100 ml water
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 carrot, diced
- Optional: bay leaves, dill, or herbs of choice

### Instructions:

Clean and cut the garfish into bite-sized pieces. Prepare the marinade by combining vinegar, water, sugar, and salt. Heat with carrots, onion, and spices. Place the garfish pieces in a jar and pour the marinade over them. Seal the jar, cool, and refrigerate. The pickled garfish will last up to two months.

Hiiumaa residents love fish and are experts at preparing it. And whatever they have, they gladly share. Whether you're visiting from near or far, one thing is certain – you won't leave disappointed: there's fish, and you'll get to enjoy it.

## WINTER SPRATS – PRETTY, BIG, FRESH

Oven-baked sprat (*pahlakilu*) is a timeless Hiiumaa dish, often called a national treasure. The recipe is simple, with few ingredients and utensils required: fresh sprats, a handful of seasonings, a *pahl* (a traditional grilling frame), and glowing charcoal.

While some soak the fish briefly in milk, sprinkle dried dill, or add a dollop of butter, the hallmark of Hiiumaa cooking is simplicity. The goal is to let the natural flavor of the fish shine.

For the fire, hardwood is best – spruce and pine release resin, which adds an unpleasant taste. The process begins with seasoning: lightly sprinkle the fish with salt, freshly ground white pepper, and a pinch of sugar. Quality fish ensures the best results, so minimal seasoning is required.

Patience is key: the fish must absorb the flavors, and the flame can't be too intense. Overheating risks burning the sprats. Many a family will have a *pahl* that has become a cherished heirloom. However, suitable metal grills for cooking fish can also be easily found in stores today.

Once ready, the fish is packed tightly onto the *pahl* and grilled over the glowing coals. Within minutes, the sprats become golden and slightly crispy. Enjoying *pahlakilu* straight off the grill is a treat that mustn't be missed.





### IDE TARTARE (SÄINA ÄKINE)

#### Ingredients:

- Fresh, if at all possible fresh-caught ide (remove Y-bones and dice into 4-5 mm cubes)
- 1 finely chopped onion (per 1 kg of fish)
- Salt (preferably coarse)
- Pepper

#### Instructions:

Remove the bones and dice the ide finely. Mix with onion, salt, and pepper, adjusting to taste. Serve as a fresh and flavourful starter. For a smoother texture, use a meat grinder.

### THE RETURN OF IDE

The ide (*säinas*) is a striking fish with silvery sides, a greenish-black back, and a white belly. While traditionally associated with freshwater, it has become more abundant around Hiiumaa, especially in Väinameri waters. Known colloquially as “poor man’s whitefish,” it’s a favourite among recreational anglers for its stubborn resilience.

Although enjoyable to catch, its many small bones make ide a less popular dining choice. However, locals have mastered recipes to transform ide into delightful dishes, such as rissoles or *äkin* – a tartare-like delicacy that rivals whitefish in taste.

Among other species, Hiiumaa summer is unthinkable without smoked flounder, and whitefish is also prized – it’s a fixture at Christmas and the scales are believed to bring good financial fortune when placed in the folds of a wallet.

### YEAR-ROUND FISH FEASTS

Hiiumaa’s fishing year offers variety for every season: sprat in winter, garfish

in spring, flounder in summer, and ide all year round. Of course, this is only a glimpse of the island’s abundant fishing traditions, which are as rich and diverse as its history.

For more information about where and how to get fresh fish, visit [hiiumaa.ee](http://hiiumaa.ee). ■

### GRILLED SPRATS (PAHLAKILU)

#### Ingredients:

- Fresh sprats
- Salt, pepper, and a pinch of sugar
- *Pahl* (grilling frame)
- Wood fire, oven or glowing charcoal

#### Instructions:

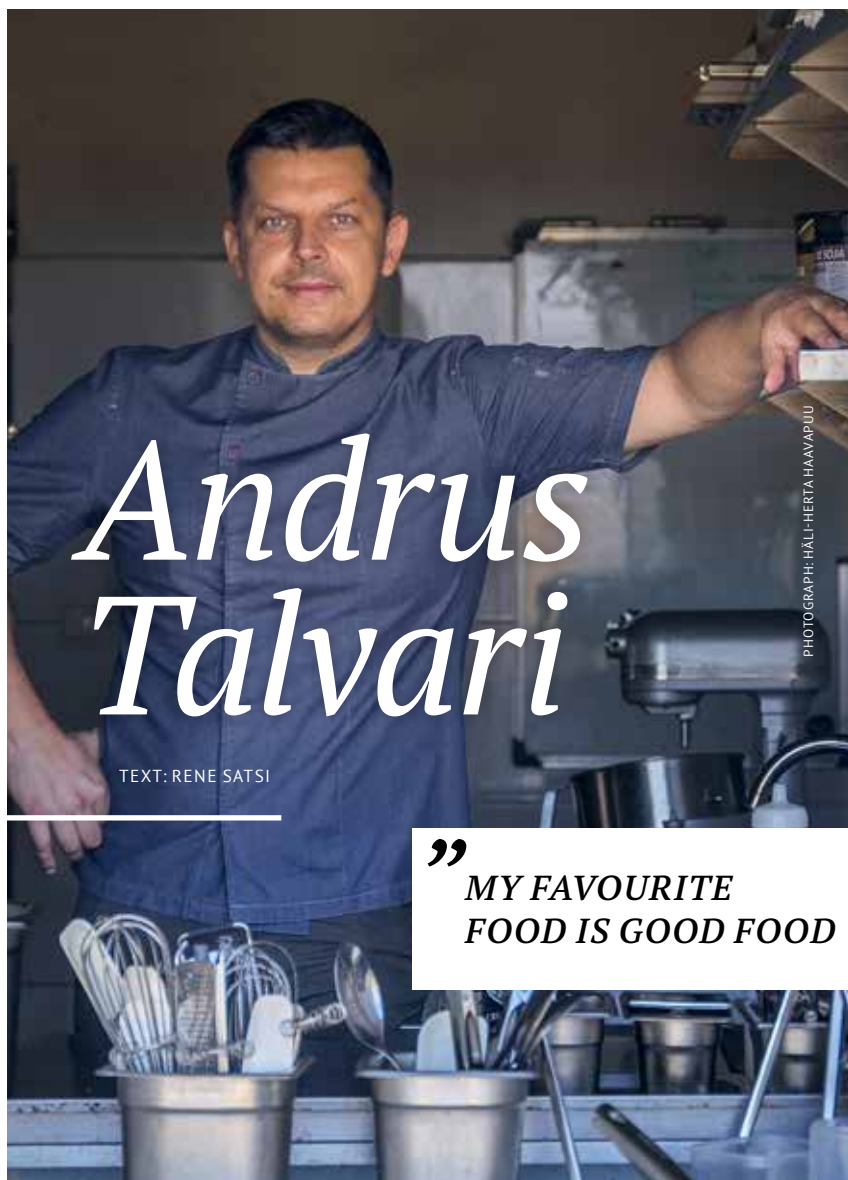
Season the sprats with salt, pepper, and sugar, and let them marinate briefly. Oil the *pahl* to prevent sticking, and arrange the sprats in a dense, even layer. Place the *pahl* over the charcoal, turning occasionally, until the fish turns golden and crispy. Serve immediately, with fresh farmhouse butter and traditional barley bread or potatoes for a true Hiiumaa experience.

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12.-15. JUUNI 2025  
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# Andrus Talvari

TEXT: RENE SATSI

PHOTOGRAPH: HÄLI-HERTA HAAPU

”  
**MY FAVOURITE  
FOOD IS GOOD FOOD**

*In 2015, Andrus was fed up with city life. He decided to accompany friends to the countryside to scout out a 200-year-old house for a possible new restaurant. As Andrus puts it, something went clicked for him, he ended up staying on Hiiumaa and the Ungru Restaurant & Guesthouse was born.*

**In 2016, you were asked to start your first business, Ungru. What was it like?**

Intimidating! I'd only been involved on the culinary side. Not with business. I had witnessed how many places didn't make money and failed.

**You now have several restaurants. Do you consider yourself a businessman or chef?**

More of a businessman. I don't make it into the kitchen very much. Only when there are special events. Or if the team needs me.

**Is cooking a lifelong interest?**

My career started after secondary school when I was late applying for uni and culinary school was the last option open to me. After a year there, I switched to studying advertising

and image theory. I've also been active professionally in that area - as a website and graphic designer.

**You don't yearn for a hot kitchen?**

Definitely not. I'm happy with being free to choose to do so at any time - to leap in, "all right, boys, today I'm braving the heat!" but fortunately that happens rarely. I lack the sporting interest to make it as a chef de cuisine, instead what interests me is getting on financially and being free. That said, I want to shout out my great respect to our chefs - I'd be nowhere without them!

**Do you hire the chefs for your restaurants from the mainland?**

From Tallinn, for the most part. The ones on the island work year-round at their own places and you can't get them to defect to yours in high season, no matter how you sweet-talk them.

**What would you like to do next in your life?**

I've now been on Hiiumaa for 10 years. Yeah, I'd want to try something new, but I also like what I am doing now. Only time will tell.

**Your first establishment, Ungru, has been called Hiiumaa's best restaurant. What's special about it?**

I don't actually know. After all, the competitors are great. Maybe Ungru has some X-factor. My goal was to put together a team that is really devoted to the whole restaurant life. Maybe patrons sense that? They don't find only walls, tables, chairs and food but they see a reflection of our people. The building and location surely also contribute.

**What cuisine do you like best?**

My favourite food is good food. Every dish has to have something intriguing, something that hits, even it's just humble pan-fried potatoes. For example, I like to take slow-cooked beef tongue and slather Kalles Kaviar spread on it - you know that Swedish fish-based product in the blue tube. It seems perverse but it's so good!

**The strangest thing you've ever eaten?**

I ate an earthworm at the age of 2. So my dad said. Luckily, I don't remember how it tasted.

**And finally: why Hiiumaa...?**

It has space and air, everything is clean. People are uncomplicated and good. The environment is ideal for raising kids, too. ■

# Henri Arras

TEXT: JAANO MARTIN OTS

*We caught up with Henri and Viktor, the owners and operators of Ouk distillery, one weekend afternoon, when there was also a tasting event going on.*

“Our story began 455 million years ago,” says Viktor, launching into a guided tour. He takes us over to the distilling apparatus, where the tasting begins. Effusive with their praise, the visitors buy a few bottles to take home.

“The tasting room is going well,” says Henri. “As you can see, we do product demonstrations and tastings here, generally along with a tour of the production side. We show people how a world-famous artisanal beverage is made.”

## IF YOU'RE GOING TO DISTILL, DO IT PROPERLY!

Ouk Distillery's founders Henri Arras and Viktor Tammsaar are relative newcomers to Hiiumaa, and both married women from the island. Viktor has been living here for 34 years, while Henri spent his childhood summers on nearby Vormsi Island and has been a part-time *hiidlane* for some 10 years.

“Five years ago, we were sitting on my deck discussing economic theory and we came to then conclusion that we should be producing higher value added things. I believe the only way to sail beyond Hiiumaa's shores is to have a product that is competitive on a world level. We have embodied that idea from our gin label, right down to the product content and the legend,” says Henri.

Viktor's speciality is restoring and building historical windmills. He quips that he is a third-generation distiller, but lawfully only for one generation. Viktor has a reputation for never doing anything sloppily or in a half-hearted



PHOTOGRAPH: KRISTEL PEIKEL

way. He takes artist's pride in both the windmills he builds and gin he distills. Viktor and Henri made sure to master the fundamentals of distilling first, investing in computerized iStill equipment and attending training courses at the manufacturer.

They then engaged in extensive experimentation to develop the Ouk gin varieties. Sixteen recipes made the final round of their in-house competition, all of which were found to be very drinkable. The three top ones advanced to the final round, and from these they picked one that relied most heavily on forest herbs harvested from the crater and its surroundings.

## ESTONIA'S BEST CRAFT GIN

Today Ouk Distillery, located at the Port of Kärkla, makes gin and aquavit that have been declared Estonia's finest and which rely on the same deposits of artesian water from that ancient meteorite impact. Ouk also borrowed some other details from the crater – for example, the navy strength gin's alcohol content, 59.01%, uses the same digits as the latitude of the crater in degrees, and Ouk uses oak from the crater for flavor and colour in its spirits. ■

## Awards won by Ouk Distillery's beverages:

*Ouk Hiiumaa London Dry Gin – Best Estonian London Dry Gin 2024*

*Ouk Hiiumaa Akvavit – Best Estonian Drink 2024 winner in the distilled spirits category*

*Ouk Hiiumaa Navy Strength Gin – Bronze Medal at Best Estonian Drink 2024 in the historical style category*



455 million years ago, a giant meteorite landed right next to today's location of the town of Kärkla. At the time, because of the shifts in Earth's magnetic poles and the Ice Age and thaw cycle, all of Hiiumaa lay under 100 meters of water. The impact left a 500-diameter crater in the seabed – a hole or *ouk*, in the Hiiumaa dialect. Later, as the Earth's magnetic poles flipped, and the crater is now in the Northern Hemisphere. A legacy of the strike that benefits today's Hiiumaa inhabitants is artesian wells. Good clean groundwater pools between the warped rock strata and is extruded to the surface in several places.






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**RANNA SURF VILLAGE** is a very special getaway located on the beautiful island of Hiiumaa. Here lies our paradise, with a lovely hippie cafe, luxurious glamping, a sandy beach, a sauna by the sea and amenities for campers. It is the people who gather here that make our place special, filling our pine forest with laughter and guitar music. Come outside with us and tell your story by the fire!




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Soera Farm Museum

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## Hiiumaa – officially the best in Estonia

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Visit our distillery in Kärkla or [www.ouk.ee](http://www.ouk.ee)



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2025 GO HIIMUMAA



# Happening on Hiiumaa in 2025

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ON THE EVENTS, VISIT  
[HIIUMAA.EE/SUNDMUSED](http://HIIUMAA.EE/SUNDMUSED)



## JANUARY

**JANUARY 29** 90th anniversary of the birth of Fred Jüssi. Day of Fruitful Idling

## FEBRUARY

**FEBRUARY 23** Tennis Tournament For Estonia

**FEBRUARY 24** Estonian Independence Day on Hiiumaa

## MARCH

**MARCH 8** March International Women's Day/ Marten Kuningas

**MARCH 24** March Concert: Henry-David Varema performs J. S. Bach

**MARCH 30** March Lottemaa concert tour

## APRIL

**APRIL 12–19** April Hiiumaa Restaurant Week

**APRIL 19** Kivipalu Open 2025 Disc Golf Tournament

## MAY

**MAY 1–SEPTEMBER 18** Orienteerumiseljapäevakud (Four-Day Orienteering Challenge)

**MAY 02–JANUARY 31 2026** exhibition on Hiiumaa folk costume at Pikk Maja

**MAY 1** Kärkla Town Day, Kärkla Town Run

**MAY 8** Hiiumaa Tourism Fair

**MAY 10** Hiiumaa Song and Dance Festival

**MAY 15 – SEPTEMBER 4** Dago Cup stages (ORC inshore legs, Port of Kärkla)

**MAY 16** Palade Environmental Education Centre presents Evening Hike into Kukka Mire

**MAY 17** Hiiumaa Spring Fair at Käina go-kart track

**MAY 17** Hiiumaa Public Rally Sprint

**MAY 17** MuuseumiÕÖ – special programme at branches of the Hiiumaa Museum

**MAY 22– SEPTEMBER 18** Kassari Culture Thursdays at Orjaku Harbour

**MAY 23–25** Hiiumaa Nature Hike and concert performance by Mari Jürjens

**MAY 24** Suuremõisa Garden Day

**MAY 24** Hiiumaa Badminton Tournament

**MAY 30** Kassari Klassika

**MAY 31** Garfish Festival

## JUNE

Orienteerumiseljapäevakud (Four-Day Orienteering Challenge)

Exhibition on Hiiumaa folk costume at Pikk Maja

Dago Cup stages (ORC inshore legs, Port of Kärkla)

Kassari Culture Thursdays at Orjaku Harbour

**JUNE 1** Children's Festival

**JUNE 6–8** Hiiumaa Literary Festival, Chapter 4

**JUNE 8** Green Cooking at Soera Education Centre

**JUNE 12–15** Sõru Jazz

**JUNE 13** Kassari Klassika

**JUNE 14–15** Dago Regatta (Hiiumaa ORC sailing championship, race around Hiiumaa)

**JUNE 20** Barley Dumpling Soup Friday at Mihkli Farm Museum

**JUNE 20–AUGUST 22** "Mere laul" (Song of the Sea) a dramatic production at Viscosa Culture Factory

**JUNE 21** Hingelt Merelised Regatta in Kärkla Harbour

**JUNE 21** Village Dance at Mihkli Farm Museum

**JUNE 20–21** Suuremõisa Castle Days 2025

**JUNE 21–22** Old Vehicle Derby on Hiiumaa

**JUNE 21–22** Smoke Sauna Days at Mihkli Farm Museum

**JUNE 21** Suvesumin 2025 Viscosa suvi opening event

**JUNE 22** Midsummer bonfire in Käina

**JUNE 22** Midsummer bonfire in Kõrgessaare

**JUNE 23** Midsummer bonfire in Kassari

**JUNE 23** Midsummer bonfire in Pühalepa

**JUNE 23** Midsummer bonfire in Sõru

**JUNE 24** Midsummer bonfire in Kärkla

**JUNE 23–26** Neeme Ots Trumpet Summer Academy

**JUNE 27** Barley Dumpling Soup Friday at Mihkli Farm Museum

**JUNE 27** Hiiumaa Museum's summer guided tour at Viskoosa

## JULY

Orienteerumiseljapäevakud (Four-Day Orienteering Challenge)

Exhibition on Hiiumaa folk costume at Pikk Maja

Dago Cup stages (ORC inshore legs, Port of Kärkla)

Kassari Culture Thursdays at Orjaku Harbour

"Mere laul" (Song of the Sea) a dramatic production at Viscosa Culture Factory

**JULY 4** Barley Dumpling Soup Friday at Mihkli Farm Museum

**JULY 5** Hiiumaa Museum's summer guided tour in Tahkuna

**JULY 10** Lavender Farm women's doubles at Hiiumaa Tennis Club

**JULY 10** Songs to Lavender at Lavender Farm

**JULY 10–13** Hiiu Folk Music Festival

**JULY 11** Hiiumaa Fishermen's Day 2025

**JULY 11** Barley Dumpling Soup Friday at Mihkli Farm Museum s

**JULY 12–13** Open Farms Day

**JULY 12** Summer Crafts and Homemade Goods Fair in Kärkla

**JULY 13** Hiiumaa Museum's summer guided tour in Emmaste

**JULY 17** Sunrise Concert at Soera Farm Museum

**JULY 17** Hiiumaa Museum's summer guided tour in Kassari

**JULY 18** Midsummer village celebration at Soera Farm Museum

**JULY 18** Barley Dumpling Soup Friday at Mihkli Farm Museum

**JULY 18** Kassari Klassika

**JULY 18** Hiiumaa Museum's summer guided tour in Kärkla

**JULY 19** Village Dance at Rudolf Tobias House Museum

**JULY 19-20** July Smoke Sauna Days at Mihkli Farm

**JULY 22** Hiiumaa Museum's summer guided tour in Viskoosa

**JULY 23-27** *Paradise*, a stage adaptation of the novel by Tõnu Õnnepalu

**JULY 24** Sunrise Concert at Soera Farm Museum

**JULY 25** Barley Dumpling Soup Friday at Mihkli Farm

**JULY 26** Hiiumaa Museum's summer guided tour in Emmaste

**JULY 26** Kila-kola Fair on Vabrikuväljak Square in Kärdla

**JULY 26** Open-air performance "Rätsep, õhk ja õnneloos" (Tailor, Air and Lottery) at Soera Farm Museum

**JULY 27** Lavender Farm's Harvest Celebration and Close of Season

**JULY 27** Pühalepa Music Festival special: Estonian National Male Choir. Veljo Tormis 95

**JULY 31** Hiiumaa Museum's summer guided tour in Kassari

**JULY 31** Sunrise Concert at Soera Farm Museum

**JULY 31 – AUGUST 2** Pop-up Cafe Day on Hiiumaa

**JULY 31 – AUGUST 3** Võnge Festival at Viscosa culture factory

## AUGUST

Orienteerumiseljapäevakud (Four-Day Orienteering Challenge)

Exhibition on Hiiumaa folk costume at Pikk Maja

Dago Cup stages (ORC inshore legs, Port of Kärdla)

Kassari Culture Thursdays at Orjaku Harbour

"Mere laul" (Song of the Sea) a dramatic production at Viscosa Culture Factory

**AUGUST 1-3** 14th Pühalepa music festival at Pühalepa and Kärdla Church: Veljo Tormis 95, Arvo Pärt 90

**AUGUST 1-3** August Kärdla Race – Garmin stage

**AUGUST 8** Kassari Klassika

**AUGUST 8-9** Oti Regatta at Orjaku

**AUGUST 9** Hiiumaa Museum's summer guided tour in Tahkunas

**AUGUST 9** Lestafest (Flounder Festival)

**AUGUST 16** Hiiumaa Fish and Beer Festival

**AUGUST 22** Kassari klassika

**AUGUST 22-23** August Saunabuss Party

**AUGUST 23** Hiiumaa Field Day

**AUGUST 23-24** August Smoke sauna days at Mihkli Farm Museum

**AUGUST 24** Hiiumaa XCO, at Hiiumaa Recreational Trails in Paluküla

## SEPTEMBER

Orienteerumiseljapäevakud (Four-Day Orienteering Challenge)

Exhibition on Hiiumaa folk costume at Pikk Maja

Dago Cup stages (ORC inshore legs, Port of Kärdla)

Kassari Culture Thursdays at Orjaku Harbour

**SEPTEMBER 1-30** Indian Summer on Hiiumaa – activities island-wide

**SEPTEMBER 1-7** Hiiu Gourmet workshops in Käina

**SEPTEMBER 5** Vananaistesuve armastuse retk beginning in Kärdla

**SEPTEMBER 5** Kassari Klassika gala concert

**SEPTEMBER 13-14** Autumn Regatta, jointly organized with Haapsalu Yacht Club

**SEPTEMBER 13** Sõru Regatta

**SEPTEMBER 19** Vananaistesuve armastuse retk beginning in Käina

**SEPTEMBER 20** Coop Hiiumaa Kärdla tour

**SEPTEMBER 20** Hiiumaa Autumn Fair on Kärdla's main square (Keskväljak)

## OCTOBER

Exhibition on Hiiumaa folk costume at Pikk Maja

**OCTOBER 3-4** Hiiumaa bicycle weekend

**OCTOBER 18-25** Hiiumaa Restaurant Week

## NOVEMBER

Exhibition on Hiiumaa folk costume at Pikk Maja

**NOVEMBER 7-8** Hiiumaa Rahvaralli (amateur rally race)

## DECEMBER

Exhibition on Hiiumaa folk costume at Pikk Maja

**DECEMBER 6** Hiiumaa Glögg Cafe Day

**DECEMBER 13** Winter Crafts and Home-made Goods Fair

**DECEMBER 24-JANUARY 1** Post-Christmas Hike



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