

CULTURAL HERITAGE IN LÄÄNE COUNTY



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1 UNGRU CASTLE

Beside the road which runs from Haapsalu to Rohuküla are the scenic ruins of Ungru castle. This was the most grandiose Baroque Revival mansion in Estonia, although unfortunately it was never completely finished.

In 1629, the manor was given to Otto von Ungern-Sternberg as a gift from King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. The manor was in the possession of the noble family of Ungern-Sternbergs from this time onwards until its transfer in 1919. The count of Ungru, Ewald von Ungern-Sternberg, decided to erect a fancy castle and the construction work commenced in 1893. The middle of the castle was decorated with a four-storey stone tower, the dome of which is a smaller copy of that of the church of St Nicholas in Tallinn. The elegant décor of the façade was based on Merseburg castle in Prussia. The castle's roof was built in 1899 but the construction work was then put on hold due to a lack of funds.



2 THE CHURCH OF ST MARY MAGDALENE OF RIDALA

The church of Ridala was built in the third quarter of the thirteenth century, and it is a true treasure from the Middle Ages and Baroque era. The early Baroque main portal is crowned with a decorative gable with the oldest stone figure from Estonian medieval art found in its niche - a figure of the church's name-sake saint, St Mary Magdalene. The walls of the altar room adorn fragments of fresco-secco paintings from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the middle of the altar room is the fanciest Baroque altar wall to be found in any of Estonia's rural churches. The churchyard boasts rare stone crosses which have been preserved from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, along with wheel crosses from a later era that are typical of western Estonia.



3 THE HOUSE OF PRAYER IN PÕGARI

In Põgari, on the edge of a scenic coastal meadow along the road from Tuuru to Puise, there is a house of prayer that was built in 1933. The appearance and interior of this wooden building - the hall, kitchen, and dining room - have been preserved exactly as they were when the building was constructed. Põgari's house of prayer was witness to one of the most tragic events in the history of the republic of Estonia: on 22 September 1944, the last session of the republic's government was held here. The formation of the government of Otto Tief was the last desperate attempt to save Estonia in the midst of the war that was raging around it in 1944. The existence of the Tief government became one of the most important pillars on which the independence of Estonia was restored in 1991. Therefore this house of prayer of the Baptist congregation has become a significant symbol for the modern republic of Estonia.





4 BRET CLIFFS

On the route from Parila to Puise, six large cliffs with epigraphs can be found here and there, these being known as Bret's cliffs after the author. Bret, also known as Albert Kallasmaa (1915-1969), was a hermitic village artist with a complicated fate who

carved the message and feelings that were important to him into the cliffs. As the years have gone by, the locations of these chunks of carved stone have become places at which people like to stop for a while and think about eternity. The most poetic of them is the 'cliff of love' in the vicinity of Puise which states: 'How beautiful is a man with the blood of love flowing in his veins'. Here, the author captured in stone the heartache of unrequited love.



5 ST MARTIN'S CHURCH OF MARTNA

Anyone who is interested in art and history has a great deal to discover in the wide single-nave church of Martna. This house of God was built at the beginning of the sixteenth century, as evidenced by the coat of arms with three diamonds of the bishop of

Ösel-Wiek (Saare-Lääne), Johannes III Orgas (1491-1515). The church's interior includes murals from three different periods - starting with the red herringbone ornaments from the time in which the church was first built to the Baroque angels which are blowing a fanfare. The archaic christening stone with its Gotlandic design is made of limestone from Ungru. This also dates back to the construction of the church. The choir boasts an altar wall which was crafted in the workshop of the greatest master of Estonia's High Baroque era, Christian Ackermann. There is also a collection of epitaphs from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the church, which is third largest in Estonia after the Dome Church and the Church of St Nicholas in Tallinn. The epitaphs were carried before the caskets in funeral processions and were then hung on the walls of the church.



6 SUURE-LÄHTRU MANOR

The heyday of the Suure-Lähtru manor of the sixteenth century is linked to the family of Baranoffs which owned Suure-Lähtru in the period between 1590 and 1835. Karl Gustav von Baranoff had an imposing Neoclassicism mansion built, with the construction work being completed in 1778. The building is decorated with a

Baroque staircase with Rococo wood-carving adorning the posts. Following the nationalisation of the manor in 1919, a school operated from it. In the Soviet era, however, the building housed the offices of the local co-operative. In 1996 the mansion, which was decaying by this time, was purchased by private owners who have since restored it. The family opened a small museum dedicated to the history of the building on the ground floor.



7 ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF KULLAMAA

The wonderful interior elements of the church of Kullamaa which itself dates from the thirteenth century include the chancel, the chandeliers, the organ, the altarpiece, Göseken's epitaph, and the group of triumphal arches. In front of the chancel is a headstone with the epigraph: 'This is the peaceful resting place of Augusta Carolina Friderica Luisa, daughter of the Count of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Friedrich Wilhelm Karl, spouse of the Duke of Württemberg and Governor of Vyborg, born 3 December 1764, deceased 14

September 1788'. Empress Catherine II of Russia is believed to have sent her rival to be kept in imprisonment in Koluvere castle, where she passed away a while later. In the churchyard outside is the legendary wheel cross from 1621 which states: 'Sitta Kodt Matz'. According to legend, a man collected horse excrement, using them to fertilise his field which then yielded powerful rye, and he became so comparatively rich that he could buy himself a burial spot next to the church. Estonia's first professional composer, Rudolf Tobias, as well as other historical and cultural personas are also buried in the churchyard.



8 KOLUVERE CASTLE

Koluvere castle was erected as a tower castle in the thirteenth century and was rebuilt into a convent-style castle in the fourteenth. It is now the only fully-preserved such castle in Estonia. The scenic beauty of Koluvere castle has been enjoyed by the bishops

of Ösel-Wiek, by the imprisoned princess of Württemberg, and by several well-known historical families - the Buxhoevends, the Münchhausens, the Orlovis, and others. The castle's history is full of secrets and legends. It has repeatedly been looted, burned down, and rebuilt across several centuries, and is once again shining bright today, as beautiful and imposing as ever, thanks to the restoration work that has been undertaken by private owners.



9 THE RISTI RAILWAY STATION COMPLEX

Risti railway station was built in 1904. It is a good example of what is a relatively standard station design of the beginning of the twentieth century. The station building was erected in 1905 and its interior has remained virtually unchanged in that time, which provides a good glimpse of the interior design of a middle and lower-class railway station of the time.

The station's most characteristic feature is its water tower which used to supply steam engines and was used until the 1970s. The tower houses its water tank at the top, along with a boiler at the bottom to prevent the water from freezing in winter. The hydrant which still stands next to the tracks was used to pump water into the locomotives. In 1999, the 'Railway Tracks Remember...' monument was unveiled to honour those people who had been deported from western Estonia. Most of the people who were taken to Siberia via Risti station came from Lääne County, but there were also plenty of people from Pärnu County, as well as from the islands of Hiiumaa and Vormsi. A rough total of 3,000 deported people were sent on their way from this station.

LÄÄNE COUNTY





10 THE CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS IN LÄÄNE-NIGULA

Near Taebala, the church of Lääne-Nigula stands with its tower, all of which was erected in the thirteenth century. The church suffered a great fire in 1809 and only the choir arch and the western portal were preserved from the original building when it was restored in 1816. The building's interior elements also originate from the nineteenth century.

The imposing imperial-style altar wall was made in 1823 by a craftsman named Sigismund, who hailed from St Petersburg. The 52.2-metre-high tower with a 26.7-metre-high dome was built in 1882. The church is surrounded by an old cemetery with numerous exciting crosses and headstones.



11 TAEBLA'S OLD SCHOOL BUILDING

Taebala's old school building was designed by the architect Artur Pern, and was built in 1929. It is a traditional school building, one of the oldest wooden school buildings in Estonia, and one which has been preserved in a remarkably authentic form. As with all

of the other school buildings that were erected during the first period of the republic of Estonia, Taebala's school also housed a boarding school, as well as apartments for teachers and the headmaster. The original volumes, façade design, and elements, and a great deal of the interior layout and finishing have been preserved. Historical elements can be found in the building: panel doors, stairs, wooden floors, ceilings covered with planks, etc. A new school building was erected next to the old building in 1978. The old building was still used to teach some classes even in the 1990s. The feature film, 'Seltsimees laps' (directed by Moonika Siimets) was filmed in the school building to portray the events of 1950.



12 ANTS LAIKMAA MUSEUM

Ants Laikmaa (1866-1942) is one of the most important painters from the first half of the twentieth century and was also an organiser of the contemporary art scene. His creations mostly includes pastels. The name of Laikmaa is, among other things,

connected with the arrival of impressionism in the world of Estonian art. He mainly painted natural scenes, portraits of Estonian academicians, and scenes involving the peasantry of western Estonia. The national romantic-style residence in Kadarpiku Village was built based on the painter's own drawings. The house is surrounded by a romantic natural park. On the ground floor of the museum is an exhibition which introduces the life of the master, while on the upper floor is his studio, workshop, and bedroom with his personal items present and with ethnographic antiquities.



13 THE CHURCH OF ST CATHERINE OF NOAROOTSI

The Late Gothic church of Noarootsi, with its Swedish red wooden roof, was built around 1500. It is one of the three churches with wooden roofs in Estonia. The building

with its limestone and rubble stone walls was also used as a fortress church in the Middle Ages. The church's interior boasts valuable art artefacts from the seventeenth century, including the dolomite christening stone with Gothic elements which can be included in the overall Renaissance-style composition, along with the Baroque chancel that was carved by Elert Thiele, and the Baroque dolomite epitaph for the Reverend Martin Winter which was created by Joachim Winter.



14 PÜRKSI MANOR AND PARK

Pürksi manor dates from 1620 and was in the hands of the noble family of von Ungern-Sternbergs from 1798 to 1919. The mansion house was built in the eighteen century, although it now has the appearance of

a nineteenth century building thanks to layer extensions. The manor's most famous owner was the painter, Karl Johann Emanuel von Ungern-Sternberg (1773-1830). He painted portraits, including those of several professors of the University of Tartu. His passion however, was for medieval castles, churches, and other cultural monuments that can be found in Estonia and Livonia. His work is exhibited in museums and is stored in various archives, all of which is priceless material for modern researchers of art and history. In 1919, the manor was nationalised and subsequently housed the Agricultural and Public University of Pürksi in the period between 1920-1943. These days the manor complex is in the hands of Noarootsi Gymnasium. The manor is surrounded by a gorgeous park which includes the beautiful white beech tree and a unique circle of linden trees.



15 SAARE MANOR AND LYCKHOLM MUSEUM

Saare manor was founded in 1662. It belonged to the noble family of the von Rosens from the beginning of the eighteenth century and is believed to be the only manor in Estonia to have been held by one family

since the end of the Great Northern War. Around 1790, the current Late Baroque mansion with its semi-hipped roof was built. The von Rosen family departed Estonia in 1939 and the manor was left behind to decay. Gustav von Rosen, who had had to leave his country of birth as a fifteen year-old boy, returned to Estonia in 1995-1996 to restore the mansion which by this time was in ruins. The equally ruinous stables were turned into a museum by him.



16 ATHE SHEDS FOR THE FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT OF AULEPA AND ÖSTERBYRD

At the beginning of the twentieth century, people started to build sheds in the larger villages to house fire-fighting equipment. The sheds were stocked with manual sprayers along with the necessary transportation equipment, water barrels, hooks, etc; the tower was used to dry hoses. The shed would also have been equipped with an alarm bell. Whoever detected a fire or needed help rushed to ring the bell. Those peasants who were working as volunteer firemen had to extinguish fires within a radius of ten kilometres of the shed. Today, very few of the small sheds for village fire-fighting equipment remain standing. For this reason it is even more important that the shed survives which housed the fire-fighting equipment for the village of Österby from the 1930s - having been restored in 1998 while the shed for the village of Aulepa was equally restored in 2011.



17 THE TELISE MARKER TOWERS

There are beacons that are unique to Estonia to be found on the Telise peninsula. The first wooden marker towers were erected along the Telisna cape in 1860 to ensure safe access by ships to Haapsalu. The marker towers are made of local materials and have an important role in maritime cultural history. Today, the marker towers are no longer in use as navigation aids but, since 2004, Telise's towers have been nationally protected as heritage monuments.



18 ROOSLEPA CHAPEL AND CEMETERY

A wooden chapel was built in the seventeenth century beside the crossing of three roads. When a stone chapel was built in 1834, the old wooden one was removed to the village of Sutlepa, and from there to the Estonian Open Air Museum in 1970. When

the Estonian Swedes departed in 1944, the stone chapel was left to the hands of fate. An end wall was pulled down by the Soviet border guards in 1970. When Estonia regained independence, the chapel was restored by the joint efforts of King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, the exiled community of Estonian Swedes, and the local municipality government, and the chapel was re-consecrated in 2007. A stone with the signature of the king's grandfather, Gustavus Adolphus - who visited the chapel in 1932 - was also taken into the chapel from the churchyard. The sixteenth century cemetery underwent a thorough cleaning and clearing in 1990-1991.



19 OSMUSAARE LIGHTHOUSE

The lighthouse is located on the edge of the klint at the north-western end of the island of Osmussaare, and is a significant beacon on the international fairway. In 1850, a powerful limestone lighthouse was built which was demolished by the retreating Soviet Army in 1941. In 1954, a monolithic concrete lighthouse reaching 35 metres above the ground was erected - one of the most imposing and elegant of the beacons built during the Stalinist era. The slim concrete cylinder is contrasted by the heavy stand with its decorative cornices. The tower was painted in black and white stripes, just like the old one had been. In 1998, the lighthouse underwent thorough repair; the façade was fixed, and the lantern room was replaced.



20 ST OLAF'S CHURCH OF NÕVA

The chapel-house of God of the eighteenth century is the oldest wooden church in mainland Estonia. It is also one of the smallest wooden churches (13.6 x 7.1m). The church's eastern wall is adorned by rare stained paper windows from the nineteenth century. Uniquely the church has different benches for men and women. The churchyard contains a collection of iron crosses which were made by the local blacksmiths, all of which are unique in their precise design and realisation - the lady of the manor is even said to have made the beautiful cross for the final resting place of her family with her own hands, as well as the church's wooden altar grate.



21 ST OLAF'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY OF VORMSI

Hullo Village is home to the most important historical and cultural monument on the island - the church of Vormsi which dates from the fourteenth century. When the Swedes fled the island at the end of World War II, the church was left to decay. It was restored at the end of the 1980s and was re-consecrated on St Olaf's Day in 1990. In the niche above the main door is a figure of St Olaf, the church's namesake, which was created in 1990. The church and its cosy interior boasts restored ceiling paintings which originated in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The cemetery next to the church is unique in Estonia. There are more than 330 (!) preserved limestone and sandstone wheel crosses, with the oldest dating from 1743 and the newest from 1923. People started using wheel crosses in Vormsi in the seventeenth century.

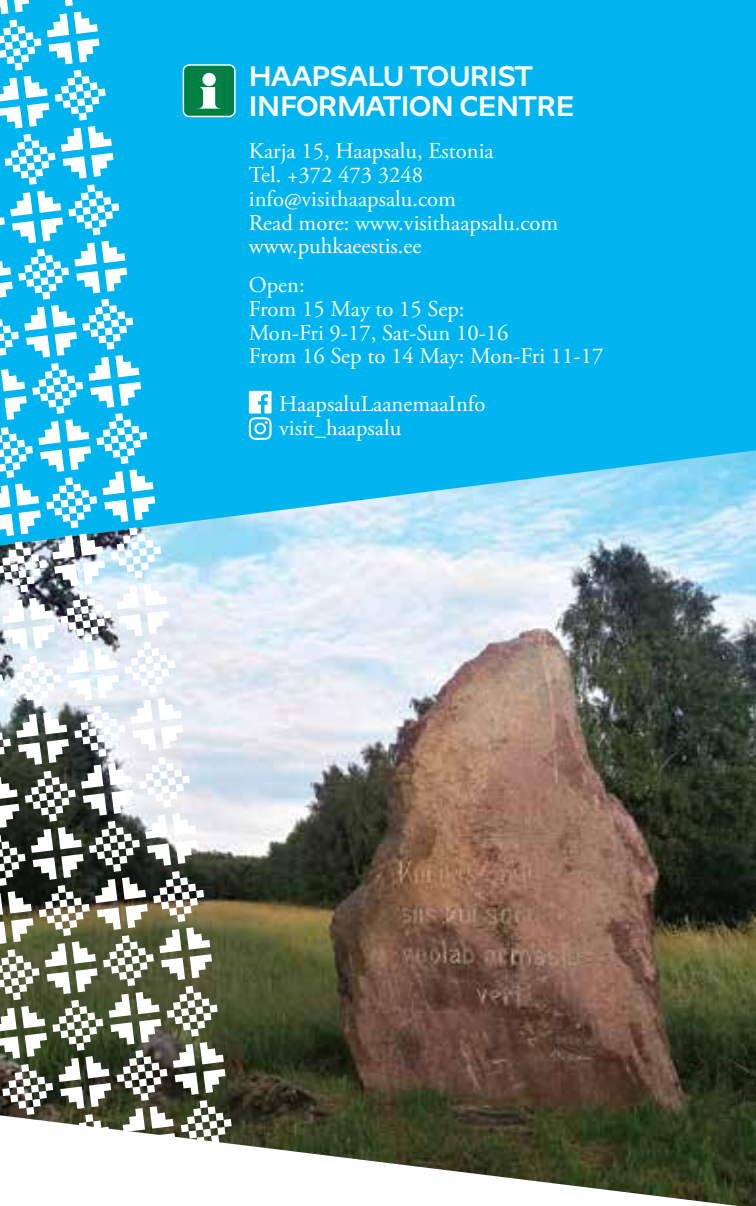


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OHANÄOLINE SAAR LÄÄNEMERES
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