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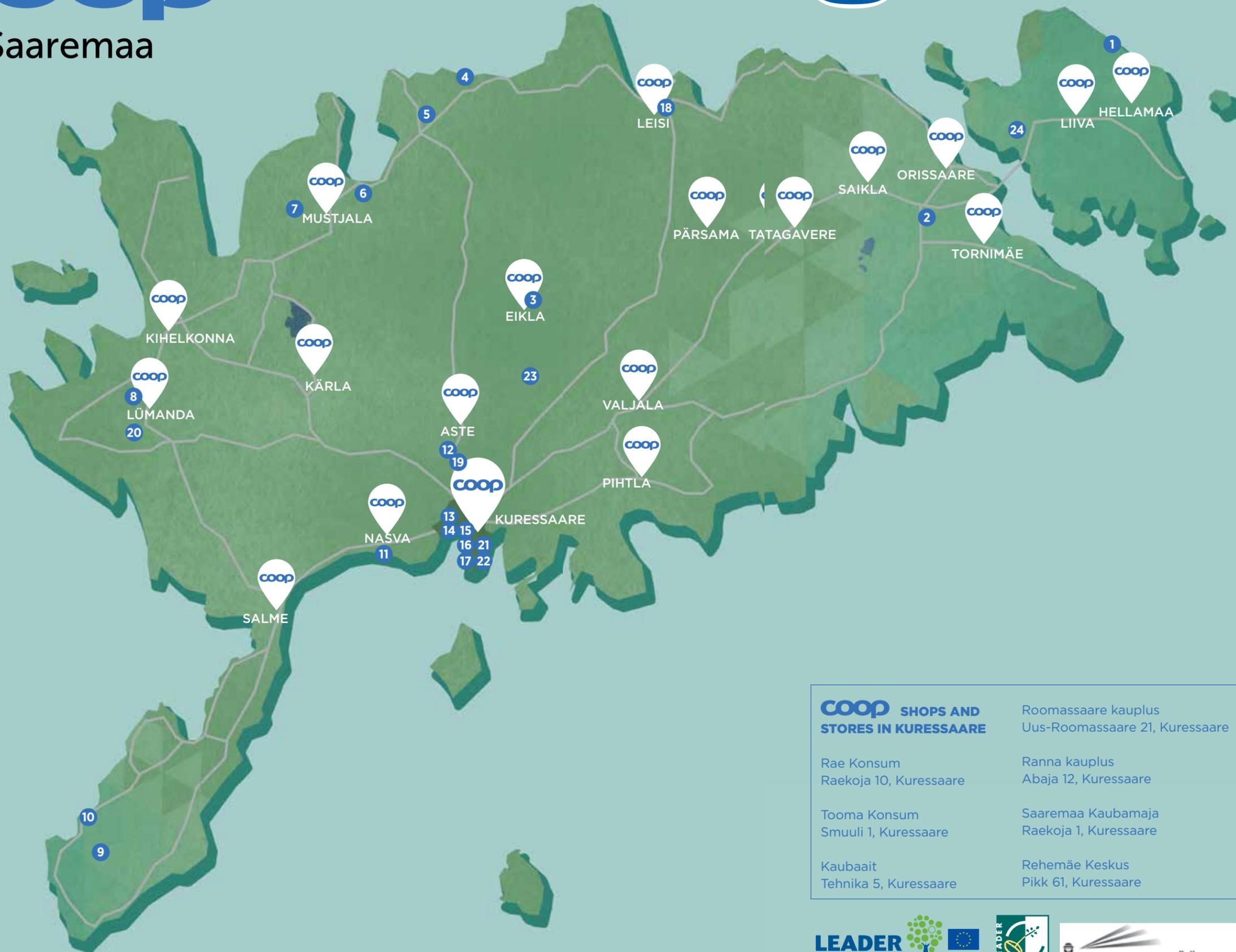




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Mythical Ultima Thule

Let's go to Saaremaa! Are we going to Saaremaa again? Just mentioning the name of Saaremaa to anyone who has visited Saaremaa at least once, conjures visions of the mythical Ultima Thule, Vikings, coastal meadows, junipers, lots of sunshine, a rich heritage and the tough, fun-loving islanders.

Everybody who has ever visited Saaremaa understands the inexplicable magic power you can draw from this island. Its thousands of years old culture has impacted the life of the islanders as well as the architecture which makes an impression on everybody.

The sea is always nearby, actually it is all around. It provides our daily food, keeps us in touch with the neighbouring islands and it brings visitors from far and wide.

Saaremaa has a particular light, enjoying more days of sunshine than any other region of Estonia. The most famous Estonian painter Konrad Mägi spent his most creative summers in Saaremaa, painting dozens of landscapes with their focus on primeval nature. Today Saaremaa and its neighbouring islands are a part of the UNESCO biospheric area "Man and the Biosphere" and they make for a highly valued destination for all hikers and nature observers. You can go and wave at the migratory birds at the tip of Sõrve Peninsula, picked by the birds as their final launching pad for their long journey South.

Muhumaa, Saaremaa and their tiny neighbouring islands offer you everything that you could dream of – peace and quiet and the breathtaking views. The choice is yours- grab a basket and go picking mushrooms or enjoy the fine (*kena**) delights of the local cooks in numerous cafes and restaurants. You can stay the night in an old mill, in a farmhouse or if you wish, in a spa. When travelling with children, you can be sure that the adventure parks and beaches will bring sweet, juniper-scented dreams even to the most restless kids, no doubt.

When exploring the islands the distances always feel much shorter than in the mainland, there will always be a fine little village shop, an old church, a battered stone fence or an animal on its way into the woods.

There are plenty of things to do on the islands all year round. From spring to autumn you can enjoy various cultural events – from small village parties to large festivals. These fine parties always include tasting the local delicacies and if you are lucky, you can truly bond with the local people!

Welcome to Ultima Thule!

**In an overseas paradise you can look at things from a different angle. Keep in mind that the most important word on the island is "kena" (fine). "Kena" can interpret everything and it can describe everything incl. food, people, wildlife etc.*

Margit Kõrvits
www.visitsaaremaa.ee



COVER PHOTO: Alina Birjuk
Development of Viirelaiu Lighthouse Guesthouse won the West Estonian Tourist Enterprise 2018 award.



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View of Viirelaiu Lighthouse Guesthouse from Kiipsu tip in 1951



VISIT SAAREMAA

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250
sunny days

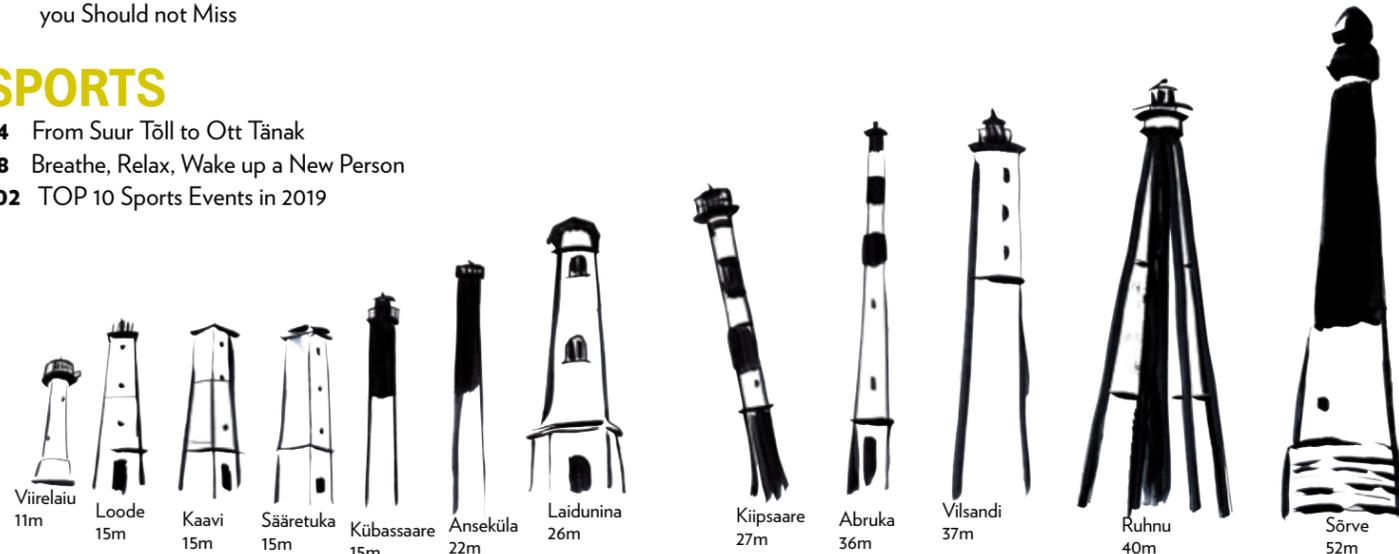
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Viirelaiu 11m
Looe 15m
Kaavi 15m
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Kübassaare 15m
Anseküla 22m
Laidunina 26m

Kiipsaare 27m
Abruka 36m
Vilsandi 37m
Ruhnu 40m
Sörve 52m



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Photo: Valmar Voolaid

HISTORY

It was Lennart Meri, a writer and later president who claimed in his book *Hõbevalge* (The Silver White) that namely Saaremaa was the much sought after, mysterious and mythical Ultima Thule where the Greek explorer Pytheas arrived in the 4th century BCE. In any case, the history of the islands is long and its innumerable traces are to be found in the wildlife, churches, manors and the surviving traditions.

The approximate time of Kaali meteorite fall is 7500-7600 years ago. Meteorite fall caused big damages on already inhabited Saaremaa, it could be compared to explosion of atomic bomb. At the height of 5-10 km meteorite fell apart and came down to the ground in pieces the biggest of which created a big crater with diameter of 110 m and depth of 22 m and 8 smaller craters.

The Island

– Beginning and End

TEXT: MEHIS TULK | ILLUSTRATION: EIKE MALVA



‘Keep singing, priest!’

This is the first written recorded phrase in Estonian from the Livonian Chronicle of Henry. It must be pointed out that it is also the first written record of Saaremaa dialect and the chronicle does definitely not describe our ancestors’ love for singing; in fact it is quite the opposite.

In 1215 at the mouth of the Koiva River, pagan islanders captured Frederik, a priest of the Order of Cistercian Monks together with his disciple and his Livonian entourage. When the priest was singing praises to his Christian God out of defiance to his captivators, the islanders hit his head with clubs and encouraged him to carry on his singing in Latin. The servants of God were cruelly tortured and finally they were killed by a blow of a battle-axe between the shoulder blades.

The early records of the written history of Saaremaa and the islanders, the single episodes of which are to be found in the Icelandic sagas, are mostly associated with militance, hostility and danger. Eysysla, the land of islands, was keeping the slaves kidnapped from overseas and holding captive the Scandinavian nobility. Some historians even suggest that the unscrupulous raids of the islanders on the Baltic Sea and on the overseas shores directly encouraged the Germans, Danes and Swedes to commence the forceful Christian colonisation of the Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea at the turn of the 13th century. It is also remarkable that the Estonian tribes were only finally subjected to the Christian foreign power under the German Empire in 1345, namely in Saaremaa where, after years of resistance, the nobility finally surrendered.

Islanders continue to be an obstinate folk and lifestyles on the island and on the mainland are like two different worlds. The sea has always provided food for the island’s people, vigour to its crops and shelter from severe nuisances. Wars and disease have spared Saaremaa, people have found shelter and new blood for making a fresh start on the devastated mainland.

The islanders have been loved and hated, our particular way of speaking has been mocked and praised, our vitality has been cursed and admired. This patch of land where the most precious resources are soft limestone and tough forests grown on poor soil has been called a paradise as well as a cursed-by-the-devil place.

An islander might express his indifference to that by saying ‘Kena,’ (nice) whilst spitting and scratching his belly. The notion of things being done differently would never cross his mind because things have always been this way and they

should remain so because Saaremaa is the centre of universe. Everything begins here and everything ends here. Even time moves at a different pace, on the island of Muhu it is doesn’t move at all!

The sea is the cause of everything. We have all been looking at the sea and the tireless waves, sliding into infinity at a pace that makes sense to the waterworld only. The sea is untamable, unpolishable and unpaveable, its mood defines time and the very existence of the islanders.

Mainland folks always wonder why the islanders are hardly ever in a hurry, reaching the conclusion that the slow islanders’ minds must be trapped by the sea. It used to be easy to spot islanders in the queues at the ferry port. The islanders would peacefully sit and wait in their cars looking pensively at the sea whereas the visitors would be impatiently skipping along the quay, igniting car engines and panicking in the queues for coffee.

Today’s efficient ferry traffic is practically queueless, thus it is harder to spot islanders in a crowd but the particular sentiment when the ferry touches the quay at Kuivastu, is definitely still there. We all feel the sensation going through our bodies and our hearts cheer ‘We have arrived!’

It makes no difference whether we have arrived for the first time or for the one thousand and first time. It does not matter that most of us need to spend another hour or an hour and a half in a car before getting to our destinations. Arriving at the port is both definite and indefinite, it is the end of a journey and the beginning of a journey. It is hard to explain, you need to feel it just like lots of people do.

Becoming an islander has always been equally important to being born as an islander and living like an islander. Multiple tests have proven that the people who find their wives in Saaremaa become islanders hassle-free. The others must go through the purge by giving birth to a large number of children, endless toiling or giving up one’s halo and fame, admitting that it’s great but totally valueless in Saaremaa and better to start afresh.

And finally – whoever has been to Saaremaa, will return. You give your little finger to the island and it takes your whole hand and then your heart altogether. It is like an addiction with no cure or an infectious disease with no vaccine. No need to worry because to our knowledge it is the only disease that makes you feel better. |

Famous Islanders

TEXT: MO SAAREMAA | PHOTOS: KAUPU KIKKAS, PRIVATE COLLECTION

Who is the most famous islander in the world, after all is said and done? Potential nominees would be an explorer, F. G. B. von Bellingshausen (1778 Lahetaguse - 1852 Kronstadt); the scandalous, legendary theatre figure Aario Alfred Maristi (1905–1991), president Arnold Rüütel (b.1928) as well as the controversial rapper Beebilõust (b. 1981).

➤ We are going to introduce to you the three of the island's brightest stars whose work is appreciated around the world and whose sources of inspiration or whom you might run into in person in Saaremaa.

Louis Isidore Kahn

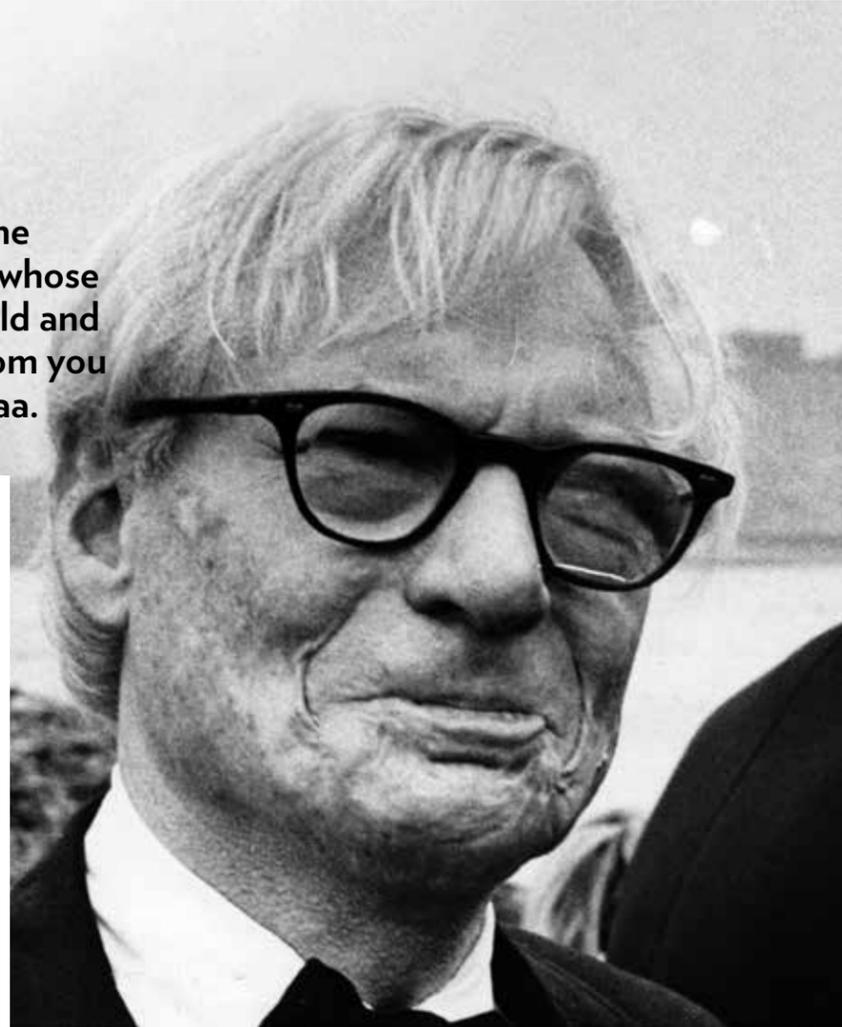
From a Kuressaare Boy to a Top Architect of the 20th Century

Louis Isidore Kahn, one of the top architects of the 20th century was born in Saaremaa on 5th March (20th February according to the old calendar) in 1901 as the first child of the family of a former financial staff officer Leopold and his wife Bertha (a harp player by education). The architect has always named Saaremaa as his place of birth, coming "from an island with a castle on it". He also remembered the Lake of Kaali, "lestakala" (flatfish) and "kadakas" (juniper) and the burns from jumping over St. John's bonfires. Most of his childhood memories come from the United States though where his father Leopold emigrated to in 1904, settling down in Philadelphia; Bertha and the children followed him two years later.

In an interview Kahn was once asked when he had become an architect. He had made most of his living as a jazz musician until he was in his fifties and he only opened up as a mature gifted architect after that. However, he answered that he had become an architect at the age of three; a childhood memory of a monumental, stylish castle of Kuressaare had made an incredibly strong impression on him. Kahn grew up in Philadelphia and he acquired US citizenship in 1914. He graduated from Pennsylvania University and he continued his studies later in Europe. The masterpieces of this late-blooming architect come from as late as the 1960s. Kahn's work is absolutely unique, created without any direct influences.

In addition to the USA the work of one of the most prominent architects of the 20th century can be seen in India, Bangladesh, Nepal. His top works are the Kimbell Art Museum in Texas, USA, the building of the National Assembly of Bangladesh in Dhaka, the Yale Art Gallery in New Haven in Connecticut, USA.

Kahn's buildings are powerfully monumental. His favourite materials were concrete, wood, brick. The symbiosis of archetypal geometric forms (circle, square, triangular) and astonishing views creates



beauty. Kahn, a charismatic, widely travelled person was also a popular university professor. During his European tour in 1928 he visited Riga and he pointed out in his memoirs that in Kuressaare he had lived in the tiny house of his grandmother where he slept on the floor. Kahn died in New York in 1974.

In 2006 the first Louis Kahn Festival took place in Kuressaare. Estonia saw the premiere of the film 'My architect. A son's journey' (2003), presented in Kuressaare Linnateater by the author Nathaniel Kahn, Louis' son. The film tells the son's story of learning to know his father and forgiving him through his architecture. In 2004 the film was nominated for an Oscar in the category of documentaries and it also gained a few prominent festival awards.

Louis Kahn Association is planning to organise an international conference in Kuressaare in 2021 when the Estonian Association of Architects will be celebrating its 100th anniversary..



Ott Tänak

Through Hardship to the Top of the Rally World

Ott Tänak (born on 15th October 1987 in Kärla parish in Saaremaa) is one of the most outstanding rally drivers who has it in his genes as his father is a former Estonian rally driving champion. At the age of 15 he became more serious about rally driving, starting at rally sprints as well as at the domestic rally driving championships. His co-driver was Tõnu Kurvet, a former co-driver of his father Ivar Tänak. He gained his first victories in Estonia, becoming the national champion in 2008 and 2009 in the rally driving N4-class and as early as in 2009 in Portugal Tänak made his WRC debut. In 2013 Ott and his father Ivar formed the team OT Racing with Ott as the driver on his N-group Subaru and Martin Järveoja as the co-driver

– the partnership is still working. Luckily there were other supporters in addition to the Tänak family who had noticed a Saaremaa village boy wasting his enormous talent in his tiny homeland and they believed that he would be worth a chance to demonstrate his speed and talent in the wider world.

His endeavours worked out. Malcolm Wilson has invited Tänak a couple of times to be the principal driver of his team, in the season of 2017 his team members were Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia, the five time world champions. Tänak reached the highlight of his career with this particular team at the Sardinian rally last June.

Prior to the 2018 season Tänak joined the Toyota factory team. By now Ott Tänak together with his co-driver Martin Järveoja has won three world championship rallies and 108 speed trials. The next aim is clearly the world championship title which should be only a matter of time.



Maria Faust

A Bright Jazz Star

Maria Faust (born in Kuressaare in 1979) is a saxophone player and a songwriter, one of the most versatile and recognized musicians in Estonia.

Maria has reminisced that at the age of three or four she was determined to become a musician: her grandmother had an old hairbrush that Maria tried to use as a violin – the teeth created sounds. Then she started training her fingers on a self-drawn keyboard.

At the age of six she was admitted to Kuressaare Music School where she studied singing and the piano. Her mother could not afford to buy a piano but she could practise at a neighbours' place. In the end the saxophone won her heart. She ended her singing career in her teens. She got to the final of a popular Estonian Television talent show "Kaks takti ette" but she realized that singing pop songs was really not for her. She began her music studies in Tallinn and later she graduated from

the Copenhagen Rhythmic Music Conservatory (performance doc). Today Maria Faust is more involved in the experimental forms of jazz music, having also collaborated with prominent pop and rock musicians incl. producers John Parish and Mike Howard. Maria Faust's work is productive and unique. She adores risks and lacks the fear of mixing different styles. In 2014 her album *Sacrum Facere* won the Danish Music Prize for the best jazz composer and the best jazz walbum. The following year she won the Danskebank Jazz Prize at the Estonian jazz festival *Jazzkaar* and she was awarded the prestigious Danish culture prize the *Niels Matthiasens Mindelegat*. Maria has published albums and toured with various groups in China, USA, the Balkans, Russia, South America and the whole of Europe. She keeps revisiting Kuressaare to make concerts and to instruct young musicians in the rhythm and improvisation camps in Saaremaa.



Ain Anger

A Bass Singing on the Grand Opera Stages of the World

Ain Anger, a world famous bass, was born in Kihelkonna, Saaremaa in 1971. He made his singing debut as a singer of Kuressaare mixed choir in Saaremaa. He studied singing at the Estonian Music Academy and he commenced his opera singer's career in the Estonia Opera in Tallinn. In 2001 he left Estonia for Leipzig Opera to make his first international debut as an opera soloist.

Since 2004 Anger has been a soloist of the Vienna State Opera as well as a frequent guest performer in the main opera houses and concert halls in Berlin, Munich, Milan, Paris, Tokyo, New York, San Francisco etc. Anger sings a wide opera and concert repertoire. As a soloist of the Vienna State Opera he has sung over forty roles, including Philippe II and the Grand Inquisitor (Verdi's *Don Carlos*), Sarastro (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*), Gremin (Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*), Pimen

(Mussorgski's *Boris Godunov*) and Fiesco (Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*), Pogner (Wagner's *The Mastersingers from Nuremberg*), Daland (Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*), Hermann (Wagner's *Tannhäuser*), Hunding (Wagner's *The Valkyrie*), Titurel (Wagner's *Parsifal*) and many others. Anger's two most recent debuts were singing in one of his dream roles, Boris in Mussorgski's *Boris Godunov* at Berlin Deutsche Opera and singing Hagen in Wagner's *Twilight of the Gods* at the Canadian Opera, receiving glowing reviews for both. Ain Anger has been awarded the Order of the White Star by the President of the Estonian Republic. Every now and then he makes an appearance on his native island during the Saaremaa Opera Festival, appearing at gala concerts or running his masterclasses. |



Manors of Saaremaa

historical centres of community and leisure

TEXT: VISIT SAAREMAA | PHOTOS: KAUPU KIKKAS, PRIVATE COLLECTION

› In the shades of pine woods, surrounded by flowery meadows and ponds where ducks and water lilies lazily float in the sun, some of Estonia's most beautiful treasures lie nestled: hundreds of old manor houses.

as important centres for the community and some still do so to this day, hosting schools, libraries, concerts and art exhibitions. One hundred and forty one of these manor houses were built on the island of Saaremaa, where German noblemen also had their winter residencies in capital Kuressaare and danced and mingled in the 'Kuursaal', in the park surrounding the medieval castle. Today you can enjoy a dinner, outdoor movie or occasional concert in the rebuilt Kuursaal, reminiscing the old days. And a fair few of the historical countryside manors in Saaremaa can also still be visited, some of them in ruins and ghostly, some of them beautifully restored and hosting a hotel, restaurant or herb gardens. In the following paragraph, five of them will be introduced. They are all intriguing in their own right, and situated on a route which will take you across the island.



< Audla Manor before and today.

In the seven centuries that the country was ruled by Denmark, Sweden, Russia and Germany, these houses were built for servants of landlords and as economic centres of episcopacies. The proprietors of the manors had a special position in the community. They had many privileges, but also many political and economical obligations towards the state. Most of the manors were built in the eighteenth century, when the architecture of the houses became much more extravagant and Russian noblemen and –women would inhabit the properties. In these glory days the country had more than two-thousand of these manors. The buildings would vary from white, fairy-tail castles with high towers that Rapunzel would approve of, to pastoral and wooden, with big verandas overlooking a nurtured garden of flowerbeds.

The rich and wealthy would gather here, leaving their winter residencies behind for a long summer in the Estonian countryside. Many a time, they would host great Gatsby worthy parties, inviting all nobles from neighbouring manors, who would arrive to the party in horse carriages and dressed in style. Pädaste Manor, on the island Muhu of Saaremaa County, now a luxury spa-resort and hotel, is one exemplary manor within this history. It belonged to Baron Axel von Buxhoeveden, the Imperial Hunting Master at the court of Czar Nicholas II and his wife Charlotte, a heiress of the Siemens company. During summer season, Charlotte used to trade her house in St. Petersburg for Muhu and invite musicians and artists to join her on the sea-side property for months filled with socializing, music and arts. But the Estonian manors would also function

Audla Manor

You will come across the manor of Audla when you drive onto Saaremaa, from Muhu towards Kuressaare, and take the turn towards Laimjala. The Orissaare-Valjala highway takes you through some of the most serene meadows of the island – where late summer sunsets make the hay bales seem like little chunks of gold. A little north from Audla, the ethereal Koigi swamp is more than worth a visit. Hike the 5 km long plank road and discover the wetlands; one of the landscapes Estonia is famous for. Audla Manor, on the other hand, is known for its little more disturbing nature. Several people who have visited this manor from the 15th century, which is slowly decaying and overgrown by trees, report paranormal activity. One of them had their tyre blow out. Enjoy the mystery, but be sure to park your car at a safe distance.



^ Tõlluste Manor



> Pihlta Manor



Tõlluste Manor

Driving further south-west from Audla, past Laimjala and Sakla and towards the seaside, you will arrive at Tõlluste Manor. This manor has belonged to at least fifteen different owners throughout the centuries. The first and the last of them though, are two with particular touristic and cultural interest. In 1550 Diedrich Behr bought the manor and conjoined it with his other property, which he had taken on from the Tölsen family. The manors new and vast grounds were named after the Tölsens, who are said to have served as material for the biggest folk legend of Saaremaa: Suur Tõll. Nowadays, Tõlluste Manor, is owned by the natural cosmetics company Siberica. On the properties there is a beautiful garden, where you will find all the herbs to give you the silky skin and hair that is fit for the best nobleman or –woman.

Pihlta Manor

The cotton candy coloured, neo-gothic facade of Pihlta Manor is surely one of the most charming manor facades on Saaremaa. With the rest of the manor largely in ruins, the decorative pink wall demands all of our attention. Although Pihlta Manor was already established in the Middle Ages, the neo-gothic main building was added over a period of time in the 18th and 19th century. After the Second World War, Pihlta manor hosted a school. In 1973 the building became empty and started to wear down. If you are looking for a present-day community centre around Pihlta; then try Pihlta brewery just around the corner. It's the oldest micro beer brewery of Estonia and serves a local beer made with pine needles and a famous, treacherously strong, farmer's brew. Pihlta is a mere ten minutes from Tõlluste and the drive over takes you well on your way to the capital Kuressaare.



Kotland Manor

After a visit to Kuressaare, turn towards Kihelkonna to the northwest. A winding forest highway will take you into the national park of Vilsandi, which is host to more than 200 species of birds and 30 types of orchids. But just before you reach Vilsandi National Park, in the small village of Koki, one of the cosiest



accommodations of the island can be found. The yellow wooden Kotland manor is the only manor in Estonia with a thatched roof. Kotland manor was built in 1844 and at the heart of the mansion stands a mantle chimney dating back to the Great Northern War. Today, the chimney is part of the stylishly redecorated kitchen. In some rooms the original wooden floors and plastered ceilings still remain. Behind the

house, in the garden, you can pick berries and watch bees hop from one colourful flower to another. The whole house can be rented as a private holiday home and it fits up to three families. Enjoy living like royalty, surrounded by nature. Get warmed up in the sauna, dip into the pond, watch the stars and wake up between the crisp white sheets in an antique wooden bed.

^ Loona Manor

< Kotland Manor

Loona Manor

Continuing towards Vilsandi National Park, be sure to make a stop at Lümända Söögi-maja to still your hunger. In this roadside eatery you will find homey classics from the Estonian kitchen for a very friendly price. A hearty fish soup, fresh potatoes, a solid piece of local meat. Stomachs filled, it's time to head towards Loona village. There, the baroque Loona Manor is a good starting point for a day in the wilderness, since it also hosts the visitor's centre of the park. A beautiful driveway lined with lush trees leads up to the manor, that dates back to the 16th century, and it's only a matter of a little imagination to see how idyllic life must have been in this leafy retreat. After a day of hiking, biking, bird-watching, mushrooming or swimming, you can return to have dinner in Loona Manor's romantic restaurant. Sit down at one of the small tables, rest your legs and watch the evening set over the manor's well-kept gardens. |

KURESSAARE

Kuressaare Episcopal Castle, also known as Kuressaare Castle, is the only medieval stronghold that has survived without major reconstruction in the Baltic countries. The castle inspired Louis Kahn, one of the most prominent architects of the 20th century, to create extraordinary buildings all over the world.

Kuressaare is a small town of a striking harmony. It acquired its character throughout centuries melding together different eras and comfortably moving around between the Middle Ages, the present and the future with the utmost comfort. The ambiance of Kuressaare is made up of its heavy 14th century bishop's castle, its romantic wooden houses and its airy, ultra modern architecture. Kuressaare is the only place to make it all come into harmony.



48 Hours in Kuressaare

TEXT: VISIT SAAREMAA | PHOTOS: MARGIT KÖRVITS, SILVIA PÄRMANN

› Kuressaare looks tiny from the air but on the ground this little town accommodates several different Kuressaares that will appeal to people with very different tastes and interests: fans of history, gourmets, gin experts, music freaks, design enthusiasts, proper hedonists, architecture lovers; people who just enjoy their walks in parks and by the sea, rain or shine.

› Kuressaare is the rare place where the medieval castle, old houses and modern architecture co-exist in perfect harmony.



FRIDAY

Afternoon

• CHECK IN AT ARENSBURG BOUTIQUE & SPA

HOTEL. A small hotel on the main street of Kuressaare has something to offer to gourmets and hedonists as well as architecture lovers. In the more than 300 year-old building the best of contemporary architecture and a centuries old luxurious townhouse merge. Depending on your preference for contemporary architecture or history you can choose your room. The extension completed in 2007 is the work of Estonian architects from KOKO, a firm that has been awarded many architectural accolades. The black building comprises the inexplicable mystery of the Episcopal Castle, hard to explain but definitely perceptible.

The old building and the new building harmonise perfectly, they are connected by a calm and quiet courtyard where you can relax on the terrace on warm days.

• Do not hesitate to book treatments in the cosy hotel spa.

• **GO FOR A WALK** around the old town of Kuressaare, in the parks and by the sea. Take a look at the Episcopal Castle, spot a building of historic significance, like Mihkel Salong's Piano Factory building. Take a deep breath of fresh air and let the calm rhythm of a small town rule.

Evening

• **CONCERT.** In summer you will find a very good concert in Kuressaare or elsewhere around Saaremaa or in Muhumaa. These islands are full of music, playing operas, chamber music, organ concerts and the most contemporary of music.

• **TOUR AROUND KEK.** Fans of architecture should book a tour in the legendary building of Saare KEK prior to their visit, designed by architect Marika Lööke. Half of the building has been impeccably renovated, whereas the other half allows you to experience Soviet era atmosphere with its authentic décor. Ringtee 15, <http://saarekek.ee>

• **DINNER IN HAFEN.** Kuressaare suffers no shortage of excellent eateries. After your cultural experiences, proceed for dinner to the restaurant Hafen. In the white summer nights as well as in the mysteriously black autumn days it is therapeutic to walk to the seaside and feel the waves calmly coming and going behind the window. Tori 4, hafen.ee

• **A GLASS OF WINE IN PRELUDE.** On your way back to the hotel pop into Prelude Vinotheque, located in a lovely romantic building on the main street. This place has a marvellous atmosphere with an excellent choice of wines from all over the world. Trust the landlady's recommendation and you will be enjoying a marvellous glass of wine. Lossi 4, www.prelude.ee

SATURDAY

Morning

• **HÖME.** Go shopping! Kuressaare with its few shopping centres and tiny shops does not sound like an exciting place to go shopping but you will change your mind as soon as you enter Höme.

Höme is a place of old and new furniture, accessories and gourmet food. This treasure box was founded less than two years ago by two young people, Brette Saar and Bert Lepik, in love with pretty things and with one another. Every single object in the shop has been obtained and renovated by Brette and Bert at European auctions, all new items have been very carefully selected. Your visit to Höme will be perfect if you leave with an original piece by the local ceramicist Sari Ruuhonen.

Pihlta tee 24, facebook.com/pintsljakohvriga/

• **ANTIQUÉ STORES AND MARKETS.** Kuressaare is not a place to seek contemporary top-notch Nordic design, although in summer a few Estonian designers open their pop-up shops in the island for a couple of days. It is rather a place to hunt for old items and buy some superb handicraft. The small market is just next to the main street and during the festivals there will be more handicraft markets open that are definitely worth a visit.

• **BEAUTY PRODUCTS FROM PURE NATURE.** Saaremaa and Muhumaa do not offer merely food products from pure nature; quite a lot of them can be applied on to the skin. Delight yourself and your friends with some Natura Siberica products, made from plants from Saaremaa. Find the shimmer powders and lipsticks by the beauty brand Le'Maag of Saaremaa. Come back for more, as the founder of the brand, Maaja Tuuling, keeps expanding her selection. The marvellous stage make-up of Estonia Opera and Ballet Theatre all comes from the skin-friendly cosmetics of Le'Maag.

Lunch

• **MOSAIIK.** Have an enjoyable lunch in some of the main street cafes. Mosaiik café also has a vegetarian menu. If you have become a fan of the local food, make sure you have a salad and its dressing made with the craft vinegar by the local small producer Wösel. Inquire about non-alcoholic healthy cocktails that are made with fantastic apple cider vinegars. Tallinna 1, mosaiikcafe.ee/

KURE CAFE. Pop into the chique, bohemian Kure Café for a cup of coffee. Treat yourself to the best coffee, a piece of cake and a pastry – you are on holiday! Tallinna 9, facebook.com/kurecafe

> In Love with One Another and Creating Pretty Homes: Brette Saar and Bert Lepik, founders of Höme



> In Paris there is the café *Les Deux Magots*, in Vienna there is the Cafe Central and in Kuressaare there is Kure *kohvik*.



Afternoon

• **GO TO A PHOTO SESSION!** A holiday in Kuressaare is the time to look your best and happiest. Photographer Keili Tees, the owner of the photo boutique Keili in the town centre, is a renowned portrait and family photographer who prefers to take the photos outside her studio. She knows where the prettiest and the most interesting spots are in town and where the most picturesque junipers and rocks are on the beach. As a true documentalist, she might choose to accompany you for the whole day for the sake of getting the best shots; a few families have gone for that option, travelling to Kuressaare solely for that purpose.

Kohtu 1, keelifotobutiik.com

Early Evening

• **CHILL AT THE SPA!** First go to the sauna, then have a massage or pick another treatment and then just relax by the pool.

• **READ A BOOK!**

Why not try Lennart Meri's "Silver White: Travelogues" which touch upon the sea as the genesis of the mentality, culture and existence of Estonians and address the issues of the famous Kaali Meteorite Crater.

• **DO NOTHING!**

Evening

• **SAAREMAAKERA AND LAHENTAGGE GIN.**

As the option of doing nothing might become overwhelming, it would be pointless to plan to have dinner too far from the hotel. Luckily, just about twenty metres from the hotel there is Saaremaakera, serving pizzas made in a wood fired pizza oven and fish&chips in Saaremaa style. Trendy people have definitely heard from the craft gin Lahentagge (<https://www.lahentagge.com>) that has been claimed as one of the best in the world. It comes from a place near Kuressaare and all herbs and juniper berries used in it come from Saaremaa. Ask the barman to fix a gin and tonic and let the fine flavours fly you to the atmosphere of the world's finest metropolitan bars.

SUNDAY

Morning.

• **SLEEP IN!** Enjoy your breakfast. Have another helping of pancakes.

Lunch.

• **LEARN TO PLAY GOLF!** Kuressaare is one of the few towns in the world whose golf course is practically in its centre. You can have 1:1 private lessons or group lessons with your friends, also the children can learn to play golf. Later you can analyse your performance in the golf club's restaurant MO. One lesson will not turn you into the next Tiger Woods, so you'll have to come back soon!

www.saaregolf.ee



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COMBINING LIFE AND WORK THE SAAREMAA WAY_

TEXT: MELE PESTI | ILLUSTRATION: EIKE MALVA

It took me a while to realize that I was not the only freelancer in Saaremaa, fed up with my home office. We even toyed with an option to purchase a secret apartment that could be converted into an office. Thus far we had been sharing larger tables in the cafes of Kuressaare as our head offices. Then I found Kristi, a bookkeeper/crafts entrepreneur and Eva, a language teacher/dietary consultant and Ardo, a jack of all trades and they all agreed that the idea of building our own island combining work and freedom in the capital of the island would be valuable enough to sacrifice the required days and nights of hard work into its establishment.

The work has born fruit - the third corner of the impressive central square of Kuressaare now accommodates an inspiring island of working freedom: a free office. As a freelancer, I can confirm that the best environment for stimulating creativity and steady motivation and which is always available when required, is now there in the form of a free office. People and jobs differ, no doubt. 'The office' bears a slightly restrictive connotation - we are talking about indoor work here. Upon opening a free office in a small town we first had to break the mindset that only spade-based sweaty hard labour would classify as proper work, whereas everything else would be merely an opportunity for women to have coffee and chit-chat. As potential permanent users I had these IT-sector people in mind who have successfully managed to break through to an independent lifestyle in Saaremaa; I was hoping to lure them out of the juniper fields presuming that even extreme introverts would be willing to see another face apart from the wild boars by then. The stereotypical coworking space user is rather IT-related, Tallinn LIFT99 and Tartu sTARTUp hubs are definitely IT offices, the other four or five free offices in Estonia are also IT-based.

Anyway, we ended up with a lot more varied company of people in the office. Edu office is definitely a venue for making apps but rather



are very open to everybody but socialising is by no means compulsory. During events in the common room, the offices retain their quiet, businesslike atmosphere.

At the same time computers are not the only tools for the residents of the Edu office. Edu accommodates an elegant photo studio Klõps where photographers share the space and time of the free studio; so does the beauty salon that makes you pretty before the significant click. In the remaining ten rooms tens of people are tapping keyboards - unless they are in their morning yoga lessons getting their bodies and souls ready for the day or in their evening language classes polishing their language skills.

The principal aim of setting up the Edu office was definitely the establishment of a cosy, concentration-friendly place of work for ourselves and like-minded people. However, in the first year our role remarkably expanded: we feel that we are inspiring people with flexible working hours to move to the island. We share the available information on global business trends with everybody (changes are rapid and large-scale!) and we demonstrate the ways of integrating into the life of a small town, away from

for a change from producing technical drawings and scientific articles, rendering folk music management and real estate marketing, completing the preparation of lectures and making birch sap lemonade. A wide variety of activities has brought along an incredible amount of co-operation as well: Edu coffee mornings have given rise to business projects and joint marketing - learning something on a daily basis goes without saying. However, the Edu folks are not a closed community - we

big centers. The Saaremaa people residing permanently on the mainland have found us and they are extending their trips in the island by a couple of working days, working in the new inexpensive Kuressaare office. We encourage everybody to extend their weekend-only trips to the island by a couple of more days; you can efficiently complete your office work in a favourable environment and continue your holiday a short walk's distance from the office. |

Wherever you go, we go as well.

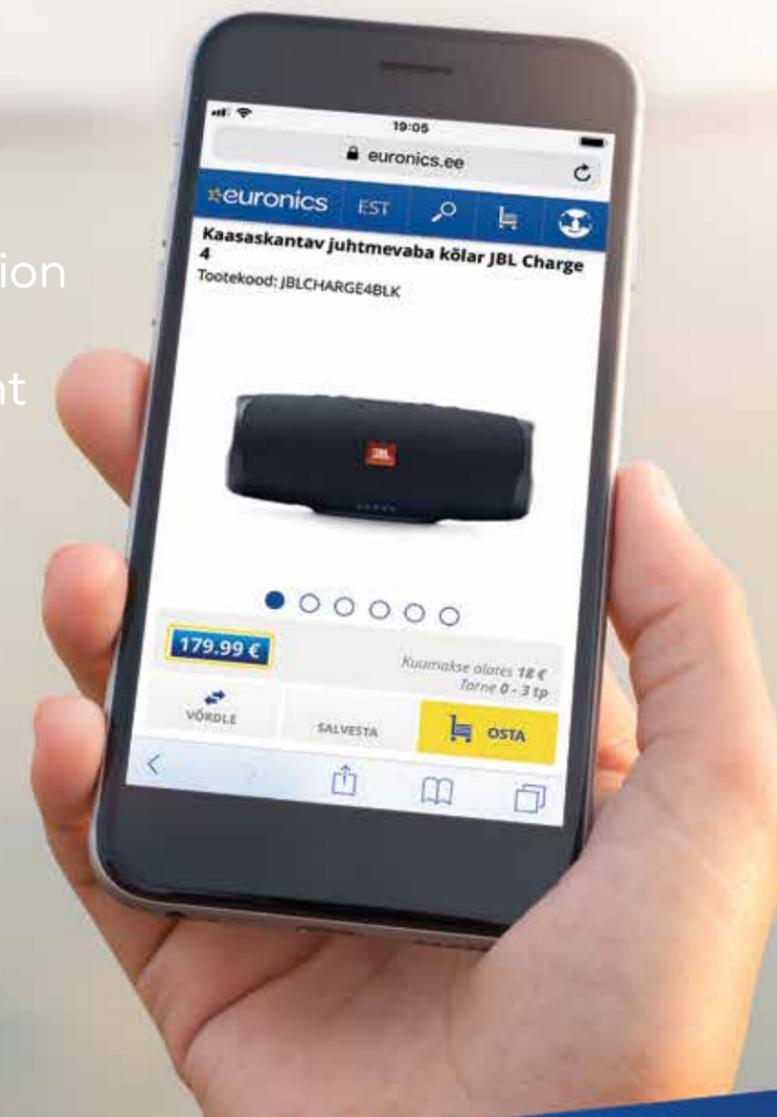
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Chef Toomas Leedu:

BEFORE ORDERING YOUR FISH, CHECK WHAT'S ON THE PLATES OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE

TEXT: SILVIA PÄRMANN | PHOTOS: KEILI TEES, MARGIT KÕRVITS, SILVIA PÄRMANN

Chef Toomas Leedu who runs a summer fish restaurant Ku-Kuu in Kuressaare Kuursaal and who is going to open a new restaurant 'Lab' this spring, is fascinated with everything that the land and the sea provide in the islands and he is giving recommendations as to what, when and where to eat. Because the innocent tourists who order flatfish in May, get a few sympathetic looks.



In summer Kuressaare definitely becomes the food capital of Estonia and the numerous White Guide stickers on restaurant doors signify the high level of the eateries of Saaremaa and Muhumaa. The islands whose food selection is highly dependent on the weather and who have been rather reluctant to accept foreign recipes, have a great variety of pure, delicious flavours to offer.



Where are the best places for local food? Is there any other food available apart from the local food in Saaremaa?

> The most famous fish restaurant in Saaremaa is located in Kuursaal.

Kuressaare probably has about forty eateries and there are more in the whole of Saaremaa. Muhu is a close competitor, no doubt. In the village of Liiva you will find Koost and Tuul and in the immediate vicinity there are Muhu Veinitalu (Muhu Wine Farm) and Pädaste. They all have very strong concepts. The chefs really must make an effort not to fall behind. There are various places in smaller villages. For example, Tihemetsa Farm in Nasva serves warm smoked fish straight out of the oven.

It's really easy here, as everything grows literally by the restaurant door. Occasionally I feel sorry for the chefs in Tallinn as the city has grown so much that there is no space left for any greenhouses. We needed tomatoes for our chilly jam, the season was coming to an end and we had not placed our order. I got into car, drove around in town and I spotted some tomatoes in a greenhouse. I knocked on the door and asked whether we could buy a couple of buckets of tomatoes. So, we picked the tomatoes that we needed!

Not everyone has discovered the local stuff yet, recently I ate out and there was kangaroo steak on the menu. It was unbelievable, as if the 1990s had returned, only the alligator was missing from the menu.

When you travel and a chef in Japan serves *mulgipuder* (an Estonian dish of mashed potatoes, barley and optional pork), then would a native Estonian agree that it is actually *mulgipuder*? You can really cook the food that you have grown up with well and it's in your genes.

Lots of Estonian chefs have worked in top restaurants abroad. They return, making super dishes, using the techniques and the mindsets they have acquired, not the exotic ingredients.

How have eating habits changed on the island?

Traditional food has always been very poor. We should keep in mind that peasant food and manor cuisine are two different things altogether. Also the availability and preferences of food

Fish&chips à la Saaremaa





SÕRVE LIGHTHOUSE OPEN

MAY - SEPTEMBER

have changed. You open an old cookery book and you read a crayfish recipe that says: "Take 100 crayfish". OK, that must be a wedding meal recipe but it actually turns out to be a meal for six.

The fish have changed a lot, too. My partner's mother is in her fifties and in her youth whitefish, eel and cod were all considered to be very common fish.

Eel is still caught but it's sold live and it costs 30 euros a kilo.

I refuse to be part of this price inflation, so we rather cook something else in our restaurant. There is not much eel around here. There is less whitefish as well and you need to go further to catch it, like around the island of Ruhnu and to the Northern coast. Cod, the most common fish 30 years ago, has become very rare.

People still eat lots of fish on the island. Today people tend to shy away, scared of the smell of fish sticking to their hands and thus they hardly ever cook fish at home. In the island people still do.

Is there something that people did not know how to eat but now it is on our tables?

Definitely seaweed - some restaurants are using it already.

Agar is made of it and it can be used instead of gelatin.

Juniper berries are picked for making gin and syrup. I must say that I am not a fan myself. People like to take it as a souvenir, it is extremely local. Some eat it with their pancakes, some with their ice-cream.

Seasonality must be quite prominent in the islanders' choice of food. What should we eat when?

I open KuKuu at the end of April and then we will be expecting the pike to arrive. It normally arrives in the first weeks of May and the fishermen know where to catch it the earliest.

I have got a deal with them that I always get the first pike.

This way the pike arrives on my menu before it's sold in the market. Some of the fish are available the whole year round but it's always a good idea to ask the locals if it would taste good. When I came to the island, I made lots of mistakes that

„I have my famous list of the local fishermen in my telephone. “

proper islanders would never make. I reckoned that the bigger the flatfish, the better the taste but the small ones taste much better although they are a nightmare to eat.

Obtaining fresh fish is quite a saga to go through. I have my famous list of the local fishermen in my telephone. Everybody has his own spot for fishing.

Summers are completely crazy for the kitchen staff. Fishermen's calls start coming in in the early morning when they are still on the sea - then I am involved already. I often arrive in Kuursaal with the fresh fish only 15 minutes before opening, the waitresses waiting for the daily menu and their prices to be written on the menu. The computer in my head is trying to calculate the weight and price for fish.

One of the cooks complained that the fish was too fresh. Too fresh material is a problem of a lucky cook - the fish tends to roll up on the pan when you put it on the heat too fresh, it's complicated to fry it evenly. It all changes by dinner time. Our fish are often still alive when they arrive in the kitchen. A large meat tenderiser comes in handy.

I never buy enough fish for several days, I am not going to serve five-day-old deep frozen fish. The customers are aware that the catch of the day might not last until the evening, thus

they drop by in Ku-Kuu during the day and book their fish for dinner. We have tubs with notes "Seven-o'clock dinner table bass" and so on.

Forests are rich in food too. I pick all my mushrooms myself,

I have my own spots and once you have your spots, it's easy.

Within four hours you can pick a bootful of mushrooms. I have tens of kilos of ceps in my freezer ready for the next summer.

Is the autumn still quite busy in spite of the low tourist numbers?

Yes, it is. Autumn is the time to discuss my menu plans with farmers, so that they know how to plant the lettuce and vegetables. We have several excellent vegetable farms here. Rautsi farm is very popular with mainland restaurants as well. Jõe farm produces superb vegetables as well.

Sheep farmers need agreements concluded, otherwise they would not slaughter any sheep in the summer.

In March we are going to open a tiny restaurant Lab with a completely different concept in a smaller room of Kuursaal.

Lab stands for laboratory and it's going to be a venue for experiments. I am not going to practise molecular gastronomy, the kitchen is still going to run on salt, pepper and bay leaf but I would like to make food from the best raw material available through experimenting. I have got various blends brewing for drinks. Time will show if they are going to work.

Lab will be a small place, open over the autumn and winter as well.

Have the islanders brought along exciting recipes or cooking methods from their distant voyages?

The island of Gotland has always been receiving our vodka and it has provided grindstones in return and there have been more distant destinations. Spicy sprats must have got their spices from somewhere for sure. However, when I recently tasted the Ukrainian spicy sprats they tasted exactly the same as ours. |



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#maailmaserval

You never know when you might end up face to face with a fine seal on the seaside.

Photo: Karl Jakob Toplaan

THE SEA

The life and welfare of the islanders have always depended on the sea. According to the islanders there are just three great rulers of the seas – England (*Inglismaa*), Hiiumaa and Saaremaa. Islanders have always been a seafaring folk, building their own boats. Early risers can see fishing boats going out to sea and they may join the crew if they wish. 'Overseas' there are fascinating islands of Vilsandi, Abruksa, Ruhnu and Viirelaid and the great neighbour Hiiumaa.



Saaremaa Ship Builders are Appreciated all over the World

TEXT: VISIT SAAREMAA | PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE SHIPYARDS

› An insular way of life and boat building have always belonged together. Today boat building is one of the most significant industries in Saaremaa and boat builders are export beacons.

Saaremaa as a tourist destination is known to everybody, yet we should not neglect its industry as the driver of the local economy. The total annual volume of the economy of Saare County is nearly 500 million euros, out of which exports is one third and growing. The main export markets are Finland, Germany and Sweden and the main article of export are small craft.

There are about ten boat builders on the island, sustaining thousands of years of traditions and developing the industry with modern technologies.

The first wide sailboats were developed by Muhu boat builders, using the Viking era war ship and they kept carrying passengers across the sea until the beginning of the 20th century.

Boat building proper began in Kuressaare at the beginning of 1800s. It was initiated by a German insurance agent Christoph Friedrich Schmidt who worked for a Hamburg company dealing with selling ship wrecks. Historians guess that a part of his business idea was obtaining ship building materials from wrecks because vessels from Courland as well as ports of the Gulf of Livonia ran onto the rocks on the coast of Saaremaa fairly frequently. At the beginning of the 19th century the first master boat builders arrived on Saaremaa.

The history of the early days of boat building is hazy and when reminiscing, boat builders tend to say that running a business from an island has its advantages and disadvantages but first and foremost it gives entrepreneurs opportunities to emphasize the local, historical and the emotional.

So admits Peeter Säask, a producer of sailboats, executive director of the company Saare Yachts: "Regardless of the main markets being far away and complex logistics increasing expenditure and everything requiring a longer-term planning, the location on an island and dedicated workers have created a narrative that gives his company a competitive advantage. 'Our clients seem to like this story,' says Säask.

Saare Yachts produces four types of yachts, the most recent model of the most complex construction is called Saare 46. It is a 46-foot yacht and the first specimen was handed over to its Danish owner just two years ago acquiring the name 'Lucky Dane.' The owner of Kasse Paadid OÜ, Fred Keert is happy that Saaremaa has become a competence centre with its makers of models and moulds, strength tests and newly built boat tests. 'Another advantage is the presence of other manufacturers who can help with larger orders.' Kasse's rowing boats have been sold to Finland, Sweden, Norway, Latvia,

Germany and Belgium but also Estonians have bought over 2500 boats. Model Kasse 430 is the most bought rowing boat since Estonia's reindpendence according to Keert. The company has started making speedboats and recently Kasse bought two models, well-known in the Nordic countries, Nymar 520 and 610 from the Finns.

The largest and the best known boat building company is definitely the Baltic Workboats with its shipyard in Nasva with 200 employees. BWB has sold its production to 20 countries all over the world and it has built 190 ships, it is the largest manufacturer of aluminium ships in the Baltic Sea region. Its turnover in 2017 was over 31 million euros. In the last years the keyword in boat building has been hybrid technology and the islanders have nicely kept up with this trend. It is an environmentally friendly technology that helps to reduce operating costs. The first boat that BWB applied its hybrid technology on, was the pollution control patrol vessel Raju, handed over to the Estonian Police and Boarder Guard Board in summer 2018. To mark the significance of this top technology specimen, President Kersti Kaljulaid was asked to become its godmother. 'In November we handed over to Sweden a ferry built with the same technology. It transports passengers in the Stockholm archipelago.



We have just recently won the tender to build three hybrid ships for the Kiel Canal,' says member of board of the Baltic Workboats Jüri Taal, listing the projects based on the new technology.

BWB has manufactured ferries for the traffic between the small islands and the mainland of Estonia and recently Swedish clients ordered a 100-metre passenger boat but the main product of the company, as the name hints, are workboats. Aluminium and steel work-patrol boats and pilot speedboats have broken through to the USA market as well. BWB is planning to build its assembly plant on the eastern coast of the USA where prefabricated products would be sent from Nasva. The plant would be offering servicing of ships as well. The main emphasis would still be on Estonia says company manager Jaano Vink. His responsibilities are organising the company's daily work and increasing the production capacity of the shipyard in Nasva. 'As we are reinforcing our position in the USA market and our perspectives in the Middle East and in southeastern Asia are quite stable, our priority is to make all our resources in Nasva reach maximum efficiency' said Vink.

The main production of Alunaut OÜ are workboats as well but their production capa-

city is smaller than BWB's. 'In recent years our clients have turned out to be mostly law enforcement agencies and rescue units. Today our client portfolio comprises the Finnish and the Dutch Armies, the Swiss, German, Latvian and Swedish police forces, Estonian, German and Norwegian rescue and sea rescue units. The most exciting product has probably been the speedy, powerful police speedboat for the Brinz Lake in Switzerland with its top speed of 80 km/h and capacity 740 horse power,' an owner and executive director of Alunaut Mark Muru explains. As for the new projects, a rescue speed boat for Estonia, three speedboats for the Latvian Boarder Guard and a boat for a rescue unit of the Kristjansund Parish in Norway are being manufactured. Alunaut also has long-term plans. 'The coming years may see our first autonomous motor boat and the first zero emission ship – a workboat with electric transmission with no internal combustion engines or devices using fossil fuels on board.' How to keep the two hundred and more boat builders on the tiny island of Saaremaa? Jüri Taal emphasises that they are working hard in the name of that knowing that Nasva is the best location for boat building. 'In Saaremaa there are two schools – Kuressaare Vocational School and TalTech Maritime Economy

Centre – that teach small craft building. We work closely with both schools and we offer the BWB Small Craft Scholarship. The first five students have received their scholarships and we are hoping to bind them long-term to our company via training opportunities and personal experience.' Taal adds that the existing employees should not be neglected either. 'Our company pays good salaries and as each boat is unique, there will never be any shortage of challenges and opportunities for self-development.'

In order to maintain the high level of Saaremaa boat building, OÜ Lindvart, a producer of fiberglass small crafts, also works closely with schools. 'Saaremaa is the cradle of Estonia's boat building and we have always possessed vast amounts of knowledge, both theoretical and practical,' says company director Kristjan Kana. Lindvart considers client's needs and taylor-made products to be the basis of their company's strength. 'Although we offer standard bodies for smaller boats, there are no identical vessels in our production. We are geared toward making such yachts, boats or small crafts that reflect the character of their future owner.' Kristjan Kana promises that interesting work never will never come to an end on the island. |



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Food of a Pretty & Intelligent Person

TEXT & PHOTO : SILVIA PÄRMANN | ILLUSTRATION: EIKE MALVA

“We look into the mirror and we see that eating Baltic herring has made us beautiful and intelligent,” the writer Jüri Tuulik from the island of Abruca noticed while studying his image in the mirror. If you feel like going fishing for Baltic herring, you should try to get fishermen from Muhu or one of the other islands to take you aboard of their boat. The Baltic herring season is not year-round but luckily, other fish have similar magic powers and fortunately you do not need to have a boat or a pair of rubber boots or nets to catch them.

Willingness and a couple of useful telephone numbers will do the trick; the telephone numbers are available in tourist farms, hotels and at Saaremaa Tourist Information Centre.

Beauty requires sacrifice – that became very clear in Muhumaa where I had to sacrifice a good night’s sleep and get up very early for fishing. Arriving at about six or half past six at Kallaste Harbour I was still the last one to arrive.

As a compensation for the early rise I was able to enjoy a very zen moment in the boat on the mirror-like water in the early morning sun – at least until the next-door neighbours turned up in their boat to help pulling the nets. No-one expected the tourist to get involved! |





Sailing Ship Hoppet, a Treasure of Estonian Maritime History

The atmosphere of historical Kuressaare (Arensburg) is all around – in the beautiful old town, in the episcopal castle and in the streets where the vikings used to wander centuries ago. Throughout history Kuressaare has been a famous resort town for its mud baths and it continues to be very popular with holiday makers today.

Saaremaa used to be a significant Baltic Sea trading centre. At the beginning of the last century there were numerous transport options in Kuressaare but within the last 80 years a fair amount of them have ceased to exist. Today we find it hard to imagine that it would be possible to take a ferry from Tallinn to Kuressaare and back but Tallinn-Romasaare and Pärnu-Romasaare (today Roomassaare) were popular passenger ship routes back then. The network of passenger lines covered the whole of Estonian coast and the islands in that era with the longest shipping line going to London.

The transport hub used to be the area around Kuressaare stronghold. Today it is hard to imagine trains on the streets of Kuressaare but the railway line Kuressaar-

Romasaare (5km) started on the quay and continued through the centre offering holiday makers convenient transport from the harbour to the castle. Now the former railway station building accommodates a cafe right next to the moat.

Only 150 metres away from the castle's defence walls in the cove of Tori there is Kuressaare Yacht Harbour (formerly Arensbürger Yacht Club), the present home of the Prettiest Ship of Republic, the 92-year old schooner Hoppet. Therefore, we are at an ancient gateway to the sea with a beautiful promenade, a castle park, an episcopal castle, spa-hotels, an old railway station, a sandy beach, tennis courts, cafes and restaurants. A variety of pretty streets lead to the centre of town.



Private collection
Photo courtesy of A. Kirss

Estonia's only seaworthy historic sailing ship Hoppet (Hope) was made by the Estonian coastal Swedes in 1925-1926 and it is the flagship of our maritime history. Until the 1960s Hoppet was a working cargo vessel in Estonia, Finland and Sweden. Then it entered a new era, carrying people who wanted to breathe in the salty air of the sea. After a series of renovations the schooner was finally returned to Estonia and its renovation was completed by 2013. The master of the last big project was a wooden vessel builder for three generations – Lasse Kiiski of Estonian origin who restored a proper heart and soul to Hoppet.

Saaremaa is famous for its explorers and fine sailors. Let Hoppet help us keep and value centuries of authenticity, demonstrate its maritime romanticism and take us to an era of genuine sea dogs when ships were made of wood and men were made of iron.

Private collection, Photo courtesy of Kaljas Hoppet



The leader of the Republican Sailing Ships Society and the Hoppet is fully devoted to his mission to make sure that this gem of a schooner continues sailing in Estonian waters. A part of maritime history should be made available to the public again and the maritime traditions kept alive.

The Hoppet is in the centre of various festivals: Kuressaare Maritime Festival, Kuressaare Opera Festival, Kuressaare Castle Festival, Saaremaa Gin Festival etc. and it is going to visit other seaside cultural events as well.

We are grateful to all supporters of the maintenance of the Estonian historic schooner thus keeping alive the maritime culture and traditions.

The ship accommodates up to 50 people for summer rides. On board, Scandinavian and local coastal provisions, exotic and delicious food will be served. Take your pick from craft beers, Saaremaa homebrew, genuine sailors' rums from all over the world and naval officers' craft gins from Saaremaa and all over the Vikings area.

In summer we are a local tourist attraction inviting visitors on board to get acquainted with the vessel, to take photos and to climb the mast and to enjoy the view with a refreshing cocktail.

- » Shorter, 1-2-hour bay trips on the sea (with provisions upon request).
- » Sunset trips.
- » Concerts on the sea (jazz, romances, sea songs, guitar music, folk music).
- » Charter rides for groups and longer rides (4h rides, day trips etc.).
- » Rides to nearby islands (e.g. a day on Abruksa), to festivals and concerts.
- » Company summer outings, motivation rides, team building events.
- » Educational projects, camps etc.

In winter, admiral von Bellingshausen's lounge for up to 20 guests is open to celebrate anniversaries, to hold seminars, workshops and Christmas parties, upon request.



The moments spent on an old sailing ship will always stay with you. We look forward to seeing you on board of the Hoppet.

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Special Garage – Legendary classical motor carriages

Walking around Kuressaare and seeing such vehicles makes you wonder whether you are in a time machine. Classical stylish vehicles from 1930s-1960s carry you to the past and they come in handy for weddings, film shootings as well as for VIP-transfers. The vehicles roll happily by on Saaremaa, Muhumaa, Hiiumaa and on the mainland upon request.



Photo by Special Garage

> There is no need to go to the Pacific or to the Caribbean in search of the perfect island holiday on a golden sandy beach. The small islands of the Baltic Sea offer the same exotica, breathtaking views and peace and quiet, as those distant overseas islands.

To Tiny Paradise Islands near Saaremaa

TEXT: ANNA NIGESEN | PHOTO: PRIIT NOOGEN, ANNA NIGESEN, RUUDU RAHUMARU, MARGIT KÖRVITS

Saaremaa and Hiiumaa, the two bigger islands in Estonia, are wonderful but they have both been much explored. In search of a perfect holiday I began to explore the smaller islands and islets of Estonia to find a well-hidden gem, Estonia's own paradise island with plenty of sunshine, privacy, clean air and pure food. After months of hard work, I found four of them close to Saaremaa except the island of Ruhnu which only feels close at Kuressaare airport when the plane is about to take off.



Vilsandi, the Sunniest Estonian island

My voyage of discovery to Estonia's smaller islands began in Vilsandi, officially the sunniest island in Estonia. Vilsandi is the westernmost island of Estonia but it is separated from the summer hubbub of Kuressaare not only by distance but also by eras – a ride to the Port of Papissaare, where boats go to Vilsandi, feels like a trip to another era. This heritage protected road going to the Port of Papissaare and passing the Church of Kihelkonna, is the longest cobblestone road (3.1 km) in Estonia. The road gives you the right rhythm of life on the island and the rhythm is very slow. Vilsandi is 7 km long and 2.5 km wide and its 22-kilometre long coastline is incredibly varied: coral reefs, sandy beaches, gravel ridges full of fossils, limestone, pastures, tiny beaches and large rocks. On the western tip of the island there is the majestic Vilsandi Lighthouse, built in 1809. The years 1910 – 1941 saw one of the most interesting periods of the lighthouse under the guidance of Artur Toom. He started Vaika Bird Sanctuary that has developed into Vilsandi National Park. Right next to the lighthouse there is another Vilsandi landmark - a unique boathouse built by the Red Cross in 1859. During its operating years until 1939 the unsinkable rowing boat saved the lives of 88 seamen, two dogs and one cat. The true sights of Vilsandi are definitely its seals and birds. It's risky to guarantee visitors the seals but in reality you can hardly make a trip to Vilsandi in spring without seeing one. Vilsandi has one of Estonia's biggest grey seal rookeries. Just 30 people live on the island and in summer they can enjoy the company of thousands of water birds, by far exceeding the number of tourists. Bird watchers have no reason to worry about a possible lack of objects of interest. Vilsandi is so close to Saaremaa and the water between the two islands is often so shallow, that you can get from one island to another

by walking in knee-deep water, nevertheless it might be a good idea to book your boat trip well in advance in the summer.

Abruka, an Island of Writers and Orchids

All tiny islands and islets are special but Abruka keeps inspiring writers with its aura. There is a saying that if you meet anyone at all in Abruka, then that person will either be a fisherman or a writer. The work of the twin brothers Jüri and Ülo Tuulik, born in 1940, is deeply rooted in their native island's nature, people and history. Anton Hansen Tammsaare, the greatest Estonian novelist, used to go on holidays to Abruka. The number of permanent residents on Abruka has fallen to 20. After a short boat trip from Kuressaare we arrived on the island and strolled around for a bit. Very soon the feeling of being on an island disappeared because instead of the traditional junipers and broad views that would normally allow you to see the whole island, Abruka welcomes you with its lush primeval forest with its mysterious branchy and knobbly, 200-year-old lime trees. To enjoy the sea view you really have to walk very close to the sea where you will also see orchids. With our rather superficial knowledge of orchids we managed to recognize a few species, the total of species growing on coastal meadows and wooded meadows should be around ten. Please be aware that orchids are protected species. Orchid fans become enthusiastic about spotting various orchids in full bloom by the sea. So, we couldn't help smiling from ear to ear when we saw the Scottish mountain cows munching away on the coastal meadows. Indeed we saw innumerable birds, including the sea eagle. However, we did not meet one single writer.



Viirelaid, a One-Household Islet

On Viirelaid you can spot anyone from a long distance. In fact you can see the whole islet already from the port. Arriving on a tiny windswept islet might be a chilly experience but Viirelaid is not a lonely island in the middle of a mighty ocean. You can still spot the mainland and Saaremaa even on a rather foggy day. Since Viirelaid is just a kilometre from Saaremaa, we could have swum there or we could have taken a kayak. Still, it's much more convenient and a lot nicer to get a lift at Virtsu Port and arrive dry and content on the islet.

The islet is definitely not overpopulated or overdeveloped: just one lighthouse, one household and 500 sheep. The islet of the size of Kadriorg Park, the most famous park in Tallinn and the home of Presidential Palace (Viirelaid 81 ha and Kadriorg Park 85 ha) has never been home for too many people. It has been like a one-family islet in the most literal meaning of the word. Gabriel Grigorjev from Laimjala in Saaremaa was a lighthouse supervisor and he became a lighthouse guard on the islet, followed by his son Peeter who took over and looked after Viirelaid until his death in 1970. Today it is a one-community islet who have converted the old lighthouse guard's house into a guesthouse. We were welcomed by wide open veranda doors and a large plate of smoked fish. The old cowshed has been replaced by a small modern house built by KAOS architects and it can function as a seminar room, a civic centre or a village pub and last but not least – it provides protection from the sea wind. The other side is protected by the new house with its terrace open to the romantic sunset, complemented by the distant idle chatter of the sheep and the red lighthouse towering in the middle of it all, a visible landmark to everybody, made a bit excessive by the extremely weak likelihood of getting lost on the islet.



The Peace and the Singing Sands of Ruhnu

I arrived on Ruhnu only in early November. The best time to visit Ruhnu is definitely summer. The summer brings along the famous festival Ruhnu Rahu and you can enjoy the work of a top Estonian artist in *Kultuuriait*. Anyway, the autumn was the best time to find out why Ruhnu would be our most paradise-like island. When I recalled its mediterranean type sun in the following weeks, I always felt warmer.

The oldest Estonian wooden building or the oldest surviving wooden church built in 1644 is located on Ruhnu. On the hill of Haubjerre, the highest point of the island, there is a lighthouse designed by the famous engineer Gustav Eiffel. It was made in France and it replaced the old wooden structure in 1877. The lighthouse has a metal construction with four buttresses and a spiral staircase. It's the only surviving lighthouse of this type in the Baltic region.

There is a village, two shops, the famous above-mentioned wooden church and an even more famous bear which no-one has actually seen. The only sculpture on the island is dedicated to that bear. Ruhnu has always been a popular holiday destination with artists but the bear monument remains the only sculpture on the island. Ruhnu is an idyllic island. You should see, taste, touch and breathe it in, not read about it. Even the sands sing in Ruhnu and everybody always has time for you.

Should a longer summer vacation or a properly crispy winter break provide an opportunity, it is well worth visiting Hiiumaa, the big neighbour either by ferry in summer or by the unforgettable ice road in winter. |



ACCOMMODATION ON THE SMALL ISLANDS AND ISLETS

VILSANDI

Kusti tourist farm offers camping and accommodation in three double barns. The tourist farm arranges transport to the island upon request. Open only in summer.

ABRUKA

Vahtra farm, located right on the edge of a primeval forest and it is about 500 metres from the sea. Next to the farmhouse from 1928 there is a comfortable modern holiday house with capacity for 11 guests. Camping is also available.

Innu talu offers separate houses for accommodation, e.g. a 1.5-storey boathouse with two beds on the ground floor and a gallery on the top floor. Both, the ground floor and the top floor have sea views. You can bring your own food, whereas cooking and grilling appliances, pots, pans and a smoking oven are provided by the farm.

VIIRELAID

Viirelaiu Majakavahi holiday centre provides accommodation for to up to 100 people in summer and to 35 in winter. .

RUHNU

Ruhnu offers accommodation in its **7 tourist farms**. **Liise farm** is the largest with its sauna and a shop. **Limo Sauna** with its 10 beds is located on the prettiest beach on Ruhnu.

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Thanks to their mild climate and calcareous soil Saaremaa and Muhu possess rich flora and fauna.

Photo: Margit Kõrvits

THE LAND

The lighthouses and grand coastal landscapes are not the only gems of Saaremaa and Muhumaa. There are also the village of Koguva with its long stone fences, the windmills, thick forests as venues for nature photographers to get good shots of the moose, the wild boar and the foxes. There are welcoming nature trails at Viidumäe Nature Reserve and Vilsandi National Park with its wild orchids. Traditional farming is still there and the sheep are an integral part of the landscape of Saaremaa.

Saaremaa Safari

TEXT: VISIT SAAREMAA | PHOTOS: KARL JAKOB TOPLAAN

➤ The bird migration time in spring and the time of bird hatching is the most the most exciting time of the year for nature photographers. It's a special time and Saaremaa is one of the best places to be.

When I started with photography, I found all the birds and animals from Saaremaa very exiting. I have always really enjoyed the sea, lakes and all other water bodies and waterbirds started to attract me more and more. Of these, the most mysterious and interesting was the gray heron, and for a long time it was my biggest dream to capture its beauty on film. However, year after year, I feel a greater desire to photograph species that are not so commonly found or I that have never seen before. I feel that this is my chance to tell stories about the extraordinary nature of Saaremaa. One day I would like to photograph the big carnivores wolf and lynx.

Karl Jakob Toplaan, nature photographer

Young photographer Karl Jakob Toplaan started to take nature photography more seriously seven years ago when he was only 13 years old. With his images of Saaremaa he has repeatedly achieved prize-winning places in the Nature Photo of the Year, the biggest nature photo competition in Estonia.



You might meet a red deer with powerful horns in the autumn in Saaremaa. It's wedding time. Although the level of hormones at that time is high and the confrontations between the bulls may turn out to be fierce, most of this wedding season passes peacefully. The misty morning is idyllic.



The wingspan of the sea eagle can reach 2.5 meters, making it the king of Estonian birds. Whenever you have a little time to stop off the coast of Saaremaa, seeing an eagle is not uncommon - just keep your eyes open and watch the sky.



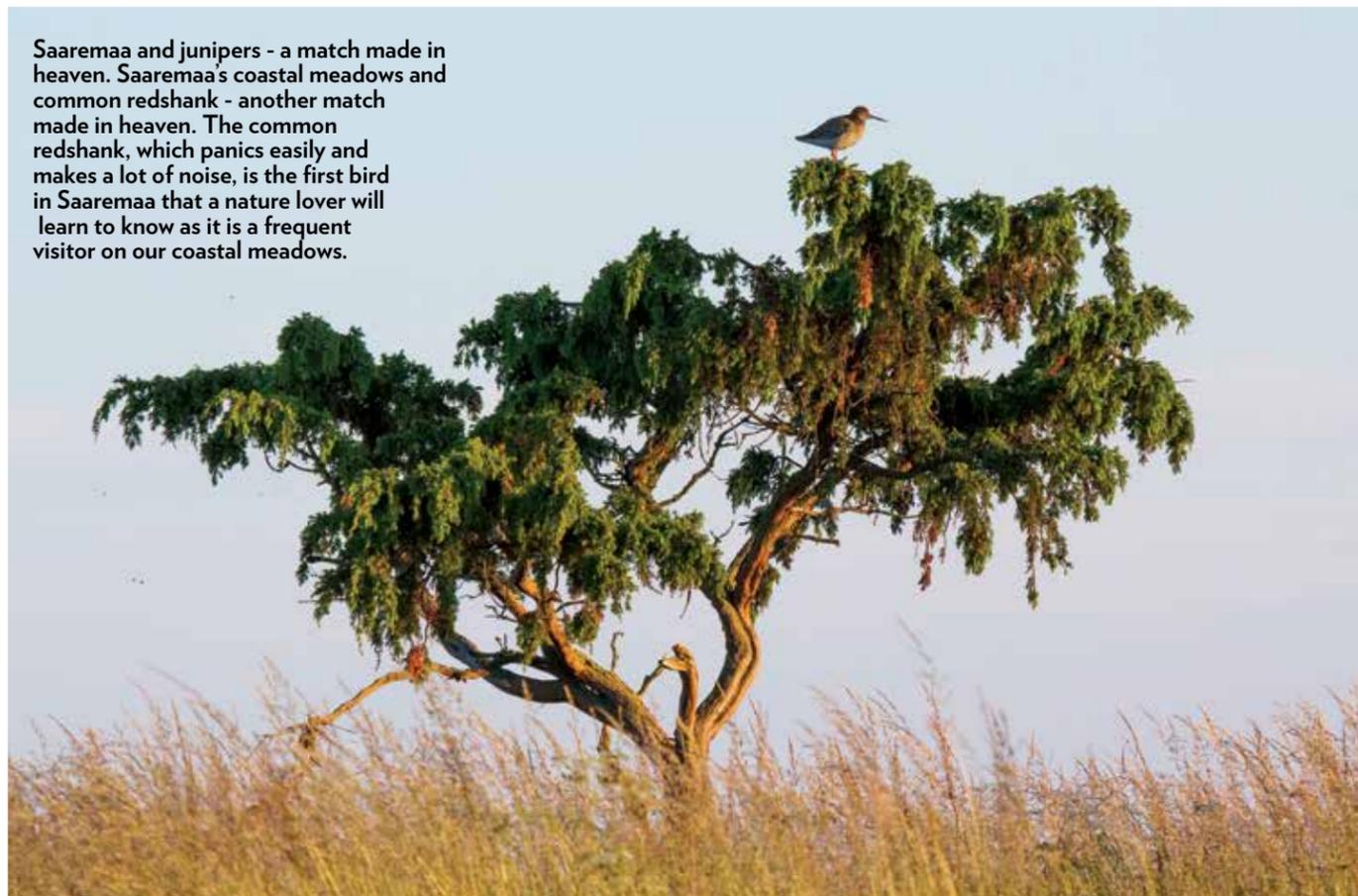
Gray seals are mostly encountered on smaller islets where they feel safe. They are disturbed mainly by fishermen and ornithologists. This picture was taken in spring in Kirurahu islet.



The bearded reedling is a bird that has been encountered by only a few - because it prefers to stay in thick reeds. In order to meet this exotic-looking bird, you need to wade into thick reed beds. If you meet that bird you will get a positive surprise. They are rather bold birds whose acrobatic skills will excite anyone.



The common tern chooses its partner for life, expressing its affection with gifts. A delicious fish is the best gift for a loved one. The picture was taken using a floating photo shield that makes it easier to access the birds and leaves the photographer unnoticed.



Saaremaa and junipers - a match made in heaven. Saaremaa's coastal meadows and common redshank - another match made in heaven. The common redshank, which panics easily and makes a lot of noise, is the first bird in Saaremaa that a nature lover will learn to know as it is a frequent visitor on our coastal meadows.



For fox puppies, every new smell is interesting. When they start to like the smell of a flower they can sniff it over and over again. It gives the photographer a good opportunity to capture the moment.

A low-angle photograph of a wooden building, possibly a barn or a house, with a window. A white lace curtain is hanging from the window. To the left, there is a wooden lattice structure, possibly a roof or a balcony. The sky is bright and clear, with a sun flare visible. The overall scene is warm and inviting.

Here We Come!

On the Feasibility of Holiday Making in the Countryside Today

TEXT: SILVIA PÄRMANN | PHOTOS: ANNA-KAI TÖRS, SILVIA PÄRMANN, MARGIT KÕRVITS, TOURIST FARM MANAGERS

➤ On a warm summer day Mrs Coffee Grinder and her husband John from Tallinn arrive at a farmyard on Muhu island, accompanied by a vigorous Red-Haired Lady on the rear seat. They are determined to spend their summer holidays on a beautiful island but the Coffee Grinder's tantrums turn peaceful daily life on the farm upside down. If have never heard this story, you have never been to Estonia before. We have all grown up with this story I finally decided to go and see what it all actually looked like.



fashion house windows of Paris and Milan tend to be like the humanitarian aid clothes that were sent to Estonia in the 1990s, Pädaste is still not a place where you feel that relaxed. If you want to feel at home for real, drive to the proper countryside, to a farm similar to the one where the Coffee Grinder and John arrived.

› Pädaste manor complex as a perfect place for relaxing and dreaming is a peaceful refuge, at the same time encouraging its guests to relax in an active way and to explore the neighbourhood. Experience the sensuous spa treatments and taste the most delicious meals.



^ In the segment of luxurious hotels, Pädaste is probably the best known Estonian hotel in the world, definitely holding the largest number of awards. tunnustuse poolest päris kindlasti.

On a nice autumn day we arrived in the yard of a country house in Muhu. That's where the similarities between the most famous Estonian story of an island summer holiday and reality end. Pädaste manor with its lambskin carpets, large windows and fireplaces is awash with peaceful harmony and it just smelled so good! It is definitely a country home but not a traditional country home. Pädaste is a former residence of a nobleman in the middle of the unspoiled countryside with its picturesque views of the inlets, the coast and coastal meadows of the Baltic Sea. The manor's kitchen uses vegetables grown in the manor's own vegetable garden but the dishes are anything but plain farm food. Chef Stefan Berwanger creates meals inspired by the cuisine of the Nordic islands, thus maintaining the position of Alexander restaurant as the best. Instead of a normal sauna there is a spa that has repeatedly won the prestigious title of the best Estonian spa at the World Travel Awards. People flee the big cities to seek refuge in Pädaste, a holiday place on a tiny island, just to be in the middle of wildlife, to go for walks, to go cycling, to read books, to relax in the spa. For the residents of Tallinn, ending up by the sea or in the middle of woods is not extraordinary, so for us the main attraction of Pädaste were its famous dinners. Fairly soon a cold Estonian rain started to fall, forcing us indoors several hours before the dinner. We just strolled around, sat in one of the many cosy nooks with our books and a glass of wine. This kind of "imprisonment" did not really classify as a terrible

punishment or a misfortune: Pädaste has every reason to be a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, a chain of the world's most luxurious small hotels. At the height of the manors in Estonia, lords of the manor were well-travelled, internationally known people who promoted culture. Local peasants had a love-hate relationship with them – after the abolishment of serfdom a number of Estonian peasants carried on working for them in spite of the fact that the standards of landlords varied widely. Lots of ideas were copied in the construction and design of Estonia's public buildings and homes. Manors were role models for managing and building households. In some ways, Pädaste as a luxury hotel copies the role of the manors. The atmosphere, the recipes and the level of service of Pädaste make it a role model for lots of hotel managers in Estonia. Although every moment in Pädaste is thoroughly enjoyable, it is quite different from genuine country life on an island. At the first light there is no crowing rooster waking you up, there is no muddy sheepdog rushing to greet you, leaning its huge paws on your shoulders and licking your face. If you develop a craving for the most common cheese sandwich and a cup of coffee, then you would probably not get them as none of the kitchen personnel would have heard of such things, let alone how to make them. You should not dream of dragging yourself in your long-term favourite pyjamas and with uncombed hair to the breakfast table. Although today's ladiesware collections in the

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Sheep Are All Over the Place

Andruse Eco-Tourist Farm (andrusetalu.ee) is by no means offering a trendy lifestyle but has definitely hit the target with the from-the-farm-directly- to-the-restaurant-table chain.

Lots of hotels have their own vegetable and herb gardens, sometimes on metropolitan rooftops but very few accommodations offer them as honestly as Andruse Farm does.

There are five cosy holiday homes in the farmyard and the place is equally relevant for having wedding parties and for discussing development strategies in board meetings. When you arrive with your family, go and see the sheep first! If you do that, you might postpone tasting the delicate oven-baked lamb with vegetables and potatoes. Andruse Farm grows a lot more in its fields - it all tastes good and is worth taking a look at.

Rahtla Village where the farm is situated, is an equally exciting place. Right by the farm, in the woods there are the old lime kilns. In the old days lime burning for hundreds of lords of the manor and thousands of peasants on poor arable land generated significant extra income.

Tourists are always looking for seaside accommodation. For some reason the local people prefer to hide their homes on windless edges of woods. The pretty pebble beach is five kilometres from the tourist farm, within a proper bicycle ride.

There are plenty of houses by the sea in Saaremaa where urban folks can make their dreams come true.



Soela beach houses provide accommodation all year round, each house accommodating up to six people.

so instead of flour sacks there are comfortable beds and the solar-powered hot water in the shower. With Sõrve being one of the sunniest spots of Estonia, you should not worry. You are guaranteed to be able to see sunrise on the sea from your bed; although I can't imagine why anyone on his summer holiday in Saaremaa would like to get up to see the sunrise. Furthermore, as the sun rises in the middle of the night in Estonia in summer, about five in the morning, any proper holidaymaker would rather sleep in. The sun and the surrounding wildlife – birds, grasshoppers, junipers and the sea – can easily say “Good morning!” a couple of hours later.

I am not saying that the accommodation related websites overplay the natural charms of Saaremaa. They have actually reduced the number of the creatures you may come across in relaxing in the wilderness – for some reason the mosquito buzzing does not get mentioned next to bird singing and grasshopper chirping at all. Beware of the mosquitos and make sure you bring some mosquito repellent along with your sunscreen.

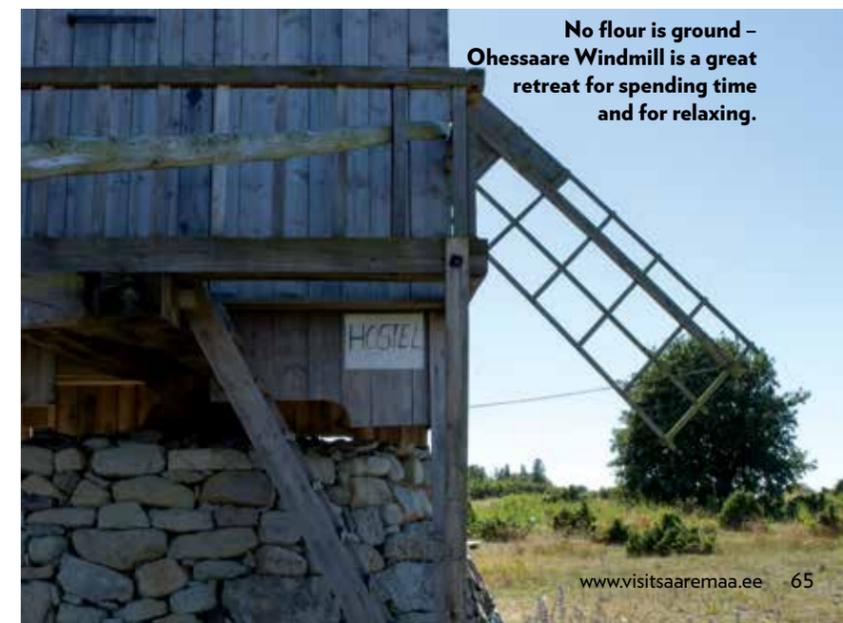
Affordable Million Dollar View

When the refined manor atmosphere and the daily farm life are not quite your cup of tea and you would like to have your holiday in privacy and to know once in a lifetime what it feels like to live in a house with a million dollar view by the sea, in the forest, the beach houses at Soela Harbour are the perfect choice (soela.ee). Enjoy the sea, fresh air, a lot of light and hardly any passers-by!

The houses are modern buildings of an outstanding design, completed at the end of 2017. The houses were designed by a renowned architect Vahur Sova whose work is usually not to be seen in quiet, remote places like North Saaremaa but he has designed three beach houses and a net barn in Soela, each of them having their own character but merging nicely with their surroundings. The cosy atmosphere transfers itself to the interiors of the houses with lots of books to read on the seaside terraces, three bedrooms and a kitchen/living-room that would easily accommodate a family or a circle of friends. The size of the kitchen is perfect, so are the furnishings, so cooking on your holiday will hardly feel like a punishment.

Move to a Proper Windmill!

I am not trying to say that staying in the countryside cannot be comfortable. Honestly, it is quite a relief when at the end of the world, you find a super comfortable bed, a hot shower and an internet connection. However, if you would like to get even closer to nature and by-gone farm life, i.e. the way many people imagine what life used to be like, you have to go a bit further. Proceed toward Sõrve and find the Ohessaare windmill (saaremaatuulik.ee). It was built less than ten years ago exactly on the same spot where the original post mill used to stand. Providing all necessary grinding equipment never became an issue,



No flour is ground – Ohessaare Windmill is a great retreat for spending time and for relaxing.

**TROUT FISHING
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www.pidulaforell.ee



The best option to stay in the middle of the primeval wilderness is to bring your own tent – there are camp sites galore in Saaremaa and on the neighbouring islets.

PRFOODS

TASTY HIGH-QUALITY FISH FROM SAAREMAA

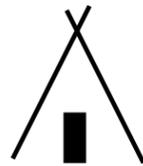


HOTELS OF KURESSAARE:

Idyllic Kuressaare possesses a wide variety of hotels from boutique hotels and spa-hotels to rental apartments.

- 🏠 The town centre has retained its atmosphere of the era when it was known as the gem of the small Livonian towns and this atmosphere survives in the small hotels on the main street and around it, e.g. **EKESPARRE**, **ARENSBURG**, **GRAND ROSE SPA** and the gem of the modern concrete architecture the **JOHAN SPA HOTEL**.
- 🛀 The seven spa-hotels with **GOSPA** (gospa.ee) as the best-known, are definitely the main attraction where in addition to regular saunas and pools you can enjoy massages and various treatments. In addition to wellness spas there are two excellent medical spas **RÜÜTLI** and **MERI**.
- 🍷 The truly characteristic product of Saaremaa is the **GOSPA treatment line Kena** which uses the best natural ingredients growing on the island.
- 🍷 Make sure you experience the saunas of the **GRAND ROSE SPA** and have a good swishing with a proper whisk in their steam sauna.

Into Wilderness with a Tent or Spot a Forest Hut



Windmills qualify as buildings, thus serious adventurers pack a tent along their mosquito repellent. You will find plenty of places in Saaremaa to put up your tent. Elda campsite area in Vilsandi National Park is perfect for plant, seal, bird and butterfly watching.

Harilaid makes a very special place for camping. It has never been populated and once you are there you feel as if you have reached the end of the world, far away from any civilisation and completely at the mercy of the forces of nature.

If you have no tent, you can still stay in the wilderness. The State Forest Management Centre has built two forest huts in Saaremaa and staying in them is free of charge. Sopi forest hut is the first registered gamekeeper's place in Saaremaa from 1795 when Campenhausen made the first forest management programme where he noted that the gamekeeper in Sopi forest was Kiviste Andres. The forest hut is surrounded by a primeval forest with interesting erratic blocks, wartime anti-tank lines, old farm stone fences and a driveway built on brushwood. The hut comprises three sleeping places, a table, benches and a hearth. There are also an earth closet, a woodshed and a covered bonfire place. Please bring your own drinking water! Ninanuki forest hut near the sea on Triigi peninsula is another similar place, accommodating four people. You can stay in both huts in winter! To make sure that the huts are available, please send an e-mail in advance to: info.vilsandi@rmk.ee

PRFOODS.EE
VETTEL.EE

Heimon
GOURMET

Stylish Farm Architecture

TEXT: KARIN PAULUS | PHOTO: PRIIT NOOGEN

Natural isolation has allowed the islanders to live their own lives and from an architectural point of view to develop in a different manner, borrowing from the mainland as well as respecting the old customs. The isolation of the Western islands was made more severe by the Soviet regime which created the so-called border zones where special entrance permits were needed. As a result of this, there are a lot of old buildings still standing, including ruins and impeccably renovated summer houses.

In Saaremaa and Muhu people used to live clustered in villages but there used to be also fishermen's villages stretched along the coast with their own landing sites. Such landscapes were made even more vivid by the nets hanging on drying poles which today are rather used as ornaments.

The old huts that provided shelter to the fishermen and functioned as drying sites for nets make an even more archaic impression today. In order to preserve the old lifestyle, the three net houses from Saaremaa – Nasva, Toomalõuka and Alvi have been moved to the Open Air Museum in Tallinn.

In older farmsteads you still see that in addition to the old style barn dwelling there were lots of outhouses in wealthier farmsteads, e.g. separate granaries, storages for food and clothes, a cowshed, a barn and a sauna. There are no longer many traditional summer kitchens that were often built from the local dolomite in Saaremaa and Muhu.

Old and newly stacked stone fences are a characteristic feature of this region and there are fewer wooden fences made from rot resistant wood e.g. juniper because due to the labour-intensive method no-one can be bothered to make them today. Often, entrances were made a bit grander, in Saaremaa and Muhu the gate posts were sometimes made of stone. Foot gates were also decorated and vanity wood carvings were quite common.

Old-fashioned little post mills are truly great, their characteristic feature is the body that can be turned all the way round by a tail-pole. Like the modern wind generators, the windmills were built onto higher and clearer spots. The framework of the body covered in vertical boards over the stone base is mounted on a main post, during the grinding the arms used to be sails or boards. Today the most astonishing site of a restored windmill is the fine courtyard

of Kuressaare Castle. This amazing windmill was built following the example of a 17th century ruined mill from Jaagu farm in the village of Kõruse. There is a group of windmills in Angla and the producer of Saaremaa vodka with the picture of a windmill on the label has helped to renovate one old traditional mill each year. An observant eye will spot original remains next to them.

In addition to the flour making procedure in a windmill it would be a good idea to introduce the old draw-well to children as well, as thanks to electricity the running water is a common convenience in the countryside today.

All in all, the most precious gems of Estonian landscapes are the barn dwellings. The stretched out buildings are covered by high hipped roofs with wide eaves that would provide shelter from rain. The roofs were first made of straw, later from reed, then from shingles and staves. Older buildings were made of local materials like timber and stone. With practically no paint being used, over the years the beams turned grey, perfectly harmonising with the limestone walls. Such buildings are cosily archaic and they help us realise how simple or even how medieval life in the countryside was until fairly recently. The centre of life was the threshing room with a stove, this also was the scene for indoor work and originally for sleeping as well. This room was adjoined to the threshing barn and in larger houses, further back there were tidier chambers. The walls were basically windowless, like the old granaries and sheds where light and fresh air would enter through the door, accompanied by a tiny, shuttered opening. Larger windows started to appear at the end of the 19th century. As the actual threshing took place in the threshing room as well, the floors, covered in dirt, clay or slabs of limestone, extremely shocking today, were actually fairly practical back then.

Shy visitors who would rather not peek into people's yards, will find Mihkli Farm Museum (*Mihkli Talumuuseum*) in the village of Viki near Kihelkonna on the Western coast. This fine complex comprises a house and surviving outbuildings including a carriage shed, barns and a cowshed. The buildings are filled with authentic farm staff and various educational entertainment is available.

It is definitely worth a visit as a fair amount of authenticity is still to be found there. |





The first owner of the Tolli 3 building, landlord Nolcken used it as a summer house, Mihkel Salong built a piano factory next to the dwellings.

Modern Island Home in an Old Piano Factory

TEXT AND PHOTOS: SILVIA PÄRMANN

This is a complex polyphony of causes that makes us pick one or another house when looking for a new home. It can be the ancient park at the end of the street, the proximity of the main street with cafés or the medieval bishop's castle, wonderful neighbours or the fascinating history of the house itself. Although everything can be said about the old piano factory on Tolli Street in Kuressaare, it is the house's own story that leaves everything else in the shade. But surprisingly, this was not the main argument for creating her new home for music loving Helle Susi. The role of her new home in the life and work of one of the Estonia's forgotten piano masters began to emerge only a few years later.

In Saaremaa, where people used to live and still live in farms and small townhouses, the factories never had the size of the famous New York former factories that started the now global loft culture. In the small town of Kuressaare, the factory and apartments where under the same roof back in the days of piano production. So it is not a radical change of lifestyle that has happened in that house.

Although the interior of Mihkel Salong's piano factory cannot be compared to the old days style and vibe.

Mihkel Salong was born in 1877 in Lümanda, Saaremaa and went to school there. He left for St. Petersburg to look for a better job. Many Estonians lived there at the turn of the century. And there he became a piano master and set up his own piano industry. He participated in international exhibitions, his pianos received awards - and then he lost everything during the October Revolution.

He returned to Saaremaa where he started everything from the beginning. His first factory was at Väike-Sadama Street and in 1935 he moved to a more spacious house on Tolli Street. On the first floor of the park-side wing of the house was his son's photo studio. Karl Salong was a respected photographer - but he also worked at the piano factory.

Mihkel Salong's business was successful, his pianos were well-known for their sound and strong construction. The pianos were made only on order. Salong continued to participate in the exhibitions, and won so many medals that they could no longer

paint all the awards into the pianos. There is a number on every piano made by Mihkel Salong, the biggest number found so far is 1500.

But everything changed with World War II. The workshop was nationalized, son Karl was deported to Siberia, where he died. Mihkel and his wife Marie, after a short stay in Tallinn, were able to move back to what was their former house but use only two rooms and a kitchen. Mihkel lived in the same house until his death in 1946, Marie left in 1961 to Canada, to where their daughter had fled.

However, the presence of Mihkel Salong is still visible to the eye - one piano has returned home.

This and the old cross-stitched tapestry on the wall above the piano are in a harmonious dialogue with modern furniture and lighting. The home has taken the best of the factory years and of modern design.

Visitors are first welcomed in the dining room that is illuminated by Tom Dixon lights from the Beat collection. Though their name seems to be related to music, their inspiration lays actually in pots and pans - which, of course, are also suitable for creating sounds. The interior and furniture are surprisingly locally made. The long dining table was made in Saaremaa by local company Kalla Mööbel, and the authors of the kitchen are local designers Kaido Kivi and Hannele Kivi whose company KiviProjekt produced it. Kaido and Hannele Kivi are the ones who helped to create the interior of the apartment.

Natural materials that are very characteristic to Saaremaa like limestone, stone and wood are used. No room is overloaded with furniture, there is space left for thoughts and music.

The need for open space is the main reason why the owner decides to build the sauna on the basement floor. Only there was no proper basement. As a result of some excavation, the apartment was two-storey. Now it can also accommodate a number of friends in summertime.

As perfect as the pianos made there is the lighting system. This is a smart house that allows you to easily increase light and manage technical issues.

The factory does no longer mean hard work. When you step in there you'll have a feeling that the holiday just began. |



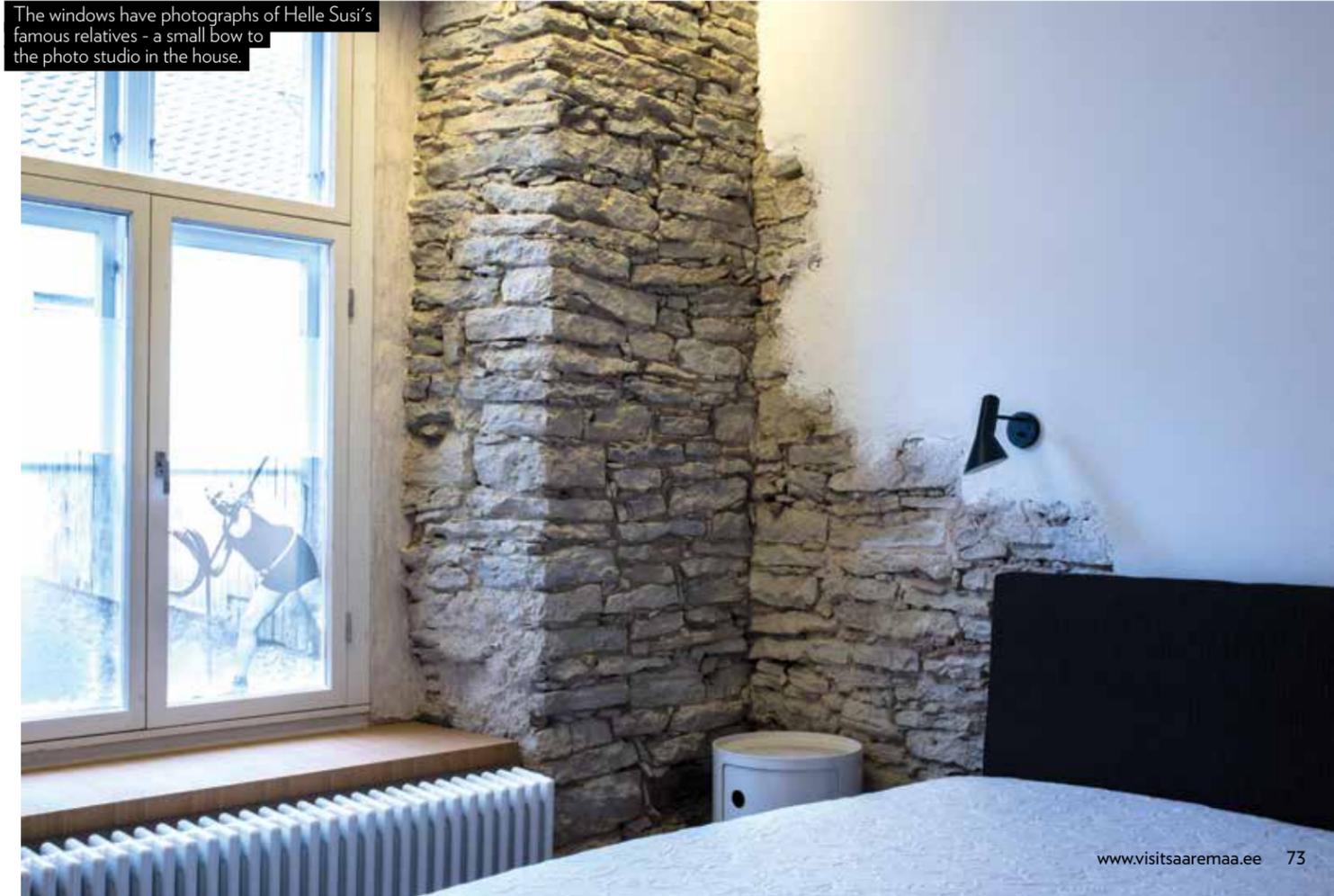
Pianos keys come from Germany but the whole woodwork was done in the same house.



The windows have photographs of Helle Susi's famous relatives - a small bow to the photo studio in the house.



The name on the piano was painted and decorations engraved by Mihkel's son Karl.



Saaremaa Is an Excellent Place for Studying and Teaching

Jana Raadik Cottrell,
Experience Economy Lecturer

Something which is quite common for the islanders living in a cold climate, can make a strong impression on people who live in different climates. Taking a ferry over the frozen sea can be exotic and impressive for those who have never experienced it at home, not to mention the famous ice roads.

Teaching entrepreneurship at Centre for Blue Economy is based on the experience economy as a new economic model which takes into account the changing market situation, values and methods of communication. The new economic thinking means that we are not offering just products or services but experiences that we can acquire by using these products or services and they are important for the receiver, hence messages and stories count.

The education received from the Centre for Blue Economy is also an experience, offered by the school in the field of the experience economy. The study environment provides an added value and e-courses offer more exciting opportunities. Centre for Blue Economy is participating in the international tourism education project 'Boosted' which enables colleges in three countries to share their



knowledge via free e-courses in English. In April Saaremaa will be hosting an international Boosted Spring School.

The studies at the Centre emphasise the importance of creative thinking in entrepreneurship. You need to possess curiosity, an ability to analyse and a vision of your goals. Let your dreams fly.

➤ **The studies at the Centre emphasise the importance of creative thinking in entrepreneurship.**



TalTech Maritime Academy Centre for Blue Economy study programmes:

› Business and Experience Management

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www.taltech.ee/kuessaare

Boosted tourism e-course: www.projectboosted.eu

Tarmo Sahk,
Head of Laboratories, Small Craft Competence Centre

I came to Saaremaa because it is nice here and it is the only place where I can study shipbuilding and practise science.

Studies at TalTech Centre for Blue Economy give broad foundation in shipbuilding as well as in everything connected to it – in materials

➤ **There is no such thing as an unemployed boat builder.** science, production management, entrepreneurship,

economy etc. Professional teachers know how to make the most complex ideas easily graspable for the students.

Furthermore, the local marine industry and the Small Craft Competence Centre offer excellent opportunities for work and training. There is no such thing as an unemployed shipbuilder.

➤ **I like this school so much that the distance from home is not an issue.**

Robert Markus Liiv,
Studying motion graphics

I am from Viimsi and I am a student of the department of design in Kuressaare Regional Training Centre. I am studying to become a designer of animated graphics and I am in my first year. Why did I come here?

I love this school. When I was at basic school, I took photos and did other creative stuff in my spare time. My parents were really supportive of my idea to come and study in Saaremaa.

I particularly like the specialist classes. In colour studies we had an exhibition in different colour harmonies. The others painted on paper but I used my Photoshop grim art style for the same work. In another lesson we drew a tattoo on paper, we vectorised it in Adobe Illustrator and later we added it to the picture of our hand in Photoshop. I am a student of video studies and I am really looking forward to these classes getting started.

The school has an excellent pool of computers for design programmes and I really like it. Although we have not studied video processing programmes in school yet, I have tried them at home already.

You really cannot learn everything on the Youtube. Teachers teach from their own experience. The basics of photography just do not cover everything you need to know. When studying with a proper teacher, you get answers right away. When I was independently studying Photoshop, I gave up at least six times because I got really confused. When we started studying Illustrator, our teacher Erik had answers to all our questions. I definitely prefer to study with a teacher rather than using Youtube videos. Everything settles better and after all, the teachers know how to teach.

The school's Design Lighthouse building has everything I need. I am happy that I can use all these opportunities in my free time as



well. I happened to have some free time and by accident I found a student company whose products I could take photos of in the school's photo studio. I can't wait to start my own student company. I am really looking forward to commencing managerial and promotional work and I would love to find out how other people are doing the same thing.

Thanks to the school I have participated in my first photo contest. I did not excel but I got lots of experience on how to act under pressure and it motivated me to study more. All my teachers are really nice, they explain everything patiently and calmly.

Saaremaa is very calm on the whole, definitely much calmer than Tallinn and the people are friendly. In Viimsi or in Tallinn it is not uncommon not to say Hello in the shops whereas in Saaremaa people talk to you as if you were an old friend. I am still not used to a shop assistant starting a conversation with me but I am really enjoying it.

Saaremaa has plenty of interesting spots for taking photographs. I am interested in history, especially the era of the vikings and I have watched documentaries on vikings. In Saaremaa near Salme village there are the archeological sites of the viking ships. There are also Kaali, Panga cliff, Koigi marsh and the tip of Sörve Peninsula which I would like to take photos of.

Travelling between home and school is definitely time-consuming but it is not too bad. The school reimburses the tickets. I like this school so much that the distance from home does not matter.

Elise Sule,
Studying to become a spa therapist

➤ **Coming to school feels more like a mini-vacation.**



www.ametikool.ee

I work as a masseuse at the V Spa in Tartu but when I can come to an agreement with my employer, I take a week off work, head to the island and it is like having a minivacation. I like to switch my Tartu pace for Kuressaare pace where I can have some peace and quiet. Travelling is the most tiring part but you get used to it. Some buses are really comfortable and let me watch all the new films.

Our job offers a wide variety of duties and tasks. It never gets boring and it keeps us busy all the time. I want to train up in manicure, pedicure and face treatments. If you have multifunctional skills and you know how to attend to visitors' needs, you have all sorts of opportunities all the time. That's why I chose this school.



Photo: Kristina Mägi

CULTURE

Thanks to their long-term isolation from the mainland, Saaremaa and the neighbouring islands and islets have retained their character and uniqueness. However, the seafarers' cosmopolitan spirit and modern times have brought international music festivals to the islands. Today, modern and traditional styles peacefully co-exist in everything from farm architecture to eating habits.

Islanders wearing their imposing folk costumes are a common sight at festivals and concerts.

You Need to Make an Effort to Have a Cultural Break

TEXT: MELE PESTI | PHOTOS: MARGIT KÕRVITS, KRISTINA MÄGI



Road sign to Mustjala Music Festival.

› When I lived in Tallinn, I ended up going to the cinema, theatre, concert or an exhibition every other day. Then my life got the the stage when I needed to concentrate a bit more and so, I decided to make that easier by moving to Saaremaa – a place that to my mind was going to be uneventful enough not to interfere with my nerdy life. My friends were telling me ‘You are not going to last long, boredom will just kill you’. It didn’t take me long to realize that it was quite the opposite.



Pidula Manor during Mustjala Music Festival.

Music Breaks Hearts and Borders between Countries

Music is doing well here. A few Estonian singers and musicians come from Saaremaa. It could be the musical way of speaking, it could be the great music teachers. Who knows? The blond maid in the song "Saaremaa valss" (The Waltz of Saaremaa) has become so famous thanks to Georg Ots' singing that generations of Finns have been looking for her in Saaremaa. An internationally known jazz guitarist Tiit Paulus has been helping the island's young guitarists to start their careers and Ivo Linna used to enchant girls in his school band back in the mists of time.

Saaremaa is the native island of a songwriter and saxophone player Maria Faust who has been awarded several Scandinavian music prizes as well as of a diverse guitarist Andre Maaker. These two excellent musicians also share a lot of their talent with their native island. Maria and her renowned colleagues organise rhythm and improvisation camps and Andre organises guitar camps where the young people and the young spirits can practise playing under the guidance of top musicians. Final concerts are open to everybody, guitar camps are accompanied by Kuressaare Guitar Weeks, offering a week of concerts by excellent bands.

No-one has ever counted all of the summer music events in Saaremaa. More sophisticated Estonians know the opera festival, the younger generation knows *I Land Sound* and the jazz fans know *Juu Jääb* but there are more. The Chamber Music Festival offers good quality music with its professional vocal group and a healthy portion of fado, tango or flamenco. Church Music festivals of local choral music and classical music are held in Kihelkonna in July.

The tradition of public summer concerts dates back to 1841 when the first mud baths were opened and the ladies wearing long light dresses and carrying parasols together with the gentlemen wearing suits would be walking toward the band stand to enjoy a warm summer night and music. Since 1997 when the tradition was restored, there have been concerts in the park on Sundays.

Estonian and international musicians play music at the cultural centre. Sometimes you need to know where to look for a concert. In Kuressaare Castle you may spot a concert in its chapter house. In town take a peek into St. Laurence Church where the whole year round, once a week in the summer a series of Edoardo Narbona Organ Concerts are held.

The island's young cellists and double bass players play together in the spirited band C-kids playing classical music as well as interpretations of pop, rock and folk music. C-kids also performs at various public events and anniversaries throughout the year. There might be a good concert in the restaurants of Arensburg or Mosaiik. Also a decor shop Maru Äri on the outskirts of town will be holding concerts with the best musicians from the mainland. A new concert and party venue is the KEK building on the edge of town. There are a number of other concerts, e.g. a secret festival From Etno to Techno, a Party of Woollen Socks in Lümända Lime Park or the Vilsandi Trance taking place on the neighbouring island.

Cinema Came Back to Life, Theatre Is Its Elder Brother

Ten years ago there was one discotheque in Kuressaare showing some random films. Now we have the high-tech Apollo Cinema showing mostly international blockbusters in its two halls and there is the TeatriKino screening classic movies. Occasionally filmmakers come to the island to meet the audience and Estonian and Baltic filmmakers may choose Kuressaare Theatre as the venue of the premiere of their films.

Student films compete in the spring and the best of them are screened at the Mini Film Festival, the autumnal Anima Festival provides an opportunity to see and make animated cartoons. In summer evenings you can have a break from admiring the starry skies to enjoy films, wrapped in a blanket in a tender night on the terrace of *Kuursaal* in the Castle Park. At the end of the year when the nights get long and dark, the *TeatriKino* holds its festival Kuressaare Film Week, showing new movies from all over the world. 2019 sees a newcomer, the Thule Centre in the centre of Kuressaare.

A professional theatre was opened in Kuressaare in 1935, the reorganised theatre with its permanent troupe made its reappearance in 1999. The theatre repertoire includes a couple of its own productions and a lot of guest performances. Islanders and guests have warmly received the summer shows that frequently dwell on the sea and the island life style.

There Is No Shortage of Folk

The folk culture of Saaremaa has limitless resources including music, dance, home-grown and imported customs, amateur and professional culture. Guests are always welcome, either as members of an audience or as participants.

In January there is a dance festival for young children in Kärla, a day festival of the Estonian zither in Orissaare and a school dance festival in Kuressaare. In December there is an outdoor winter song festival in Kihelkonna, come rain or come shine. There are plenty more folk song and dance festivals, most of them in the summer. On Thursdays throughout the summer there are free folk dance concerts on the band stand of Kuressaare Castle Park.

Kuressaare Folk Club has been a breath of fresh air. Every month the two musicians, Leana and Hartwig, now also residents of the island, bring some cool folk bands to Saaremaa. It is an old custom to celebrate the Midsummer Day in Saaremaa, hence lots of Estonians gather on the island. You would find a party with a bonfire and some live music in almost every bigger village on the island on the 23th June or even a couple of days earlier. In Kuressaare Beach Park you would find a bonfire and a folk band playing. In August there is a festival Kärla Stripe (*Kärla Triip*), celebrating the pretty striped pattern of the Kärla national costume skirt.

Two Arty Islands Next to One Another

You can enjoy fine arts in the exhibition halls and streets of Saaremaa, there is an active art group 'Kontrast'. Kuressaare Castle makes the mightiest host of art with its exhibition hall in the basement and several temporary display rooms, including the Tower Cafe (*Tornikohvik*), the tallest exhibition site with the

best views in town. In summer the gunpowder and cannon cellars are open as well. The key words for the 2019 exhibitions are fairly militaristic: weapons, hunting trophies, knights but also the Opera Festival's 20th Anniversary Exhibition etc.

The Town Hall Gallery (*Raegalerii*) is in Kuressaare Town Hall, right next to the tourist centre. There are the Cultural Centre, Saaremaa Art Studio and the Time House (*Ajamaja*), and Külliki Järvila's House Gallery where you will find art exhibitions. In the Art Studio workshops you can create art with your own hands. The Edukantor Gallery has a permanent exhibition of Estonian contemporary classic art.



In the summer a cafe/shop, a handicraft shop and the Musta Jala Gallery open in Mustjala. There are several art centres in Muhu. The Estonian Artists Union farm-residence of art and innovation in Nõmmküla brings together international artists. The picturesque Koguva village is like a museum on its own, there are the Museum of Muhumaa and the Art Stables of Koguva, both displaying the art of the Baltic countries.

In Kuressaare as well as in Orissaare you can experience some outstanding street art. In Kuressaare peek behind Saaremaa Valls, take a look at the wall of the old bakery on Kohtu street and at the plot next to the Secondary School for Adults and the more adventurous might drop in on the ghost house on Kaare street. You can see the work of an ex islander Izak Mora by the pond behind the dairy factory and behind Edukantor in the centre of town, as well as at an exhibition in the Cultural Centre in the early summer. You can also find his work as the remnants of the festival *I Land Sound* on the walls of the buildings of Orissaare and on the islet of Illiku.

✓ Street art by artist Izak Mora from Chile can be found in many places in Kuressaare.

Cultural life in Saaremaa is as vivid as in the mainland and you need to make tough choices. Saaremaa also inspires you to create, either through writing, painting, composing or modelling. A number of renowned artists have come to paint in Saaremaa, (summer) residences for writers tend to be in Saaremaa or in Hiiumaa. Why not follow this pattern for your trip to Saaremaa: think of an old creative idea you used to contemplate, then find a nice place to stay, walk around and in no time your inspiration will come. You may not necessarily become famous but you will definitely feel great.

The highlights of cultural life

TEXT: MO SAAREMAA | PHOTOS: JUHANI SÄRGLER, MARGIT KÖRVITS, KRISTINA MÄGI, VILLU VESKI

1 I Land Sound

July 11-14, Illiku islet
ilandsound.ee

Third summer in a row for the experience festival I Land Sound to land on picturesque Illiku islet. On the Illiku islet in Saaremaa time no longer matters and each awakening brings new meaning. To create an enriching experience the pioneers of electronic nightlife, artists and local community all contribute to the event. Four remarkable days and memories that will stay with you forever.



2 Kuressaare Maritime Festival

August 4 -10
merepaevad.ee

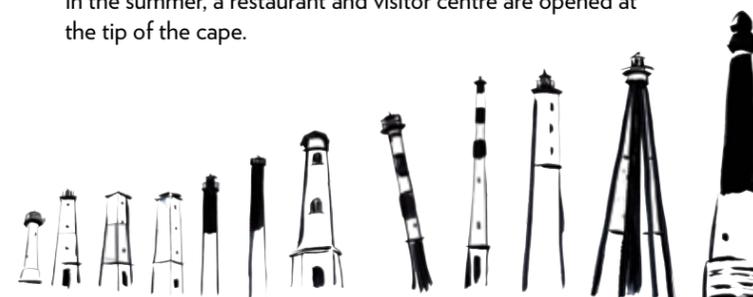
Estonians know that the heart of the Estonian sea beats in Saaremaa. The Maritime Festival is based on the small Baltic Sea and highlights the long voyages and explorations of Estonians and the trips across the ocean by the Saaremaa seamen. You can watch the traditional marine festival regatta and demonstrations of different vessels in the yacht marina. Kids can have fun at the Kuressaare beach and park. The Marine Festival also includes the handicraft and haakrik fair at Tori inlet.



3 Tip of Sõrve Cape

The Visitor Centre is open from
May until September
sorvekeskus.ee

Sõrve Cape is located at the southern end of the peninsula, followed by a number of islets that are part of the Irbe Strait. According to a legend, these islets were created by Toell the Great: as the hero was chasing Vanapagan out of the country, he threw stones after him. The heavier stones fell, but the lighter ones flew further out. In 1646, the Livonian governor general Gabriel Oxenstierna had a primitive lighthouse – a beacon – built on a little island located at the tip of Sõrve Peninsula. Autumn storms showed that the small island selected for the beacon was unsuitable and the beacon was relocated to the tip of Sõrve Peninsula. A stone tower was established there in 1770, but it was destroyed in the Second World War. The present cone-shaped lighthouse of monolithic concrete was built in 1960. In the summer, you can also climb to the top of the highest lighthouse of the Baltic Sea. The height of Sõrve Lighthouse from its foot is 52 metres and it is 53 metres above sea level. In the summer, a restaurant and visitor centre are opened at the tip of the cape.





4 Triigi concert hall

Triigi harbour

There are many things that are different on an island. Language, people, traditions. Even the architecture is different. Triigi concert hall does not have a long history, neither is it located in the heart of Kuressaare town. It's in a remote harbour. The remarkable building has many functions. In the summertime it is a concert and performance venue. In wintertime it reborns as a fishermen shed.



5 Kuressaare Street Festival

May 25
kuressaarefestival.ee

In spring, Kuressaare will close its city centre to cars and make space to pedestrians, cyclists, traders, artists, poets, and soup-makers. There is an entire street dedicated to Estonian design and another one to children. There are pop up restaurants everywhere that offer food and drinks that cannot be found in Saaremaa otherwise. On the last day of the festival the people of Kuressaare open their sheds/garages to offer an incredible shopping experience. Kuressaare street festival welcomes everybody: both from the city and from the countryside, from the mainland and from the sea!



6 Saaremaa Food Festival and Street Picnic

September 7
saaremaatoidufestival.ee

Saaremaa Food Festival is an exciting week-long programme, the motto of which is 'a happy eater also makes happy food'. Restaurants' Week, which is part of the festival, offers delicious local treats at great prices. Tastings and promotions of the products of Saare County's small producers will also take place. On Saturday, bring with you a picnic basket and take part in the street picnic in the centre of Kuressaare. Usually about 4000 people take part of this street dinner. It's an experience that is impossible to put into words. On the last day of the festival, the Apple Cafes' Day will take place.



7 Saaremaa Opera Days

July 23-27, Kuressaare
saaremaaopera.com

Saaremaa Opera Days, which take place in the middle of the summer in the historical courtyard of Kuressaare castle, is the most popular opera festival in the Baltic States. An opera house is erected for this occasion, seating up to 2,000 people. Over the years, Saaremaa Opera Days have welcomed well-known and recognised theatres, including Moscow Helikon Opera, Black American Opera Broadway, the Hungarian State Opera, the Shanghai Opera from China, and many more. Due to the location and high-quality programme, Saaremaa Opera Days is an exotic festival and visiting it has become a great privilege.



8 Kuressaare Castle Festival

In June, Kuressaare Episcopal Castle
saaremaamuseum.ee

Kuressaare Episcopal Castle, also known as Kuressaare Castle, was built in the 14th century. Today, the Castle houses Saaremaa Museum with its permanent exhibition and sundry temporary exhibitions. Every June the castle becomes a venue of a festival that celebrates the life in the old days. The festival allows to explore the local history through an immediate experience and to feel the breath of the Middle Ages.



9 Juu Jäab

June 20- 23, Nautse küla, Muhu island
juujaab.ee

A special feature of the Juu Jäab Festival is the fact that the Festival takes place outdoors exposed to the elements – be it grass that is slowly turning into mud because of pouring rain, starlit sky adding a touch of romance or the scorching June sun, people have always come to celebrate the birth of music. Juu Jäab brings together many diverse artists and personalities, each of whom has a story to tell.

Village parties and Midsummer Eve

Midsummer Eve is on June 23

Midsummer or St. John's Day, Jaanipäev as it is known in Estonia, is one of the oldest local celebrations. Late June is the perfect time for a holiday in the blooming nature where days extend into nights, with barely any darkness in sight.

Due to its northern location, Saaremaa and Muhumaa experience the summertime 'White Nights' phenomena, when the sun sets late and the night is dusk at most. Midsummer coincides closely with the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere – the summer solstice. This year the solstice occurs on June 20th, and Midsummer festivities begin on the eve of June 23rd and conclude on June 24th. Locals barely sleep during this bright period, sitting outside by the glow of bonfires and twilight.

In Saaremaa, Midsummer is more important than Christmas or birthday parties. Village swings and white nights cannot be replaced with anything else. Add a cold beer and stories told by old village people. What else can you want?



10



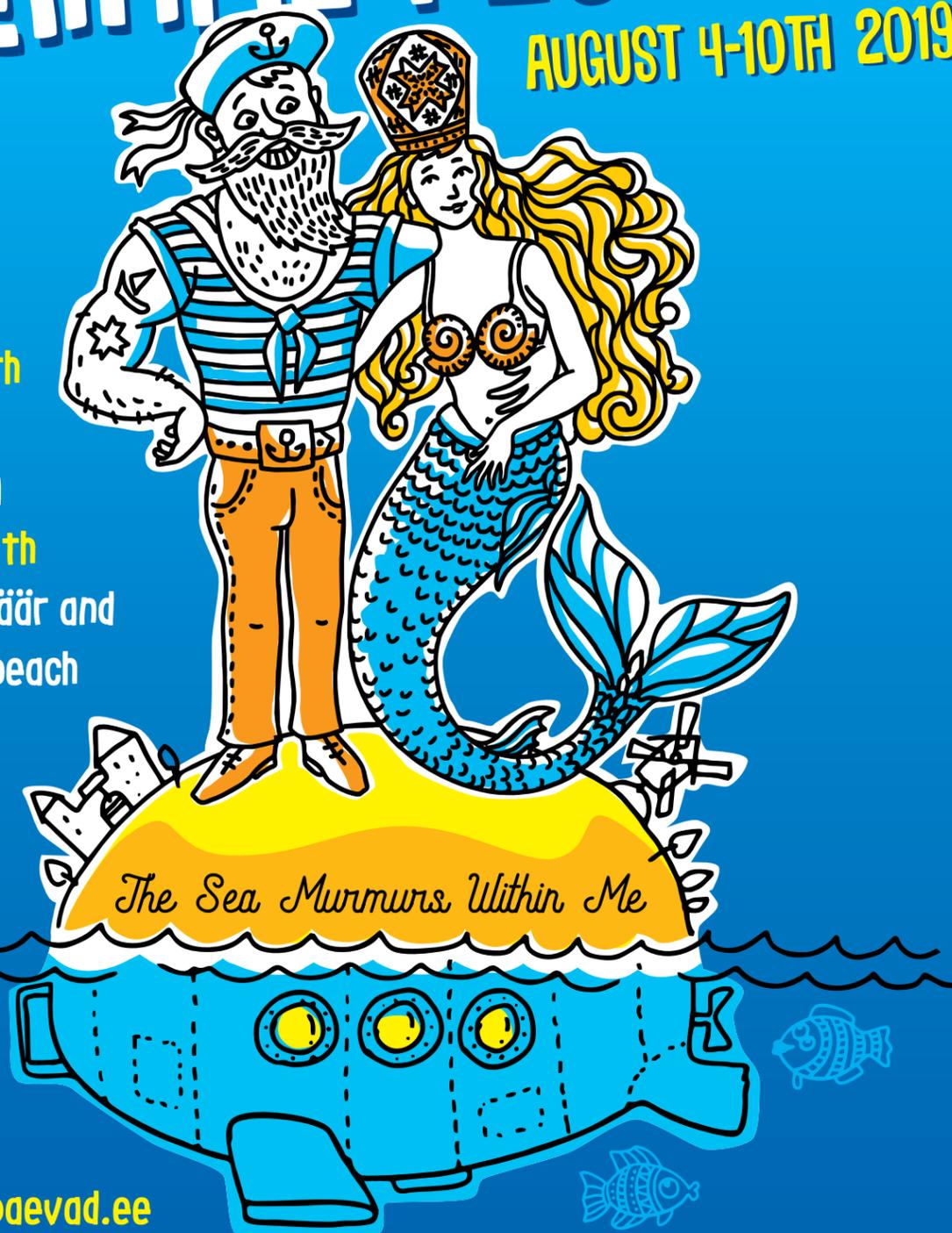
KURESSAARE MARITIME FESTIVAL

AUGUST 4-10TH 2019

August 4th
opening
ceremony

August 5-9th
at marinas
of Saaremaa

August 9-10th
at Raiekivi säär and
Kuressaare beach



www.merepaevad.ee

A Big Mission for a Small Orchestra

TEXT: SILVIA PÄRMANN | PHOTO: WESTERN ISLES CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

➤ After a four-day holiday in Saaremaa, the conductor and artistic director of the Läänesaarte kammerorkester (Western Isles Chamber Orchestra) Edoardo Narbona and project manager Annikki Aruväli decided to move from Turin to the island and set up an orchestra. When I heard this, I was speechless for a while.

Without any ambitions to start a cultural revolution on the island, conductor Edoardo and cellist Annikki came to Estonia four years ago. From Saaremaa they continued to Hiiumaa where Annikki performed at a festival. "Hiiumaa still felt a bit wild. *Metsik*," notes Edoardo, an Estonian-English mixed speaker. "I'm a cityboy. Saaremaa felt very different from Hiiumaa. We did two concerts, Valjala and Kuressaare. Fantastic!"

In Turin, the couple had organized an annual Nordic festival and actually had the feeling for some time that organizing it with Italians was too complicated. The offer to come to Saaremaa was unexpected, but came at the right time. For both, however, the question was that although they could teach in the music school, what would they do on the island as musicians themselves. The answer was - to create Saare's first professional orchestra on the island that was the birthplace of many famous musicians. Unfortunately, there weren't many professional musicians on the island.

"The folk culture of Saaremaa is very high and well kept, but in terms of high culture most events have been introduced from outside," Annikki noted. As there was no professional life in the field of classical music for musicians, they all moved to Tallinn or abroad after graduation. The first idea of the orchestra was to bring together local musicians. And for three years now people are driving from Saaremaa, from the mainland and "we also have the director of Kärdla Music School in the orchestra," Annikki added.

Edoardo and Annikki see the role of the orchestra to be much bigger than just a music experience. This is a great opportunity to build cult-

ural ties, which in turn is the basis for the other links that every little place in the world really needs.

Edoardo's vision of the life of Saaremaa's music and contemporary culture is ambitious. He looks beyond Kuressaare, into small community centers, which are in very good condition in Saaremaa and many houses have fascinating acoustics. Lümanda, Kärla, Orissaare, Salmel - he lists and describes the places many Estonians have not heard of. In Orissaare's gigantic giant hall, he felt like the chief conductor of some major orchestra. "Triigi Filharmonia in Triigi harbour is one amazing place," he also mentions other concert venues far from Kuressaare and even further from Tallinn where the orchestra has reached. "All the local people came together!" Kuressaare is actually the only place where there isn't a really good concert hall.

They organized free buses from Kuressaare to concert venues. Several people were so excited that right after the first concert they bought another ticket for the following one.

Edoardo wants to play music all year round. In addition to the orchestra's concerts. He gives one organ concert every month in the summer. And the plan is to take the orchestra to even smaller halls than the island's community centers. Edoardo already had ideas about a program that would fit into tiny places. He dreams about a concert on some of the small islands of Saare County, such as Ruhnu - although the planes that can land there are too small for the whole orchestra.

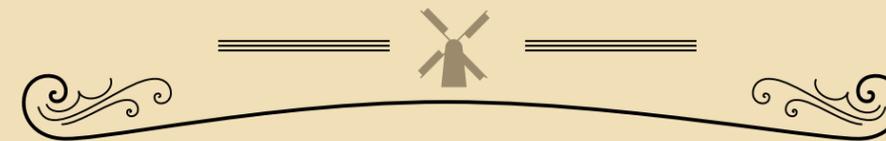
Although the mission is to fill the whole year with music, the most important concert tour of the orchestra takes place in the summer. There is a concert in Loona Manor on July 23, another concert in Pädaste Manor in July 24. |



ANGLA • KAALI • PANGA

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IT IS NICE IN SAAREMAA – JUNIPER TREES, THE SEA, THE SUN, SMOKED FISH AND LOCAL HUMOUR



Angla Windmill Park and the Heritage Culture Centre

welcome you with 5-century-old windmills. The arms of the Viite windmill turn around and the Vilidu windmill grinds by the power of wind. The cyclist-weather-ervane entertains visitors with his diligent pedalling.

The heritage Culture Centre accommodates through 3 floors exhibitions of unique century-old handicraft machines, a mantle chimney, local history displays, handicraft workshops and a bakery room with a huge bread baking oven. Folk related events, traditional heritage festivals and concerts are all held here.

Make a reservation to learn how to make things from timber, felt and dolomite and how to bake bread. In the summer months visitors are welcomed by farm animals and birds in their summer "houses". Healthy food made from locally grown ingredients and drinks are served.



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Incredibly Beautiful Panga Cliff and the Sundial

The height of the cliff on the western coast of Saaremaa is 21.2 m. Here is the sundial.

In the nature reserve you can enjoy a breathtaking view of the sunset, have a picnic, enjoy peace and quiet and the beauty of wildlife.

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Family Discovery Tour of Saaremaa

TEXT: MO SAAREMAA | PHOTOS: MARGIT KÕRVITS, VALMAR VOOLAID

➤ All children love the spas of Kuressaare but Saaremaa and Muhumaa also offer a lot of adventures on farms and in the countryside, not to mention the mysterious castle and the meteorite craters.

Ostriches and Other Creatures of Muhu

Estonia's national bird is a swallow whereas Muhu's national bird seems to be the ostrich. For 20 years Muhu Ostrich Farm (www.jaanalind.ee) has made it possible to watch them, as well as eat them. Children enjoy feeding them corn seeds from their palms. The farm also breeds emus, birds with good red meat and valuable fat. The meat topic should probably be avoided while the children are admiring the birds. The farm has more exotic residents like zebras, kangaroos,

alpacas and ponies which are kept purely as pets. A few more and less exotic animals can be seen at the minizoo at Kapa Farm (<http://www.kipikoovi.ee>). Another, really nice farm is Pajuvärava Farm (facebook.com/pg/pajuvaravatalu) which lots of people will remember from a popular TV family programme. You can walk around and stroke goats and other farm animals. Asva Viking Village (<https://vikingvillage.ee>) welcomes you and offers opportunities to meet various animals and colourful birds and there is a lot more to do. The adventure trail is quite a challenge (it's 12m off the ground), so are the archery, axe throwing, viking games and horse riding. Please make sure you call in advance.

Pure Classics

On your first visit to Saaremaa start with the basics. You can see a kangaroo in Australia and you can do an adventure trail anywhere in the world but there are things you will not find anywhere else. First the mysterious Kaali Crater. The bright flame of the fall of the Kaali meteorite shook the Baltic coast and it was visible from far and wide, or at least Lennart Meri writes so in his book "Silver White". By the crater there is the Museum of Meteoritics and Limestone that gives you an overview of meteoritics in Estonia and in the world, there is a display of the substratum of Saaremaa and fossils.

For Proper Adventurers

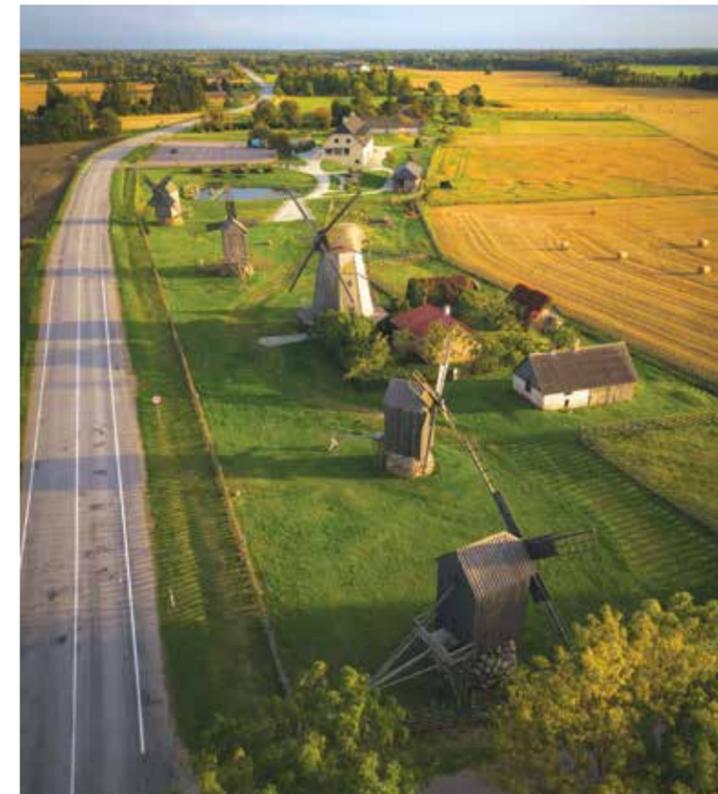
In addition to Asva there are a total of five adventure parks and trails in Saaremaa and Muhumaa. In Hallikivi Adventure Park (hallikiviseikluspark.webnode.com) audacious visitors can enjoy a 120-m long ride in the air. In a fine pine forest of Leisi there is another adventure trail built of various ropes, nets and cables between the trees, together with a separate trail for young children.

There is an adventure park in Kuressaare with its five trails of different rates of difficulty with a total length of 600 metres in K-Park. At the end of each trail there is a zip-line as a reward with the total length of 160 metres. There is also a separate trail for young children. You can also visit the thrilling adventure trail in the Suure Tõllu Holiday Village (suurtoll.ee) and in Muhu Adventure Park (muhuseikleja.ee). If you are after adventures of a different kind, do not miss the Archebald Medieval Experience Centre (archebald.ee) which lets you travel seven or eight hundred years back in time and teaches you how to mint a coin, do archery or make a candle. Do not be surprised if you end up in a torture chamber, attached to an evil torture mechanism or snobbishly brandishing a sword, wearing a knight's helmet.

For Nature Lovers

The easiest way to walk around in the unspoiled countryside of Saaremaa is to use its hiking trails. This way you can be sure that you encounter some exciting wildlife. There are numerous hiking trails, bird watching towers and nature trails for the whole family: Suure Tõllu Forest Trail, Kuressaare Health Park, Musumänniku Health Trail, Viidumäe Nature Reserve, Vilsandi National Park, Saaremaa Lime Park and Püha Soobiku Discovery Trail, a 1-km trail where children can cross water on a barge, watch ants, climb to an authentic sea eagle's nest, observe insects in the insect hotel, see the animals' fodder rack etc.

Panga Cliff lets you sense the power of nature, rising as a limestone wall directly from the beach. At its highest point there is an ancient sacrificial site where tributes were offered to the sea. Manmade Saaremaa is equally pretty. At Angla Windmill Hill you can see and experience the old ways of life on the island.



Out of the five windmills four are post windmills, the old traditional windmills of Saaremaa. In the middle of them there is a slightly taller Dutch-style mill built in 1927. Angla Heritage Culture Centre nearby offers opportunities to participate in clay, wool and felt workshops and to learn to bake bread. Kuressaare Episcopal Castle originates from the 14th century. The Castle with its incredible history also accommodates a museum which is well worth a visit.

Legends of the Castle

The Convent Building of Kuressaare Episcopal Castle is the only surviving medieval stronghold without significant reconstruction in the Baltic countries. Children are thrilled by the legends connected with the Castle. One legend tells us about a cellar where a door leads to from the eastern corner of the courtyard. According to legend, the walled-in cellar was discovered accidentally in 1785 with a human skeleton in it. The skeleton allegedly belonged to an inquisitor monk who had come to Saaremaa in the 16th century to fight Protestantism but ended up falling in love and as punishment was walled in alive. The room is still called the room of a walled-in knight. According to another legend, hungry lions were once kept in a deep shaft under the wooden bridge and criminals with the death sentence were thrown in front of them. The lions immediately tore the unlucky criminals apart and until today this spot is known as the pit of lions or the pit of wild dogs. |



Photo: Kristiina Mägi

SPORTS

Saaremaa and the sea around it offer endless opportunities to do sports and to watch and enjoy sports. Either you prefer the beach for your morning yoga or you fancy the waves for your extreme surf board stunts or would you rather watch sports from a comfortable armchair or directly next to the rally track and getting muddy all over? Saaremaa has thought of everything and there is something for everybody.

A surf school and surf clubs operate in Saaremaa



◀ Ott Tănak, born in Saaremaa, has become the fastest rally pilot in the world.
 ▼ The beaches of Saaremaa are one of the most valued surf spots in Estonia.

From Suur Tõll to Ott Tănak

TEXT: RAUL VINNI | PHOTOS: KRISTINA MÄGI, TAIRO LUTTER/EESTI MEEDIA/SXANPIX, ALAR TRUU/ÕHTULEHT/SCANPIX



› Saaremaa people love sports. The hero giant *Suur Tõll* (Toell the Great) himself can be considered to have been the first keen sportsman on the island. Legend has it that he was building a church in Kärla and his son was building a church in Kaarma. The giants had just one hammer to share that they kept flinging to each other over the distance of 15 km. It is quite possible that hammer throwing was born then. Kärla as a venue for *Suur Tõll's* performance is quite significant because this tiny village is also the homesite of Ott Tănak, today a top figure in the rally world and one of the best-known Estonians in the world.

Most of the people associate Saaremaa with the sea.

Fans of sailing will always find plenty to do. The local *Merispordi Selts* (Maritime Sports Society) has been operating for over 100 years as the initiator of sailing activities. Sails on the horizon in summer are a common sight. Anyone can go for fun rides or take some sailing lessons. The big regattas visiting the ports of Saaremaa in summer make strong impressions on spectators. For example the oldest and the greatest Baltic regatta *Muhu Väina Regatt*, (the Moonsund Regatta) will be bringing over one hundred yachts to *Suur Katel* Bay in June 2019. They also drop anchor in Roomassaare and in Kuressaare enabling the spectators to take part in the regatta hubbub. Needless to say, the yachts of the islanders always aim for the highest positions in competition and the young islanders do obtain medals each year in Estonian as well as European and worldwide competition.

Surfing with Seals

Sailing is not only popular in summer. Winter sailing can be watched from very close quarters. Sailboats racing on mirror-like ice at speeds of 70 km/h make iceboating a picturesque sport. The islanders have always been strong iceboaters and in the first decades of the last century the islanders were so tough that they used to sail on the frozen sea to Haapsalu where the local people could marvel enough at their audacity. Winters with proper ice are made for ice-skating. It is hard to resist the temptation of the frozen sea and its snowless ice to ice-skate beyond the horizon. When going downwind, unbutton your jacket and feel like a sail. However, please keep in mind that extreme ventures are only permitted in the company of the local people who are familiar with the environment. Always make sure you notify the sea rescuers of your plans. Saaremaa is a surfers' paradise, either you choose to surf on a surfboard or on a dragón, an explosively popular thing in the

last decade. Saaremaa has no shortage of wind and if the wind blows from an unfavourable direction, just move around and you find a spot with a better wind direction. You are bound to spot a company of surfers on the beach on a windy day and there are definitely beaches to everyone's liking. You will find the smooth sea at Sõrve Peninsula and several-metre high waves on the Northern coast. There are kilometres of sandy beaches and there are pebble beaches. You can always just watch the surfers and their tricks at the height of ten metres that could be quite an impressive sight. If you feel like trying some tricks out yourself, you can always find a trainer almost on any beach. Once you have acquired the skill of surfing, you can go exploring the coastal waters of Saaremaa, if lucky you can race the grey seals or play with them, not to mention visiting some unpopulated islets. Please make sure prior to your visit where and when you are permitted to go due to nature protection restrictions.

Swim from Muhu to Saaremaa

Swimming is the most natural activity in the water. Why not add some excitement to it by swimming from Muhu to Saaremaa? In 2019 the 26th Väikese Väina (Väike Strait) Open Sea Swimming takes place over a distance of approximately 2 kilometres. If you would like to do more, go for open sea swimming on Kaunispe beach at the tip of Sõrve Peninsula on the same day. All participants will be taken one kilometre away from the beach on a proper fishing boat and everybody will swim back to the coast. There will be no winners apart from sports. You should keep in mind that summer temperatures of the open sea water can be just + 20 degrees.

Kuessaare has every right to bear the status of a golfing mecca. Estonia does not have too many towns with their own golf courses. With its 18 holes, the par 72 Saare Golf Centre is Estonia's only golf course located on an island.

In Saaremaa disc golf has truly exploded. There are 10 courses all over Saaremaa with choices for everybody. One of the unconventional ones is Kudjape with its 12 baskets, established on top of a covered old rubbish dump.

Saaremaa has no shortage of cycling lanes. Kuessaare is a starting point for over 30 kilometres of safe cycling lanes. In addition, there are plenty of wood trails all over the island. Competitive cyclists can have a go in September in a nationwide cycling marathon on the extremely hilly Karujärve landscape by Saaremaa standards.

Saaremaa and Muhumaa offer an impressive list of events for runners. Running competitions are developing into an independent branch of tourism thanks to their scenic surroundings in the wilderness.

Runner-Friendly Island

The legendary Saaremaa Three-Day Race has been taking place at the end of October since 1977. The marathon distance is run in three days in Kuessaare and on Sõrve Peninsula. The 10km distance is run on the first day, the 6.2 km distance on the second day and the 16 km distance on the third day. This autumnal venture brings almost 1000 runners to Saaremaa for three days. As legendary as the race is its organiser Tõnu Vaher, one of the best known sportsmen of Saaremaa. He was selected as one of the runners of the Beijing Olympic torch relay, representing Estonia. The same team organises another



^The Marathon season in Saaremaa starts in the autumn when the Three Days Run and the Ultima Thule Marathon take place.

exciting event – four times a year they organise races marking the summer solstice, the winter solstice, the September equinox and the March equinox. If you happen to visit Saaremaa on one of those dates, you can join a race or a walk in Loode Tammik near Kuessaare to welcome the new season. In 2019 the 39th series of these races will commence, including the 150th jubilee race in summer.

Saaremaa also hosts the Ultima Thule Marathon. Four years ago Rasmus Kagge, a known TV reporter challenged the mayor of Kuessaare Madis Kallas to organise Saaremaa Marathon. Today the race includes the distances of 42.2, 21.1 and 10 km for runners and walkers. Ultima Thule also has a separate distance for pram walkers. Ultima Thule is the proud owner of one of the most beautiful participation medals. Why not acquire a unique souvenir?

Legendary Rally

Saaremaa Rally is an event that even all little boys and girls know. Several generations have been enjoying the 51 consecutive seasons of Saaremaa Rally taking place in October. It has repeatedly been voted the best rally and with the most participants, it is definitely one of the grandest tourist magnets for Saaremaa. The tourist season is coming to an end but the rally fills the hotels and restaurants like as if it were the height of summer. Saaremaa Rally has definitely contributed to Ott Tänak's rise

< The invincible volleyball team of Saaremaa offers excitement for the audience quite often at the home as well.

„If you rather stay away from active sports, you can participate as a fan“

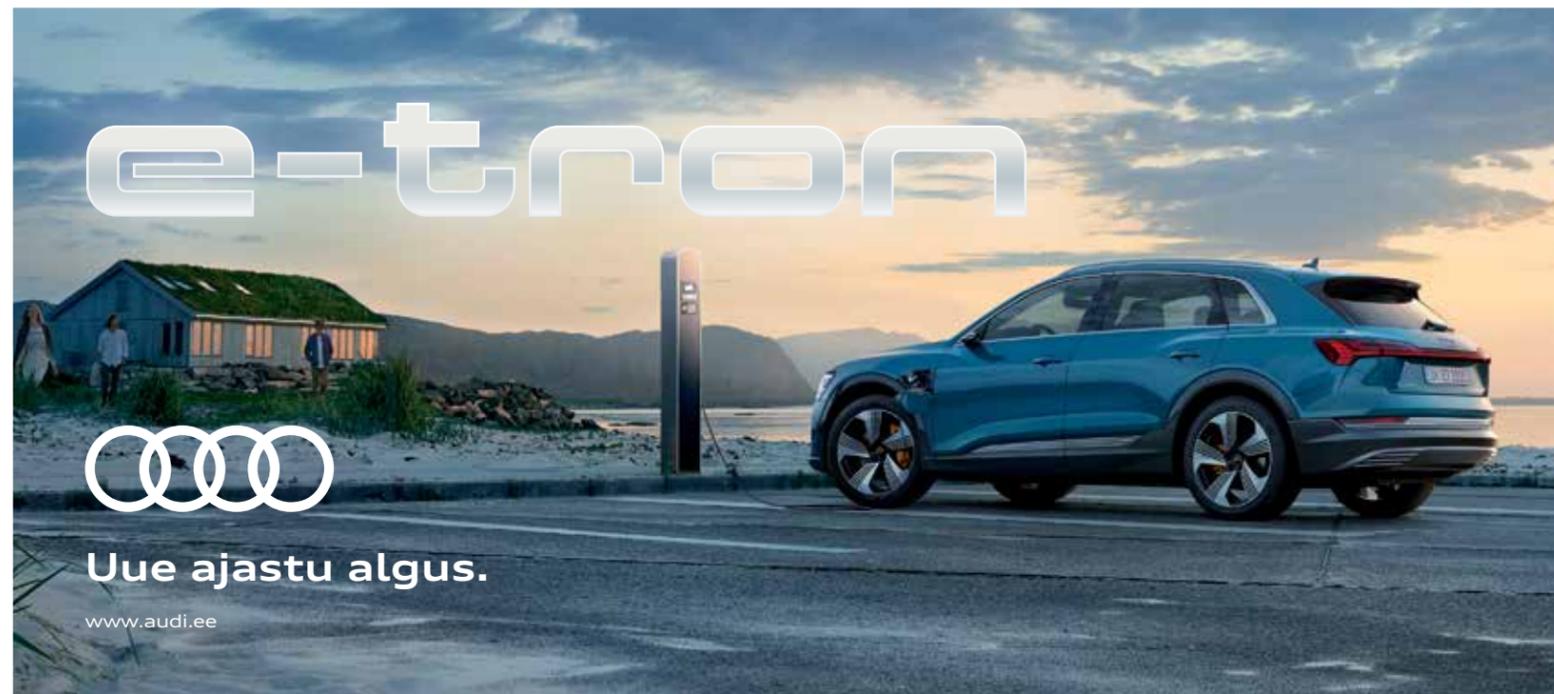


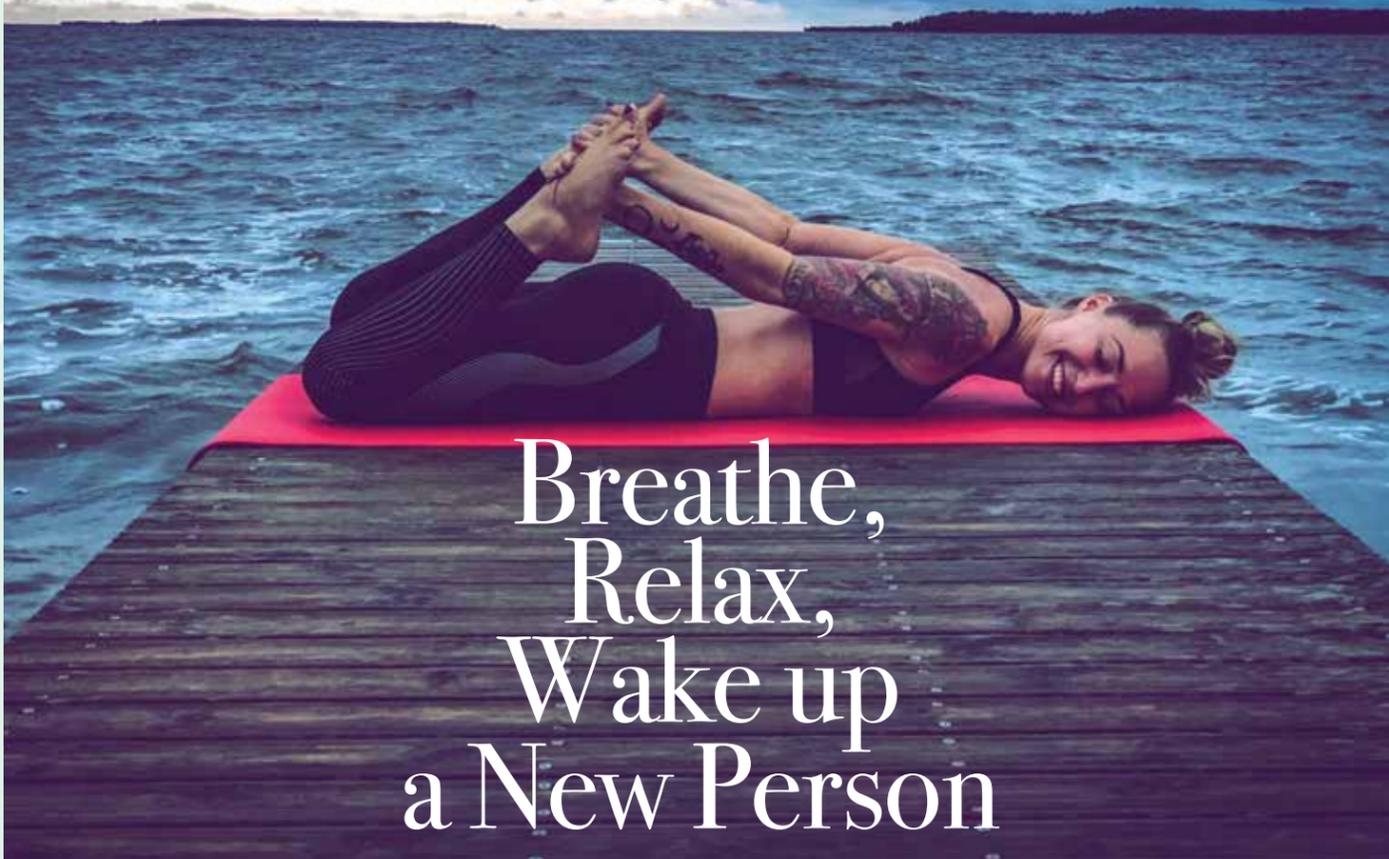
through years to the very top of the rally world, becoming one of the main candidates for the world champion's title of 2019. Tänak has won the Saaremaa Rally several times and he has always admitted that the titles won on his native island in front of his fellow-islanders have been some of the most significant ones in his career.

If you rather stay away from active sports, you can participate as a fan of the FC Kuessaare which competes in the Estonian league from spring to autumn.

Saaremaa has finally established an elite level volleyball team which in 2017/2018 won all available titles in Estonia and in the Baltics. The fans of this team with their impressive drums and cheering are considered to be the best in Estonia.

Saaremaa with its pools, stadiums, tennis halls and the sports hall provides all options for doing sports. If nothing really appeals to you on the island, go for sports! /





Breathe, Relax, Wake up a New Person

TEXT: MELE PESTI | PHOTOS: ELISABETH ELLINOR SULKOVSKI

People who like yoga, like Saaremaa. Finding your focus or looking for the ways to strengthening it work fine around here. An island makes a good holiday destination. Being from Saaremaa myself, I usually end up considering islands as my possible holiday destinations. A restricted patch of land around me brings peace. The night on Saaremaa, an island with no connection to Eurasia, brings along the ultimate peace and none of those limitless opportunities to drive anywhere I want. A dam would let me go to the neighbouring island Muhumaa but there I would still have to wait for the morning ferry, the sloshing waves would grind down my last resistance. An island is a cosy little break on the cosmopolitan highway of opportunity. Islands become homes for the people who appreciate the environment and prefer this to the edgy, rich plurality of opportunities of a big city. The same goes for tourism; visitors come to the island to relax in a spa-hotel or in a tourist farm with plenty of pure air, trees and bushes. All this makes Saaremaa a very logical place as a home of yoga. To some extent it has happened and in Saaremaa you can practise a wide variety of different yoga styles under the guidance of experienced yoga teachers. You can do yoga in the environment you prefer; from a sports club exercise room to scenic farmyards and beaches. There are all-year-round and weekly training opportunities and there are teachers who come to the island once a month, there are teachers who spend an intensive yoga summer in Saaremaa and there

are teachers who prefer to be on an inspiration-seeking retreat in summer. The feel is the main thing with yoga, including the feeling that I am in the place that is serving me best and if anything changes, I will react flexibly. There is no dedicated yoga centre in Saaremaa yet, although people do want one. For these two reasons it is impossible to compose an accurate year-round yoga calendar but you will be able to find various venues for yoga. You can do the energetic ashtanga yoga in Edukantor on the main square of Kuressaare and in the sports club Fitlife with teacher Kerli. She also teaches weekly yoga classes in Orissaare Sports Hall, in Tagavere Civic Centre and at Valjala Basic School. Kerli's lessons cheer you up and directly and indirectly turn you and your self-image upside down. In addition to yoga and meditation she also runs topic-based programmes where you would learn about types of bodies, eating habits and body and mind. Once a week classes for children are held in all these venues, teaching children of different ages to learn the basics of yoga through games. In Vöbeluse Studio Eliisa teaches yoga to young children. There are lessons for 5-7-year olds, for I-III form children and for IV-VII form children. Eliisa focuses on teaching them how to train their minds and how to concentrate on their studies. In the same studio Katrin Kivi teaches kundalin yoga a couple of times a month. In addition to thorough search for the balance of body, mind and soul in Kuressaare, Katrin invites you to Lümamanda to feel a deeper touch of yoga in Kandimaa joogamaja yoga camps. She conducts dance trips in Kuressaare as well as in Lümamanda. The keyword for more information is Spiritjooga .

Western Saaremaa enjoys busy yoga life over the summer. 12 km from Lümamanda, right on the coast is beautiful Karala where a yoga centre is being built. Until it is finished, Liina teaches yoga and organises camps on her own farm and in Karala Civic Centre . The keyword for more information is Urbanyogini. On your way back from the western coast to Kuressaare make a stop in Mändjala. In addition to swimming and sunbathing on the long sandy beach go and find Hotell Saaremaa in the middle of the pine forest where teacher Helen teaches shivananda yoga. On nice summer days the yoga sometimes transfers to the beach, the best place for bending while bathing in the sun. When leaving Kuressaare for the mainland, better not accelerate because less than five kilometres out of the city limits there is another yoga centre on Muusika Farm at Upa where teacher Haivi runs kundalin and yin-yoga lessons, also offering rooms to the teachers of other types of yoga. Surprisingly, none of the seven Kuressaare spas have proper yoga centres yet. There are occasional classes, like Laura's pleasant vinyasa and yin-yoga series in the summer. Something to contemplate for spa managers. Grand Rose with its seven saunas runs island-relevant sauna yoga: half an hour of yoga in the sauna! It is completely different from bikram or the warm room yoga. The latter feels like an intensive aerobics session in a warm room, whereas sauna yoga



is smooth and relaxing and at the same time, efficient training and meditative. In Meri Spa GraceFit started recently: classes involve elements of ballet, yoga, dance and pilates and are individually created for each lesson by teacher Shalin. There are definitely many more yoga centres and teachers in Saaremaa. We assure you that no yoga fans will feel abandoned in Saaremaa, unless that is something they are looking for and there are numerous private places for meditating in peace too! /

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GOSPA
GEORG OTS SPA HOTEL

BEING PROUD OF YOUR CULTURE

TEXT: TAMMEOUGU MARI | ILLUSTRATION: EIKE MALVA

We get lots of guests here in Sörve. They go to concerts, they do dragon surfing, they go swimming and hiking or they walk to the tip of Sääre to look for Courland, they visit friends and relatives or the remains of their ancestral homes.

Sometimes Sörvema Heritage Society gets requests to demonstrate the heritage culture of Sörve. Oh, would you please demonstrate your dialect and the way you speak, as well as your food, clothes, music and fairy tales! The genuine local culture, so exciting for outsiders, is something that Sõru people take for granted because they don't see it as something rare and special to make a show of.

Local cultures are on the wane everywhere and globalisation is taking over. The almighty ruling business ideology requires low prices, speed, simplicity, superficiality. How would the hundred-and-fifty-year-old traditional monotonous Sörvesinging overcome the noise of the mass media?

I Long for Development, Not Replacement

Our culture needs to breathe. We should not get stuck with our centuries-old songs, but boldly add some rap rhymes to it. When we spend our summers performing our folk dances to tourists and making cheap cardigans from New Zealand yarn, we will soon be accepting this as our own culture.

I have a dream that when one summer morning we actually notice the real value of our culture, we will be wearing our folk costumes with pride and be quite relaxed about wearing trendy yellow sneakers with our folk costumes. We will be served our plain food on silver plates in the restaurants. School children will be rapping away in their Sörve dialect and curtsying to the President in their homemade shoes. Plus two million more great things.

On that day we will be able to demonstrate our culture to the guests with pride.

Then nobody will be happy with the cheap "tourist stuff". Wool from local sheep will be spun in the local wool factory and knitted into mittens or cardigans with fine patterns. Artisans will be able to focus and still make a living.

Sörve Is Still Unique

May all this happen rather sooner than later because right now Sörve has plenty of its own culture and we do not have to reinvent it.

Genuine is expensive but long-lasting, sustainable and environmentally friendly. It is like making clothes, food, stories and songs for ourselves.

Then we can start believing the new stories that have been made for our guests.

Only valued culture can survive and this is our secret treasure.

Just keep your eyes open and you will recognize the genuine. |



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TOP 10 Sports Events in 2019

TEXT: MO SAAREMAA | ILLUSTRATION: EIKE MALVA



1. Saaremaa Rally

11.-12. 10 2019

saaremaarally.eu

The 52th Saaremaa Rally will take place in Kuressaare and Saare county in October and is the top event of the year for all the rally fans in the country. It is the rally with the longest history in Estonia, having been organised consecutively for 51 years.

4. Ultima Thule Marathon

14.09.2019

ultimathulemarathon.com

A fascinating opportunity to merge sports and sightseeing with the starting and finishing points being in the courtyard of Kuressaare Castle and the track running through the streets of Kuressaare and its vicinity. The Ultima Thule Marathon has the options of two distances: the marathon (42.195 km) and the half marathon (21.1 km).

The 21.1 km distance race will be also welcoming walkers and Nordic walkers.

7. Competitions in Dragon Surfing

saaremaasurf.ee

Saaremaa dragon surfers have been one of the best in Estonia for years. The records for height constantly get broken in Saaremaa. Dragon surfing is suitable for all ages and for all shapes of people. Competitions are held for professionals as well as for beginners.

8. Golf

saaregolf.ee

Kuressaare possesses a nice 18-hole championship-type course, located within easy walking distance of Kuressaare Castle, the centre of town and the hotels and spas. The golf course is surrounded by the landscape reminiscent of an idyllic painting. There are competitions for golfers practically every week over the summer.

9. Riding Triathlon Haagi Lõugas

June 2019

Summer, the sea, sandy beaches, fast horses and fearless competitors make up the riding triathlon containing 250 m swimming, 2 km running and 6 km riding. Spectators can follow the whole course of competition, so pick up your picnic basket and a beach towel and enjoy one of the most passionate sports events of the summer.

10. Väike Strait Open Sea Swimming

July 2019

The most exciting stage of the Estonian Open Sea Swimming Serial Competition is the Saaremaa competition starting at the Port of Vahtna in Muhumaa and finishing at the Port of Orissaare. Over 100 swimmers participate in the 2.3 km long distance every year.

5. The Moonsund Regatta

muhuvain.ee

The 62th Moonsund Regatta takes place on 12th-20th July 2019 starting in Kärdla and finishing in Pärnu. The oldest and largest Estonian sailing regatta will be visiting Saaremaa as well and you can cheer the members of Saaremaa *Merispordi Selts* (Saaremaa Maritime Sports Society).

6. Iceboating

3.-9.03. Orissaare

esticesailing.ee

Iceboating with its rushing sailboats on skates along smooth, snow free ice is a truly Nordic sport. Estonians have always gained high positions in international competitions and weather permitting, the MONOTYPE-XV European championship will be held in Orissaare.

2. Top Level Volleyball

saarevorkpall.ee

The Saaremaa volleyball team is one of the great newcomers in Estonia and the Baltics. They came, they saw and they conquered! Thanks to that, it is once again possible to enjoy top-level volleyball in Saaremaa.

3. Saaremaa Three-Day Race

18.-20.10.2019

saaremaajooks.ee

Participants of Saaremaa Three-Day Race run a full-length marathon in three days and they need the stamina to cover 42.195 kilometres.



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WWW.AURIGA.EE



THE BUILDINGS ON SAAREMAA & MUHU you Should not Miss

Saaremaa and Muhu are places of exciting architectural history, where as early as the Middle Ages distinguished buildings were erected and today their modern buildings pick architectural awards. There are ruins, cemeteries, churches, hedonistic resort buildings together with windmills, stone fences and lighthouses that you simply must see before leaving the islands

Kuressaare Beach House: Pure Hedonism
2010

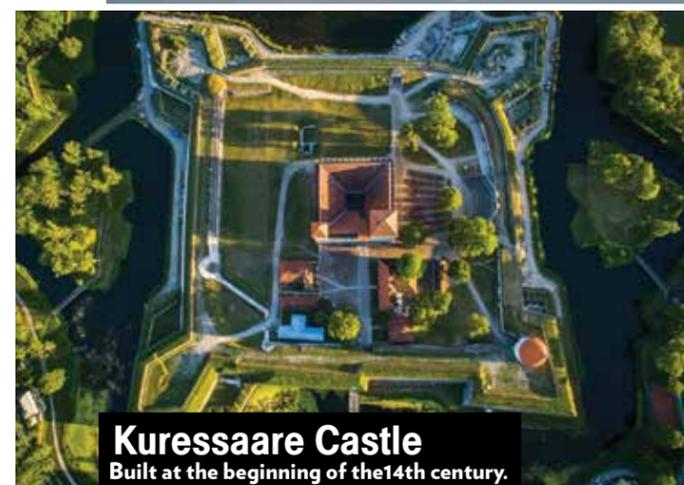
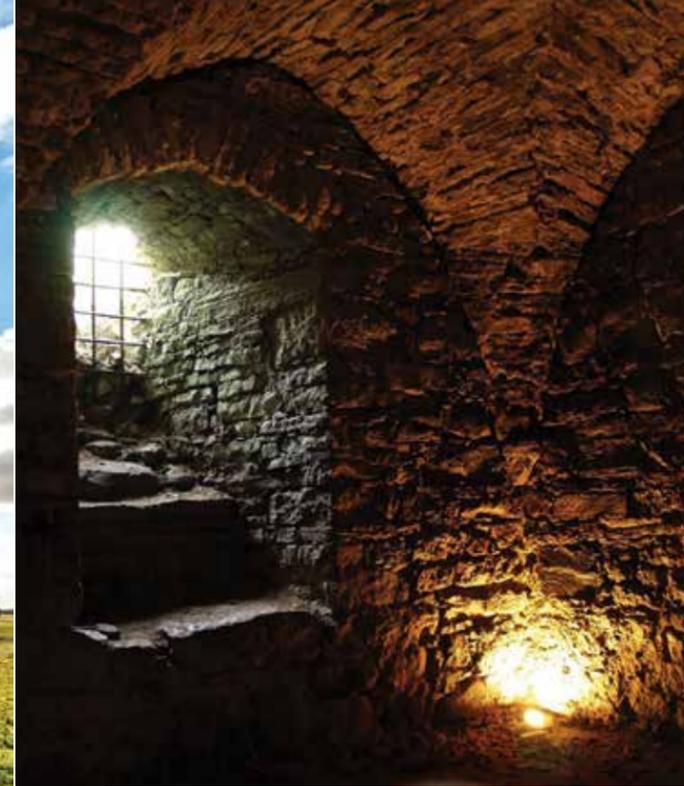
Modern beach architecture is rare in Estonia. To celebrate the 170th anniversary of Kuressaare a modern beach house with an outstanding roof structure was built. The building designed by architect Hannes Koppel was built on the remains of an old beach house. It is a building which gives the impression of being larger in size than it actually is. The building was awarded an annual prize by the Cultural Endowment of Estonia for contemporary and elegant interpretation of a traditional resort townhouse.

Kuressaare Railway Station Building: alias Roheline Konn (Green Frog)
Completed in 1924

Kuressaare Railway Station is located in a really picturesque place in the middle of an ancient park. Trains stopped rolling into Saaremaa a long time ago. Before that they used to connect the Port of Roomassaare and the centre of Kuressaare. The total length of the railway line was eight kilometres. The line was closed down in 1940 for purely pragmatic reasons. The islanders had got attached to their railway station thanks to its popular canteen Roheline Konn. Today the canteen operates under the name Nautleja.

Karja St. Catherine's Church, the Favourite of Pagans
Built at the beginning of the 14th century

A single nave church without a belfry has retained its original looks without major changes. It is the smallest church in Saaremaa. Above the altar the pagan magic symbols on the ceiling that were painted during its construction have survived. Early and high Gothic elements with some Roman features dominate in the design of the church. Karja church is one of the rural churches with the richest medieval stone sculptures in the whole of Northern Europe. The church vaults are twice the height of its walls.



Kuressaare Castle
Built at the beginning of the 14th century.

The construction of the convent building, the oldest part of Kuressaare Castle began around the beginning of the 14th century and it was completed together with its first round wall at the end of the 14th century. Only one underground part of the round wall has survived, the southern corner of it has been dug out and put on display. The convent house of Kuressaare Castle is the only surviving medieval stronghold without major reconstruction in the Baltic countries. The room plan of the convent house is identical to the order convent house of Radzyń Chelmiński, the architectural design is clearly influenced by other Prussian convent houses, especially from Malborg.

Maasilinn Castle Ruins: Forced Labour and Great Wars

Built in the middle of the 15th century

Life in Saaremaa has not always been as idyllic as it may seem today. Rebellious islanders organised a series of uprisings and arranged serious fights with their neighbours which left strongholds in ruins. The provincial master Burchard von Dreileben built the Maasilinn Castle after St. George's Night Uprising was quelled in 1345, the construction of the later stone castle began in the middle of the 15th century. The medieval Maasi stronghold was erected by islanders' forced labour. This way the ruling Livonian Order punished Estonians for the mutiny that had destroyed the stronghold of the Order. The seaside stronghold became secure until the Danes blew it up. Since the Danish King Frederik II ordered the stronghold to be destroyed on the 11th August 1576, it has been in ruins.

Kuressaare Town Hall: "Borrowed" Lions and a Travelling Ceiling Painting

Built in 1654-1670

Kuressaare Town Hall is situated on the main street and the initiator of its construction was Count Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie. The Town Hall is basic and simple but makes a noble impression in a small town, representing the so-called Nordic Baroque. The most prominent decoration of the building is the stone carved portal dated 1670 but lots of people rather appreciate the two grand lions guarding the doors. These lions "were borrowed" only in 1973 from a house on Kiriku street, centuries after the completion of the Town Hall. The ceiling of the second floor hall is decorated with the largest ceiling painting in Estonia of all time (5,5 x 7,5 m). It was found in the form of a rolled canvas in an old house in Kuressaare (Pikk street) after the Second World War. Allegedly, the painting had been brought to Kuressaare from Narva where it was not originally from either. The first floor of the building accommodates the Town Hall Gallery, tourist information office and, last but not least, you can get married in the Town Hall.



Saare KEK Building: Ambitious in any Era
Built in 1979-1982

The soviet era collective farm construction offices (KEK) developed their own building material industry and established their own design offices (EKE Projekt). Ambitious KEKs enabled talented architects to create buildings where art and architecture merged. The main building of Saare KEK (1977-1982) designed by architect Marika Lõoke, situated by Kuressaare roundabout, is one of the most outstanding buildings of the era. The then extremely popular supergraphics on its wall was and still is associated with the Soviet agitprop-art. Today there are offices and various cultural events take place in the building and rooms are available for rent for a wide variety of functions.



Kuressaare Kuursaal: a 130-year Old Beauty

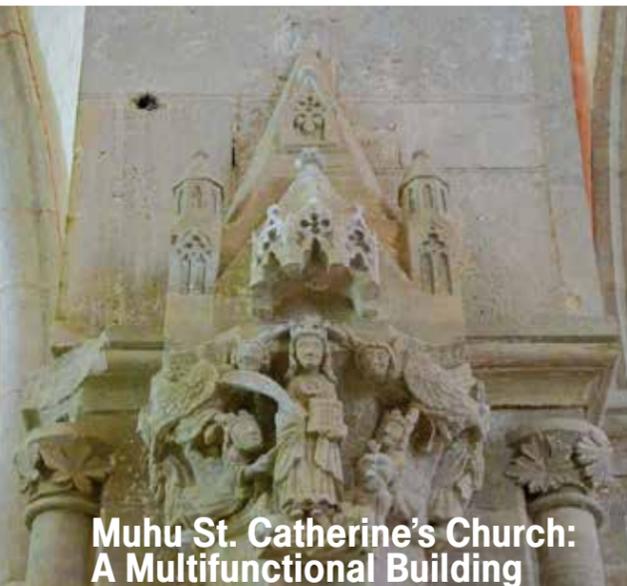
Built in 1889

The idea of building Kuursaal next to Kuressaare Castle moat allegedly came from a local chemist. It was built in eight months and it was opened in style in 1889. In the middle part or in the White Hall there was a restaurant as it is today. The right wing was the venue of the summer theatre with mostly troupes from Germany performing, whereas after the First World War Estonian actors took to its stage. Kuursaal was quite popular throughout the Soviet era as well and in 1989 it was awarded the prize of Estonia's best building of the year

The House of a Field Guard: "Moved" from the Outskirts to the Centre

Built in 1787

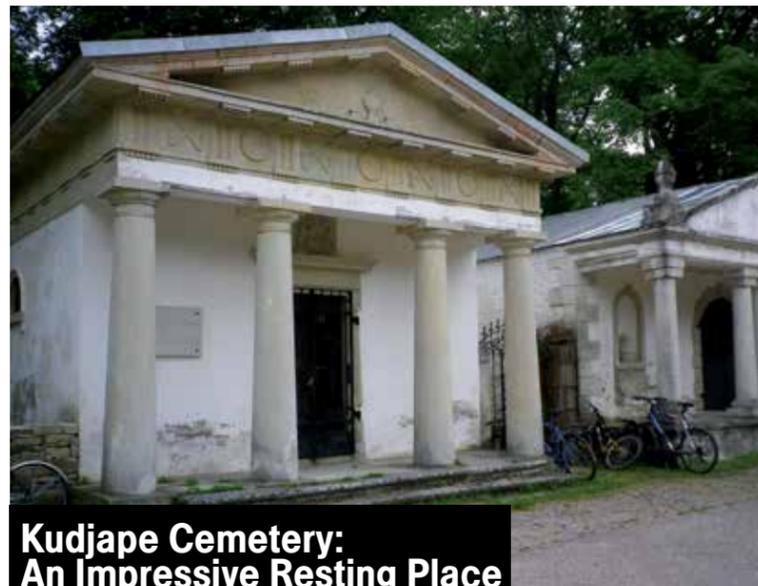
The house of a field guard is a landmark that marked the eastern border of the town until the end of the 19th century but today the house at 11 Kitsas street is right in the centre of town. The field guard was responsible for making sure that the town animals could not get to the Kaarma-Suuremõisa fields that bordered Kitsas Street. The house was a part of today's Arensburg Hotel or Haeska Manor property with its large park and orchard. The guard house was built to look after the fields on the border of the orchard and the fields situated on the town border. The orchard around the field guard's house was destroyed when A. Kitzbergi Street was built.



Muhu St. Catherine's Church: A Multifunctional Building

Built on the 13th century

Muhu Church was mentioned in the chronicles as early as in 1267. The church is a very beautiful, eye-catching early Gothic building at Liiva on the way from the port to Saaremaa. As for its proportions, it is one of the prettiest rural churches in Estonia and it has also been used as a refuge. The Church interior is dominated by high domed vaults. On the northern and the eastern walls of the choir room, fragments of mural paintings dating to 1330 have survived. Above the door leading to the staircase there is a rare tombstone from the 12th-13th century.



Kudjape Cemetery: An Impressive Resting Place

Established in 1780

The town cemetery and its classical chapels are a protected architectural landmark. The most beautiful are the chapels in the shape of small Greek temples with colonnaded facades built at the main gate in 1848. The cemetery is like a museum of stone carving and ironwork. There are plenty of crypts from the first half of the 19th century covered with heavy headstones and refined Classical grave monuments, often in the shape of an urn or a vase, but there are also Soviet era monuments and very modern monuments.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF AURIGA CENTRE BRINGS COSMOPOLITAN BRANDS TO SAAREMAA

Auriga Centre has been the only contemporary shopping centre in Saaremaa for more than ten years, offering the islanders shopping opportunities in a pleasant, safe environment. Auriga accommodates various Estonian chains and local businesses. Auriga believes that the residents and guests of Saaremaa deserve the widest choice and renowned trademarks and there should be no need to go for shopping on the mainland. At the same time, for its overseas location Saaremaa is a complicated destination for businessmen and luring them to the island requires constant work.

In 2017 Auriga underwent a thorough reconstruction, making the design more customer-friendly and expanding the choice of shops and services. The main aim of the reconstruction was to convert Auriga Centre into a leisure centre, offering clients entertainment in addition to shopping. For that reason, the largest project was the construction of the Apollo Cinema which is the first modern cine-



ma in Saaremaa. To accommodate the cinema hall, the roof of the building was raised and strengthened. Now we have a cinema with top quality picture and sound. 100 000 cinema goers in its first year speaks for itself.

Another long-awaited newcomer in Saaremaa was one of the world's leading fashion

brands – H&M offers Scandinavian-type fashion at reasonable prices for the whole family in its 1500 m² store. H&M has literally delivered the world fashion to the islanders. Constantly changing collections and opportunities to recycle second-hand clothes through the shop have made H&M the favourite fashion shopping place for the islanders.

Auriga invested more than 2.5 million euros into reconstruction, becoming the largest recent real estate investment in Saaremaa. Furthermore, as it is making a broader socio-economic impact on the community, it was awarded the title of the Enterprise of the Year 2017 in Saaremaa Parish.

SAARE KEK CENTRE OF PLEASANT LIVING

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One of the most outstanding Soviet architectural landmarks was designed by architect Marika Lööke in 1979 and has been under renovation since 2017. In the renovated part of the foyer you can visit the museum and enjoy concerts. The large foyer-hall is available for various events and accommodates up to 350 people. The rooms are truly inspiring and can be put to good use for a wide range of purposes.

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Cultural events in SAAREMAA AND IN MUHU IN 2019

FEBRUARY

- **30.02** The International Wife Carrying Cup

MARCH

- **7.-10.03** NOM Lifestyle Festival for Women www.nomfestival.ee



APRIL

- **14.04** Western Islands Chamber Orchestra Concert in Kuressaare St. Laurence Church. Soloist Pirjo Jonas www.lsko.ee

MAY

- **03.05** Summer Season Opening Kuressaare 456 and Kuursaal 130 www.kultuurivara.ee
- **04.05** Vintage and Retro Culture Day in Kuressaare www.saarekek.ee
- **18.05** Museum Night www.muuseumioo.ee
- **19.05** Western Islands Chamber Orchestra Concert in Kuressaare St. Laurence Church with Helsinki Finnish Club male choir. Conductor Henrik Lamberg.
- **24.-25.05** Gardening and Flower Festival in Kuressaare www.saartruu.ee
- **25.05** Kuressaare Street Festival www.kuressaarefestival.ee

JUNE

- **19.-23.06** Music Festival Juu Jääb www.juujaab.ee
- **21.-24.06** Midsummer Day Bonfires all over Saaremaa
- **28.-29.06** Kuressaare Castle Festival www.saaremaamuuseum.ee

JULY

- **12.-14.07** Kihelkonna Church Music Festival
- **14.07** Kuressaare and Saaremaa Open Gardens www.saarekodukant.edu.ee
- **11.-14.07** I Land Sound www.ilandsound.ee
- **23.-27.07** Saaremaa Opera Festival www.saaremaaopera.com
- **23.07** Western Islands Chamber Orchestra Concert in Loona Manor. www.lsko.ee
- **24.07** Läänesaarte kammerorkestri kontsert Pädaste mõisas. www.lsko.ee



- **28.07** Muhu Café Festival
- **19.-21.07** Mustjala Music Festival www.mustjalafestival.ee

AUGUST

- **30.07-3.08** Kuressaare Chamber Music Festival www.kammerfest.ee
- **1.08** Kärla Triip karlaklubi.blogspot.com
- **3.08** Kuressaare Gin Festival www.gin.ee
- **8.-10.08** Kuressaare Maritime Festival www.merepaevad.ee
- **19.08** Kaarma Night Song Festival
- **23.-25.08** Ruhnuru festival www.ruhnuru.ee
- **16.-18.08** International Viking Market in Salme Village salmeviking.wordpress.com
- **24.08** The Night of Bonfires on the Beaches and Harbours of Saaremaa www.muinastuled.ee



SEPTEMBER

- **05.-15.09** Saaremaa Food Festival www.saaremaatoidufestival.ee
- **07.09** Kuressaare Street Picnic www.visitsaaremaa.ee/tanavapiknik
- **14.09** Ultima Thule marathon www.ultimathulemarathon.com
- **28.09** Karujärve Cycling Marathon www.karutervis.ee

OCTOBER

- **11.-12.10** Saaremaa rally www.saaremaarally.ee
- **18.-20.10** Saaremaa Three-Day-Race www.saaremaajooks.ee

NOVEMBER

- Kuressaare Film Week & Animation Festival www.klteater.ee/kinokava & Animapäevad

DECEMBER

- Information on Christmas markets and concerts: www.visitsaaremaa.ee

WHAT TO DO WITH US?

LOOK, EVERYTHING IS WRITTEN DOWN HERE
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www.suitsukala.com **F**
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www.ahoiwastriku.ee **A AH**
www.viirelaiu.ee **A F AH S E**

SAAREMAA, ITS LANGUAGE AND Õ

TEXT: TAAVI PAE, TARTU UNIVERSITY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ESTONIAN GEOGRAPHY | ILLUSTRATION: EIKE MALVA

SAAREMAA IS THE PLACE TO GO! Why? Probably the answer can be summed up in the notion 'overseas matters' which is made up of various natural and culture related matters. One of these is definitely the Saaremaa way of speaking including its õ-less speech.

Dialects in their traditional, centuries old meaning are on the wane. Nevertheless, today we have a fair amount of regional characteristic features of pronunciation. One of the best-known features in Estonia is the missing of õ-sound in the spoken language of many islanders. Although the pronunciation of õ-sound varies in Saaremaa as well as in the other dialects of Estonia, the islanders' õ-less speech is something that everybody is aware of. It becomes obvious through personal contacts as well as through watching humorous programmes or advertising. Nevertheless, Saaremaa has never been completely õ-less. The residents of the eastern corner of Saaremaa and from Muhu have always been comfortable with pronouncing the sound. President Arnold Rüütel demonstrates this vividly, as his native village Pahavalla is in the area of õ-pronouncers and his speech bears no traces of his Saaremaa roots. Where is the õ-sound borderline? Theodor Kaljo determined it in his master's thesis in Tartu University in 1928. Using the collected field data from farms, he determined the borderline running through Põide parish and partially overlapping the medieval borderline between the Order and Bishop's properties. Today the sound-based borderline is definitely much fuzzier but as an interesting cultural geographic token, it has been included in Regio Road atlas an it should be marked on the landscape as well,

primarily on Kuivastu–Kuressaare road, in the village of Reina.

The number of languages including this letter is limited and it mostly signifies something else (different pronunciation). Estonian is almost the only language where it is a separate letter in the alphabet and it is used as a character. Otto Wilhelm Masing proved the necessity of using it at the beginning of the 19th century. His argument was based on the issue that the German (Latin) alphabet was insufficient for writing Estonian accurately. The intro-

duction of the new character was not easy, one of the severe opponents of the new character came from Saaremaa. The superintendent August Heinrich Schmidt and Kuressaare Estonian Society rejected the necessity of õ-letter on the pretext of big differences in the local usages of õ and o, and because the distinct marking of the letters would be disturbing and unnecessary for readers. The majority of the islanders would not have minded if Masing had not created the new character at all.



How to get to SAAREMAA

TEXT: MO SAAREMAA | PHOTOS: MO SAAREMAA

By plane

You can fly to Kuressaare, Saaremaa direct from Tallinn Airport where flights from most European cities arrive. Information on flight schedules and booking tickets on Kuressaare Airport website:

www.kuressaare-airport.ee



By bus

Comfortable buses with WIFI connection on routes **Tallinn – Kuressaare, Pärnu – Kuressaare and Tartu – Kuressaare** every day.

A trip from Tallinn to Kuressaare takes about 4 hours.

Buy tickets on websites: www.tpilet.ee ja www.bussipilet.ee

By car and by ferry

Ferries to Saaremaa depart from the Port of Virtsu, West Estonia.

Tallinn – Port of Virtsu 135 km, about 1hr 45min drive

Riga – Port of Virtsu 256 km, about 3hr 30min drive

There is a regular ferry service between the Port of Virtsu and the Port of Kuivastu, in the summer every 30 minutes, other times of the year, about 20 departures per 24 hours. Length of the trip is 25-30 min.

Distance between the Port of Kuivastu and Kuressaare is 74 km, about 50min drive

More information: www.praamid.ee

By car on the ice road

In a cold winter you can drive from the mainland to Muhu Island on the ice road (ca 10 km) or from Hiiumaa to Saaremaa (ca 15 km).

Information on the opening and condition of ice roads: www.mnt.ee/et/tee/jaateed

By yacht

Saaremaa is a popular place for yachting. Kuressaare Yacht Harbour is an international small craft harbour. www.slmarinas.ee

FROM FINLAND TO SAAREMAA

Finnair flies between **Tallinn and Helsinki** and Tallink ferries sail between Helsinki and Tallinn 7 times a day.

www.tallink.com
www.finnair.ee

FROM SAAREMAA TO HIIUMAA

Saaremaa and Hiiumaa are connected by ferry traffic and in a cold winter by ice roads. Ferry traffic schedule: www.veeteed.com

Ice road information: www.mnt.ee/et/tee/jaateed

FROM SAAREMAA TO SMALL ISLANDS

You can travel by boat from Saaremaa to **Abruka, Vilsandi** and **Ruhnu**. More information on boat and plane connections:

www.visitsaaremaa.ee/en/discover/small-islands



SAARE COUNTY

Population **33 231**
Area **2937,64 km²**

Density of population **11,3 people/km²**
County capital: **Kuressaare**

Saare County is made up of three parishes:
Saaremaa, Muhu ja Ruhnu

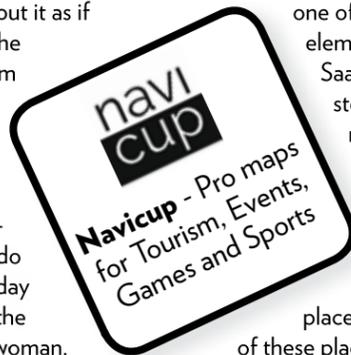
• **THE SUN** loves Saaremaa. It continues to be the sunniest place in Estonia with Kuressaare as the sunniest town. Annually there are always over 250 sunny days in Kuressaare and that's why people sometimes refer to it as the Sun Capital.

• **ULTIMA THULE** was known as the northernmost place in the world in the Antique period. Thule was an island where the sun went to sleep. According to Lennart Meri it is all about Saaremaa and the fall of the Kaali meteorite which had a huge impact on the heritage of many cultures.



• **SAARE WOMAN'S BELLY BUTTON** symbolises love, just like the fern blossom. People speak about it as if no-one has ever seen it. The symbol actually comes from an old song I've never been to sauna on the island or seen the Saare woman's belly button. As always, only half of the phrase is true. Saare women do still love the saunas but today you do not need to go to the sauna to enchant a Saare woman.

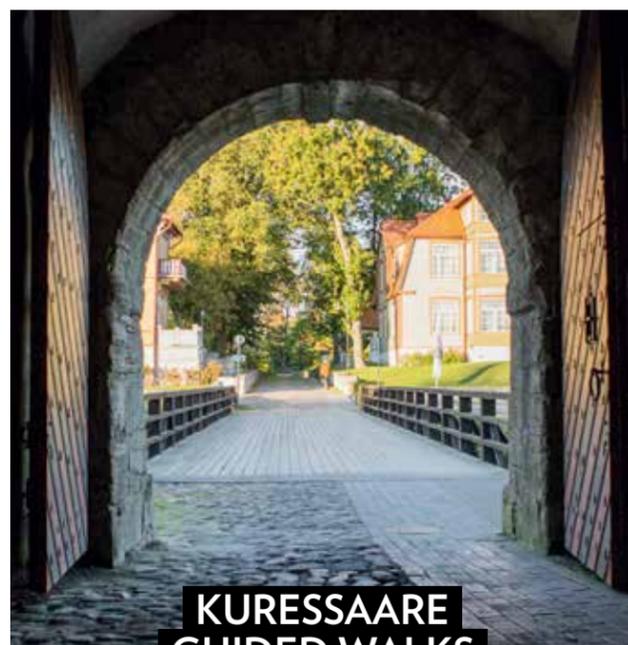
• **ICE ROAD** has brought both good luck and bad luck to the islanders. War-time enemy forces that would normally be kept away by the sea, brought misery to the island. In peacetime, ice roads encourage the traffic between the island and the mainland. In the exceptionally cold winter of 1323 there was an ice road going from Saaremaa to Lubeck which is registered longest ice road ever in Europe.



• **DRIED WHITEFISH** tied up in long strings and hung under the eaves is one of the most common design elements of private houses in Saaremaa. If some crook dares to steal this string of fish, the story makes it onto the front page of the newspaper.

• **EUROPE'S CENTRE** has been marked dozens of times in various places through the centuries. One of these places is in Saaremaa, in the village of Mõnnuste, coordinates 58°18'14"N 22°16'44"E.

• **Ö-SOUND** betrays an islander in the mainland immediately. So does his singing intonation. Linguists see a close connection between the islanders' dialect and the Scandinavian languages proving the common history of the ancient and viking era of Saaremaa and the Nordic countries.



KURESSAARE GUIDED WALKS

every **Saturday**
29.06.-17.08
11:00
Free

Starting From Kuressaare Town Hall

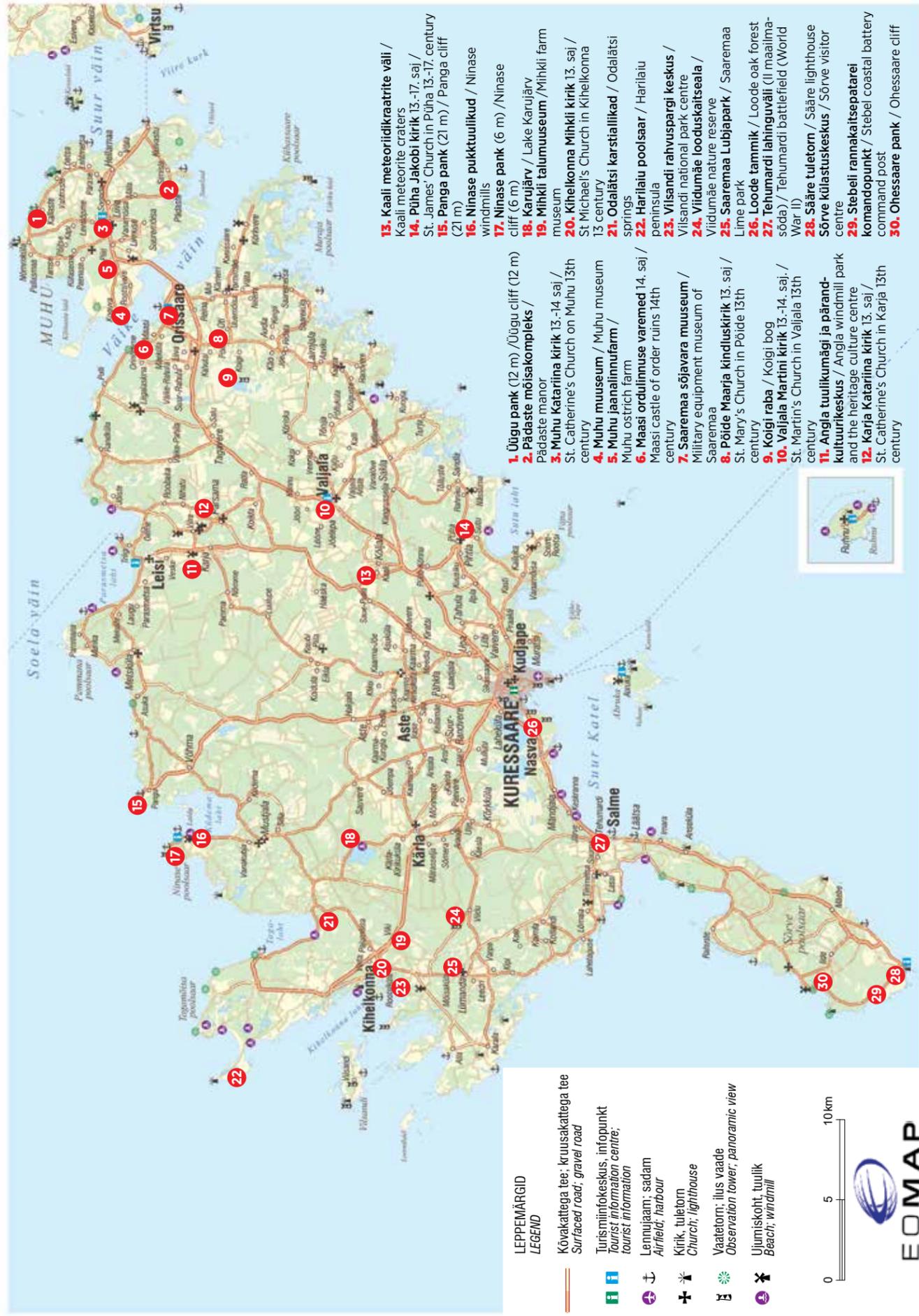


Tallinna str. 2, Kuressaare 93819, Saaremaa, Estonia.
Ph +372 453 3120, +372 453 3766



www.visitsaaremaa.ee

Saaremaa



Eurobio Lab

In 2014, the company Eurobio Lab decided to create in Estonia the first unique farm to grow rare plants. Eurobio Lab founded an organic farm in Estonia in Pihltla village, in the south of the island Saaremaa. The farm covers about 5 ha of the XVI-century Tölluste manor. Saaremaa was selected for a good reason. The plants of island suffer from wild winds and therefore develop special protective properties very useful for cosmetics. The company Eurobio Lab picks wild plants and berries in Saaremaa with the help of the local people who are fishermen in other seasons. The company gathers the plants in the state-owned Estonian woods from May to October under strict control of the national environmental agency. Eurobio Lab gathers hypericum, nettle, primrose, Iceland moss, anemone, geranium, mountain ash tree berries, fir tree and pine tree needles, aquilegia, milfoil, ferns, lingonberries, raspberry and wild strawberry leaves. The gathered plants then go for drying in an old barn with straw roof. And dry plants are delivered for extraction.

Natura Siberica

Eurobio Lab uses the vital forces of the plants to support hair and skin beauty and health by means of the most advanced technologies and under the strictest control at all the stages of the production.

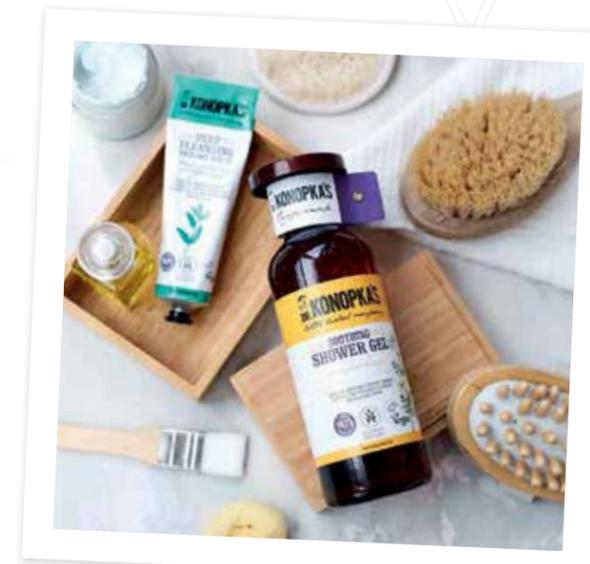
The plants, gathered in the most pure environment, are used as ingredients to create the cosmetic products of Eurobio Lab and Natura Siberica brands.

Wild Siberica Saaremaa line is created especially for the gentle care for the skin and hair. Mild marine climate, fertile ground and primeval forests of Saaremaa island create wonderful conditions for growing of the unique plants that have high potential, force and energy for maintaining health and beauty of your skin and hair.



Dr.Konopka's

In a small Doctor Konopka's herb line you can find a remedy for every occasion. Recipes of invigorating balms, infusions and ointments based on healing herbs were carefully collected and kept and have passed from generation to generation. 85 years ago Dr.Konopka's opened a small pharmacy on the outskirts of Tallinn. He decided to devote his life to the study of herbs and plants and use them in the composition of all products sold in his pharmacy. Dr.Konopka's starts working on products for face,body and hair beauty. The first one who tests new products is doctor's wife, the beautiful and incredibly demanding customer. Only after she confirms the highest quality of the goods, beauty products appear on the pharmacy's shelves. In 1938 Dr.Konopka's on his own funds releases a book with his beauty recipes in a very limited edition. Eurobio Lab company decides to recreate the beauty recipes of Dr.Konopka's using modern technology. After three years of meticulous work there is a line of Dr. Konopka's products for beauty and health for skin and hair appears.



MADE IN ESTONIA



DR. KONOPKA'S
little herbal company

Quenching thirsts for 20 years



SAAREMAA VESI®

