FIFTEENTH STAGE - EUROPEAN TRAIL CORRIDOR E/1 .

PERTINENCE IRPINIA TREKKING AVELLINO.

RIFUGIO FIE TOPPO DEL MONACO (1160 mslm) - RUDERI MONASTERO DELL' INCORONATA (1060 mslm) - SANTUARIO DI MONTEVERGINE (1253 mslm) - OSPEDALETTO D'ALPINOLO (725 mslm) - AVELLINO (336 mslm).

The Refuge is surrounded by a halo of beech trees that completely envelop it. It is a recently completed structure with all the comforts. It has a ground-floor living area of 170 square meters with a large kitchen, two dining rooms with a fireplace, a reception area, a gymnasium room, and a bathroom. Upstairs five rooms with bathrooms, beds with mattresses,sheets, pillows and comforters, for a capacity of 28 beds. Service bathroom on the floor. In the attic a mini apartment with six beds, living room and bathroom ; an additional room with five beds and bathroom. It is open year-round by reservation for groups of at least 10 people. The food part is self-managed.

The Stage starts from the square of the Refuge and passes by the fire pit and helicopter landing strip, joins a path with steps and descends for a while until it joins a dirt road. You proceed following the course of the valleys, entering and leaving them until you reach the paved mountain road. Follow it, keeping to the right, and follow it for about 100 m.

At a sharp bend, turn left and enter a wide dirt road slightly downhill. We find ourselves in the Acqua dei Colombi locality. Here, too, we follow the course of the valleys on a path with no difference in elevation. After one km, at a downhill bend you leave the dirt road and enter a narrow path slightly uphill. This small section is not suitable for those suffering from vertigo.

You walk about 150 m where you have to rest the outer side of both feet so that you have more grip. You climb a little and descend again on the other side continuing on a wide and comfortable dirt road. You pass a curve to the right and after a while you come to a crossroads, continue straight ahead slightly uphill ignoring the detour to the left. Further wide curve and after a straight stretch you intersect a dirt road coming from the right on which we enter to descend to Kornati.

This last stretch is a cobblestone white track that takes us to the rear of the large structure of the Monastery. The monastic complex was built in 1555 on land donated by the Carafa family to the hermit Giulio da Nardò , the very year in which Pope Paul IV Carafa was elected. It consists of a Monastery, later governed by Camaldolese Monks, with intercommunicating cells and a Sanctuary ( now almost completely collapsed and covered by soil, except for the mighty two-meter-wide arches all made of living stone ). The whole complex was destroyed by the French in 1806 because they believed that the monks gave hospitality to a Brigand called " frà Diavolo " ( who was none other than a captain of the Bourbon army who had deserted ). All the Monks were imprisoned and beheaded in Naples and after a few days the Brigand with his band also met the same end. The Commander of the French troops that purged the area was the father of the future writer Victor Hugò, stationed in Avellino.

After a dutiful visit to the site, including a centuries-old, imposing beech tree perched on rocks under which there is a spring, take a dirt road on the left slightly uphill that you follow for a while, then leave it and take a path on the right that climbs. After a first part with a gradual slope you reach a group of large rocks right on the edge of a deep valley, protected by steel cables, where you have to help yourself, in some cases, with your hands, always in safety. At the end of this short section we continue on a wide dirt road from which we can admire the gorge that descends with a remarkable endenza.

Immediately after we meet a small plateau full of tall ferns, where we keep to the right edge among the beech trees. Once the widening is over, we descend, still on a dirt road with a chalky bottom, to Campetto di Sant'Angelo, another large plateau almost always dusty due to the deposit of volcanic ash over the centuries and also full of ferns that sometimes obstruct the view. On the plateau you keep to the right and after a while have to be careful to see an opening to the left with marking on the trees.

Here you turn slightly to the left and pass a small plateau with large beech trees, and then begin to climb fairly steeply, zigzagging until you reach the ridgeline on the left, which you follow to the intersection with a dirt road at the end of the trail. Here, to the left we go toward the small Rock Church of San Silvestro I° Papa, while our path continues to the right. Shortly after, on the left uphill, another dirt road leads to the summit of Mount Vallatrone; we, on the other hand, go straight ahead.

We travel more than a kilometer on comfortable dirt road with no detours and no elevation changes until we reach the locality Sopra l'Arenella (1256 mslm). From here you turn left onto a paved road and go over another km to the small Rifugio di Forcetelle (1224 mslm), where you leave the road and enter s another dirt road turning left beside a large concrete tank.

Continue slightly uphill for another 700 m and, after a wide bend, turn right on a path that gradually gains height, until you reach below Cupitelle where a section with a good gradient and with narrow hairpin bends begins. After about fifteen minutes the sloping section is overcome and the path becomes easier. This leads to Campetto di Monte Vergine (1400 mslm), where you cross an esplanade just below the television and telecommunications antennas. After a while you intersect the paved road, which you follow keeping to the left until the end of a small tunnel, after which you turn left to enter a downhill path.

From here we descend a stretch with a good gradient between a very thick layer of leaves and we rejoin the asphalt road that shortly leads us to the Sanctuary of Montevergine, located at 1253 mslm, whose origins date back to the mystical work of St. William of Vercelli. The Romanesque structure was consecrated in 1124. The shrine is imposing and consists of a new area and an original one where, on the High Altar, is placed the Black Madonna and Child with a beautiful gold and gemstone crown on her head. "Mamma Schiavona " is one of the few Byzantine Madonnas still present in Italian Churches. St. William created the Order of Virginians and after the making of the Sanctuary of Montevergine he went away continuing his hermitage and building several churches between Irpinia and Lucania, stopping also at the court of Roger II°, to conclude his pilgrimage with the building of the first female Monastery ,governed by an Abbess, in the Plain of Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi called the Monastery of Goleto.

After a dutiful visit to the Sanctuary, we resume the route by descending for about a hundred meters down the paved road and turning left onto a flight of steps that takes us to the Sacred Mile, where the Stations of the Cross are encountered. We cross the road (begun in 1901 and completed in 1909) and take the Pilgrims' Path, cobblestone and beaten earth with steps that for 900 years has been walked by the faithful even barefoot.

After a while you reach a viewpoint from which you can sweep your gaze from Alta Irpinia to Monti Picentini, from Monti Lattari to Vesuvius. Continue downhill intersecting the road several times until you reach Tiglio Sacro (900 mslm), where the two sections of the Sentiero dei Pellegrini coming from Mercogliano and Ospedaletto intersect, where you keep to the left. After a little while you intersect the road for the last time and turn left passing on a small path protected by a fence.

At the end of the wide bend in the road, turn left again and resume the Path, which after a while passes in front of a wooden structure under which there is the " Pietra della Madonna ", a rock structure where the Madonna is said to have sat and which, over the centuries, thousands of pilgrims, sitting down, have fashioned into the shape of a chair.

Continuing, we meet, on the left, the " Scalzatoio ", a structure made of living stone where shoes were left to proceed barefoot as a sign of devotion. Here the cobblestones widen but become more sloping until the beginning of the built-up area, where we enter a paved road with plane trees on either side until we reach the Piazza with the beautiful Triton Fountain, where we can get fresh water. We have reached Ospedaletto d'Alpinolo, home of the Castagna del prete and Torrone chestnuts, as well as the starting point of the " Juta a Montevergine ", an ancient custom that, in the month of September, brought hundreds of wagons and carriages harnessed with flowers to the village to climb up to the Sanctuary.

It continues by taking a small road that leads to the municipal headquarters and follows it until it intersects the provincial road and then goes into the small market square and through a small tunnel to a picnic area. Continue on the municipal road that comes to a small traffic circle where you continue straight on the provincial road for about two kilometers. You leave the provincial road by turning left to enter a small road between farms. Shortly after keep to the right and go downhill passing between a group of houses, past which you enter the municipal territory of Avellino. The small road continues to descend passing between small villas and ending up at a crossroads where you keep right to take the provincial road and follow it for about a kilometer and then leave it to follow another small road that goes through the entire Pennini area, on the outskirts of Avellino.

One turns onto Via Tagliamento, passes alongside the Athletics Field and reaches the Bourbon Prison, where the Stage ends.

Avellino is the capital of Irpinia, land first of the Osca and then of the Samnites Irpini. Abellinum ( 3rd/I cent.b.c. ), was an important seat in Roman times, located almost halfway between Naples and Foggia on the Via Appia Moderna. During the Lombard period an imposing city wall was built. In 969 it was occupied by the Byzantines for a short period. Immediately it was recaptured by the Lombards, who, however, had to cede it to the Normans. It was succeeded by the Swabians, and Charles I of Anjou assigned it, in 1268, to Simone de Monfort. In 1589 it passed to Marino Caracciolo, Prince of Avellino. The Caracciolos held Avellino until 1806, when feudality ended.

Worth visiting are the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, built in the 12th century and enlarged and restored several times, the 14th-century Customs Palace, the 17th-century Clock Tower, the 1669 Fountain of Bellerophon, the mid-18th-century Palazzo Caracciolo and the Irpinian Museum, whose nine rooms house artifacts attesting to the stable frequentation of the Irpinian territory from prehistoric times to the Roman era ( 4th millennium B.C.-6th century A.D. ).

DIFF. E - DUR h 7.30 - DISL. uphill mt 428 - downhill mt 1252 - DIST.km 23.

In the opposite direction DISL in ascent mt 1252 and in descent mt 428. DUR h 8.30

Highest point mt 1456.

WATER ON THE ROUTE : YES.