

# COGLIERE LA MONTAGNA

## MONTESCHENO



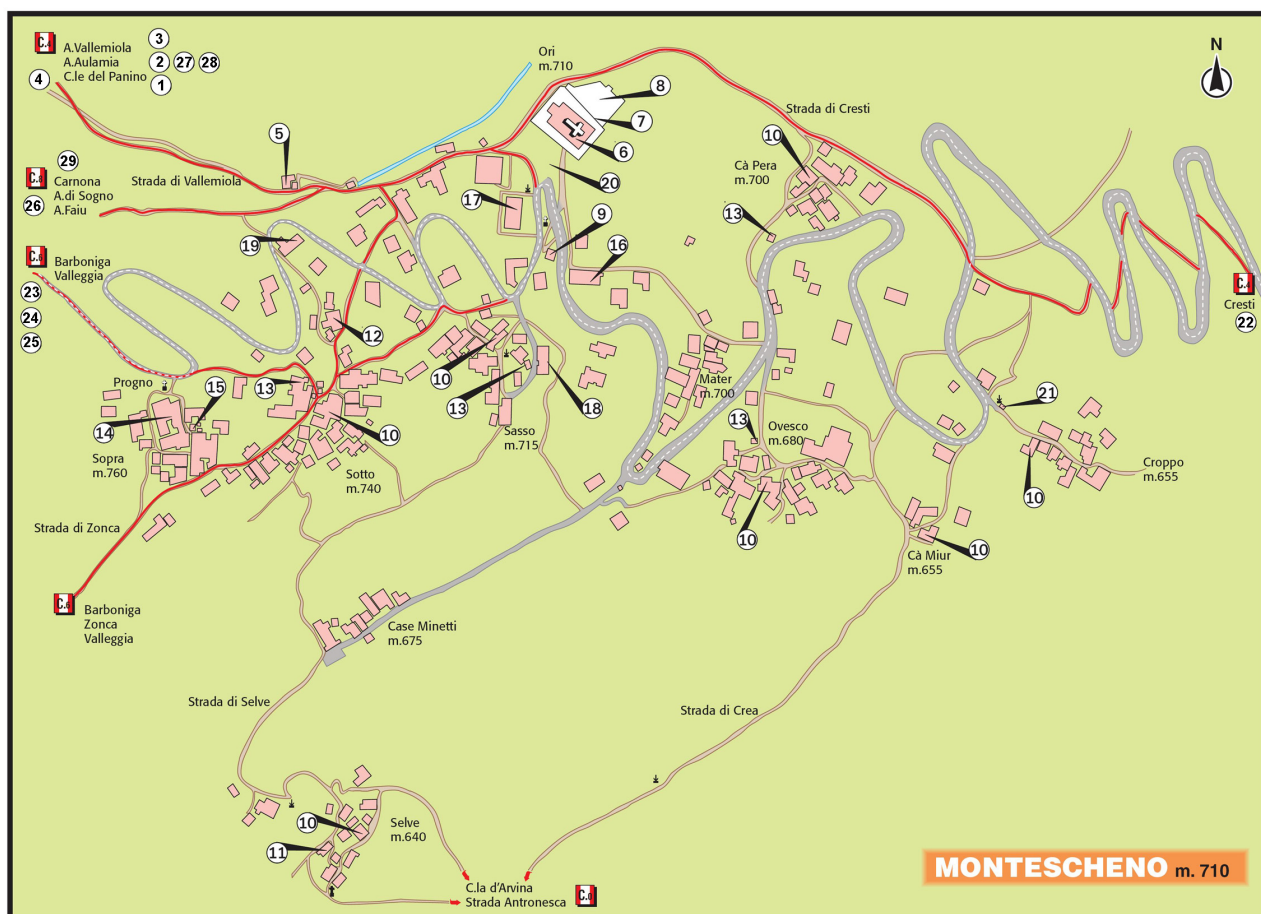
### Within the territory you can see:

Houses of architectural interest, chapels, oratories, the parish church of 1644, the bell tower of 1783, stone fountains, ovens, presses, mills, wash houses, arched stone bridges, micca quarry, laugera quarry (soapstone), engravings rocks, place of discovery of a tomb from the Roman era, hydroelectric plants.

### TIPS OF HISTORY IN ANTRONA VALLEY MONTESCHENO

On the way along the Antrona valley the first village to be met is Montescheno, lying in sunny position in the wide triangle formed by the Ovesca and the Brevettola streams. The village does not consist of a single core of houses but of the hamlets of Cresti, Croppo, Ovesco, Cadmater, Cadpera, Sasso, Progno lower and higher, Selve, Vallemiola, Barboniga, Valleggia, Zonca and a part of Galliano. Its name comes from the Latin "Schena" (back, ridge) and from the Latin genitive "montis", hence "mountain ridge". In ancient times not well determined, a colony of shepherds, once abandoned the nomadic life, settled down forming a community in the present area of Montescheno. In 1519 the village obtained its statutes. Life in Montescheno, as well as in all the other communes of the valley, was based on agriculture and stock rearing, the most widespread cultivation was vineyard, that produced a fairly good wine though poor in alcohol. The statutes of 1519 controlled its production. Other cultivations were rye, potato and hemp. The hemp was processed in the jute factory of Villadossola. During the past centuries great importance for the economic life was given to the iron mines, which the Montescheno area was rich of. The statutes of 1519 controlled their exploitation. (See: De Maurizi G., *La cartografica* - 1919).

## PLACES OF INTEREST



1. **CHAPEL OF THE PIANINO**
2. **AULAMIA** - 2a **STONE BASIN**. - 2b **CHAPEL**. – 2c **ENGRAVED BOULDER** (See: Bertamini T. *Un masso inciso ad Aulamia di Montescheno*, Riv. Oscellana, 1997 pp. 129-132).
3. **VALLEMIOLA** - two **PRESSES** are worth seeing, one - 3a in the upper part and one - 3b in the lower part of the village - 3c one bakery oven still in function; two **Oratories**: the first one - 3d is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, facing east, was built in 1649; the second one - 3e is the Oratory of the Graces, west of the village, in the interior a Madonna with the Infant Jesus dating 1534.
4. **ARCH BRIDGE** on the Brevettola stream.
5. **EX-GRAIN MILL** (a part of it is still standing).
6. **THE PARISH CHURCH** dedicated to the Saints Giovanni Battista and Carlo, was separated from the mother church of Seppiana on Dec. 6th, 1747. The church with a nave and two aisles, in late classic style, was built between 1627 and 1644. Noteworthy are some frescos of 1843 by Giovanni Zanola from Varallo and the four medallions with the Saints Giovanni Battista, Pietro, Carlo and Ambrogio frescoed in 1648.
7. **VIA CRUCIS** (The Way of the Cross) - Originally painted in 1839 by Carlo Ferrari from Milan, its stations were recently re-frescoed by Sartoretto from Valleggia.
8. **CEMETERY** it contains several chapels frescoed at the beginning of this Century.
9. **BELL TOWER** its construction begun in 1760 and its opening took place in 1783; it is 6,4 metres wide and 45 metres high.
10. **HOUSES OF ARCHITECTONIC INTEREST, DATING 1600**

11. **HOUSES WITH MURAL PAINTINGS**
12. **HOUSES WITH ANCIENT WORKSHOPS**
13. **PUBLIC WASH-HOUSE**
14. **RURAL HOUSE** where an old wine press is kept.
15. **BAKERY OVEN**
16. **EX-NURSERY SCHOOL** - Was built in 1942 on initiative of the parish priest don Carlo Felice Baldi and of the teacher Miss Ida Prei. The building is now housing the rest home of the Antrona Valley.
17. **PRIMARY SCHOOLS**
18. **PARISH CHURCH**
19. **WORKERS' SOCIETY** - The workers' society boasts several decades of life and has its seat in a valuable building which also houses the out-patients' department.
20. **WAR MEMORIAL STONE**
21. **CHAPEL**
22. **CRESTI** - **22a** Oratory dedicated to Our Lady of Annunciation and to S. Carlo, was built in 1614 and restored in 1874.-**22b** Houses of architectural interest.
23. **BARBONIGA** - **23a** Oratory dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, built in 1836 and recently refrescoed by Giorgio Sartoretti from Valleggia. - **23b** PRESS dated 1745; - **23c** hamlet's Bakery OVEN.
24. **VALLEGGIA** - **24a** Oratory dedicated to Our Lady of the Blood, venerated at Re (Vigizzo valley), built before 1664 and enlarged in 1878. - **24b** PRESS of 1903.- **24c** Bakery OVEN - **24d** some HOUSES dated 1600 of architectural interest. - **24e** Stone FOUNTAIN.
25. **ZONCA** - **25a** Oratory dedicated to the Saints Lucia and Apollonia, built in 1656. - **25b** Some HOUSES dating back to 1600. - **25c** HOUSE of 1660 belonging to the noble Vescia family from Zonca. - **25d** Traditional OVEN. - **25e** HOUSES with frescos of 1800. - **25f** CHAPEL
26. **IRON MINES OF OGAGGIA** - For the history prior to the C19 please refer to map n. 4. From 1859 the Ogaggia mine begun its activity again thanks to Ignazio Ceretti, son of Vittore, who had to manage the whole company. He had a smooth mule track built to cover the distance of 10 Kms from the mine to Villadossola. After the death of his father Vittore in 1871, Ignazio Ceretti had the responsibility of the whole business. He replaced the old power hammers of the Villadossola plant with a new rolling mill. Around the year 1880 the iron ore transport costs were cut down with the setting up of a ropeway. In 1881 the manpower employed had reached the 186 units: 75 miners, 15 workers at the ore roasting kiln, 26 at the blast furnace and 70 at the rolling mills. Meanwhile, in the Ossola, in spite of the great difficulties, new factories sprang up, increasing the industrial development of the valley. In 1888 the Novara Domodossola railway freed this area from isolation and highly favoured the development of trading. The P. M. Ceretti factory, continuing its growth on impulse, was the first in Ossola to set up a hydroelectric power plant to exploit such a handy new source of energy (in the following years other smaller scale plants were built by the Ceretti family on the Brevettola stream -See map n. 8). However, this caused the shut-down of the blast furnace, also determined by other factors, such as the exhaustion of the Ogaggia mines that had already ceased to produce hematites and siderites, but only pyrites, whose dressing had become uneconomic, as well as the more simple and profitable supply of iron scraps or ingots on the international market thanks to the opening of the Sempione rail tunnel in 1905. (See: Bertamini T., *Il centro siderurgico di Villadossola* - 1967).
27. **MICA QUARRY AT THE ALPE "I MONDEI"** -At the Alpe "I Mondei", in the crystalline rocks of the Pennine Alps complex Camughera/Moncucco lies the body of the most western Ossola pegmatite. Such mineral is known for the impressive contribution given, with 37 mineral species, some not very common and others actually rare, to the Mineralogy of the valley as well as of the entire country. In this area a quarry was opened,

called "mica quarry" or "pegmatite quarry", that proved to provide one of the most noticeable Italian pegmatites, both under the mineralogical and mining profile. This quarry enjoyed of a long, even though discontinuous, period of activity that took place within the span of 40 years, from 1922 till the end of 1960. (See: Reggiani A., *Kasolite all'alpe "I Mondei" in territorio di Montescheno, Valle Antrona, Ossola* - ed. Succ. Fus. Pavia - 1974).

## 28. LAUGERA QUARRIES

29. **ALPE GROppo** - **29a** Laugera rock WALL with hones, cross-shaped cupels and carrot-sampling remains used to make vessels. (See: De Giuli A., Copiatti E, *Sentieri Antichi* - ed. Grossi -1997).

30. **ROMAN AGE TOME** (place of discovery) (See: Bertamini T., *Una tomba di epoca Romana a Montescheno*, in Oscellana, 1997, pp. 29 - 32).

31. **HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANTS ON THE BREVETTOLA STREAM** (See map n. 8 for the characteristics) - **31a** at Montescheno - **31b** at Ponte Cresti.

32. **MILL at Zonca**

33. **THE SOURCE OF THE BREVETTOLA STREAM**

## Manifestazioni ricorrenti

1. Prima domenica di giugno "Festa dei ragazzi"
2. Seconda domenica di giugno "Sagra della segale"
3. Ultima domenica di giugno "Festa di S.Giovanni e S.Carlo"
4. La terza domenica di luglio "Autani dei set frei"
5. Prima settimana di novembre festa di S. Carlo patrono di Montescheno
6. A Cresti la domenica dopo Pasqua festa della frazione
7. A Vallemiola l'ultima domenica di giugno festa della frazione
8. A Barboniga alla terza domenica di settembre festa dedicata alla Madonna
9. A Valleggia alla fine di maggio festa dedicata alla Madonna del sangue.

## Bibliografia

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2. "La Strada Antronesca", CAI Villadossola, 1997
3. "Escursionismo in Ossola, Valle Antrona", Crosa Lenz/Frangioni G., Grossi, 1994
4. "La pegmatite di Montescheno in Valle Antrona", De Capitani S., Università di Milano, 1924
5. "L'Ossola e le sue valli", De Maurizi G., Grossi, 1920
6. "Montescheno", De Maurizi G., La Cartografica, 1919
7. "Le Autani della Valle Antrona", Frangioni G., Grossi, 1990
8. "Guida illustrata di Valle Antrona", Grossetti A., EDPR, 1913
9. "Minerali Ossolani", Mattioli V., Mattioli (MI), 1979
10. "Kasolite dell'Alpe i Mondei in territorio di Montescheno", Reggiani A., Fusi, 1974
11. "Ossola minerale", Reggiani A., C.C.Novara, 1975

## TOOLS FOR VISITING THE TERRITORY

The morphology of the area requires good training to tackle the walks along marked but demanding routes.

To tackle these paths, tools that help with orientation are indispensable, such as:

1. CARTOGRAPHY - The Italian Alpine Club of Villadossola has drawn up map 107 (formerly 7) of the Antrona Valley, where the various routes have been reported, highlighting those marked (or marked with difficulty) from those not marked. See the link <https://www.estmonterosa.it/carte-escursionistiche-25000.html>
2. INFORMATION TABLE OF THE NUMBERED ROUTES – Some basic information about the routes is given on the back of the card.
3. ON THE WEBSITE [www.estmonterosa.it](http://www.estmonterosa.it) you can get further information by consulting the "Territory" page or by going directly to the link <https://www.estmonterosa.it/catasto-percorsi-vco-valle-antrona-settore-c.html>
4. gpx TRACKS - At the link above, by opening the folders of the various types of routes and itineraries, the gpx tracks are being prepared, which can help in orientation.

Thematic itineraries have been prepared to view the territory from an anthropic, historical and naturalistic point of view.

### Itineraries in the territory of Montescheno

Each itinerary has an "identification code" (for example IC01) which allows you to consult the website [www.estmonterosa.it](http://www.estmonterosa.it) - Sector C on the "itineraries" page for further information. The choice of the itinerary can be made on the basis of the travel time and the height difference, and therefore gradually prepare for the more demanding routes, or it can be chosen on the basis of the seasonal period.

#### List :

#### Itinerario IC01 (Cresti, Vallemiola, Montescheno)

L'itinerario propone la visita degli insediamenti antichi e a solatio della Valle Antrona. Si inizia con l'attraversamento del sito Megalitico di Varchignoli poi con un cammino a mezza costa si raggiunge Vallemiola, antica frazione di Montescheno. Immutata la vocazione del luogo: due torchi, uno nella parte alta l'altro in quella bassa della frazione, un forno del pane ancora funzionante, un oratorio dedicato alla SS.Trinità (1649) sconsacrato e uno, a sera dell'abitato, delle Grazie (1534). Scendendo dall'antica mulattiera per raggiungere Montescheno, si attraversa un bel ponte ad arco, si vedono i resti degli antichi mulini, si prosegue per visitare il mulino ancora funzionante.

#### Itinerario IC02 (Via della segale a Montescheno)

L'itinerario propone l'attraversamento degli antichi terrazzamenti, un tempo coltivati a vite, e le frazioni abitate di Montescheno. Si attraversa la frazione di Selve con una cappella e antiche case, la località Ovesco dove alcuni particolari fanno datare le costruzioni al 1600. Si prosegue per l'abitato di Progno dove si osservano voltini in pietra a secco, un forno per il pane e il torchio ancora adoperato da una famiglia. Su mulattiera si raggiunge la frazione di Barboniga, anche qui vi è il torchio, il forno e il lavatoio. Passando davanti all'oratorio dedicato alla Madonna del Rosario si prosegue per la località di Valleggia, antica frazione ora totalmente ristrutturata ed abitata. La piazza principale ospita l'oratorio di Maria SS.del Sangue (1664), un forno, il torchio e la grossa fontana ricavata da un unico blocco. Si prosegue per poi arrivare a Zonca dove si può osservare l'oratorio di S.Lucia e Apollonia (1656), case del 1600, cappelle, fontane e due forni. Si scende ad incrociare la "Strada Antronesca" proprio alla chiesa di Seppiana per poi proseguire fino a Montescheno.

**Itinerario IC03** (Montescheno e le miniere di Mondei)

L'itinerario propone le antiche lavorazione nel territorio di Montescheno. Si fa la conoscenza ad una delle quattro centrali idroelettriche realizzate dalla "Pietro Maria Ceretti", per incrementare la produzione siderurgica. Altro scenario che cambia, imponenti terrazzamenti ci avvisano che siamo nei pressi dell'Alpe Aulamia, superata la quale un cippo ci ricorda i pericoli di questi affascinanti luoghi. Superato un tratto scosceso ci si imbatte nei primi segni dell'estrazione della "Laugera" tipica pietra ollare di colore verde facile da lavorare dalla quale si ricavava il vassellame. Poco sopra scorgiamo il villaggio dei Mundeì con l'ufficio tecnico e il dormitorio; era questo il luogo dell'estrazione della micca in attività fino agli anni 1964. Ritornando ad Aulamia per godere delle sue meraviglie: una fontana in pietra di forma pentagonale, le casere e le stalle e il masso con le incisioni rupestri.

**Itinerario IC04** (Giro "Autani dei set frei")

La domenica dopo il 10 luglio le genti di Montescheno si radunano nella piazza della parrocchiale per dar vita alla processione dei "set frei", questo fin dal 1600. Il percorso disegna grossomodo il perimetro del comune: tocca il costolone a ponente del Moncucco, costeggia tutto lo spartiacque a nord della Val Bognanco, la testata della Brevettola e, dai declivi del monte Ciapè discende verso sud, il versante sinistro del torrente Ovesca per tornare, attraverso le frazioni, alla chiesa Parrocchiale. Qui viene riproposto l'itinerario che sebbene faticoso è ricco di fascino e di grandi panorami.

N.B. – The tables of each itinerary show the values (with different colours) divided as follows:



(blue) Traditional value and peasant life. – ANTHROPIC



(brown) Historical, artistic, cultural value. – HISTORICAL



(green) naturalistic value. – NATURALISTIC