

DENERVO

A PLACE OF MAGIC ATMOSPHERES

In a much varied territory like this, containing on little space rocks, hills and high mountains, the hiker can pass in some hours from the tempered zone at the border of the lake with spontaneous agaves and oleanders, to the Alpine zone with impressive birches and beech woods. The itinerary we are doing to the Denervo will be in one of the most significant zones of the hinterland of Gargnano. We are, horizontally measured, at a distance of some hundred metres from the lake and though on a level of 1500 m in comparison to 65 m level of the lake. The result is that they're breathless views on the lake, which opens entirely at our feet, and at the same time there is also a wide and not less interesting view on the peaks of the alpine heights behind us and white also during the summer months. If you perform the excursion in springtime as we are doing, the woods and meadows are becoming gardens alternating every week their various flowering, beginning with the not so showy ones like snowdrops, anemones, lilies on the valley, orchids, up to the more flashy ones like peonies, lilies and asphodels in a series of delicate colours and pictures.



We start at **Briano**, place we reach by car going up to Montegargnano in direction of Costa. At the small opening of Santo di Liano, at about 10 km from Gargnano, we deviate to the right on the still asphalted but narrower

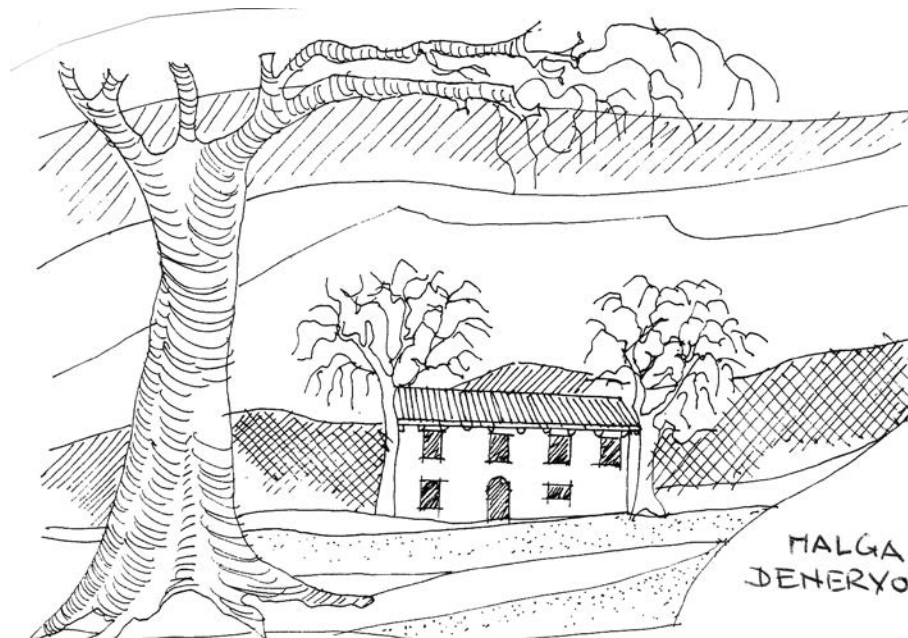
road marking the indications Razione-Briano, which we drive through for other 3,5 km through a wood, up to the setting of the wide grazing of **Briano**. We leave the car at the small widening at Destra (a.s.l. 980), at the feet of the small road taking to the small church and the refuge of the alpine association. The wooden road sign indicates the number 32 and accompanies us during the whole climb up to the peak of the Denervo. At the beginning, the well-marked path penetrates the small forest with its typical black hornbeams and first signs of beeches. On both sides of the way, you don't rarely notice small round places whose ground presents itself in a decisive black colour. They are so called "gial", grounds created for preparing coal "cooked" anciently on the scene and then transported down hill on the back of donkeys or mules, an activity practised by the coal setters up to some ten years ago. Today, the trees may grow and develop without the risk of being cut while being still "young", allowing the hiker to walk up to the peak among a shadowy path.

At the crossing directly behind the **small widening** (a.s.l. 1252 - h. **0,40**) we continue on the path on the left (still n.32) climbing up with the crest. The other path down would bring us to Premaur, but we'll take it in the other direction when going back, at the end of the ring path, which the tour advises. Here, the climb, after a short easy passage, becomes harder and the way narrower. But it doesn't present particular difficulties as it is well marked. After a rather steep passage, we reach a first open point among the vegetation offering us a first try of the panoramic views the trip reserves us. The sight in this case is on the animated profile of the lower Garda and the hilly and wooded valleys of Rasone closed towards south by the lopped peaks of mount Castello di Gaino (also called by the people of Montegargnano The Three Heights) and of mount Pizzocolo. Further on we reach an obvious framework, another convenient place to admire the landscape (a.s.l. 1455 h. **1,20**). Always following in the direction of the crest (attention to the holes and the discontinuity of the rocky ground resulting from wonders of widespread erosion so called "furrowed grounds" which ask us to be careful while proceeding), after a short while we'll reach the south terrace of the peak (a.s.l. 1460 f. **1,35**). The **Denervo** not having got a genuine peak, extends from south to north by a progress of widening crest, almost flat and expanding for several hundred metres. Even if being nearly completely woodland, it has wide openings serving as



grazing and allowing scenes of extraordinary beauty nearly to all sides and very different from one another. The first excellent sight is the terrace towards south allowing us a view on Valvestino with its lake having the same name, on the mounts Zingla, Spino and Pizzocolo designing the profile in the west. In conditions of normal weather and looking south, we notice the wide extension of the lake closed by the moraines. On particularly clear days, the view spaces far beyond, on the complete Po valley up to the Tuscan-Emilian Apennine chain where mount Cimone marks the highest point. It is an extraordinary position, since, differently to so many other also interesting terraces, we are on a dominant peak because of its wide view on the surroundings, but the "surroundings" are not flat under us or confused in the distance;

on the contrary, they offer various grades of visual observations, from the lowest to the highest, from the relatively near to the lost in the never ending, in a connection of landscapes creating innumerate contrasts of forms and graduations in which the light has fun to dictate us ever changing sceneries. After the rest, a little bit further, in another clearing, there is an old little house made of stone, serving as a shelter for the animals and their guardians. The path exceeds it and runs all along the summit part of the Denervo touching then a grazing surrounded by huge beeches some of them having been overwhelmed by the time and by atmospheric agents. The tree trunks as well as the huge contorted branches, "naked" during the winter, don't give the impression of a static simply vegetal body, but adopt plastic forms similar to stiff muscles trying to resist the weight of the years and the power of the elements. The magic of the Denervo may be in brief: joining to the extraordinary sights this "live" presence seeming to dialogue with the surroundings. The way slides among the tree trunks along some of these models, but if you like there are hundreds of them meriting your attention. It is nice to "loose oneself" on small deviations in order to discover those more hidden ones. The path keeps on the back of the summit up to the north end, which offers us another panoramic point of exceptional interest: a window to another region, a surrounding wholly different from that admired on the other slope. This time you can't see the lake; the protagonists are now the mountain chains degrading at the horizon up to



the alpine peaks perennially covered in snow of the Carè Alto and the Brenta, more than 3000 metres high and raising more evidently and conspicuously behind the rocky walls of mount Caplone-Bus and mount Tremalzo. Below, between the grazing, we realize the extended body of the Alpine summer pasture. After a rest, in order to admire the scenery, we'll go down to reach it, surprised of the ability with which it has been constructed, with small slabs and fitting perfectly nearly without binding material. Up to our days it serves as summer pasture, well-preserved during the centuries without being rearranged: inside it preserves the spacious room of the "casera" (place ventilated by numerous cracks in the wall where the cheese was put to ripen), the corner of the chimney, the very plain rooms for the people; more below

the stall and the cistern collecting the rain water, the only source of supply. The whole represents an architectural testimony of great interest, what a pity that it risks to be endangered by the critical conditions of the roof. It is a unique and precious example, a monument meriting to be safeguarded, it would be a shame if for lack of maintenance it fell to ruin. These reflections made, we retake our walk.

From **malga Denervo** (a.s.l. 1373 h. **1,35**) there are now two possibilities to continue. The first, classical one, foresees to follow the blaze n.32 which, pointing to the west, takes us to **Briano** near the small opening of Lovere and from there directly to the car (about 1,00 h). The other one, nearly unknown to the normal hikers, foresees however the downward trip towards the so called "senter des véc", running along the

peak ring-shaped on the slope turned to the east and facing Tignale and the mount Baldo (blaze n.39 - indications at the place). It is a lonely region allowing us to walk through very beautiful birch - and beech woods, as it runs through nearly flat mule tracks and lets us discover another nature of this so suggestive mountain. And to think that seen from below the peak of the Denervo hasn't got any of the characters affecting the one who observes it! That's perhaps why it was nearly unknown to the hikers up to some years ago. After a steep descent in direction of Fòbia and paying attention to a junction at 1143 (h. 0,20 from the malga), we deviate to the right on a flat track with the blaze 39 - 35. Still a long tract through the wood and we finally reach the open

on a better marked way also to be taken by an all-terrain vehicle. At the other junction more downwards we turn right on the flat road pointing to the south (blaze 35 - indications Piazze-Comer). The place is called **Valzana** (a.s.l. 1.113 h. 0,45 - **3,00**) and is characterized by farmhouses cattered between little woods and meadows. More forward, when the meadows get wider, on a flat and open terrace having easily inspired the name to the place, **Piazze**, there is a large clearing with a peasant's house, a little chapel, another simple house, rose-coloured and with blue shutters (a.s.l. 1.111 h. 0,20 - **3,20**). The place has got a double function since its origins: summer pasture but also holidays for the owner's family who has built all this in the early 1900 and has preserved this jewel with great care and passion. Going up the meadow, we take at a certain point the deviation announced in the wood.

The blaze is still the number 35 and it will accompany us during the whole way up to the small opening we crossed at the beginning. Between this one and Piazze, there is another wide grazing with another summer pasture from where you may see a piece of the lake: it is **Premaur**, open space surrounded by birches and hundred years old beeches (a.s.l. 1.165 - h. 0,20 - **3,40**). From here, continuing slightly climbing to the west, we retake the path through the wood mounting sideways on, up to the opening at a.s.l. 1252 (h. 0,20 - **4,00**). Here, going back and in this case downwards the way n.32 having done before, we easily reach the **alpine refuge** and from there the asphalted road where we have parked the car near by (a.s.l. 980 h. 0,30 - **4,30**). In alternative, at the opening at n. a.s.l. 1252, instead of going down, you can make a little deviation taking the path on the left running to the crest. In about 15 minutes you reach another opening and immediately afterwards the **peak Comer**, offering an extraordinary breathless view on the lake and the mountains around (confer the other suggested trip). Going down towards west at the second opening, you may easily retake the principal path to the alpine refuge.

Text and drawings Franco Ghitti (translated by Malu Schultheis)

Notes

Indicated times are for a rushless, quiet walk. Seichtseing and main stops such as resting or having lunch are no included in timing. We recommend good trekking boots and weatherproof garments and gear: weather at these heights can be very instable. Pay attention to the red/white painted numbered signs. Described trails are maintained by Paths and Trails Group of Gargnano "La Variante".

Trail Maps edited by the Comunità Montana del Parco Alto Garda Bresciano or Kompass Map 1/50000 can be usefull.

